

## **Blenheim High School - Finance, Audit, Facilities and Staffing Committee (FAFS)**

### **Terms of Reference**

#### ***Purpose of the Finance, Audit, Facilities and Staffing Committee***

The purpose of the Committee is:

1. To advise the Governing Body and Head Teacher on matters relating to the Academy's Finances, Financial Policies, Controls, Resources, HR Policies and Procedures, Premises and Security.
2. To ensure that the school has the right volume, mix and calibre of staff to meet the educational and pastoral needs of students to achieve its required performance targets.
3. Contribute to and monitor relevant sections of the School Strategic Plan and the School Development Plan, developing supporting policies as necessary.

The Audit Committee is a sub Committee of FAFS, but chaired by a different Governor to the Chair of FAFS.

### **Key Accountabilities**

The Key Accountabilities of this Committee are as set out below:

- Ensuring the school has effective controls in place for managing within available resources and ensuring regularity, propriety and value for money;
- Ensuring the school has procedures in place to identify and manage risks, ensuring that risks are aligned with strategic priorities and improvement plans and that appropriate intervention plans are in place to manage risks;
- Ensuring the school has a fit-for-purpose organisational structure to deliver the strategic objectives and resources are allocated in line with the organisations strategic priorities;
- Holding a regular cycle of meetings and appropriate processes to support business and financial planning, scrutinising the annual budget and 3-year plan and making recommendations to the FGB;
- Developing a long-term financial strategy to ensure that the school has the resources it needs to deliver its strategic objectives over the long term, and reviewing and updating the plan annually;
- Ensuring the school is making the best use of it's budget including in relation to planning and delivery of the curriculum and staffing;
- Ensuring the school, is complying with procurement rules and gets the best value when buying goods and services;

- Developing an effective reserves policy to provide long-term resource stability and ensure effective governance;
- Overseeing a transparent system for performance management of the HT linked to defined strategic priorities;
- Effective oversight of the pay, contractual arrangements and performance of all other employees and the framework for their pay and conditions of service;
- Supporting the school in the development of a long-term asset management strategy for the up-keep and enhancement of the premises;
- Establishing an effective system of audit and control under separate chairmanship.

<b>Membership</b>	A minimum of six governors, to include the Head Teacher or his/her delegate, to be appointed at the first Governing Body meeting of the academic year. The committee may make recommendations to the Governing Body for the co-option of non-governor members.	
<b>Chairperson</b>	A Governor, not the Head Teacher or Chairman of Governors. To be appointed by the members at the first meeting following the appointment of members for the academic year. In the absence of the Chairman the quorate membership will appoint a Chairman for that meeting.	
<b>Clerk</b>	Clerk to the Governors. In his/her absence, one of the members present.	
<b>Quorum</b>	Four governors, including the Head Teacher or his delegate. The Audit Committee will consist of three members of the Governing Body. Additionally, up to two external co-opted members may also be appointed. The Chair of the Governing Body cannot be a member of the Audit Committee.	
<b>Meetings</b>	Frequency:	Minimum of one per term, prior to the termly Governing Body meeting. Audit will meet at least twice per year following a FAFS meeting.
	Notice:	One week, in writing, with agenda.
	Agenda items:	Items from members to be included in the meeting agenda to be sent to the Clerk at least two weeks prior to the meeting.
	Any other business:	In order to improve the efficiency of the meeting all items for discussion must be included in the agenda and will not be discussed under any other business unless urgent.
	Minutes:	To be circulated within two weeks of meeting.

## **Specifically, the Committee is responsible for:**

### **Finance**

- Promoting and monitoring the School Aims and ensuring value for money (“VFM”) when considering all expenditure;
- Liaising and consulting with other Committees as necessary;
- Recommending the annual budget to the Governing Body, taking account of the School’s Strategic Plan;
- Developing a long term financial strategy (4 to 5 years) and reviewing it annually with financial plans for a minimum of 3 years beyond the current budget;
- Monitoring and reviewing expenditure on a monthly basis and ensuring compliance with the overall financial plan for the Academy, and with the financial regulations of the DfE, drawing any matters of concern to the attention of the Governing Body;
- Monitoring monthly the actual income and expenditure and revised forecast against the annual budget, making recommendations where necessary;
- Reviewing the Academy’s risk management and assessment strategy and associated plans;
- Monitoring and reviewing the Charging Policy (school trips and visits), making recommendations to the Governing Body as required;
- Ensuring the annual financial statements are produced in accordance with the Academy Financial Handbook and subsequent DfE guidance;
- Awarding contracts by tender up to the level of authority delegated by the Governing Body;
- Ensuring Voluntary Funds are administered properly and audited as required;
- Agreeing annually the level of delegation, virement and cheque signing authorities;
- Monitoring and reviewing cash balances and deposit surplus cash to maximise returns without taking unnecessary risk.

### **Audit**

- Advising the Governing Body and Accounting Officer on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Academy Trust’s (“AT”) governance, risk management, internal control and VFM systems and frameworks. An annual report will be produced by the Audit Committee in this regard;
- Advising the Governing Body on the appointment, re-appointment, dismissal and remuneration of the external and regulatory auditor;
- Advising the Governing Body on the need for, and then, where appropriate, the appointment, re-appointment, dismissal and remuneration of, an internal auditor or other assurance provider to enable the Board to sign the corporate governance statement in the annual accounts;

- Advising the Governing Body on an appropriate programme of work to be delivered by independent assurance providers (external auditors and responsible officer). This programme of work to be derived from the Audit Committee's regard of the key risks faced by the Academy, the assurance framework in place and its duty to report to the Governing Body;
- Reviewing the external auditor's annual planning document and approving the planned audit approach;
- Receiving reports (annual reports, management letters etc) from the external auditor and other bodies, for example the ESFA and NAO, and considering any issues raised, the associated management response and action plans. Where deemed appropriate, reports should be referred to the FGB or other committee for information and action;
- Regularly monitoring outstanding audit recommendations from whatever source and ensuring any delays to implementation dates are reasonable;
- Reviewing the Academy's fraud response plan and ensuring that all allegations of fraud or irregularity are managed and investigated appropriately;
- Considering any additional services delivered by the external auditor or other assurance provider and ensure appropriate independence is maintained;
- Ensuring appropriate co-operation and co-ordination of the work of the external auditor and responsible officer;
- Meeting with the external Auditor and Responsible Officer, without management present, at least annually.
- The Audit Committee may not incur expenditure in excess of £10,000 without the prior approval of the FAFS Committee;
- The Head Teacher, Senior Managers and other FAF members may be invited to attend, but will have no voting rights.

## **Facilities**

- Considering recommendations on the appropriateness of the Academy's accommodation;
- Overseeing the preparation and implementation of relevant contracts;
- Reviewing and supporting the Head Teacher and Senior Management Team in the development of a long term Asset Management Strategy and Plan for the maintenance. Upkeep, renewal and enhancement of the premises;
- Advising the Governing Body on the repair needs for the rolling maintenance programme;
- Ensuring that the Governors' responsibilities are discharged regarding litter under the Environmental Protection Act 1990;
- Monitoring and reviewing all policies relevant to the premises, making recommendations to the Governing Body as required;
- Ensuring any necessary liaison with the Local Authority's Property Services Department happens.

## Staffing

- Guiding and assisting the Head Teacher and Governing Body on all employment and staff relations issues, consulting with other committees as necessary;
- Promoting policies and actions to ensure equality of opportunity in staffing matters throughout the school community;
- Ensuring value for money in all staffing matters;
- Regularly reviewing the school's staffing organisation to ensure it remains fit for purpose;
- Reviewing the staffing budget for each year and monitoring compliance with it;
  - Budgets are created and managed effectively and within the constraints of the school's overall budget;
- Monitoring the performance of any relevant personnel/staffing related external contracts.

### The Committee will also ensure that:

- The Leadership and Middle Management teams fully understand their leadership role, are appropriately skilled and experienced and receive effective support, training and development;
- All staff are appropriately qualified and/or experienced;
- The selection processes are robust and fair and designed to identify the best candidate for the post;
- Effective continuing professional training and development is planned and implemented throughout the school;
- Performance of staff is effectively monitored and managed, great performance is recognised appropriately and performance issues are resolved effectively;
- Succession planning processes are in place and managed effectively;
- Pay and conditions for staff are agreed and managed effectively and with due regard to relevant guidelines and frameworks;
- The wellbeing and personal development of individual staff is a priority and is managed as such;
- The school develops and implements a range of effective policies setting out the framework by which staff are engaged and managed;
- The school complies fully with relevant legislation and recommended good practice in all staffing matters.

### Current Policies: (subject to review)

- Appraisal Policy for All Staff
- Disciplinary & Capability Procedure \*
- Grievance \*
- ICT Acceptable Use for Staff
- Staff Attendance Management

- Families Policy, incorporating Maternity, Paternity and Parental Leave and Flexible Working
- Prevention of violence and aggression towards staff
- Recruitment, retention and staff appointments
- Physical contact, touch and the use of physical restraint
- Special Leave of Absence
- Whistleblowing
- Ending Bullying and Harassment
- Shared Parental Leave
- Adoption Rights and Benefits

\* *Statutory*

**The committee refer to and take regard of the following guidance:**

- Working together to safeguard children March 2015
- Keeping Children Safe in Education Sept 16
- A Competency Framework for Governors. January 2017
- Academies Financial Handbook (updated annually)