



Diocese of Chelmsford Vine Schools Trust

Community Board Terms of Reference

This policy is a mandatory policy for all Vine schools and must be implemented with no amendments.

**"I am the vine; you are the branches.
If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit."
(John 15:5)**

The Diocese of Chelmsford Vine Schools Trust	
Approved by:	The Vine Schools Trust
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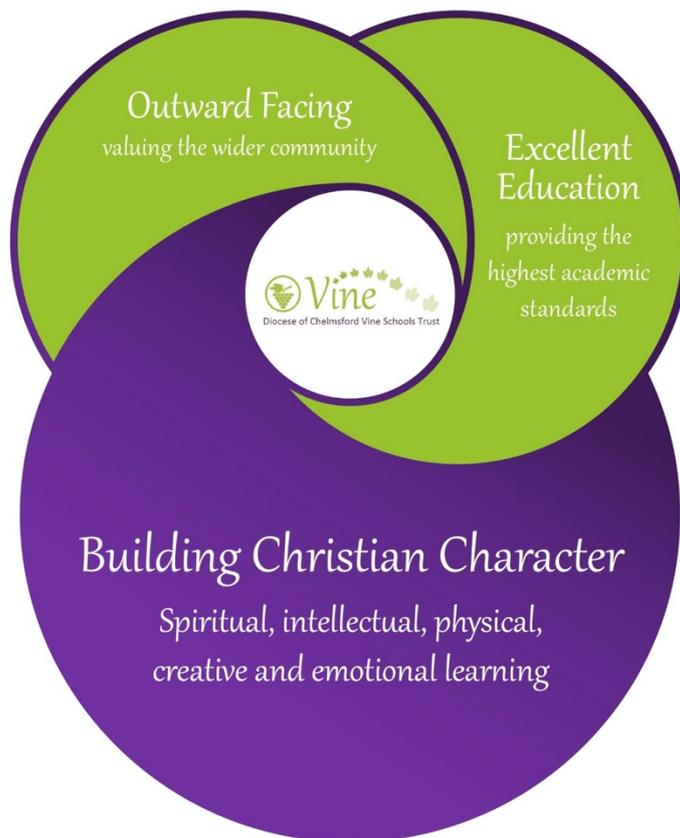
Vision & Values

Valuing every person

Inspiring great teaching

Nurturing academic excellence and **Christian Character**

Excelling, unlocking great potential



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1. Introduction

The Vine Schools Trust recognises the value of the links between the local schools and the Parish Church and its role within the local community. Vine schools aim to serve their community by providing an education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice.

Communities can take great pride in their local school and also provide children with a sense of belonging, making them feel safe and secure. The Vine Schools Trust is therefore committed to promoting, enabling and ensuring school engagement with parents and the Parish Church and relevant community organisations and individuals.

Drawing on the support and resources of the Parish Church and the community can be a powerful force in providing opportunities, raising aspirations and expectations and ultimately achieving success. Therefore, the strategic aim of the school Community Board is to provide an effective platform to enable school-church-community relationships to develop and deliver the benefit for the children and staff at the local school

2. Governance

- 1.1 The overarching responsibility for the governance of the Trust and its schools lies with the Vine Board of Directors. The Directors are responsible for setting and monitoring strategic objectives, as well as compliance with charity and company law and the Vine Trust Funding Agreement.
- 1.2 The Board of Directors fulfil the three core functions of governance:
 - Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
 - Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils and the effective and efficient performance management of staff; and
 - Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is spent wisely.
- 1.3 Responsibility and accountability to the Trust Board of Directors for the three functions lies with the Chief Executive Officer, Chief Operating Officer. The day to day operational running of schools is delegated to the Headteacher of each school.
- 1.4 The responsibilities of the Trust Board, Chief Executive Officer and headteachers are the subject of the Vine Schools Trust Scheme of Delegation.
- 1.5 To enable the Directors to fulfil their responsibility eight to ten regional Local Schools Board's work on behalf of the Vine Trust Board of Directors and undertake delegated governance of between 2 and 4 four schools. The **Governance Scheme of Delegation** outlines their responsibilities.

2. School Community Board

- 2.1 The Vine Schools Trust is committed to enabling the school to engage with parents and be practically and spiritually involved with the Parish Church alongside relevant community organisations and individuals.

2.2 Each school will develop its own **Community Board** to work within these Term of Reference and with these three key objectives:

Community – as part of the life of the local Church and community such a group will provide a means of them coming together to:

- develop relationships and opportunities;
- support projects within the school; and
- enable the school to support activity/projects within the Church and community.

Concerns – everyone can benefit from the views of others and a good school thrives on clear channels of feedback and information sharing. The group will provide a positive environment in which they can consider opinions and share local intelligence which can be passed to the Local Schools Board to inform decision making.

Celebration – championing the strengths and achievements of the school is in everyone's best interests. The group will set out to be good ambassadors for their school.

2.3 The Community Board is not the same as any Parent/Friends Association (or such title) and does not a fundraising role.

2.4 Any minimal costs of the Community Board will be paid for out of the school budget under the terms of the Directors and Governors' Allowances Policy at the discretion of the Executive Headteacher/Headteacher.

3. Membership of the Community Board

3.1 The membership of the Community Board is flexible to accommodate the particular needs of the school.

3.2 Membership is primarily targeted at the Incumbent (Priest-in-Charge) from the Parish Church, members of the Church (often a representative from the PCC), parents and community-based organisations. It might also be appropriate to invite pupils to participate in some activities or parts of meetings.

3.3. There is no limit on the number of members, though consideration should be given to the efficiency of administration, so 6 is a suggested number with a maximum of 10. As a minimum, each Community Board must have **three** members drawn from the following:

- At least one person representing the Church, usually the incumbent or his/her representative. There may also be someone else from the PCC or church community, including other Christian denominations in the community;
- At least two parents (from unconnected families, and who are not also members of staff). Parents of pupils at the school must be given the opportunity every two years to make nominations (whether nominating themselves or other parents). The school and the Community Board may determine how they seek nominations, but this must involve communications to all parents, at least bi-annually.
- Where it is beneficial, someone from the wider community, perhaps representing a community group the school engages or will engage, with.

3.4 To become a Community Board member, an applicant must complete and return an **Application form, and a DBS application will be carried out**. They may also be subject to other good governance processes such as completing a Skills Audit.

- 3.5 All members are required to sign the Vine Schools Trust Governance **Code of Conduct** which includes adhering to the Nolan principles.
- 3.6 All members will need to adhere to the Vine Schools Trust Declaration of Pecuniary Interests Policy.
- 3.7 Nominations will be considered by a panel consisting of the Chair of the Community Board, the Chair of the Local Schools Board and the Executive Headteacher/headteacher. Appointments will be made on their recommendation by a decision of the Local Schools Board.
- 3.8 Each person appointed should have an induction visit to the school and be willing to undertake training provided by the Vine Schools Trust and in particular attend or undertake online safeguarding training, updated annually.
- 3.9 There is no fixed constraint on the length of time someone may serve as a member of the Communities Board School, though it is recommended that re-nomination is sought after two years.
- 3.10 Members of the Community Board may be asked to step down if they find they cannot attend meetings, their contribution is negative, or they fail to adhere to the Code of Conduct. This decision will be taken after discussion with the individual by the Chair of the Local Schools Board in consultation with the Executive Headteacher/Headteacher. The decision is final and should be reported to the Local Schools Board.
- 3.11 A member of the Local Schools Board and the Vine Trust Board is entitled to attend meetings of the Community Board.

4. Chair of the Community Board

- 4.1. A Community Board must have a Chair, who may not be a member of the school staff.
- 4.2. The Community Board Chair will be nominated by the Executive Headteacher (where there is one)/Headteacher to the Local Schools Board, either from the Community Board or another appropriate person and subject to approval by the Chair of the Local Schools Board. This ensures the vital link between the Community Board, the Local Schools Board and the Vine Board of Directors.
- 4.3. In the absence of the Chair, or there is at the time, a vacancy in the office of the Chair, another member by agreement of the members shall act as the Chair for the purposes of the meeting, provided that the person elected shall not be a member of staff.
- 4.4. At least once a year, the Chair will be invited to attend the Local Schools Board for the part of the meeting discussing the school usually based on the annual report, (see 7.1.5 below).

5. Executive Headteacher and Headteacher

- 5.1 All Community Board meetings will be attended by, and the agenda produced in consultation with the Executive Headteacher (where there is one) and or the Headteacher and if possible, their Deputy.
- 5.2 If necessary and for anyone meeting the Executive Headteacher/Headteacher may designate someone from the school staff to attend on their behalf.

6. Community Board Meetings

- 6.1 The Community Board will meet a minimum once per term at a time agreed by all members.

- 6.2 The quorum is one-half of the numbers of the Community Board rounded up, which must not be less than three, and not include school staff.
- 6.3 The agenda for the Community Board will be set in consultation between the Executive Headteacher/Headteacher, Chair of the Local Schools Board and the CEO and/or Vine Trust Board Communities Committee.
- 6.4 There must be a record of the meeting, which includes time, date, attendees, key discussion points, and actions agreed (full minutes are not required). Community Board members should nominate one of their number to take a record of the meeting, which must be approved by the Executive Headteacher/headteacher before being sent to the clerk of the Local Schools Board within 14 days.
- 6.5 Meetings will not be open to the public, but the notes of the previous meeting approved at the next meeting can be made available, usually on the school website. Information relating to a named person or any other matter that the Community Board considers confidential is to be recorded on a separate confidential minute and do not have to be made available.
- 6.6 The Chair of the Community Board and Executive Headteacher/Headteacher may invite other school staff, as appropriate to the topics for discussion, to the Community Board meetings.
- 6.7 Meetings may sometimes be held virtually by agreement of all the members of the Community Board so long as at least half the meetings during each academic year are held in person. Individuals may join any meeting virtually with the agreement of the Chair.

7. Areas for discussion by the Community Board

- 7.1. The areas for discussion at Community Board meetings include but are not limited to the following:
 - 7.1.1. Take a genuine interest in the wellbeing of the Executive Headteacher/Headteacher, staff and children and the steps being taken to bring about improvements;
 - 7.1.2. Discuss and provide local intelligence on matters relating to the school, Church and the community;
 - 7.1.3. At the termly meeting of the Community Board, two of the agenda items will always be:
 - Consultation Questions from the Local Schools Board and/or Vine Schools Trust Board/ Communities Committee
 - Questions to the Local Schools Board/Vine Trust Board Communities Committee
 - 7.1.4. The views of the Community Board will both be sought and provided because members believe there is information that needs to be shared with the Local Schools Board to inform decision making. Regularly the Local Schools Board will seek advice and an understanding of views on matters they are considering;
 - 7.1.5. The Community Board will provide, at least, an annual report to the Local Schools Board & the Vine Schools Trust Communities Committee focused on:
 - Marketing/promotion of the school,
 - Relationship with the local Church,
 - Relationships with the broader community,
 - Strengths and achievements of the school,
 - Celebrated pupil achievements,
 - Sponsorship,
 - Matters that it is asked to by the Local Schools Board

- 7.1.6. To enquire about how all children have equal opportunities;
 - 7.1.7. To consider questions and issues raised by the school leadership team and provide suggestions on meeting them;
 - 7.1.8. To be aware of staff wellbeing and report any significant concerns to the Local Schools Board;
 - 7.1.9. To enquire and as necessary report to the Local Schools Board any parental or community issues relating to the school;
 - 7.1.10. To foster and enable useful links with and by the Church within the school community, encouraging the developing of a positive relationship with the local Church ;
 - 7.1.11. To support the school during Ofsted and SIAMS inspections with at least the Chair attending an interview with the Inspector in person or virtually;
 - 7.1.12. Each member of the Community Board to visit the school regularly by invitation or arrangement with the Executive Headteacher/Headteacher for a 'profile and presence' opportunity during the school year, and especially at events when the parents and community are visiting the school, including attending Collective Worship;
 - 7.1.13. In the wider community, including the Church, individuals will do all they can to share good news and achievements, speaking up for and speaking well about 'their school'. As ambassadors, they will provide a positive image of the school on social media (observing the Vine Schools Trust Social Media Policy) and in conversations. However, no-one should speak to the news media without first seeking the support, advice and the correct message from the Executive Headteacher/Headteacher and/or the Vine Schools Trust media support team.
 - 7.1.14. At the Executive Headteacher/Headteacher's discretion members may assist in facilitating school events and activities for the good of the school.
 - 7.1.15. It will be helpful and supportive if the members could relay information (that is not confidential or about an individual) to their stakeholder informally and also share relevant information from those they represent.
 - 7.1.16. Members that have had training for serving on complaints and other statutory panels may be asked to support panels for other schools within the Vine Schools Trust, subject to availability. They would not normally be asked for their own school due to possible conflicts of interest.
- 7.2. It is strategically important that the Community Board views are sought and given on any given subject that the Local Schools Board and/or Vine Schools Trust are considering, and advice or intelligence is requested.
 - 7.3. Members of the Community Board are not expected or required to consult their stakeholder group, e.g. the parent body but express their own views on behalf of those they represent.
 - 7.4. The Community Board is expected to raise questions to the Local Schools Board and Vine Trust Communities Committee and ask for a view on any matter they identify that affects the school.

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