



INSPIRE Partnership Multi Academy Trust (IPMAT)

Induction Policy

Rationale

As the Multi-Academy Trust evolves and grows it is essential that it does so in such a way that does not jeopardise its future success and sustainability and is always with regard to the risks and benefits in doing so.

This policy sets out the agreed considerations and processes of the IPMAT Board which will ensure that any new schools joining understand their role and position in doing so, how processes of due diligence and information sharing will be carried out and how the Board will support and develop new trustees when a new school joins the MAT.

Induction of a new school

When a recommendation or application is made for a new school to join the MAT, the IPMAT Board, subject to permission granted from the DFE, will always take seriously the impact of a new school doing so. Once the Board has met and approved a new school joining in principle, a process of due diligence to be carried out, this will also be communicated to LGBs in all schools concerned.

Due Diligence

Before a new school is considered to convert and join the MAT, professional scrutiny will be undertaken in the following areas:

- Financial Position
- Historic attainment and trends
- Views of parents and the local community
- Current assessment performance
- Leadership and Governance Capacity
- Asset Condition
- Capacity and other risks, with mitigating factors
- Teaching and learning due diligence

A formal report will then be provided back to the Board and the LGB of the school wishing to join the MAT sharing the outcomes of the due diligence.

Proceeding to conversion

Upon a successful recommendation for progression to conversion and the awarding of an Academy order from the DFE the relevant processes to support the conversion will ensue.

It is the expectation that any school joining Inspire will utilise the existing expertise and consultancy provided by the Board's solicitors, accountants etc. The Chief Finance Officer (CFO) and Chief Operations Officer (COO) will provide support to the school in this period to support the process of conversion, communicating progress within this back to the Board.

Heads of School and Chairs of Governors will meet as per an agreed calendar to support this process at local level.

Induction of new trustees to the board

- The DfE believes effective governance at all levels is based on six key features:
- Strategic leadership that sets and champions vision, ethos and strategy.
- Accountability that drives up educational standards and financial performance.
- People with the right skills, experience, qualities and capacity.
- Structures that reinforce clearly defined roles and responsibilities.
- Compliance with statutory and contractual requirements.
- Evaluation to monitor and improve the quality and impact of governance

As such any new members of the Trust Board are given a full and comprehensive induction. Within this they must read and understand their roles and responsibilities with respect to the very important public duty they hold. A list of these can be found below:

- Code of Conduct For Trustees (To be developed)
- Academy's Financial Handbook (In situ)
- Governance Handbook (DfE Document)
- Articles of Association (In situ)
- Companies Act 2006 (Online)
- CC3: the essential trustee: what you need to know, what you need to do. (DfE guidance)
- 21 Questions for Mat Boards (DfE guidance)
- MAT Funding Agreement (In situ)
- 7 Principles of Public Life (DfE guidance)

In addition prospective Trustees and schools must demonstrate that they have the required personal qualities and pre-requisite skills for joining the IPMAT Board. This may be ascertained through the use of a skills audit. All members of the Board are accountable and responsible for all the decisions made and all schools joining Inspire must operate within the powers and authority delegated to them.

The IPMAT Board also recognises that principles and personal attributes that individuals bring to the board are just as important. All those involved in governance should exhibit the 7 C's:

- Committed – devoting the required time to the role
- Confident – of an independent mind, able to lead and contribute to courageous conversations

- Curious – an enquiring mind and analytical approach
- Challenging – providing appropriate challenge to the status quo, not taking information at face value
- Collaborative – prepared to listen and work in partnership with others
- Critical – critical friendship which enables both challenge and support
- Creative – able to challenge convention wisdom and be open-minded

Throughout the conversion process and beyond

As part of the induction process and ongoing schedule of evaluation and improvement, the trustees will be involved in the following activities which will form part of the MAT board's cycle for continual improvement:

- Agreeing and formulating the plans for medium and long-term development of the trust and how they build capacity within their trust and their schools;
- Continually evaluating the needs and development challenges for all the schools within the trust, irrespective of current performance levels;
- Determining how the trust will contribute to wider system improvement and develop and retain good links with other MATs, teaching schools and a wide range of stakeholders
- Ensuring there is sufficient financial expertise to oversee the trust's financial operations;
- Carrying out financial planning which is integrated in to the trust's overall strategy for its school(s);
- Ensuring the trust's vision remains deliverable and resilient to operational changes in income, such as changes in pupil numbers or characteristics or the implications of the introduction of a national funding formula.
- Making sure that there are robust contingency plans in place, with clear triggers for enacting these plans.

Risk Management

The Inspire Board will ensure that Inspire and any new schools have effective procedures in place to identify, monitor and mitigate at both school and trust level – risk management is not a box-ticking exercise. This will be achieved in the following ways:

- its scheme of delegation makes clear what risks are managed at what level so no issues 'fall between the gaps';
- the trust has a clear idea of how the way it manages risk may need to change as the trust grows, and has made a balanced assessment of the risks expansion and opportunities might pose to its existing schools;
- the trust has access to appropriate due diligence expertise so that they can be confident the trust knows what it is taking on (both in terms of benefits and risks) when an additional school joins it; and
- the trust has capacity to manage the estate for which they are responsible.

Appointments to the IPMAT Board

The IPMAT Board is structured as per the Articles of Association. Any new schools joining the MAT will understand the representation at Board level available to them, if at all. Any new trustees must possess the requisite skills and demonstrate the ability to meet the expectations of the Code of Conduct and other above mentioned documents.

Training and Professional Development

All trustees and members will access training which will support them in fulfilling their public duties, as determined by the needs of the board and individuals.

Post Conversion

Policies

Post conversion the new joining school will be asked to adhere to key IPMAT Policies such as Health and Safety, Complaints, Performance Management, Whistleblowing, Financial based policies in the first instance. These can be given as part of the Induction package.

Systems

New schools joining will be offered the support of schools already within the MAT for the implementation and management of new processes, such as finance packages, payroll packages and other systems and processes that may be pertinent. This will be organised by the CFO and COO in conjunction with the individual Heads of School.

Support For Staff

Times of change can be challenging for staff, especially if it feels there is more work to be done as an academy. Established IPMAT schools will support new joining schools by “buddying up” key staff as a first point of support.

In addition to this, support will be increased in the first year post conversion for new tasks such as the first few month-end returns the school has to do. It is anticipated by putting in an adequate level of support at the start that this will future proof against complications further down the line.

Peer to peer support for office staff and individual Heads of School is essential in the early stages post conversion. IPMAT is committed to putting this level of support in place for all schools that join.

Agreed by the IPMAT Board on: 26.09.2017

Signed Chair of the Board:

