



## **GEMS Schools Local Advisory Board Policy**

**“Education is a fundamental element for the development of a nation  
and the best investment is its youth”**

UAE National Agenda

**Building strong school governance to help create a national education sector,  
with enduring and consistent quality, is a major initiative for all UAE schools,  
as we work together towards achieving vision 2021.**

GEMS is committed to establishing sound, purposeful governance through the establishment of a Local Advisory Board (LAB) in every GEMS school.

### **1. ROLE and FUNCTION**

The LAB functions primarily as an advisory board and holds an important strategic role in overseeing the achievement of the school’s strategic aims and objectives. The LAB will:

- understand and uphold the school’s and GEMS vision and values.
- monitor, advise and support the school on matters of strategy and policy.
- help monitor the school’s standards and performance.
- support the school and the Principal and seek to provide wise counsel.

Members are a group of experienced and skilled individuals from diverse backgrounds, who add a great deal to improve the school’s performance. Members are mindful of the role and responsibilities of the Principal, and understand and appreciate the relationship of GEMS (the company) to the school.

The LAB is not involved in financial matters, appointing staff, the day to day running of the school, admissions, individual issues or grievances, or any other matters which are the remit of GEMS or the school’s leadership.

The school is a member of the GEMS Education group. The headquarters of the Group is located in Dubai, UAE and operate through Premier Schools International LLC (the “Corporate Office “). The Corporate Office is generally responsible for supporting the school financially and supplying human resources, legal support, certain procurement and enrolment support.

The LAB assists with monitoring the activity and performance of the school by supporting the school’s senior leaders to be fully accountable for the school’s outcomes. Working in partnership with the school, the LAB actively collaborates, engages and challenges the school through constructive dialogue at all times. Confidentiality must be assured by all members of the LAB at all times.

## **2. COMPOSITION**

Chosen for their skills and expertise, the LAB consists of 5 to 10 members, including the Principal and a member drawn from the School Support Centre. A senior leader from another GEMS school is desirable. One of the governors (not the Principal) will be appointed chair by the LAB. This appointment is for one year, with an election by the LAB for each year thereafter. This is an important role and the relationship with the Principal, and other members of the LAB, is one of mutual trust.

There should be a diversity of profiles with consideration given to ethnicity, gender and age.

Current and past parents of the school are a good source for potential governors. It needs to be understood that no governor is representing a discrete group of stakeholders, or is an advocate for a particular point of view; LABs are a collective group.

## **3. APPOINTMENT OF GOVERNORS.**

Initially, it will fall to the Principal to form the inaugural LAB, but it will be the long term responsibility of the LAB to ensure that a list of potential members of substance, without conflict of interest to the school or GEMS, is maintained.

The Principal and chair will research / vet potential members and the LAB will approve the appointment of new members.

Governors may serve for a period of 3 consecutive years, which may be renewed for a further term with the approval of the LAB.

Members are probationary for one year. The appointment will be confirmed, or otherwise, at the end of this period by the chair

Replacements for governors who have stepped down can be made at any time. The list of names of governors is maintained by the school. The list of those available from the Schools Support Centre will be kept in the centre.

## **4. RESPONSIBILITIES**

The role of a governor is largely a thinking and questioning role, not a doing role

A governor is expected to :

- a) contribute to the strategic discussions at LAB meetings which help determine:
  - the vision and ethos of the school.
  - clear strategic priorities and targets for the school
- b) assist the school in the monitoring of their performance including:
  - reviewing the outcomes of the school's self- evaluation ( SEF)
  - considering relevant data and feedback on school performance.
  - listening to the school's stakeholders ( i. e : students, parents, staff, local community, the wider GEMS family ) to help inform advice and support given.
- c) upon request, serve on sub- committees, working parties, panels as appropriate, for example when a new Principal is appointed.

## **5. METHOD OF WORKING**

At all times the LAB's deliberations are confidential. Members are subject to a code of conduct (attached) which, along with this policy, sets out the expectations and commitment required.

The Principal will ensure that each governor is invited to the school for induction at the beginning of their term of office. This will include meeting senior staff, touring the school seeing the school in action and meeting students. Training sessions may be offered from time to time through the School Support Centre.

The LAB will meet 3 times each year. Dates are set well in advance and governors are requested to ensure their attendance.

In advance of the meeting, the agenda, which will have been prepared by the Principal with approval of the chair, will be circulated. Governors will be able to request items for the agenda in advance. Possible agenda items, although not exhaustive, might include:

- School Planning (SEF, SIP)
- Inspection and Review Data
- School Policies
- Health and safety
- Safeguarding and child protective procedures
- Stakeholder satisfaction data
- Curriculum overviews
- Use of facilities and plans for refurbishment / development

A brief report / summary statement from the Principal is a standing item.

At the beginning of a termly meeting there could be an opportunity to meet staff. Presentations could also be made to the LAB e.g. a head of department, year head or by a teacher leading a particular initiative.

Minutes are taken by an admin assistant. They will record action points which should be circulated within two weeks of the meeting and will be reviewed at the following meeting, with matters arising as required.

Governors are volunteers who are asked to give their time to the school. There should be no administrative work for governors. It is assumed that all papers will be read by each governor in advance of the termly meeting, and time taken to prepare questions and comments. All papers are to be received by governors a full week before every meeting.

The LAB can create additional working groups or sub-committees as appropriate.

## **6. REVIEW**

Successful governance significantly impacts on the school's leadership and direction. It ensures that progress and achievements continuously advance the school. How effective the LAB is will depend on many factors, not least the quality of governors and their willingness to contribute to the school through their advice, time and commitment.

It is intended that all GEMS schools will have their LAB in place from January 2017, and will be using this policy to guide function and values.

As part of the regular school reviews, the work and effectiveness of the LAB will be included. It is not otherwise intended that the School Support Centre will be actively involved in the work of the LAB.

In addition, the LAB should conduct a self-review during November / December 2017, and again a year later at the same time in 2018. Guidance from the School Support Centre will be given.

GEMS will undertake to engage an external review of governance across all its schools during the third year of their operation (January 2019 – December 2019) to review their effectiveness across the whole company, and the contribution they are making towards achieving UAE vision 2021.

## **7. BEST PRACTICE**

An effective governor will:

- get to know the school well, undertake induction, visit school activities and events
- attend and participate in meetings and come prepared
- act in the best interests of the school at all times
- behave in a professional manner
- maintain confidentiality.

## **GEMS Schools' Local Advisory Board CODE OF CONDUCT**

NAME:

SCHOOL:

As a Governor I agree to the following:

### Role and responsibilities

- I understand and accept the purpose of the Local Advisory Board and the roles of the Principal and GEMS Education.
- I accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the Local Advisory Board.
- I will act fairly and without prejudice.
- I will maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of the school. My actions within the school and the local community will reflect this.
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting the school I will follow the procedures established by the school. I will report such matters to the school and won't comment or engage in discussion with complainants.

### Commitment

- I will make full efforts to attend every meeting, prepare in advance and contribute to the best of my ability.
- I will undertake relevant induction and training.
- I will get to know the school well.

### Relationships

- I will strive to work as a member of a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted.
- I will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all communications.
- I will support the chair in their role of ensuring due process and appropriate conduct.

### Confidentiality

- I will observe complete confidentiality both inside and outside the school.
- I will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding the school business arise outside meetings.
- I will not reveal detail of any Local Advisory Board's decision.

### Declaration of other interests

- I will record any pecuniary or business interest with the school in the Register of Interests.
- I will record any interest in other schools.
- I will declare any conflict of loyalty at meetings should the situation arise.

### Breach of the code

- If I believe the code to have been breached I will inform the chair immediately, who will investigate.
- If the chair has breached the code, another governor will investigate.
- I may expect to be asked to step down should investigation show that I have breached the code.

Signature: -

Date:-

## **Content of Principal's Reports to Governors**

The role of the Local Advisory Board in supporting school improvement relies to a great extent on receiving accurate information about the performance of the school. This may be via the Principal's report, but aspects of this information might also form an agenda item. Information and data should include

- student progress
- management of the school's resources
- progress on the implementation of the school strategic plan

The Principal's report provides a record of aspects of the school's work alongside meeting action points.

### **Items which could be included in a termly report**

- progress on targets including curriculum developments, staff PD and use of time
- achievements of pupils and other members of the school community
- school visits and journeys
- extra-curricular activities
- projections for number on roll figures and admissions trends over time
- staffing structure and responsibilities
- emerging priorities for school improvement planning
- review of material resources, premises requirements and concerns
- policy monitoring information
- outcomes of curriculum reviews

### **Items which could be included at least once a year**

- GEMS internal review or external inspection
- pupil attendance data with trends
- baseline assessments and a review of key trends
- public examination results
- leavers' destinations
- parental engagement plans and actions
- community links and use of school facilities
- health and safety issues, relating to policy
- SEN / SfL policy implementation
- summary of extra-curricular activities

### **Items which could be included as and when**

- staff appointments and number of applicants
- staff changes, resignations, vacancies
- number of formal complaints with any detail anonymized
- policy monitoring information
- maintenance and improvement work to premises