



# Ark Schools Accountabilities Framework

## 1. Introduction and governance model summary

The Ark Schools Accountabilities Framework outlines where responsibility and accountability sits for the key functional areas within Ark Schools between the four 'tiers' of governance:

- **Ark Schools board:** All Ark academies are part of a charitable company, Ark Schools, which is regulated by the DfE. As a multi-academy trust with all schools held within one legal entity, Ark Schools has a Master Funding Agreement with the Department for Education for all its schools and a Supplemental Funding Agreement for each school. The Ark Schools board is therefore the legal governing (proprietary) body for *every* school. The board hold and fulfil all statutory responsibilities by approving, and the monitoring, network- wide educational and financial plans including the Operating Plan and budget. The board holds legal liability for areas that would normally be the responsibility of a school governing body, such as the SCR and policies, with support from the central team.
- **Ark Schools central:** The executive leadership and staff responsible for working with schools to deliver educational and operational outcomes. The board discharge the day-to-day line management of Principals and provision of all training/ support systems for schools to the central team.
- **Principals:** Responsible for meeting all educational and operational targets for outcomes in their individual school.
- **Local Governing Bodies:** Responsible for localised challenge and support but with no legal liability or final approval of policies or core documents. LGBs provide strategic input into individual school plans and budgets, monitor alignment of school processes and reporting with overall strategy and policies, and embed the school's ethos and values. They also lead on local stakeholder engagement (staff, parents, community).

Ark believes that this model allows for strategic board decision-making and powerful, innovative and focused local governance. Flows of information and decision-making are coordinated by the central governance team and are embedded into the scheme of delegation, meeting cycles, and agenda planners. This ensures that trustees and governors work together to drive meaningful improvement across the network – and as governors spend less time on policies and paperwork means that they can spend more time understanding the specific needs of their school, and adapt their activities accordingly. They are central to the focus on the school's values and ethos so that all pupils believe they can succeed, and to providing links to the community. They also provide continuity of care to the school and as such are a continuing powerful advocate for their needs within the Ark family, and source of sharing of good practice across the network.

**Note:** This document also does not lay out every legal responsibility of a Multi-Academy Trust or every activity in the remit of individual stakeholders; rather it is concerned with the core activities that are carried out within each area of operational delivery. The overriding legal assumption that sits behind all this work is that all academies in a MAT are governed by one trust and a single board of directors.

The board of directors is responsible for decisions relating to how each academy is run, but can delegate some of its functions (for example to a local governing body or an Executive team). The MAT remains accountable for these functions.

This Framework also does not dictate when responsibilities may be further delegated within sets of stakeholders – for example by a Principal to other staff within the school, or the Ark Schools Managing Director to other staff at Kingsway. There will be circumstances where the rules may change – for example, in crisis situations, Ark central may take on a much more involved role – or where stakeholders may go above and beyond the level of support that is articulated here – for example the LGB may be engaged on a range of other aspects not explicitly referenced here. The Accountabilities Framework is updated on an annual basis in order to ensure that delegated responsibilities can be aligned with organisational need.

## 2. High-level division of responsibilities

*This articulates responsibilities in areas where it is important to define roles across stakeholders. It does not prescribe every activity in the remit of individual stakeholders.*

| Functional area            | Ark Schools board  | Ark central   | School Principal  | Local governing body (LGB)   |
|----------------------------|--|---|---|--|
| Teaching & learning        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accountable for overall vision and model for teaching</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support school Principal in setting vision and model for teaching, arranging CPD/ coaching and reporting on teacher performance</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set vision and model for teaching and approach to improving teacher quality</li> <li>Arrange CPD and coaching for teachers and monitor teaching performance</li> <li>Plan and deliver approach to climate for learning, planning &amp; preparation and assessing &amp; responding</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor school approach to teaching and learning including CPD and coaching for teachers and teacher performance</li> </ul>   |
| Curriculum & assessment    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approve school targets</li> <li>Accountable for all curriculum and assessment practices meeting requirements laid out in statutory guidance</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide guidance to schools on approach to assessment, curriculum and inclusion model</li> <li>Deliver SEND audits</li> <li>Approve school curriculum models</li> <li>Review and propose school targets to board</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop school approach to assessment, curriculum, inclusion model and graduated response</li> <li>Engage with SEND audit process</li> <li>Propose school targets to Ark central</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Informed of school approach to assessment, curriculum, inclusion model and graduated response</li> <li>Consulted on SEND audits (SEND link)</li> <li>Consulted on school targets (Chair)</li> </ul>   |
| Culture, ethos & wellbeing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approve Exclusions and SG policies</li> <li>Accountable for Exclusions, pastoral and Safeguarding (SG) arrangements meeting national requirements laid out in statutory guidance</li> </ul>                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set network Exclusions and SG policies</li> <li>Responsible for ensuring network practices around Exclusions, pastoral and Safeguarding arrangements meet national requirements</li> <li>Arrange Exclusions training and independent review panels (IRPs)</li> <li>Respond to SG complaints against Principal and support school in event of SG complaints against staff</li> <li>Respond to issues flagged by DBS</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set school approach to culture, ethos and wellbeing including behaviour model, rituals and routines, attendance and inclusion</li> <li>Set school Attendance, Inclusion and SG policies inc. training and DBS processes</li> <li>Set local Exclusions procedures and ensure exclusion administration fulfils all relevant requirements</li> <li>Respond to SG complaints against staff</li> <li>Oversee referral of at-risk children to LA and other agencies</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Informed of school approach to culture, ethos and wellbeing including behaviour model, rituals and routines, attendance and inclusion</li> <li>Make Exclusion decisions through governor panels and engage in IRP process if required</li> <li>Informed of SG complaints, referrals and training within school</li> </ul> |
| Our people                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approve all relevant People policies relating to recruitment, capability, disciplinary/ grievance, pay, leave and reorganisation</li> <li>Accountable for meeting statutory reporting requirements</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set all People policies</li> <li>Set overarching approach to attraction &amp; recruitment, performance appraisal, probation, leadership, pay and benefits, disciplinary and grievance including investigations, tribunals and appeals</li> <li>Recruit for central/ Principal roles</li> <li>Provide training and guidance on employee relations to schools</li> <li>Liaise with unions</li> <li>Oversee all HR tracking and reporting</li> <li>Conduct pre-appointment checks for central/ Principal roles</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruit for school roles in line with overall Ark approach to attraction and recruitment</li> <li>Implement Ark approach to performance appraisal, probation, leadership development, pay and benefits, disciplinary and grievance including investigations at school level</li> <li>Conduct pre-appointment checks for school roles</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engage in Disciplinary and Grievance panels</li> <li>Monitor compliance with DBS process</li> <li>Receive report on staff performance management and pay including appraisal</li> <li>Consulted on Principal appraisal (Chair)</li> </ul>   |

| <b>Functional area</b>        | <b>Ark Schools board</b>   | <b>Ark central</b>   | <b>School Principal</b>  | <b>Local governing body (LGB)</b>  |
|-------------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| Parents & community           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accountable for meeting statutory admissions and publication requirements</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Oversee admissions arrangements including policies and appeals</li> <li>Oversee compliance with website publication requirements</li> <li>Manage crisis communications</li> <li>Set school brand guidelines</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Manage admissions appeals at school level</li> <li>Maintain school website in line with compliance requirement</li> <li>Plan and deliver open days, offer and acceptance process and parental engagement</li> <li>Manage local media, community, LA relations</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support engagement with parents, community and LA</li> </ul>  |
| Finance                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approve all relevant Finance policies</li> <li>Approve Principal bonuses</li> <li>Accountable for meeting statutory requirements around reporting, budget submissions and financial controls</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set all Finance policies</li> <li>Set school and central finance targets and budgets including holdback charge</li> <li>Coordinate endowments and reserves</li> <li>Prepare network budgets, forecasts, reports, statements &amp; tax returns</li> <li>Arrange network procurement activities including manage contracts £50k+</li> <li>Manage internal and external audit</li> <li>Set Ark approach to finance administration and internal controls</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and propose school budget and year-end pack</li> <li>Decide school staff bonuses</li> <li>Arrange procurement contracts under £50k</li> <li>Engage in internal audit activities at school level</li> <li>Deliver finance administration and internal controls arrangements in line with Ark approach</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Informed of finance policies and budget targets (Chair &amp; Finance Link)</li> <li>Consulted on use of school reserves for school or network use</li> <li>Consulted on draft budget</li> <li>Monitor management accounts and school staff bonuses</li> <li>Informed of procurement arrangements and internal audit outcomes</li> </ul> |
| IT                            | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approve IT policy</li> <li>Approve network IT outsourcing strategy</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set school IT and Acceptable Use policy</li> <li>Lead on contract management for overall IT service</li> <li>Support IT projects in schools</li> <li>Lead response in event of data breach</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set school IT strategy and promote Acceptable Use policy amongst students and staff</li> <li>Lead on engagement with IT contractors/ service providers at school level</li> <li>Manage local IT maintenance and upgrades</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Informed of IT strategy including capital investments</li> </ul>  |
| Estates                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Accountable for meeting statutory requirements around health and safety (H&amp;S)</li> <li>Approve all relevant H&amp;S policies</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set network H&amp;S policy</li> <li>Arrange H&amp;S and fire risk audits</li> <li>Oversee all aspects of initial capital build inc. procurement, legal and project management</li> <li>Support schools in arranging contracts e.g. school catering, M&amp;E, energy</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set school H&amp;S policies and procedures</li> <li>Engage in H&amp;S and fire risk audits</li> <li>Ensure compliance with procurement and building maintenance regulations/ policies at school level</li> <li>Engage in capital build projects as required</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Monitor H&amp;S incidents at school</li> <li>Informed of H&amp;S arrangements including audit outcomes</li> <li>Informed of capital build project updates</li> </ul>  |
| Monitoring, Reporting & Data  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approve data protection (DP) policy</li> <li>Accountable for meeting statutory requirements around data protection and security</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Set DP &amp; Incident Response policies</li> <li>Provide DP guidelines and standards</li> <li>Oversee Ark approach to DP controls</li> <li>Arrange DP training</li> <li>Respond to FOI/ SAR requests</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure school meets DP requirements and standards at school level in line with overall Ark approach</li> </ul>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Informed of overall approach to DP and security</li> </ul>  |
| Governance & Accountabilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Approve Scheme of Delegation, Terms of Reference, Risk Framework and Policy Framework</li> <li>Accountable for meeting statutory requirements for governance arrangements</li> </ul>                    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop Scheme of Delegation, Terms of Reference and Policy Framework</li> <li>Develop Risk Framework and register</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure required policies are in place and publicised according to overall Ark approach</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Agree additions to school-level policies (where relevant)</li> </ul>  |