

Ark Schools Accountabilities Framework

Introduction

The Ark Schools Accountabilities Framework acts as our scheme of delegation, clarifying where responsibility and accountability sits in key functional areas across four sets of stakeholders:

- The Ark Schools Board
- Ark's central team
- School Principals
- Local governing bodies (LGBs)

It provides a summary of the division of responsibilities. However, there will be circumstances where this division may change – for example, the Ark central team may sometimes take on a much more involved role, or the LGB may be engaged in a range of aspects not referenced here.

As a single legal entity, it is acknowledged that the board of directors is responsible for decisions relating to how each academy is run, but can delegate some functions whilst remaining legally accountable.

Ark's governance model

As a Multi-Academy Trust, Ark has a distinctive model of school governance – the Ark Schools Board is the legal accountable body for the Trust, and the LGB of each school is a committee of the Board. We believe this model allows for strong, focused local governance. Freed from the statutory responsibilities of local authority governing bodies, our governors are empowered to concentrate on enhancing the education for and improving the life chances of all the children in their school. They monitor their schools and provide support and challenge in the traditional way, but spend less time on policies and paperwork.

Our governors provide a powerful voice for the community in the school, and for the school in the community. They are also a powerful advocate for the needs of their school within the Ark family, and a source of sharing of good practice across the network.

Ark Schools has one Member, ARK, a company limited by guarantee registered in England under company No. 4589451.

High level division of responsibilities

Type of activities	School Principal <i>(Delivers on school performance & operations)</i>	LGB <i>(Monitors and challenges schools)</i>	Ark Schools Central <i>(Approves key items and supports schools)</i>	Ark Schools Board <i>(Ultimately accountable and approves all statutory policies and finance)</i>
School Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop school strategy, culture & ethos Develop and then propose academy priorities and academy improvement plan (AIP), including suggesting targets Initiates school expansion strategy Deliver performance as per AIP and targets Develop and then propose curriculum model Manage assessment processes Improve teaching quality through performance management, CPD, etc 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and challenge and input into the development of, the AIP, SEF, and school expansion strategy Support the Principal to develop and implement local school culture and ethos Support and challenge, and input into the school curriculum model Monitor school performance against AIP and targets, through reviewing and challenging principal updates and data analysis. LGB will also receive Kingsway monitoring reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approves: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School culture & ethos School targets AIP and school priorities School expansion strategy - can also initiate school expansion strategy; curriculum model; behaviour policy Support schools on multiple aspects including: implementing AIP; improving teaching quality; managing assessment processes; analysing school data Monitor school performance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set overall vision and mission for the network Hold Executives to account on school improvement, and all operational areas
Principal recruitment, appraisal		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engage (LGB Chair) in Principal recruitment Engage in appraisals with Kingsway Dir. of Ed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct Principal recruitment Conduct appraisals with LGB Chair, with engagement from LGB Chair 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approve salaries
Finance & procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deliver budget and financial targets Prepare and propose budget and 3 year forecasting Prepare monthly and end of year school finance documents Find and implement local school procurement opportunities Manage delivery of IT contract locally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support and challenge on the development of, and input into the budget (and where relevant) plans for using school reserves Monitor and challenge school finances, particularly vs. school target and budget, and use of resources vs. education plans Approve reserves in inter-school loan process Monitor & challenge locally led procurement Appoint finance link governor 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set financial policies Approve and recommend to Board: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> School budgets & forecasts Use of reserves & endowments Recommends school finance targets to ASB Support principals with school finances Responsible for all MAT finance Find, implement and manage network procurement opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accountable for ensuring financial compliance and sustainability Approve: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Network budget and holdback Financial targets for schools; Use of capital endowments; Running school deficit; Financial statements
HR / Recruitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure HR policies and processes are implemented in line with policy, including: performance appraisals and pay reviews, ER (unless against a Principal), local school recruitment (unless for Principal or new Ark School, then Central Team conducts) Develop and propose staff restructure proposals Liaise with local level unions Develop and retain great staff in schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Input into significant staff restructures Monitor implementation of key HR policies, esp. pay and performance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set HR and recruitment network policies Approve significant staff restructures Support schools with ongoing HR guidance Responsible for additional HR activities inc: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supplying representation for hearings Liaising with national level unions (e.g. pay policy) Engage in recruiting key operational posts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accountable for all HR compliance Approve all HR policies (some non-statutory policies are delegated to audit and risk committee or Kingsway Executive team)

Safeguarding, H&S and other compliance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure compliance with statutory obligations and mandatory ARK policies, including H&S, safeguarding, SEN, admissions and exclusions • Provide information for FOI requests • Respond to all school level complaints 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor school implementation of statutory compliance & risk management • Appoint link governors for Safeguarding and SEND (mandatory) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set statutory and Ark mandatory policies • Lead on all complaints against Principal • Support schools as needed, e.g. admissions, safeguarding, health & safety, etc • Responsible for additional activities, inc: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lead admissions appeals (new schools) ○ Coordinate response to FOI requests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountable for all compliance • Approve all statutory policies
Comms & community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver on school communications strategy and school visual identity • Manage parent, community, local stakeholder and school media engagement • Lead on LA communications 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support parent communications and community engagement • Act as ambassadors to community and engage with LAs (keep Principal and Kingsway informed) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support schools through: developing comms toolkit & guidance; managing crisis comms • Support Principals with LAs as needed • Develop network brand & school guidelines • Lead on marketing for priority schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve any changes to the overall Ark / Ark Schools brand
Building projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead proposal development for significant building projects and refurbishments • Lead on project delivery with engagement from Kingsway and LGB especially on procurement & CDM compliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and challenge, and input into the development of school building / refurbishment proposals • Engage in procurement process for significant projects • Monitor school building projects 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve significant building projects and smaller refurbishments if >£25K or in deficit • Support significant building project delivery • Engage in project delivery for procurement if subject to Euro. procurement law & CDM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountable for all compliance with building projects • Approve initial building projects

Compliance breakdown

Activities	School Principal	LGB	Ark Schools Central Team	Ark Schools Board
Health and Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible for local implementation of policies, including development of school procedures and internal reporting on statutory requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitors school compliance with H&S policies and statutory obligations as well as challenging schools to ensure best practice is followed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sets Ark H&S policies Monitors school H&S by arranging inspections / audits Supports schools with implementation, as needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accountable for ensuring a safe and healthy environment for staff, pupils and other persons on network premises Approve H&S policy
Safeguarding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adds to Ark policy to create school safeguarding policy Appoints Designated Senior Person (DSP) Manages all safeguarding complaints (exc. against Principal), with Kingsway engagement Responsible for referrals for children at risk, outside school environment, with support from Kingsway 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signs off school safeguarding policy Monitors implementation of safeguarding through reports from DSP on the measures being taking to ensure compliance The list of aspects to monitor is in the Safeguarding policy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sets Ark Safeguarding policy Responsible for dealing with any complaint against Principal Consulted in responding to any complaint against a staff member Supports schools to assess the need for referrals for children at risk 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accountable for all legal responsibilities Approve Ark safeguarding policy
SEND	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sets school specific SEN policy (engage Network SEN Lead) Appoints qualified SEN co. Responsible for implementation in line with statutory requirements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitors and challenge implementation of SEND policy and performance of SEND students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sets Ark SEN policy Engaged on school SEND policy Supports schools and monitors implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accountable for all legal responsibilities Approve SEND policy
Admissions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible for implementation of admissions in line with Ark policy Participates and negotiates with LA over local fair access/in year placements protocols – and then implements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kept informed of major aspects such as policy and appeals Monitor fair access in line with guiding principles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Set mandatory admissions policy Responsible for admissions appeals for “new Ark schools” – support other schools Set guiding principles for fair access/ in year placements protocols; provides expertise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accountable for all legal responsibilities Approve admissions policy framework
Exclusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responsible for issuing an exclusion, informing all relevant parties and managing any appeal processes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Informed of every exclusion and monitors frequency and trends Makes final decision if governors panel needed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sets mandatory exclusions policy Provides expert supports to help manage exclusions appeals (esp. for independent review panel) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accountable for all legal responsibilities Approve exclusions policy
FOI requests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides information needed to respond to FOI requests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Engaged as needed to respond accurately to requests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Coordinates all FOI requests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accountable for ensuring Ark fulfils FOI/Data Protection statutory obligations