Diocesan Board of Education Standing Orders

**Key functions**

These functions reflect and fall within those outlined in the Diocesan Boards of Education Measure 1991 that are applied to the full DBE. In summary:

* To promote education within the Diocese, consistent with the faith and practice of the Church of England
* To promote religious education and religious worship in schools in the Diocese
* To promote church schools and provide advice to governors and trustees
* To promote partnership between the Board and other bodies concerned with education in the Diocese
* Other functions assigned to the DBE by the Diocesan Synod

**Relationship to DoBAC**

Updates from DoBAC will be a standing agenda item on all DBE meeting agendas.

1. **Chair and Vice-Chair**
   1. At the first meeting in each academic year the Board will elect a chair and vice-chair and record its decision.
   2. The Board cannot conduct its business without an elected chair.
   3. When the chair and vice-chair are due for election, the Board will elect both positions from among its number.
   4. The Board will decide in advance of the election the process of election for either or both positions.
   5. If nobody has indicated willingness to stand for the office of chair, the meeting will be adjourned until a chair can be elected.
   6. The clerk will take the chair when the chair is being elected. Otherwise the chair will conduct all meetings of the Board except that, in his/her absence, the vice-chair will take the chair.
   7. If the election of the chair or vice-chair is contested it will be decided by secret ballot. Members standing for election will withdraw and not vote.
   8. If both the chair and vice-chair are absent from a meeting, the Board will elect a chair for that meeting.
   9. If the chair resigns, or has to relinquish the office for any reason, the vice-chair will act as chair until a successor is appointed at the next meeting of the Board. The election of chair will be a specific item of business on the agenda for that meeting.
   10. If the vice-chair resigns, or has to relinquish the office for any reason, a successor will be elected at the next meeting of the Board.
   11. If both the chair and vice-chair resign, or have to relinquish their offices for any reason, the Board will hold a special meeting within 14 days to elect their successors.
   12. The chair and/or vice-chair can be removed from office by resolution of the Board.
   13. A resolution to remove the chair or vice-chair from office will not take effect unless the matter is specified as an item of business on the agenda. The member proposing the removal must state his/her reasons for doing so prior to the meeting. The chair or vice-chair must be given the opportunity to make a statement in response before he/she withdraws from the meeting and the Board votes on the proposal to remove the chair or vice-chair from office.
2. **Calendar of Meetings**
   1. The Board will meet at least three times per year.
   2. Committees (if established) will meet at a frequency determined by the Board.
   3. The Board will set the dates for its meetings, including those of any committee or working group for the next academic year at the final meeting of the previous school year.
   4. An additional meeting shall be held if at any time eight or more members of the Board make a request in writing to the chair for the holding of such a meeting.
3. **Timing and Duration of Meetings**
   1. Meetings will start at times which are acceptable to the Board and will be limited to 2 hours duration.
   2. Where the business has not been completed within the agreed time, those members present may resolve to continue the meeting in order to deal with the business notified on the agenda or make arrangements for a further meeting to complete the business.
   3. A meeting may be discontinued at any time if the Board so resolves. If so, or if the meeting has to be abandoned because it is no longer quorate, a further meeting shall be called as soon as practicable to complete the unfinished business.
4. **Alternative arrangements for member participation at meetings**
   1. The Board may approve alternative arrangements for members to participate or vote at meetings. Members can choose one of the following options:

Members may only participate or vote at meetings which they attend at the venue stated on the agenda;

or Members may participate and vote at meetings via telephone or video conferencing, if they have indicated this in advance of a meeting and this facility is available. (A ‘virtual attendance protocol’ is required for this option.)

* 1. A meeting will only take place if there is a physical quorum for the meeting (i.e. if a quorate number of members are in attendance at the stated venue for the meeting). If members participate/vote at meetings but are not in attendance due regard will be paid to confidentiality and fair and equal contribution to the meeting.
  2. The clerk will physically attend the meeting in order to record the minutes.

1. **Quorum**
   1. The quorum for all business of the Board is eight of which four shall be elected members.
   2. Meetings which become inquorate will be discontinued, or meetings which become inquorate will continue but no decisions may be made.
2. **Clerking**
   1. The Board will determine the arrangements for appointing a clerk for meetings of the full Board and committees.
   2. The Diocesan Director of Education cannot be clerk to the DBE or a committee.
   3. If the clerk does not attend a meeting the members present at the meeting can appoint a member of the Board or committee to act as clerk for that meeting.
3. **Convening meetings**
   1. All meetings will be convened by the clerk, in accordance with the arrangements made by the Board, but subject to (a) any direction from the chair where a matter is urgent and (b) any requisition signed by three members.
4. **Notice of Meetings**
   1. Written notice of meetings, together with the agenda, will be sent so as to arrive seven clear days before the meeting – except where the chair calls an urgent meeting at short notice – to (a) each member, (b) the DDE.
   2. Non-receipt of notice of a meeting will not invalidate the meeting.
5. **Agenda**
   1. The agenda will be prepared by the clerk in accordance with any determination of the Board and in consultation with the chair and the DDE. For any committee the agenda will be prepared by the committee clerk in consultation with the chair of the committee and the DDE.
   2. Any member may place an item on the agenda by writing to the clerk.
   3. Wherever possible papers that inform agenda items will be sent to members with the agenda.
6. **Late Items/Any Other Business**
   1. The agenda will include ‘Notification of AOB’ immediately after ‘Apologies for Absence’ and any member wishing to raise an urgent meeting item must give notice at this time.
   2. The Board will decide by show of hands whether any such item is to be discussed or, if appropriate, deferred to a subsequent meeting.
7. **Members’ Expenses**
   1. Payment of members’ expenses will be made in line with the current Diocesan Expenses policy.
8. **Attendance**
   1. The clerk will keep a record of those members and all other persons present at meetings of the Board or any of its committees.
   2. Where a member sends an apology for absence with reason, the Board will decide whether to ‘consent’ to the absence and the clerk will record the decision in the minutes.
   3. The time of arrival and/or departure of any member not in attendance throughout any meeting will be recorded in the minutes.
9. **Minutes of Meetings**
   1. The minutes of meetings will be kept in a binder on consecutively numbered loose-leaf pages.
   2. Action will be taken on the basis of decisions and need not await the approval of the minutes at the next meeting.
   3. Within 10 working days of the meeting, the draft minutes will be sent by the clerk to the chair for checking and to the DDE.
   4. Copies of the draft minutes, once ‘approved’ by the chair, will be sent to all members of the Board within 15 working days of the meeting.
   5. The approval of the minutes of the previous meeting will be on the agenda of every meeting of the Board and once approved as a true record (subject to any agreed amendments) the minutes will be signed and dated by the chair.
   6. Those matters which the Board determines shall remain confidential will be minuted separately and such minutes will not be made publicly available.
10. **Confidentiality of Proceedings**
    1. Details of any dispute, discussion or disagreement should remain confidential to those present at the meeting.
11. **Correspondence**
    1. All incoming correspondence to the Board (other than any concerning a complaint) is for the attention of the whole Board, even if addressed to the chair and/or the clerk. Significant items will be circulated to all members as and when received/presented to each meeting of the Board for action or information as appropriate. The chair will report upon any correspondence on which he/she has already taken urgent action.
    2. The Board will determine by resolution who may write letters on behalf of the Board, either generally or on specific issues.
12. **Information and Advice**
    1. The DDE has a statutory duty to keep the Board fully informed, and will present a written report to each meeting of the Board.
    2. Where (exceptionally) important information required by the Board is given orally, it will be recorded in the minutes in appropriate detail.
    3. Where information required by the Board is not readily available, reasonable time will be given for its production.
    4. Where expertise is needed but not available within the Board, the Board may consider inviting appropriate non-members to attend meetings or appointing co-opted members, subject to any legal maximum.
13. **Discussion and Debate**
    1. The chair will ensure that meetings are run effectively, focussing on priorities and making best use of time available and ensuring that all members enjoy equality of opportunity to express their views and participate in decision making.
    2. The Board will receive and note, without debate, any decisions on matters which it has delegated to a committee or to an individual. Decisions will be recorded in the minutes.
    3. Recommendations received from working groups will be recorded in the minutes, together with any related Board resolution.
14. **Decision-making**
    1. Members of the Board recognise that all decisions must be made by the Board unless the Board has delegated the function to a committee or to an individual.
    2. Every question to be decided at a meeting of the Board is to be determined by a majority of the votes of the members present and voting on the question; proxy voting is not allowed. Voting by telephone or video conferencing is only permitted where the Board have adopted alternative arrangements for member participation as set out in Section 4 above.
    3. Where there is an equal division of votes the chair (or the person acting as chair for the purpose of the meeting) has a second or casting vote.
    4. Voting in the election of the chair or vice-chair where there is a contest will be held by secret ballot. Otherwise voting will ordinarily be by show of hands, unless one or more members request a secret ballot. There is no second or casting vote in the election of chair.
    5. Decisions of the Board are binding upon all its members.
    6. Decisions of the Board (or of any of its committees) may be amended or rescinded at a subsequent meeting of the Board only if a proposal to amend or rescind appears as a specific agenda item.
15. **Urgent Action**
    1. The chair, or in his or her absence the vice-chair, has authority to take urgent action between meetings only where:

* a delay in dealing with the matter would be seriously detrimental to the interests of a school, a pupil, his/her parents, or a member of staff;
* a meeting could not be called in sufficient time to deal with the matter; and
* the matter is one which can be delegated to an individual under regulations.
  1. If the chair (or vice-chair) takes any urgent action between meetings, the facts will be reported to the next meeting of the Board.

1. **Public Statements**
   1. Public statements on behalf of the Board will be made only by the chair or those delegated to make them.
2. **Access to Meetings of the Board**
   1. Apart from members, the only people entitled to attend a meeting of the Board are the DDE, the clerk, and any such other persons as the Board may determine. No substitute members are permitted.
   2. Visitors may be required to leave a meeting where matters of a confidential nature are discussed.
   3. When the DDE is absent, a nominated member of the Education team will attend in his/her place.
   4. The Board can require any non-member present at a meeting to leave at any time.
   5. The Board may invite officers to attend meetings on an occasional or regular basis. All officers are there in an advisory role and have no voting rights.
3. **Pecuniary Interests and Other Specified Conflict of Interest**
   1. The Board will maintain a register of the pecuniary and other interests of its members in either a book signed by the relevant member when an entry is made or in the form of consecutively numbered loose leaf sheets, each sheet being a statement completed and signed by the relevant member.
   2. As appropriate, members will draw attention to any pecuniary or other personal interest, whether that interest has previously been registered or not.
   3. A member must withdraw from a meeting, if he/she (or a close relative or partner):

* stands to gain, financially or otherwise, from a matter under consideration;
* has a personal interest in a matter under consideration;
* is a relative of a person being discussed;
* has any other conflict of interest or loyalty.

1. **Complaints**
   1. The Board will follow the procedures of the Diocesan Board of Finance for dealing with general complaints.
2. **Delegation of Functions**
   1. No action may be taken by an individual member (including the chair and vice-chair except where acting in accordance with Standing Order 19.1) unless authority to do so has been delegated formally by resolution of the Board.
   2. In order to ensure the most efficient conduct of its business, the Board may:

* delegate work to committees, individual members of the Board and/or the DDE;
* set up working groups to provide information and/or make recommendations to the Board.
  1. The arrangements for delegating functions will be reviewed annually by the full Board.

1. **Committees**
   1. The Board may establish committees to assist in the discharging of its functions, and the membership of any committee may include persons who are not members of the Board.
   2. Committees to which the Board has delegated any of its functions will act strictly in accordance with the terms of delegation.
   3. When establishing committees the Board will:

* determine the membership (including non-members where permitted and appropriate);
* determine the reserve membership to cover for the absence of ordinary members;
* appoint the chair of each committee annually/allow the committee to elect its chair;
* establish and record terms of reference;
* review the membership and terms of reference annually;
* decide whether or not to confer voting rights on any or all non-members;
* allow the committees to determine their own timetables within given limits;
* determine arrangements for reporting back;
* review the need for, and the membership of, committees annually; set the quorum for each committee (minimum quorum is 3)
  1. The DDE has the right to attend any committee meetings.
  2. All committees and individuals with delegated powers will report in writing to the next meeting of the Board about any decisions made or action taken.
  3. All committees with delegated powers will keep formal minutes, and copies will be presented to the next meeting of the Board and circulated to all members within 15 working days of the meeting for information.
  4. All meetings of committees will be clerked by a person who is not the DDE.

1. **Working Groups**
   1. In establishing working groups the Board will:

* determine the membership, including non-members, and the method of appointing the chair;
* determine when working groups must meet or allow working groups to determine their own timetables within given limits;
* determine procedures for reporting back.
  1. The DDE has the right to attend any working group meeting.
  2. Working groups established for specific purposes will be discontinued when their work has been completed.
  3. All working groups will present a written report, including recommendations where requested by the Board.

1. **Code of Conduct**
   1. Every member will be requested to sign the Code of Conduct declaration at first appointment and each subsequent year of appointment.