

Aligned Autonomy

2020/21

Why do we exist?

Our mission is to challenge educational and social disadvantage in the north. By the age of 18, we want every student to have the choice of university or a high quality apprenticeship.

How will we succeed?

- Academic rigour
- Aligned Autonomy
- Talent first

Why Aligned Autonomy

We are Dixons and we are also leaders.

The optimal balance between consistency and self-determination; freedom and responsibility.

Aligned Autonomy will deliver a more agile and less hierarchical organisation:

- Respect at every level
- Rules focused on clarity rather than control
- Roles that are needed and make sense
- Pushing power down

Why Aligned

- We share the same mission and values.
- All Dixons students and staff should benefit from our best collective practice.
- We all benefit from the collective Dixons resources, brand and reputation.
- Staff can be more easily deployed to train and support at any academy.
- Central services become simpler to deliver and more efficient.
- Growth can be better controlled, supported and managed.
- A divisional leadership structure sub-optimises performance, and tends to lead to cliques and fragmentation.

Why Autonomy

- Leadership and personal accountability are founded on ownership and self-direction.
- If there is no variation in how we work, there will be no opportunity for us to learn from different practices.
- A culture of conformity kills innovation and drives away the best staff.
- Standardisation fails to respond to changing needs, and fails to adapt to a changing environment.
- Micromanagement breeds indifference.
- Autonomy is the foundation of our success so far.

The process

Aligning Autonomy is a process, not a destination. A component of the backbone one year may be dropped in another because it outlives its usefulness (e.g. external review), or because it is a time for further innovation and testing (e.g. Cycle 1/2 secondary summative assessment).

Elements of the backbone must be as efficient and spare as possible in order to minimise workload and maximise impact. This also allows room for further elaboration and development in response to a leader's own drivers and context (e.g. decisions about 'how' to teach and the use of external packages).

Backbone	Clarity
Mission and values	<p>Critical questions and answers 1-4</p> <p>Mission aligned to Trust, succinct and measurable</p> <p>Pattern of 3 values: in our highly professional environment: work hard, be good, be nice</p> <p>Self-determination theory; start-up school: Drivers: Mastery, Autonomy and Purpose</p> <p>Focus on being healthy more than being smart: build cohesive leadership teams, create clarity, overcommunicate clarity and reinforce clarity</p> <p>Value diversity as much as commonality; consider cultural add as well as fit</p>
Workload	<p>Hard work is one of our values</p> <p>Minimal politics, minimal confusion, high morale, high productivity and low turnover</p> <p>'Keep it simple' to free staff from bureaucracy</p> <p>Focus on feedback rather than marking</p> <p>Time released for collaborative planning</p> <p>Eliminate unnecessary data burdens – input, process and output</p> <p>Ensure clarity of who must do what</p> <p>Annual standardised staff feedback and acted upon</p> <p>5As to manage change: aspire, assess, architect, act, advance</p>
Curriculum	<p>Curriculum principles</p> <p>Sustained range of foundation subjects from Y2 to Y9</p> <p>EBacc focussed; greater commitment to the arts and sport</p> <p>Stretch inc. competitions and outside classroom</p> <p>New EYFS curriculum</p> <p>Agreed powerful knowledge in EBacc (not fixed) – primary and secondary; EBacc knowledge organisers KS1 to KS4</p> <p>Exam specifications KS4 EBacc (a department with confidence of the Trust can innovate)</p> <p>Dixons schemes and resources to support new schools EYFS to KS4</p>
Teaching	<p>Decisions about 'what' to teach (not 'how')</p> <p>Research informed pedagogy</p> <p>Retrieval practice / low stakes testing – every lesson and in morning meeting / collective learning (if applicable)</p> <p>Weekly instructional coaching for every teacher</p>
Assessment and feedback	<p>Assessment principles</p> <p>13-week cycle</p> <p>Data Days (at least one every cycle; C1/2: weeks 9-11; C3: week 13 or week 1 of following year)</p> <p>Intervention planning</p> <p>Primary: 3 x data inputs; Secondary: 2 x data inputs</p> <p>Primary: PUMA and PIRA every cycle within set window</p> <p>Secondary: end-of-year common assessments (Y7-10); common Y11 mocks x 2; within set window</p> <p>Age-related grades (through percentile rank) Y1-10C2; age-independent Y10C3-Y11; EYFS: age and stage</p> <p>Purple / Red for segmentation and reporting</p> <p>Internal reporting (high impact; low input); reporting to families</p> <p>Assembly (Trust analytics)</p>
Behaviour and routines	<p>Behaviour core policy that promotes our Trust's mission</p> <p>High expectations (aspiration, motivation and clear social norms); tough love / warm strict relationships</p> <p>Learning habits and 'no chance' for equipment, uniform, homework in secondary; purpose not power</p> <p>Secondary sanction table with agreement on FTE and PEX</p> <p>Protocol on managed moves; permanent exclusion policy</p>



Backbone	Clarity
	Commitment to time on pastoral / preventative curriculum (e.g. PSHCE / SRE / SMSC) Careers policy; RSE core policy
Safeguarding and attendance	Core safeguarding policy SCR checklist Annual statutory training; annual external review of safeguarding DSL job description; all new Principals DSL trained Governor reporting and lead governor job description Supervision expectations Safeguarding online management system; CPOMs use and categories Protocol for EHE; CME policy; child absconds policy Core attendance policy and WTD around codes; SCR and attendance code spot checks by EP (3 times a year)
SEND	Qualified SENDCo Standard SEND annual report structure Agreement around SEND categories for reporting Mainstream teaching for all SEND
QA and appraisal	Healthy and efficient Daily On Tour, weekly learning walks, cyclical routines check, cyclical learning scrutiny Focused review 'Lead' phase senior leaders have a Trust-wide PGP priority All senior leaders add capacity to the TI Internal audit SEF
Talent management / HR	Commitment to Trust-wide capacity building and redeployment, particularly 'stabilise' and 'reinvent' phases Self-determination theory Support for Dixons Institute projects, events and training Core HR policies and procedures; iTrent Trust structure and development; salary ranges and pay reviews Continuous feedback; review every cycle Career stage expectations; Dixons standards and values; Professional Growth Plan (PGP) TES recruitment subscription; recruitment documentation (adverts, job descriptions, person specifications) Browne Jacobson
Meetings	Healthy and efficient meetings (e.g. no more than one regular after-school meeting each week for staff; no more than 2 for leaders) Executive G3 tactical – 1 hour every week; Executive Team strategic – 1 full day every week Executive Principal coaching foci Principals – termly (Dixons); Cross-cutting team – termly (Dixons); Dixons Institute – as per calendar Biennial conference
Governance	Scheme of delegation; articles of association Annual cycle; agenda and briefing matrix Key performance indicators 3 LGB meetings and 1 challenge day minimum; structure of LGB meetings LGB meeting documentation – briefing, position statement and dashboard (Sep, Dec, Mar) Clerking; internal audit Training and induction
Finance	Core policies and procedures



Backbone	Clarity
	<p>CLFP; pooled reserves</p> <p>Banking and cash management; purchasing and procurement; capital expenditure</p> <p>PS Financials; reporting; HCSS budgeting and forecasting</p> <p>Payroll</p>
IT	<p>Core policies</p> <p>Server-based services: MIS; catering; printing; access control; CCTV; digital marketing solution; Inventory; file services; unified communications; backup; infrastructure</p> <p>Service and project delivery processes: ITIL; Prince2</p> <p>End user computing (inc. devices) – see IT options document</p> <p>Procurement process; central budget for replacement strategy and planned growth</p>
Estates / health and safety	<p>Statutory practice and core policies</p> <p>Central budget for statutory compliance</p> <p>Evolve risk assessments</p> <p>Smartlog recording, training, recording of statutory compliance (curriculum and estates)</p> <p>Format of monthly walk around (health and safety spot checks)</p> <p>Estates contract management (refer to health and safety policy) for compliance and best value</p> <p>Programme of site and department audits</p>
Marketing and branding	<p>Brand guidelines</p> <p>Website compliance (managed by academy; checked by Exec); website structure (except Why Dixons?)</p> <p>Social media page branding</p> <p>Policies, HR and other key external compliance documents</p> <p>Recruitment documentation, TES career sites and printed advert style</p> <p>Trust-wide bulletin and key internal comms</p> <p>Cross-cutting team meeting record and distribution</p> <p>Standard document template for external documents; letterhead; email footer (internal and external); PPT template for external audiences, display screens and important events</p> <p>Press</p>

