

The role of the parent local trust committee member

Becoming a parent local trust committee member is a rewarding opportunity to give back to your community and use your skills and experience to ensure that pupils get the best possible education.

Parent local trust committee member responsibilities

The role of a parent local trust committee member is no different to any other local trust committee member.

Local trust committee members, make strategic decisions and work together to:

- develop a vision and strategy for the school
- oversee financial performance and make sure money is well spent
- hold the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school
- engage with pupils, staff, parents and the wider school community to understand their views

Once elected, parent local trust committee members should make use of the induction training on offer as this will explain the duties, responsibilities and expectations in detail.

Offering a parent's perspective

Parent local trust committee members offer a parental perspective to issues being discussed; however, they are not expected to represent the parent body or act as a spokesperson.

Bringing a parent's viewpoint to the board is important but should not be confused with the local trust committee's overall responsibility to engage with parents as a collective.

Providing effective support and challenge

Parent local trust committee members need to remain impartial, especially when posing challenging questions to school leaders.

For example, if school uniform is discussed at a local trust committee meeting, parent local trust committee members may have opinions based on personal experience but should ensure their questions remain objective.

Rather than stating:

"I've spoken to other parents, and we all agree that the uniform policy shouldn't change".

A parent local trust committee members might instead ask:
"Have parents been consulted on proposed uniform changes?"

"What opportunities are there to minimise the cost of this change to parents?"

While all parents are concerned with their own child's best interests, local trust committee members must make strategic decisions that are in the best interests of the whole school community – local trust committees work as a team to make collective decisions.

For example, if data indicates that pupil progress is falling behind expectations in a specific year group, it is appropriate to raise this in local trust committee meetings.

Ask: *"What support is in place to ensure all pupils make good progress?"*

Avoid asking: *"What are you going to do to support my child to catch up?"*

It is important to keep local trust committee matters confidential. Parent local trust committee members should avoid sharing concerns away from the meeting or discussing with other parents. Instead, it may be helpful to discuss any issues with the local trust committee chair.

Managing complaints

Local trust committee members may be approached by parents wishing to raise a complaint. However, it is not the parent local trust committee member's role to attempt to resolve individual issues. Instead, they should direct parents to the school's complaints procedure and avoid making promises to investigate the issue.

Similarly, if parent local trust committee members have concerns relating to their own child, they should use the school communication channels available to all parents and follow the complaints procedure where appropriate. Parent local trust committee members should not attempt to bring individual cases to the board.

Dealing with conflicts of interest

All local trust committee members must declare business or personal interests that might affect their ability to make impartial decisions.

Parent local trust committee members may need to declare an interest and remove themselves from a meeting where the outcome of a decision could directly affect them or their child – for example, changes to after-school provision that the parent currently uses.