



Governance Handbook

2025

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Welcome to Endeavour Learning Trust (ELT)

Mission

We will ensure that every child realises their potential. We pledge that our schools will be transformational places of academic excellence that offer a true richness of experience, providing all children with the same opportunities to flourish and develop their unique skills, qualities and talents. We will work collaboratively with our colleagues, parents and carers and our partners to remove any barriers that place limitations on our children, creating schools that are happy and harmonious places at the centre of their community

Chair Of Trustees’ Welcome

Thank you for volunteering to support the governance of our Trust. I'm pleased to be able to introduce this comprehensive handbook that clarifies the governance arrangements that support our strategic vision of realising the potential of our children, colleagues and communities.

Your governance role is fundamental in driving forward the Trust's vision of high-quality education for children and young people in our family of schools. I want you to find the role rewarding, challenging and an opportunity to enhance your skills and experience across a diverse range of topics including data scrutiny, stakeholder engagement, safeguarding and championing local priorities at our Local Academy Councillor level and financial oversight, risk management at trustee level

The Trust is on an exciting phase of its development and, with refreshed vision we are ambitious both for the life chances for our children and staff, but also for growth. We are delighted you are joining us on this journey.

Welcome to the Endeavour Learning family.

Helen Dicker, MBE
Chair of Trustees

Chief Executive's Welcome

Endeavour Learning Trust is, at its heart, an organisation rooted in the communities we serve. We are committed to ensuring that every child has an equitable opportunity to benefit from a transformative education and recognise the important role that each and every colleague plays delivering on this commitment.

Our colleagues are our greatest asset and a fundamental part of our Trust community. We know that we will never be successful in delivering our vision for our young people unless our colleagues are supported, nurtured and developed to achieve their full potential with us. Every colleague, regardless of their role or career stage, plays a critical role in ensuring our Trust is successful, and we will embed our position as a leading employer of choice by offering each of them a sector leading experience.

Our People Strategy provides a clear framework for our future. A future where every colleague feels empowered to be authentic because they benefit from a clear sense of belonging. A future where every colleague benefits from the professional development they need to achieve their own aspirations. A future where our colleagues are supported and nurtured to maintain a healthy work-life balance.

A future where our colleagues choose to join us, and stay with us, because they are fulfilled and valued.

I continue to be grateful for the immense commitment of our colleagues to delivering on our mission, and through this strategy we are making a clear commitment to each of you.

We are looking forward to delivering on the commitments set out in our strategy, ensuring that you benefit from the environment and employment offer that you deserve.

David Clayton
Chief Executive

Introduction

This Governance Handbook has been developed to support three key purposes:

- Reference and advice on governance structures for existing and prospective Trustees and LAC Councillors, Executive and Academy leaders.
- Reference and advice on our governance structures for prospective schools, specifically Chairs of Governors, Headteachers and members of boards of schools joining or considering joining the Trust.
- Induction of new Trustees and Local Academy Councillors.

The Handbook is for all types of governance roles (parent, staff, foundation, co-opted) at all tiers of governance (Trust Board or individual academy), and for all levels of governance experience.

This handbook sets out a structure that should meet the needs of the Trust as it grows, giving assurance to prospective academies as to the degree of autonomy that they retain and also the potential ways in which they can effect change on the manner in which the Trust operates.

As this is a 'live' document, we would be pleased to receive suggestions from you on ways in which it can be developed to reflect changes in our Trust in the future.

There is an 'acronym buster' which details full abbreviations, acronyms and terminology, available for all Trustees and Local Councillors. However, there are a few terms that will be helpful at this point when consulting this handbook:

CEO - Chief Executive Officer

The person responsible for the day to day operation of the Trust. They are also the Accounting Officer

CFO - Chief Finance Officer

The person responsible for the day to day management of the Trust's finances.

LAC - Local Academy Council

The local tier of governance at academy (school) level.

SoD - Scheme of Delegation

A reference document showing what authority the Trust Board has delegated to committees, or to its Executive Leadership under the powers of its governing document.

SEND - Special Education Need and Disability

SEND can affect a child or young person's ability to learn. The Trust has a duty and responsibility to comply with the SEN code of practice

About Us

Endeavour Learning Trust (ELT) is a small but steadily growing, well-established Multi Academy educational Trust in the North West, currently spanning South Ribble, West Lancashire and North Sefton.

In our family of schools, we have four secondary schools, one with a sixthform, and five primary schools, plus a significant extended services / community provision. Our family ethos is tangible. We are proud to work as a team, actively pursuing the best for everyone. We want our work to be enjoyable whilst making a truly positive difference to our children and young people, and the communities we serve. In meeting this aim, we strive to ensure our values are central to the way we work.

We are staunch in our commitment to working in a way which protects the wellbeing of our staff and we regularly review workload and working practices to make sure we can do our jobs and still enjoy our life outside of work.

We are ready for growth and we are open to welcoming other schools into our Trust. For more information about our academies and where they are located please to the Annex on our Trust Website.

Strategic Plan And Vision

Our strategic priorities are centred around the delivery of our mission for those that we exist to serve. By remaining resolutely focussed on our mission and ensuring that our values are consistently lived out in practice, we will Realise the Potential of our Trust partnership:

For Our Children

Our students are at the heart of everything we do at Endeavour Learning Trust. Regardless of our size, we will remain focussed on ensuring that each and every one of them is supported to achieve their own version of success, regardless of their needs, background or starting points. Each of our schools will focus on our young people experiencing the joy that a rich, high-quality and child-centred education should provide.

For Our Colleagues

Our colleagues are our greatest asset and a fundamental part in our Trust community. We know that we will never be successful in delivering our vision for our young people unless our colleagues are supported, nurtured and developed to achieve their full potential with us. Every colleague, regardless of their role or career stage, plays a critical role in ensuring our Trust is successful, and we will embed our position as an employer of choice by offering each of them a sector leading experience.

For Our Communities

Our schools sit at the heart of their communities. We will work to maximise the impact our Trust has on our communities by working collaboratively with partners to deliver what our communities need from us, and particularly for those members of our communities who are most vulnerable. We will invest in the development of provision so that any child, regardless of their needs, can access provision in an Endeavour Learning Trust school if they want to.

Our Mission

We pledge that our schools will be transformational places of academic excellence that offer a true richness of experience, providing all children with the same opportunities to flourish and develop their unique skills, qualities and talents. We will work collaboratively with our colleagues, parents and carers and our partners to remove any barriers that place limitations on our children, creating schools that are happy and harmonious places at the centre of their community.

Our Values



We are firmly committed to recognising, celebrating and investing in the individuality of all of our children and young people, each of our colleagues and the distinct ethos and identity of each of our schools, whilst remaining united by our core values. We don't believe in a "one size fits all" approach, and will adapt our provision to meet individual needs.



Equity of opportunity is central to our practice and we will be relentless in our endeavour to identify and remove barriers that prevent full inclusion. Our culture extends beyond tolerance to one where difference is embraced and every individual is valued and celebrated for their unique contribution to our community. Every individual is a full member in our community.



Our work is driven by our responsibility to every individual within our Trust community. Every person deserves to be treated with respect, dignity and kindness. We demonstrate empathy and humility in our approach, ensuring that our Trust provides an environment where every individual feels confident to be their true authentic self.



We believe in the promise of each individual across the Trust and will ensure we inspire, support and challenge in proportionate measure, so that we all thrive and are able to achieve our own individual successes. We are bold in our approach, stretching perceived boundaries, to go further for our children, colleagues and communities. We continually develop our approach to respond to changes in the communities we operate within to support every child, colleague and partners to realise their potential.



We are a proud family of schools bonded by our Trust vision, priorities and values. We work as one team in school, across our Trust and with our wider partners for the benefit of the communities we serve. Our collaborative approach inspires us to be bold and brings us together in ways that help us to make a difference. **We are better together.**

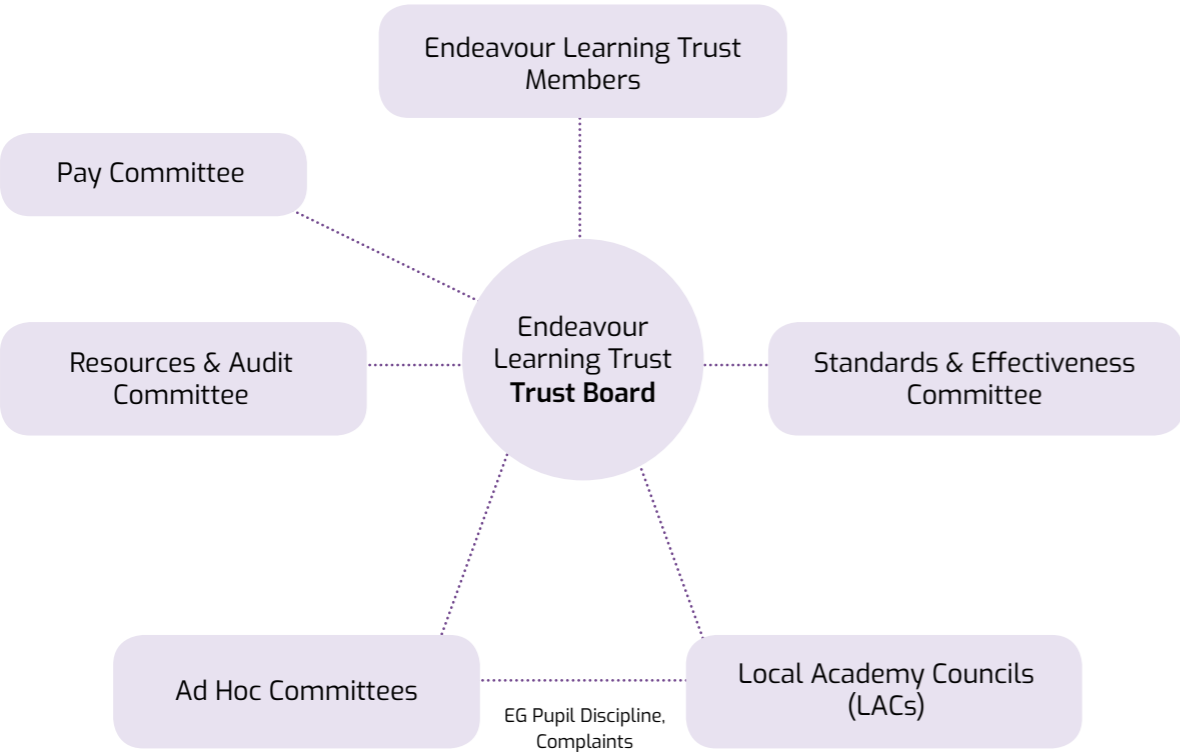
Governance Arrangements

The Trust has established a clear organisational structure with identified lines of accountability and reporting for all its operations. This includes defining the responsibilities of the Trust Board and those responsibilities delegated to its committees and officers within the Trust.

The Trust's governance is based on a system of Members, Trust Board and Committees, including Local Academy Councils which represent each individual academy. The Memorandum and Articles of Association, alongside the Trust's funding agreements, are

the legal documents detailing the parameters in which the Trust operates within the parameters of DfE's Academy Handbook and the Academy Trust Governance Guide. The Scheme of Delegation outlines the responsibilities devolved from the Trust Board to its committees and Executive Leaders. Local Academy Councils address and reflect the local and particular priorities of the Trust and its academies. There are also ad hoc Committees to provide specific oversight of key decisions at both Trust Board and local levels.

In its simplest form the Governance structure can be represented as:



The following summaries provide information on the roles and responsibilities of the tiers of Governance in the Endeavour Learning Trust.

Members

Members have an overarching responsibility for the viability and performance of the Multi Academy Trust (MAT) through the appointment of some Trustees, receiving of the annual accounts and appointing auditors. They have the power to amend the Articles of Association that govern the way the Trust is constituted and managed. Currently there are four Members of the Trust (see website and the Who's who section). Members are not involved in the day to day operation of the Trust and meet twice a year.

Trust Board

The Trust Board is comprised of Trustees appointed by Members and co-opted by the Trust Board. The Trustees are also Directors of the Academy which is a company limited by guarantee and registered as such at Companies House. Currently there are ten Trustees (see website and Who's Who section). The Chief Executive is not a Trustee.

Specific responsibilities include:

- Setting the culture, vision and strategy for the Trust that engages with key stakeholders and complies with the Trust's Charitable Objects.
- Holding the Executive Team to account for the delivery of strategic objectives and the overall performance of the Trust and its academies through receiving regular performance data and analysis. These link to the five pillars of academy trust quality:
 - High-quality and inclusive education
 - School improvement
 - Workforce
 - Finance and operations
 - Governance and leadership

The Trust Board meets formally at least three times annually, usually every half term as a collective group, with additional committees to scrutinise resources and educational standards at a strategic level.

Committees

Trustees are not involved in the day to day operation of the Trust, having delegated this to the Chief Executive, however they need to be assured the Trust is being managed effectively and therefore have committees to scrutinise in more strategic detail aspects of the Trust's responsibilities. This includes a committee with local governance responsibilities. Each academy has its own Local Academy Council, which meets termly, to monitor and support the school at a local level. In addition, there are Ad Hoc Committees for LAC nominations, Pupil Discipline, Complaints, Growth projects and for appeals relating to staffing matters. The key functions of each committee are briefly outlined below with a detailed Terms of Reference reviewed annually by the Trustees.

Resources and Audit Committee

The main purpose of the Resources and Audit Committee is to assist in the decision making of the Trust Board by enabling more detailed consideration of:

- Risk management strategies;
- Planning, control and monitoring of finances;
- Assurance relating to Estates and Operations (including IT, capital investment projects, compliance, Health & Safety and Data Protection);
- Monitoring of management of its key resource - People.

These functions are aligned to the requirements of the Academy Handbook and in relation to matters of probity, propriety and the effective stewardship of public funds.

Governance Responsibilities

Standards & Effectiveness Committee

The Standards & Effectiveness Committee oversees the educational performance of the Trust and its pupils. It provides scrutiny and challenge of the Trust's provision across all academies in relation to:

- Safeguarding and SEND
- Behaviour and attitudes
- Pastoral support
- Personal development
- School improvement
- Admissions

Local Academy Councils (LAC)

Each academy within the Trust has a LAC that provides more detailed oversight at a local level. They are effectively committees of the Trust Board. They support and strengthen the academy's leadership and, by working with executive and academy leaders, hold them accountable for the performance of students and staff. The primary function of the LAC therefore is to provide a link between the Trust, its academies and the local community in which it operates. They are of essential importance in the success of each academy and the wider Trust, ensuring stakeholders are heard and engaged in the development of the educational vision and performance of the academy.

Triangulation of information received at LAC meetings is verified through an agreed annual programme of monitoring

visits and stakeholder engagement events. The remit and terms of reference are established by the Trust Board. The LACs will meet on a termly basis. The Chairs of the LACs also meet informally with the Chair of Trustees on a termly basis to facilitate effective communication between the Trust and its LACs.

Pay Committee

To address the requirements of the Trust's Pay Policy.

Ad hoc Committees

By their very nature, there are a series of committees only required to address specific issues as necessary.

These include:

- Pupil discipline panels – to fulfil the Trust's statutory responsibilities relating to exclusions and suspensions as outlined in the Trust's Exclusion Policy. These panels are normally made up of LAC Councillors from the school the pupil attends.
- Complaints appeal panel – to fulfil the Trust's responsibility to hear complaints that have escalated to the Appeal stage as per its Complaints Procedure
- Staffing appeal panel – if required under related HR policies.
- Growth Committee – to support due diligence and oversight of Growth projects

To support the Trust, the Governance team coordinates a calendar of meetings, annual planners of key items for Primary and Secondary LACs with model agendas.

Compliance and Legal Duties

The Trust is supported by external Legal Advisers and an internal Governance Professional acting as the Data Protection Officer and Company Secretary. Trustees receive briefings on the responsibilities under charity and company law, Keeping Children Safe in Education and key documents such as the Academy Trust Handbook and Academy Trust Governance Guide.

Financial Oversight and Risk Management

Trustees have the responsibility to oversee the budget setting process and financial planning undertaken by the Trust. Endeavour operates a 'GAG pooling' financial model with headteachers responsible for the budget allocated to their schools. LACs do not oversee the budget but can provide feedback and recommendations to Trust Board if they feel an issue requires additional resources. Trustees review the Board Assurance Framework (Risk Register) termly for strategic risks with operational risk managed at Central or individual school levels. Internal and External audit processes are in place to provide a third line of assurance in relation to financial oversight and risk management. These areas are a primary focus of the Resources and Audit Committee.

Education Standards and Performance Monitoring

Strategic monitoring is undertaken by the Trust on a termly basis with more in depth review of school data undertaken by the

LACs. Patterns and specific action plans are reviewed in line with school improvement project plans that reflect the journey to improvement for the school. The Trust works collaboratively to improve standards with its Endeavour Open Network (EON) of subject and topic leads sharing best practice and support to schools both inside and outside the Trust. Strategic monitoring at Trust and school levels by Trustees and Councillors include curriculum development and accessibility, assessment and student outcomes in addition to the social aspects of pastoral support and personal development. Ofsted inspections are a team effort with Trustees and Councillors involved in the process as appropriate alongside Executive and School leaders. These areas are a primary focus of the Standards & Effectiveness Committee and the individual Local Academy Councils.

People & HR

Trustees are responsible for appointment and appraisal and remuneration of its senior leader (Chief Executive) with delegated responsibility to the Chief Executive for appraisal of Executive leaders, though Trustees remain responsible for decisions on Executive Leader pay. Staff Employment Policies are consulted on with Unions and shared with Trustees for approval and include well-being and professional development as outlined in the Trust's People Strategy. The operational aspects of complaints, grievance and disciplinary matters are overseen centrally with strategic reporting to Trustees on a termly basis. These aspects are covered in the Resources and Audit Committee.

Trustees

Trustees are responsible for the strategic direction, broad policy framework and oversight of the Trust and all its academies. They take decisions that are in the best interests of the MAT as a whole and are not representative of any one of the constituent academies. The Trust Board is responsible holding the Executive Team to account for delivering agreed priorities and ensuring the financial probity of the Trust.

Local Academy Council (LAC) Councillors

LAC Councillors sit on Local Academy Councils (LACs) and are the local champions for the academy and the local community in which the academy (school) is located. The typical constitution is 12 members for our secondary schools and 10 members for our primary schools, from a range of stakeholders including parents, staff and Trust Board appointed members. The parent body is represented by the election of two Parent Councillors on each LAC. In addition to the Headteacher, a Staff Councillor is nominated by the staff body (teaching or non-teaching) and appointed by the LAC. Councillors are appointed by the Trust Board following a nomination from the LAC with an application and 'interview' locally, with further spaces delegated to the LAC board to 'co-opt' themselves. The Chair of the LAC is appointed annually by the Trust Board.

Key factors are the skills needed by the LAC and evidence of community links. Individual LACs' constitution may vary to reflect their

local circumstances, for example Ormskirk School had two foundation Councillors nominated by Ormskirk School Foundation Trust.

When a new school joins the Trust and becomes an academy, it is for the Trust Board to determine the constitution of its LAC with the initial membership based on skills and expertise required to support the academy and its priorities. This may result in a different membership from the school's previous Governing Board. The LAC membership is determined in consultation with the existing Governing Board.

For more information on LACs application process including person specification, code of Conduct and edibility criteria please refer to the Trust website. Further resources available at LAC level are model agendas, parent election procedure, and reporting templates for LAC Chairs and curiosity school (monitoring) visits.

Executive Team

Led by the Chief Executive, the executive team includes the Chief Finance Officer (CFO), Deputy Chief Executive, Director of Primary Education, Director of Estates & Operations, and Director of People. They are supported by a central team of senior leaders including Head of Safeguarding and Welfare, Director of Estates and Operations, Director of Community Partnerships and Assistant Directors of School Improvement. Central support includes a governance team lead by a Governance Professional.

Ensuring Good Governance

The purpose of governance is to provide confident, strategic leadership within a culture of accountability, oversight and assurance for educational and financial performance. There are a variety of mechanisms to support governance at all levels of the Trust, with the overall accountability and responsibility with the Trust Board.

Scheme of Delegation

The responsibilities of the Trust Board and its committees are set out in the Trust's Scheme of Delegation (SoD). The Trust Board has agreed terms of reference for each committee. The different roles and responsibilities of Trustees, Executive and Academy leaders are also laid out in the SoD. The SoD makes it clear how methods of escalation operate between Officers, committees and the Trust Board and on what matters committees are required to make recommendations or provide advice to the Board. Day-to-day responsibility for running the Trust is delegated to the Chief Executive, also the Accounting Officer, who can further delegate as appropriate while maintaining overall accountability. The SoD also details any emergency action the Chair can undertake under 'Chair's Action.

Skills and Training

To work effectively, our governance tiers need to have people with the right skills,

experience, qualities and capacity. Our Trustees and Local Academy Councillors have a broad range of backgrounds, professions and expertise. The Trust undertakes a skills audit for all new Trustees and Local Academy Councillors and reviews these on a regular basis. There is periodic training on topical issues in addition to significant amount of training materials and resources.

Governance Reviews

Internal reviews of governance are carried out biennially and involve stakeholder feedback. Feedback from these reviews, along with advice and updates from the DfE, CST and NGA, will be used to update the Governance Handbook. External reviews of Governance are implemented on regular intervals as recommended by DfE. The last external review of governance was completed in January 2024.

Communication

Effective communication is an absolute priority to enable good governance. The following activities are undertaken and reviewed throughout the year:

- Minutes of all meetings are available for Trustees for scrutiny and are uploaded to GovernorHub¹ once signed off as a true and accurate record.
- The LAC Chair termly report is provided to each full Trust Board meeting.

¹ GovernorHub is a cloudbased platform designed to support Governance communication.

- The Chair of Trustees meets informally with the LAC Chairs on a termly basis to ensure key information is provided to and received from each LAC. The Chief Executive may attend these informal network sessions.
- Executive Leaders attend LAC meetings on an ad hoc basis through the year
- Biannual (twice yearly) governance events on key topics led by Executive Leaders with an opportunity for Trustees and LAC Councillors to network.

Principles Of Public Life (Nolan Principles)

The Nolan Principles, also known as the Seven Principles of Public Life, were established to provide a framework for ethical conduct expected from public office holders. They are fundamental to ensuring integrity and accountability within organisations like Endeavour Learning Trust. A summary is detailed in a supporting document and underpin the Trust's Code of Conduct.

They are:

Selflessness

Integrity

Objectivity

Accountability

Openness

Honesty

Leadership

Code Of Conduct

ELT's code of conduct is based on the Academy Trust Governance Code, a voluntary code for academy trusts in England. The code of conduct is reviewed annually and agreed by Trustees with a simplified version for LAC Councillors. The code of conduct links to the fundamental principle of legal, regulatory and contractual obligations (including statutory guidance), plus supplementary elements relating to:

- **Delivery of the Academy Trust's charitable Objects**
- **Openness and accountability**
- **Equality, diversity and inclusion**
- **Leadership**
- **Board Effectiveness**
- **Decision making, risk and control**
- **Integrity**

Data Protection

ELT is a GDPR compliant organisation registered with the ICO (Information Commissioners Office) and by consenting to be a Member, Trustee, Local Academy Councillor our governance roles will be published in line with statutory requirements on our website, Get Information About Schools (GIAS) and Companies House as required. There is a separate Privacy Notice for Governance which is published alongside our other Privacy Notices and Data Protection policies.

Recruitment and Induction

Recruitment

ELT welcomes applications from key stakeholders who are representative of the communities the Trust and its academies operate within for all roles in its governance structures. The criteria and application process for the various roles are stipulated in Trust's Articles of Association and will be dependent on skills, expertise and any vacancies. The Trust Board upholds diversity in its makeup by recruiting Trustees and Local Academy Councillors with varied geographical, social, economic, environmental, business and cultural backgrounds and skills and by maintaining an age and gender balance. These are summarised as:

Members:

Akin to the shareholders of a company, Members have ultimate control over the Trust, with the ability to appoint some Trustees and the right to amend the Trust's Articles of Association. Members must have sufficient knowledge, both of their role, of trusteeship in general and of the Trust's activities, to enable them to carry out their role and to represent the Trust at meetings and other events. Members can delegate recruitment to Trustees and Trustees can delegate some aspects of recruitment to staff, but Members must ensure they retain overall responsibility and control of the recruitment, selection, and induction processes of Trustees.

Trustees:

Trustees must have sufficient knowledge, both of their role, of trusteeship in general and of the Trust's activities, to enable them to carry out their legal role and responsibilities

and to represent the Trust at meetings and other events. The Trust expects Trustees to carry out the actions required to recruit new Trustees and to provide a formal recommendation to the Members for a final decision, if required. The Trust Board will identify the need to recruit additional Trustees through carrying out an annual review of the skills of the Trustees on the Board and associated Committees. In addition, if a Trustee resigns, or their term of office ends and they are not seeking re-election, or their request for re-election is not successful, any gaps on the Trust Board will be recruited to. The Trustees agree what skills, experience and knowledge are needed, and will develop a description and person specification. The Trustees will agree the process for recruitment: taking care to comply with the requirements of the Trust's Articles of Association and Scheme of Delegation.

Local Academy Councillors:

Effectively champions for their academies, acting as the 'eyes and ears' in the local community to make a difference to the future of young people attending the academy. The application process mirrors the Trustee application process with less formality. The elections of Parent Councillors will be conducted as per the requirements in the Articles of Association. For incoming schools, the Chair of Governors and Headteacher will work closely with the Trust's Governance Professional, Chief Executive and Chair of Trustees to appraise the current governance capacity and make recommendations to the Trust Board on the make up of the Local Academy Council for their appointment.

Recommendations will be based on their knowledge, skills and understanding of the role, and the initial terms of office. Existing Governors will not automatically become Local Academy Councillors.

General:

The term of office is for four years for Trustees and Local Academy Councillors. There is no term of office for Members. Trustees and Local Academy Councillors may reapply to serve at the end of their terms. Any reappointments will be considered by the Trust Board and will include feedback on their individual effectiveness during their term of office from the respective Chair and Executive / Academy Leader.

The Chair and Executive leader will review, interview and assess all new Trustee applications, and will nominate any proposed individual for election to the Trust Board. The Members, if appointing or re-appointing a Trustee, will be briefed by the Chair of Trustees and agree (or not) to the recommendation. The Governance Professional will inform interested parties of the outcome of the decision taken.

The Trust seeks to ensure diversity in its governance structures of as well as in its staff base and consideration will be given to ways in which groups that are under-represented on the board might be reached and encouraged to apply. However, at the point of selection the board will not discriminate unfairly on any of the grounds listed in the Equal Opportunities Policy.

The Trust Board, in consultation with Local Academy Councils, will consider the best methods of attracting a diverse range of candidates with the skills required. This may include advertising in the media, voluntary sector, and direct approaches

to professional bodies, over approaches to personal contacts as the intention is to promote diversity and to avoid conflicts of interest. People enquiring to become Trustees or Local Academy Councillors will be sent appropriate documentation about the Trust, and will be asked to complete an application form and skills audit.

It is a criminal offence for an individual to serve as a Trustee or Local Academy Councillor if disqualified from doing so. Checks will be carried out to ensure that all persons applying to become a Trustee or Local Academy Councillor are eligible. These checks will include a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check and a Section 128 check. All relevant parties, such as Companies House, the Trust's solicitors and auditors, GIAS are notified of the new appointments as required.

Expectations

Trustees and Local Academy Councillors are expected to adhere to the Code of Conduct and Nolan Principles. They will provide strategic challenge and support to executive and academy leaders by attending meetings, monitoring visits and sitting on panels as required. The performance of individuals on the Board will be monitored through an annual review, led by the Chair of Trustees/ Local Academy Council and the Governance Professional. In summary they need to:

- Respect the professional expertise of leaders and staff by working in partnership for the best interests of the children, colleagues and community of the Trust/Academy.
- Accept collective decisions made in the best interests of the Trust/Academy and not bring issues of a personal nature or from a specific group to the meeting but follow the Trust's mechanisms for raising these issues.

- Support the Trust/Academy's relationships with key stakeholders, including parents.
- Recognise the need for both induction and ongoing training and development.
- Attend and be prepared for meetings, visits and panels by checking agendas and reading associated paperwork or reports. Attend other events as appropriate.
- Ask strategic 'so what' questions to determine the impact or why issues have occurred and how they are going to be addressed. Follow up actions.

Induction

A proper induction is vital as part of the process of ensuring that Trustees and Local Academy Councillors can become valuable and effective members of the board as quickly as possible in addition to meeting the procedural requirements of the role. ELT will ensure that all new Trustees and Local Academy Councillors are provided with an approved induction programme that is suitable for them and their role, and will equip them with the information they need.

New Trustees and Local Academy Councillors will be offered meetings with relevant staff in order to gain a clear understanding of how the Trust Board or Local Academy Council operates. Induction might include:

- Completion of key paperwork including DBS checks and declarations of interest.
- Links to key documentation and reference material (e.g. DfE's Governance Guide and ESFA's Academy Handbook) including the Code of Conduct
- Introductions to Trustees and senior management

- Visits to the academy(s) and Headteacher(s)
- An assessment of skills and any training required and details of how to access training, including mandatory training on Safeguarding, PREVENT and Cyber security.
- Access to Governor Hub, which includes essential information about ELT, minutes and papers from previous meetings, calendar of events and meeting dates.
- A mentor to support induction and contact details of Governance Assistant/ Governance Professional.

Training, Support And Advice

A wide range of support will be provided by the Governance and Compliance team alongside training. Training will be provided by external experts, executive or academy leaders, or in house by the team. Training may include face to face events, presentations at Governance Events (Conferences) or online sessions or recordings. There will be opportunities for Trustees and Local Academy Councillors to go on dedicated courses if deemed appropriate, or undertaken their own research. Model questions around key topics (e.g. Safeguarding and SEND) and links to external sources of advice will be provided within the Resources section on GovernorHub. Trustees and Councillors also have access to the external information and advice through GovernorHub Knowledge.

There are key priorities for the Trust which include its statutory responsibilities for Safeguarding and SEND. These are summarised below with an overview of governance roles and responsibilities.

Key Priorities

Safeguarding

All Trustees and local Academy Councillors will have access to mandatory training on safeguarding recommended or led by the Trust's Head of Safeguarding and Welfare. ELT and its academies have a legal responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. Safeguarding is the action that is taken to promote the welfare of children and to protect them from harm. Safeguarding means protecting children from abuse and maltreatment, preventing harm to children's health or development; ensuring children grow up with the provision of safe and effective care and taking action for all children and young people to have the best outcomes. Child protection is part of the safeguarding process and it focusses on protecting individual children identified as suffering or likely to suffer significant harm. Trustees and Local Academy Councillors will confirm annually they have read and understood Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) with sets out the statutory guidance for schools and the responsibilities of governing boards. It is updated annually and the Trust's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy is updated so they align.

The Trust Board has a Safeguarding Link Trustee and each academy council has a Safeguarding Champion. These individuals will have more detailed oversight of safeguarding but every Trustee and Local Academy Councillor should understand safeguarding and their collective

responsibilities. Each Local Academy Council should review data on safeguarding incidents, with trend data, pertinent issues and key themes reported to the Trust Board. Annual Trust safeguarding audits are carried out in each academy and are shared with Local Academy Councils for their monitoring of actions.

Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND)

SEND can affect a child or young person's ability to learn by an emotional mental and/or physical impairment which can impact on their behaviour or ability to socialise; ability to read and write; and ability to understand and/or concentrate. There are requirements for schools which include having a clear approach to identifying and responding to SEND; ensuring that pupils with SEND get the support they need and engage in the activities of the school; and working in partnership with parents and families. The Trust has a SEND policy and each academy a SEND Information Report and a SEND Co ordinator (SENDCO). All governing boards have legal duties in relation to its pupils with SEND, basically to ensure compliance with the SEN Code. The Trust Board has a SEND Link Trustee supported by SEND Champions from the Local Academy Councils. However, every Trustee and Local Academy Councillor should understand SEND and their collective responsibilities, by reviewing data on the education outcomes of SEND pupils and other vulnerable groups.

Careers

The Trust has a designated Careers Link Trustee to take strategic responsibility for overseeing the institution's career guidance program and ensure compliance with national career education standards, such as the Gatsby Benchmarks, and support the Trust in meeting its legal obligations for providing high-quality, impartial career advice. This role involves monitoring career provision effectiveness, advocating for improvements, and ensuring alignment with students' needs and future workforce demands.

The Trust Board also has other Link Trustee and Champion roles to reflect priorities and these roles can change over time. They include Attendance, Digital, and Estates

(H&S). Role Descriptions are approved by the Trust board with individuals invite to take a lead role that reflects their professional expertise or interests.

Stakeholder Engagement and Communication

Ensuring stakeholder groups are represented is key to the delivery of the Trust's key objectives especially at Local Academy Level. Community Voice activities ensure pupil, parent and staff voice are included in governance decisions. The Trust, at all levels, encourages partnership working and collaboration with external organisations and employers. The membership of Local Academy Councils aims to reflect and engage with their local communities.

Document Control

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