The best we can be

Governance Handbook September 2025

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Our Values and Guiding Principles

Excellence Resilience and Integrity

Our Approach

Three guiding principles drive all of our work and decision-making:

a. **Children come first, and are at the heart of all we do.**
   Our academies exist for our learners. In formulating our policies and development priorities, the desire to create the best possible learning environment, deliver the best possible provision, and achieve the best possible outcomes for our young people is fundamental and can be best achieved through collaborative working.

b. **Positive relationships underpin all of our work.**
   Young people respond most positively and learn best, when their social and emotional development is strong. The craft of the classroom is multi-faceted, but we believe the most effective teachers have an ability to connect with learners and create a positive environment founded on encouragement. We work hard to create a climate in our schools where everyone is respectful, providing safe and meaningful opportunities for pupils to develop positive relationships with one another so that they fully engage in learning and collaboration.

c. **High expectations – everyone can achieve.**
   There is an expectation that all pupils will make progress relative to their starting points over the course of their time in our schools. We are committed to meeting the needs of all our learners, having a strong understanding of the challenges facing our pupils and supporting them to remove or overcome hurdles will improve all outcome measures. We will work with our young people and their parents/carers to provide the support and challenge whatever their need.

Moral Purpose:

Fylde Coast Academy Trust is a partnership of schools formed to benefit from the opportunities of collaboration, to support and enhance the strengths of each school. There is a common desire to share expertise and support school improvement across the organisation.

FCAT also has a strong desire to facilitate inclusion and social integration across our schools and communities. This is important as we value promoting integration, gaining understanding of the impact on our stakeholders and tackling social exclusion.

- The UK takes poverty, social exclusion, social justice and social mobility seriously and we do so across political divides. Creating a just, fair society where everyone can prosper and get on is a cornerstone of Britain's values.

- This is, in part, because we know that the consequences of economic exclusion and poverty are wide-ranging and long-lasting. Children from low income families are less likely to do well in school, are more likely to suffer ill-health and face pressures in their lives that can be associated with unemployment and criminality.

- The less integrated we are as a nation, the greater the economic and social costs we face – estimated as approximately £6 billion each year in one study.

- We know that where communities live separately, with fewer interactions between people from different backgrounds, mistrust, anxiety and prejudice grow.

- Conversely, social mixing and interactions between people from a wider range of backgrounds can have positive impacts; not just in reducing anxiety and prejudice, but also in enabling people to get on better in employment and social mobility.

- Resilience, integration and shared common values and behaviours – such as respect for the rule of law, democracy, equality and tolerance – are inhibitors of division, hate and extremism. They can make us stronger, more equal, more united and able to stand together as one nation.
  (The Casey Review -2016)

Our moral imperative is to alleviate the challenges our pupils, parents, carers and families face. We can remove barriers to learning and in doing so enable our pupils to experience success and engage actively and positively in their communities throughout their education and into adulthood; be that through their economic, social or cultural activity.

Principles of Governance

It is crucial that Fylde Coast Academy Trust has a robust governance framework in place to ensure high quality provision across the Trust and harness the benefits of collaboration.

As a charity and company limited by guarantee, Fylde Coast Academy Trust is governed by a Board of Trustees who are responsible for and oversee the management and administration of the Trust and its schools.

FCAT is the only legal entity accountable for all the schools within the Trust and has entered into one set of Articles of Association with the Secretary of State for Education, which governs all schools within the Trust.

The Trustees are accountable to external government agencies including the DfE and Charity Commission for the quality of education they provide and they are required to have systems in place to assure quality, safety, probity and good practice.

To discharge these responsibilities, the Trustees appoint individuals to serve on committees which focus on specific matters such as finance and audit. In addition, a Local Governing Body (LGB) oversees each school in the Trust, focusing on carrying out the Trust's vision, policies and initiatives, holding school leaders to account and the day to day running of the school.

A scheme of delegation outlines the respective roles and responsibilities in leading and managing FCAT of:

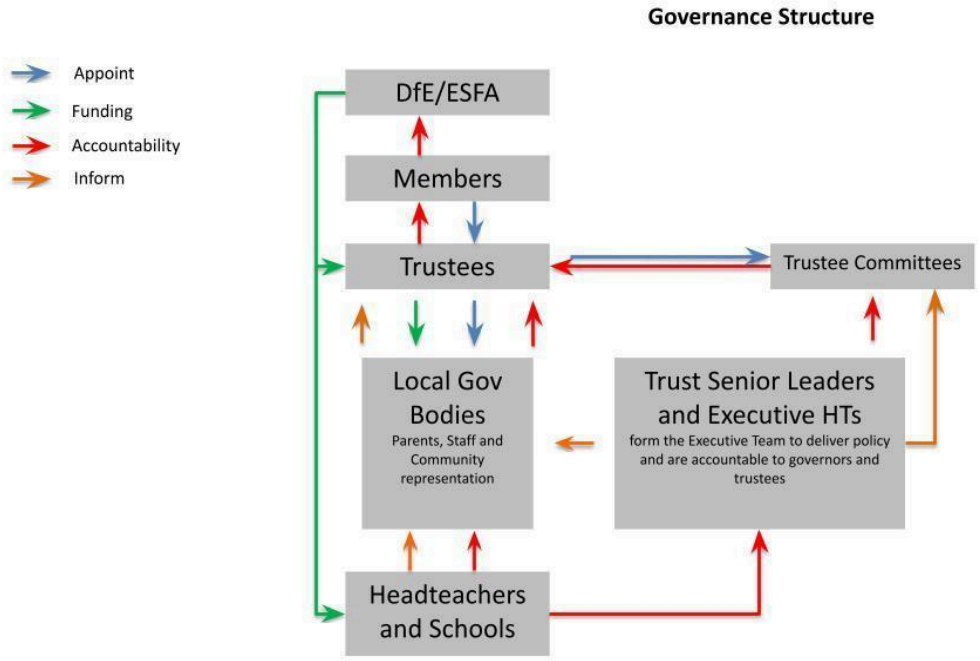
- The Board of Trustees and their committees
- The Chief Executive (CEO) and Executive Leaders
- The Headteacher of each school.

The scheme of delegation should be read in conjunction with the Articles of Association and the Operating Model.

An operating model complements the scheme of delegation (SoD). The SoD highlights the Trust's provision and responsibilities and where these are delegated in order to enable schools to meet the needs of pupils in their specific context.

Terms of reference for the Board of Trustees and all committees (including LGBs) outline the responsibilities of each committee.

Governance and Leadership Structure:



Trust Members

- FCAT will have a minimum of 3 members. It is intended that there will not usually be more than 5 members. If a member resigns, the other members appoint a replacement member.

- Members have ultimate control over the Trust. They agree the Articles of Association that define the charitable purpose and how FCAT will run, and approve amendments to the Articles.
- Members appoint up to 9 Trustees, and remove them if necessary.
- Members receive the company accounts and the annual report. They appoint the external auditor on an annual basis.
- The liability of members is limited to £10.

Trustees

The Trustees of FCAT are accountable for the performance of the schools in the Trust.
All trustees are expected to serve the interests of all schools in FCAT as mandated in the 'Objects' set out in the Articles of Association.
Trustees are company directors and must comply with charity and company law requirements and the Trust funding agreement. They must also ensure that FCAT complies in the same way.
Trustees ordinarily serve for four years and the Board meets at least 3 times per year.
Member appointed Trustees can co-opt further Trustees to the Board (there is no restriction on the number of appointments).

Link to Articles

Role of the Chair of the Board

The Chair of the Board of Trustees will:

1. Ensure Trust business is conducted properly and in line with legal requirements.
2. Preserve order in meetings and ensure all trustees have equal opportunity to express their views on all matters under discussion and decision-making.
3. Ensure all meetings are run effectively, focusing on priorities and making the best use of available time.
4. Determine where a decision requires a vote and whether the resolution has been passed.
5. Work with the clerk and CEO to carry out regular Board and Committee effectiveness reviews.

6. Establish and foster an effective relationship with the CEO and executive leaders. Ensure the Board acts as a sounding board to the CEO and provides strategic direction.
7. In the event of exceptional decisions (where a delay in taking action would be detrimental to the interests of the Trust) needing to be made between meetings which fall within the remit of a Board sub-committee, in consultation with the CEO and the Chair of the sub-committee, take appropriate action on behalf of the committee. This action, known as 'Chair's Action', must be reported at the next formal meeting of the Board for ratification.
8. The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Board have the right to attend any committee or sub-committee meeting held within FCAT's terms of reference and scheme of delegation.

Responsibilities of the CEO

The CEO's role is to lead, develop and grow the Trust in order to ensure the quality provision and high standard of education on a long-term basis. The CEO will lead on the introduction of any sponsor academies and effect sustained improvement in those schools.

The CEO's action and decision-making will focus on three clear principles:

a. Children come first, and are at the heart of all we do
b. Positive relationships underpin all of our work
c. High expectations – everyone can achieve.

Specifically:

1. The CEO will be responsible for trust wide strategic development to improve education and governance standards by;
    a. promoting and developing the ethos and values of FCAT
    b. ensuring the communication of these values externally and internally
    c. securing educational success through effective strategic planning and execution.
2. Through effective leadership and skilled policy development the CEO will;
    a. create a culture of continuous improvement
    b. implement effective organisation systems and,

c. maintain high levels of integrity to secure the best possible outcomes for all pupils

3. As appropriate, act as an Executive Headteacher (or delegate this role), brokering intervention and support as appropriate.
4. Support Senior, Executive and School Leaders as required.
5. Line manage senior and executive staff.
6. Perform the duties of Accounting Officer for the Trust.
7. Chair the senior leadership meetings.
8. In the absence or incapacity of Senior Leaders, Executive Leaders and Headteachers, determine to whom their delegated duties fall to.

Responsibilities of Senior and Executive (EHT) Leaders

Senior and executive leaders are responsible for executive governance of the trust's central team and school leaders within their line management. This requires embodying the vision, values and principles of the Trust to deliver trust wide collaborative working with a level of accountability that bridges the gap between the CEO and our schools. It requires supporting and enabling our school leaders, being responsible for evaluating school effectiveness through quality assurance systems and holding leaders to account in areas identified for development. Key to the success of this position is exercising executive governance through leadership.

Responsibilities of Headteachers

Headteachers are responsible for the leadership and management of their school. They report directly to senior and executive leaders and are accountable to their school's LGB and the Board of Trustees. Headteachers also carry a responsibility to other schools in FCAT and should act in a manner that contributes to the overall success of the Trust.

Headteachers are specifically responsible for:

1. Embodying the vision, values and principles of the Trust.
2. Implementing agreed policies and procedures, including all statutory duties.
3. Advising the LGB and the Trust on strategic direction, forward planning and quality assurance.

4. Ensuring all pupils' entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum.
5. Deploying, leading and managing all staff in the school.
6. Evaluating the quality of education in the school and ensuring all staff performance standards are maintained as appropriate to their role.
7. The admission of learners and ensuring the registers of admission and attendance are continually up to date and accurate.
8. Ensuring high standards of achievement.
9. Maintaining a calm and orderly environment in the school and classrooms
10. Who or which persons can enter school premises.
11. Staff appointments within the approved budget.
12. Informing the executive of required staffing needs and recommended changes to staffing.
13. Formulating the school budget with the CFO and CEO (or delegate) for approval by trustees.
14. Ensuring all Trust policies and practices are implemented.

Guidance on the make-up and function of the Trust Board

1. The Trust Board is bound by the Articles of Association.
2. The Trust Board has a strategic role, including establishing/developing the vision, strategy, priorities, policies and targets for the Trust.
3. The Trust Board has overall responsibility and ultimate decision making authority and accountability for all the work of the Trust.

4. Membership;

    - The Trust Board must consist of a minimum of three trustees.
    - Members may appoint up to 9 trustees. Member appointed Trustees may appoint Co-opted Trustees.
    - The Board must include two 'Parent Trustees' if LGBs do not collectively include a minimum of two parent governors.
    - Trustees serve for four years and, if eligible, any trustee may be re-appointed at a general meeting.

5. Chairs of Committees;

- The Board shall annually elect a trustee to act as Chair of Trustees and another to be Vice-Chair.
- The Chair or Vice-Chair cannot be an employee of the Trust.

6. Proceedings of Board Meetings

    - The Board will meet at least 3 times per year.
    - Any three Board members can request, in writing given to the Clerk, to convene a meeting by giving no less than 7 days notice.
    - The quorum for a meeting of the Trustees shall be any three Trustees, or where greater, any one third of the total number of Trustees
    - The quorum for the transaction of the business of a Board committee shall be a majority of the Trustees and no vote on any matter shall be taken at a meeting unless it is quorate.
    - Where any power or function of the Trustees has been exercised by any committee or a person to whom a power has been sub-delegated that person or committee shall report to the Trustees in respect of any action taken or decision made at the meeting of the Trustees immediately following the taking of the action or the making of the decision.
    - The Chief Executive Officer shall ensure that a clerk is provided to take minutes at meetings of the Board.
    - Every matter to be decided at a Board Meeting must be determined by a majority of the votes of the trustees present and voting on the matter.
    - Each trustee present in person shall be entitled to one vote.
    - Where there is an equal division of votes the Chair shall have a casting vote.
    - A register of attendance shall be kept for each meeting and published annually.

7. Trustees' Interests

    - Trustees are required to declare any business or other interests in any item being discussed at a meeting.
    - Each trustee, if present at a Board meeting, should disclose their interest, withdraw from the meeting and not vote on a matter if:
        - there maybe a conflict between their interests and the interests of any of the Academies or the Trust;
        - there is reasonable doubt about their ability to act impartially in relation to a matter where a fair hearing is required; or
        - they have a personal interest (this is where they and/or a close relative will be directly affected by the decision of the Board in relation to that matter) in a matter.

Guidance on the Function of Committee Meetings

In order to support the effective operation of the Trust, the Board has established a number of committees to which it has delegated certain of its powers and functions. Each committee has terms of reference that set out the constitution, membership and proceedings of the committees the Board has established. This guidance provides an overview of each committee's role.

In summary, the Board has established two different types of committee:

- Main board committees which are established to deal with Trust-wide matters, these are audit and risk, resources and standards

- Local governing bodies which are established by the Board to support the effective operation of the academies

The Board will review terms of references for committees together with the membership of the committees at least once annually.

Terms of reference may only be amended by the Board. The functions, duties and proceedings of committees shall also be subject to any regulations made by the Board from time to time.

Rules used to Operate Committees

Board Committees

- Each board committee has a minimum of three members and a maximum of five members. A majority of board committee members must be trustees.
- The Board appoints and removes all committee members.
- No member of the resources committee can be Chair of the audit and risk committee.
- The Chair of Trustees cannot be Chair of the audit and risk committee.
- The Trustees recognise the overriding principles of the Academy Trust Handbook (ATH) published by the ESFA.

- Audit of the resources committee should be established in such a way as to achieve internal scrutiny which delivers objective and independent assurance for the Trust.
- Staff employed by the Trust will not be members of the audit and risk committee, but may attend meetings to provide information and participate in discussions; and
- The Trust's Accounting Officer and other relevant senior staff will routinely attend committee meetings in the capacity set out above.

LGBs

Each LGB will have a minimum of five members and a maximum of eleven members.

The membership of each LGB shall be as follows, unless the Board resolve otherwise following review:

- Two parent members
- One staff member
- The Headteacher of the academy
- The chair and up to to three further persons appointed by the Board
- Up to three other persons co-opted by members of the LGB

The LGB members may only appoint co-opted members with the consent of the Board. The term of office for LGB members is 4 years, with the exception of the Headteacher this time limit shall not apply. Subject to remaining eligible, any member may put themselves forward for re-appointment or re-election (as the case may be).

LGB members can elect a temporary replacement from among the members present at a meeting in the absence of the Chair/Vice-Chair. No person may act as Chair if they are an employee of the Trust.

SDBs

A Support and Development Board (SDB) is a temporary governing body that is put in place when a school requires significant intervention and support. The SDB will assume all the responsibilities of the local governing body, with a core focus on securing a sound basis for future improvement and promoting high standards of educational achievement and will provide intensive support, challenge and governance to an FCAT Academy. The SDB replaces the existing local governing body for an interim period and is responsible for the school's strategic direction. Trustees must agree the implementation of an SDB and the members of this group.

The membership of an SDB shall be as follows, unless the Board resolve otherwise following review:

- One parent member
- One staff member
- The Headteacher of the academy
- The chair and up to three further persons appointed by the Board based on skills and experience of school improvement

Committee Meetings

Committees meet three times a year. However, any two committee members can request that the clerk convene a meeting by 14 days notice.

The quorum for the transaction of the business of a committee requires the majority of the committee members to be present. Every matter to be decided at a meeting of a committee must be determined by a majority of the votes of the members present and voting on the matter. Each committee member present in person is entitled to one vote. Where there is an equal division of votes the Chair shall have a casting vote. A register of attendance shall be kept for each Committee meeting and published annually.

Committees may invite attendance at meetings from persons who are not committee members to assist or advise on a particular matter or range of issues. Such persons may speak with the permission of the Chair but shall not be entitled to vote.

Committees can determine to make decisions via electronic means between scheduled meetings in order to allow the business of the trust to take place. All members of the committee will be informed of the business via Governor Hub and be given a date in which to confirm their vote in favour or not of the business. Any vote in this manner will need to conform to the quorum requirements for transactions. Committee members are advised to turn on notifications in order to be aware of information being posted on Governor Hub.

Members' Interests

Committee members are required to declare any business or other interests in any item being discussed at a meeting. Each committee member present must disclose any interest, withdraw from the meeting and not vote on a matter if:

- There may be a conflict between their interests and the interests of any of the Trust
- There is reasonable doubt about their ability to act impartially in relation to a matter where a fair hearing is required, or

- They have a personal interest (this is where they and/or a close relative will be directly affected by the decision of the committee in relation to that matter) in a matter.

Eligibility & Removal of Committee Members and Trustees

Committee members shall become ineligible if they;

- Become disqualified from holding office under the Trust's Articles of Association.
- Becomes disqualified from holding office as a governor.
- Are included in the list of teachers or workers considered by the Secretary of State as unsuitable to work with children or young people.
- Are barred from any regulated activity relating to children.
- Become bankrupt or make any arrangement or composition with his/her creditors generally; or their estate has been sequestrated and the sequestration has not been discharged, annulled or reduced.
- are considered unsuitable to undertake the role following any spent/unspent criminal charges, convictions, official cautions, barring from working with children, professional prohibitions or if you are subject to an investigation with the Police in accordance with the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974;
- Have been fined for causing a nuisance or disturbance on school premises during the 5 years prior to or since appointment or election as a committee member.
- Refuse to an application being made to the Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) for a criminal records check.
- Commit a serious breach of the Trust's code of governance or any standing order or protocol implemented by the Board.

If a LGB member is absent without the permission of the LGB members from all their meetings held within a period of six months, the LGB Members can resolve that his/her office be vacated.

Trustees co-opted by Trustees appointed by members can be removed by said trustees. Examples include failure to follow the code of conduct, not meeting the seven standards of public life (Nolan Principles) or non attendance at consecutive meetings. This is in addition to the ineligibility points above.

Members can also via a simple majority of members in an ordinary resolution remove a trustee. Those removing a trustee must give written notice to the clerk of the removal.

Since 2017 parents and staff members elected, can be removed in the same manner as non-elected roles.

If a committee member resigns his/her office by notice in writing to the relevant Chair and clerk. Members of employees' families within the trust will not be eligible to be considered for membership of the Board of Trustees or Local Governing Bodies as this would be deemed a conflict of interest.

Members of an Employee's families are;

- the employee's spouse or civil partner
- any other person (whether of a different sex or the same sex) with whom the employee lives as a partner in an enduring family relationship
- the employees children or step children
- any children or stepchildren of a person within the second bullet point above (and who are not children or step-children of the employee) who live with the employee and have not attained the age of 18
- the employee's parents
- the employee's siblings

The Trustees have the right to remove or suspend (on such terms as they see fit) any LGB member by written notice to the relevant Chair.

Reporting Procedures

- Produce and agree minutes within 14 days of each meeting
- The committee reports can be agreed by committee members by email.
- The committee reports will be available to the Board within 21 days of each committee meeting (governor hub is the current medium for sharing information).
- Committees shall arrange for the production and delivery of such other reports or updates as requested by the Board from time to time.
- Each committee shall conduct an annual review of its work and the powers and functions delegated to it under these terms of reference and shall concisely report the outcome and make recommendations to the Board.

Remit and Responsibilities of the Resources Committee

The resources committee has a strategic role, acting as a critical friend to the Trust's executive and those invited to attend meetings. Trustees approve the co-option of non-directors (those not members of the board of trustees) onto the committee to provide additional support and areas of expertise where appropriate in line with the articles. Co-opted non-director members do not have a vote in transactions.

The role of the resources committee is to ensure effective management and deployment of finances, staffing and other resources across the Trust and ensure compliance with all relevant regulations.

Responsibilities and delegation of powers are set out in the scheme of delegation. Should committee members require clarification the clerk will be able to advise or further guidance can be found in the articles of association.

Agendas will be agreed in advance by the Chair of committee in consultation with the CEO, based on, but not limited to, the annual Trust planner, and papers will be circulated to members and attendees at least 5 working days in advance of the meeting.

Remit and Responsibilities of the Audit and Risk Committee (inline with the ATH 2021)

The committee's oversight includes the financial and non-financial controls and risks at constituent academies.

Membership of the committee

- The membership of the committee will comprise a minimum of 3 Trustees.
- The chair of trustees and or the chair of the resources committee shall not be chair of the audit and risk committee.
- Employees of the trust shall not be audit and risk committee members, but the accounting officer and chief financial officer should attend to provide information and participate in discussions.

The audit and risk committee must ensure that risks are being addressed appropriately through **internal scrutiny** by:

- Agreeing a programme of work annually to deliver internal scrutiny across the Trust throughout the year. The ratings and responses on the Trust Risk Register should be used to inform the programme of works, ensuring checks are modified as appropriate each year, with higher risk areas reviewed in good time

- Agreeing who will perform the internal scrutiny function on behalf of the Trust. The Committee should have access to those carrying out internal scrutiny, in order to review their plans and reports, and also consider their quality
- Considering reports at each meeting from those carrying out the programme of work, incorporating:
    - Recommendations where appropriate to enhance financial and non-financial controls and risk management
    - A review of progress in addressing previous recommendations
    - An annual summary report for each year ended 31 August outlining the areas reviewed, key findings, recommendation and conclusions, to help the committee consider actions and assess year on year progress
    - Reporting to the Board on the adequacy of the trust's internal control framework, including financial and non-financial controls and management of risks

- Considering outputs from other assurance activities by third parties, including ESFA financial management and governance reviews, funding audits and investigations

Whilst the audit and risk committee is responsible for overseeing the internal scrutiny, the findings must also be made available to all trustees promptly.

The audit and risk committee must ensure that risks are being addressed appropriately through **external auditors,** taking opportunities to strengthen systems of financial management and control. Specifically the audit and risk committee must:

- Review the external auditor's plan each year
- Review the annual report and accounts
- Review the auditor's findings and actions taken by the trust's managers in response to those findings
- Assess the effectiveness and resources of the external auditor to provide a basis for decisions by the trust's members about the auditor's reappointment or dismissal or retendering. Considerations may include:
    - the auditor's sector expertise
    - their understanding of the trust and its activities
    - whether the audit process allows issues to be raised on a timely basis at the appropriate level
    - the quality of auditor comments and recommendations in relation to key areas

- the personal authority, knowledge and integrity of the audit partners and their staff to interact effectively with, and robustly challenge, the trust's managers
- the auditor's use of technology

- The committees' decision making will be minuted and available for scrutiny at the full board.

Trustees approve the co-option of non-directors onto the committee to provide additional support and areas of expertise where appropriate in line with the articles. Co-opted non-director members do not have a vote in transactions.

The audit committee will obtain any legal or independent professional advice it considers necessary. However, the audit committee may not incur expenditure in excess of £5,000 without ensuring best value.

Responsibilities and delegation of powers are set out in the scheme of delegation. Should committee members require clarification the clerk will be able to advise or further guidance can be found in the articles of association.

Agendas will be agreed in advance by the Chair of the committee in consultation with the CEO, based on, but not limited to, the annual Trust planner and papers will be circulated to members and attendees at least 5 working days in advance of the meeting.

Remit and Responsibilities of the Standards Committee

The standards committee has a strategic role, acting as a critical friend to the Trust's executive and those invited to attend meetings. Trustees approve the co-option of non-directors onto the committee to provide additional support and areas of expertise where appropriate in line with the articles. Co-opted non-director members do not have a vote in transactions.

The role of the standards committee is to assess the performance of each of our schools in relation to the goals that have been set. This includes

- An evaluation of the curriculum including the quality of education being provided and the outcomes pupils achieve.
- The personal development of pupils and how well each school meets the needs of its pupils.
- Whether safeguarding is effective.

- An assessment of the expectations for behaviour and attitudes of pupils.
- Leadership and management within the Trust.

Responsibilities and delegation of powers are set out in the scheme of delegation. Should committee members require clarification the clerk will be able to advise or further guidance can be found in the articles of association.

Agendas will be agreed in advance by the Chair of the committee in consultation with the CEO, based on, but not limited to, the annual Trust planner and papers will be circulated to members and attendees at least 5 working days in advance of the meeting.

Remit and Responsibilities of the Local Governing Bodies

The LGB committee has a strategic role, acting as a critical friend to the school's Headteacher and senior leadership team.

The LGB is primarily responsible for standards in that academy. This includes ensuring robust policies and systems are in place for the safeguarding and wellbeing of all pupils. The LGB ensure systems are in place for securing excellent academic progress, high quality teaching and an effective curriculum. LGB's must know the key strengths and areas for development within the school in order to approve and monitor the implementation school improvement priorities.

The roles and responsibilities of executive leaders in the trust fulfil a level of executive governance that supports the LGB and enables a clear focus on standards. For example the CFO works with the Headteacher and Academy Finance Lead in consultation with the CEO regarding the financial arrangements within the school.

Responsibilities and delegation of powers are set out in the scheme of delegation. Should LGB committee members require clarification the clerk will be able to advise or further guidance can be found in the articles of association.

Agendas will be agreed in advance by the Chair of the LGB in consultation with the Headteacher, based on, but not limited to, the annual Trust planner and papers will be circulated to members and attendees at least 5 working days in advance of the meeting.

The chair of the LGB will be part of the Chairs Group, a meeting of all LGB chairs and the Chair of Trustees. Meetings shall be informal and a supportive forum to aid the effective communication and running of the Trust.

Board committees may request the chair of a LGB to attend any board meeting and present a summary of the agenda and recommendations made at any previous LGB meeting.

Appendices

1. FCAT Scheme of Delegation
2. Monitoring - Key Performance Indicators
3. Financial decision making approval thresholds
4. Operating Model
5. FCAT Support for Schools

Scheme of Delegation

This Scheme of delegation identifies the body or person accountable within FCAT for decision making. It determines the functions of the Trust board, each committees and the body or person to whom delegated powers are given, for example - Headteacher. This scheme applies to all schools.

Delegation can be revised based on the performance of a school. The Board of Trustees may recall delegated powers where significant improvements are required. Delegated functions given to committees and leaders with executive governance will be reported on at board meetings as appropriate. Delegation is set to enable the Headteacher to effectively lead their school.

Scheme of delegation key: Everyone within our organisation needs to understand their role: that being the tasks and activities each person or body must complete. To make this clear FCAT use a RACI matrix. RACI is an example of a responsibility assignment matrix, it is a system that illustrates the functions' goal and the required action for each person or body. This assists with reducing confusion on expectations, in turn, increasing organisation efficiency. In this context, decisions are made efficiently and accountability is clear. Please watch this video before continuing.

Responsible – The function has been delegated to this person/body to perform.
Accountable – The person/body who is making the decision to delegate the function remains directly accountable for the function.
Consulted – The person/body who will be communicated with regarding decisions and tasks/functions to seek their view.
Informed – The person/body who will be updated on decisions and actions.

STD - Standards Committee, RES - Resources Committee, A&R - Audit and Risk Committee, LGB - Local Governing Body

STRATEGY AND LEADERSHIP				
Task, Function or Role	**Trustees**	**Exec Officer**	**Committee**	**Headteacher**
Set the strategic goals of the Trust	AR	R	LGB C	I
Setting the Trust culture and values	AR	R	LGB C	I
Set the key priorities for the school		A	LGB C	R
Develop the values, principles & ethos of Trust	A	R	LGB C	C
Maintain the character and ethos of the school		C	LGB A	R
Deliver strategic goals of the Trust	A	R	LGB C	I
Deliver key priorities of the school		C	LGB A	R
Evaluate progress towards the Trusts' goals	I	R	STD A	
Comply with the funding agreement, Articles of Association and the Academies Trust Handbook	I	R	RES A	R
Compliance with regulatory frameworks affecting the Trust (including all charity law, company law, employment law and health and safety	I	R	RES A	R
Ensuring that there are accurate financial controls for probity and value for money in relation to the management of public funds	I	R	A&R A	
Ensuring transparency of information	A R	R		
Maintaining the register of business interests and procedure to manage conflicts of interest and connected party transactions	A	C	A R	C
Maintaining the Trust risk register	I	R	A R	
Maintaining the school risk register	I	C	LGB A	R
Setting expectations for trustee conduct	A R	C		
Fostering equality, diversity and inclusion including building a diverse board	A R	C		
Appointing Chair and Vice Chair	A R			

Ensuring appointment checks, induction and training of governance stakeholders	A R	R		
Appointing co-opted Trustees	A R	C		I
Appointing and removing the Trust appointed members of LGBs	I	C	RES A R	C
Nominating safeguarding lead trustee	A R			
Nominating SEND lead trustee	A R			
Managing elections for the appointment of parent and staff members of LGBs	I	C	LGB A	R
Appointing and removing the chairs and vice chairs of LGBs	I	C	RES A R	C
Appointment of a governance professional	I	A R	C	I
Policies – review and approval of Trust Wide Policies (including admissions, DBS, charging and remissions policies, health & safety and safeguarding)		R	RES A A R	C
Prepare terms of reference for committees	A	R	C	I
Evaluating governance regularly	A R	C		
Ensuring finance skill set on board	A R	C		
Chair's Action	A R	C	I	
Chair's Action – School Level			LGB chair	R

Training programme for trustees and LGBs	A	C	RES R	C

EDUCATION AND CURRICULUM				
Task, Function or Role	**Trustees**	**Exec Officer**	**Committee**	**Headteacher**
School Development Plan - in line with strategic aims of the Trust		A	LGB C	R
Setting and reviewing the education performance of the Trust	I	R	STD A	
Setting and reviewing the education performance of the school	C	A	LGB C	R
Quality of Education - ensuring appropriate support, challenge and intervention	I	A	STD I	R
Determining the curriculum and reviewing its effectiveness	I	C	LGB A	R
Ensuring the legal requirements for children with special educational needs and disabilities are met.	I	I	LGB A	R
Delivering support for looked after children		I	LGB A	R
Delivering Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), in line with statutory requirements	I	I	LGB A	R
Delivering careers guidance, with regards to statutory requirements	I	I	LGB A	R

Evaluating the impact Pupil Premium funding	I	C	LGB A	R
Collective worship arrangements for school without religious character	I	C	LGB A	R
Set admissions policy		C	RES C LGB A	R
Keeping admission and attendance registers		I	LGB A	R
Admission decisions		C	LGB I	A R
Evaluating performance of the school by: ▪ reviewing the quality of care and provision ▪ monitoring the overall effectiveness of leadership and management ▪ receiving quality assurance reports	I	R	LGB A	R
School Self-evaluation		C	LGB A STD I	R
Review priorities - against strategic plans of the school.		R	LGB A STD I	R
Termly report to the Board (CEO's report)	A	R	LGB I	I
Behaviour and attendance		C	LGB A STD I	R
School term dates and length of school day	I	A R	LGB I	C
School lunch – ensure provided to the appropriate nutritional standards		I	LGB A	R

Provision of free school meals to those meeting the criteria		I	LGB A	R
Setting the uniform policy	I	I	LGB I	A R
Safeguarding – including ensuring each school has appointed a designated safeguarding lead, ensuring compliance with statutory guidance and maintenance of the single central record.	A	R	LGB R	R
Stakeholder Engagement – ▪ Promoting partnership working between parents/carers and the school to promote high standards of attendance, behaviour and learning ▪ Undertaking consultation with pupils, parents/carers and other stakeholders as part of a programme of regular self-evaluation by the school to assess its performance against its stated aims and objectives. ▪ Ensuring that such feedback is used to support the development of best practice and to promote the quality of the overall pupil experience.	I	C	LGB A	R
Setting approach to directing pupils offsite, exclusions	I	R	LGB A	R
Trust Support during OFSTED inspection		R	STD A LGB I	C

FINANCIAL				
Task, Function or Role	**Trustees**	**Exec Officer**	**Committee**	**Headteacher**

Appointment to the Audit and Risk Committee	A R	I	I	
Appointment of the Chief Financial Officer	A	R	I	
Recommend appointment of External Auditors to the Members	A	R	I	
Appointment of the Internal Auditors	I	R	RES A	
Approve Annual Accounts	A	R	RES R	
Approving the Trust's finance policy and procedures	I	C	RES A	
Bank Accounts – authorising the establishment of bank accounts and approve bank mandates in the name of the Trust	I	R	RES A	
Agreeing a funding model including school allocations	I	R	RES A	C
Trust Annual Budget – formulating and setting the Trust wide budgets	I	R	RES A	I
Approving the intended use of surplus school balances	I	C	RES A	R
Approving the central procurement framework	I	R	RES A	C
Monitoring the procurement framework for compliance	I	R	A&R A	I
Approving the Trust's charging and remissions policy	I	R	RES A	C

Agreeing local charges in accordance with the Trust's charging and remissions policy	I	A	LGB I	R
Preparing Trust financial statements in accordance with the accounting framework	I	R	RES A	I
Approving school financial statements	I	R	RES A	C
Monitoring and reporting monthly management accounts	I	R	RES A	R
Investments – agreeing the investment policy in line with the ATH and managing the cash position	C	R	RES A	C
Ensuring adequate insurance cover is in place	A	R	RES A	I

HR AND OPERATIONS				
Task, Function or Role	**Trustees**	**Exec Officer (Trust SLT)**	**Committee**	**Headteacher**
Approving the Trust staff structure	I	R	(RES) A	I
Recruiting to the Trust central staff structure	I	A R	(RES) C	I
Approving school staffing structures (except SLT)		A	(LGB) C	R
Recruiting to the school staff structure		I	(LGB) I	A R
Appointing and agreeing the pay of the CEO	A		(RES) R	
Appointing and performance managing the senior executive leader (SEL) as Accounting Officer	A		(RES) R	

Appointing and agreeing the pay of the Trust SLT	A	C	(RES) R	
Appointing and agreeing the pay of Headteachers	I	R	(LGB) C (RES) A	
Appointing and agreeing the pay of executive leaders	I - SLT C - CEO	R - SLT	RES A (R -CEO)	
Approving school SLT staffing structures and pay ranges		A R	(LGB) I (RES) I	R
Appointing and agreeing the pay (within policy & agreed range) of school senior leadership teams		A	LGB C	R
Appointing and agreeing the pay (within policy and agreed range) of other staff in schools		I	LGB I	A R
Approving pay outside of the national terms and conditions	I	R	RES A	C
Exercising pay discretions within policy - ● Central staff ● School staff	 I I	 R C	 RES A LGB I	 A R
Agreeing redundancies ● Central staff ● School staff	 I I	 R R	 RES A RES A	 C R
Dismissing the CEO	A		RES R	
Dismissing central staff	I	A R	RES I	
Dismissing Headteachers	I	A R (CEO)	RES I	
Dismissing Deputy Headteachers	I	C	LGB I	A R

Dismissing other staff		C	LGB I	A R
Suspending/reinstating the CEO	A	I	RES R	I
Suspending/reinstating central staff		A R	RES I	
Suspending/reinstating Headteachers	I	A R (CEO)	RES I	
Suspending/reinstating Deputy Headteachers	I	C	LGB I	A R
Suspending/reinstating other staff		C	LGB I	A R
Agreeing termination payments for the CEO	A		RES R	
Agreeing termination payments for Headteachers	I	R	RES A LGB C	
Agreeing termination payments for central staff		A R	RES I	
Agreeing termination payments for other staff		A	RES I LGB I	R
Maintaining HR Policies (including recruitment, discipline, capability, grievance and absence policies) in accordance with all appropriate regulations	I	R	RES A	R
Review of HR policies	I	R	RES A	C
Setting whistleblowing procedures	I	R	RES A	I
Overseeing staff wellbeing, workload and working conditions	A	R	RES A	R
Annual pay reviews ● Central staff	I	R C	RES A LGB I	A R

• School staff				
Overseeing the effectiveness of services provided centrally by the Trust	A		A R	C
Acquiring and disposing of Trust land	A	C	RES R	
Changing the use of Assets	I	R	A&R A	R
Setting health and safety policies and estates management strategy	A	R	RES A	I
Media and PR - overseeing public relations activities to project the activities of the Trust and schools to the wider community	I	R	A&R A	R
Setting governance policies (data protection, information sharing, cyber security, Freedom of Information (FOI), code of conduct, complaints, whistleblowing)	I	R	A&R A	R
Academy Prospectus		I	LGB I	A R
Trust Prospectus and website	I	A R	A&R C	C

Monitoring - Key Performance Indicators

Academic Performance Indicators		**Finance Performance Indicators**	
		Income KPIs	**Expenditure KPIs**
Number on roll	Expected standard Reading	Pupil numbers as per latest GAG	Total salary costs as a % of GAG income
No. in Reception/ Y7 & PAN	Expected standard Writing	Total income (year end projection)	Total salary cost as a % of total income

% Disadvantaged	Expected standard Maths	Total income per pupil	Teaching staff costs as a % of total staff costs
% FSM	Higher standard Reading	Government funding per pupil	Total salary cost as a % of total expenditure
% SEND	Higher standard Writing	Government funding as a % of total income	% of total expenditure on teaching staff costs
% EAL	Higher standard Maths	Self generated income per pupil	% of total spend on curriculum support staff costs
Mean APS Year 6 or 11	Expected Std R W M		% of total spend on non-curriculum support staff costs
Projected Reception/ Y7 & PAN	Higher Std R W M		Total expenditure as a % of total income
Ofsted Category	KS1 Expected Reading		Total expenditure (year end projection)
	KS1 Expected Writing		Human Resource Management Performance KPIS
Overall attendance %	KS1 Expected Maths		Working days lost to sickness absence
Overall persistent abs %	KS1 Higher Reading		Employee Turnover
Disadvantaged attendance %	KS1 Higher Writing		Staff Satisfaction Scores
	KS1 Higher Maths		
Disadvantaged persistent abs %	Y1 Phonics Expected		
SEN K Attendance %	Y2 Phonics Expected (resit)		
SEN K Persistent absence %			
No. fixed term exclusions	% English 4+		
Racist incidents	% English 5+		
Bullying incidents	% English 7+		
No. safeguarding incidents (by category)	% maths 4+		
% GAG spent on staffing	% maths 5+		
Pupil/teacher ratio	% maths 7+		
Av teacher cost	% English+maths 4+		
In year % variance	% English+maths 5+		
Teaching staff FTE	% English+maths 7+		
Non-teaching staff FTE	P8 estimate (all)		
	P8 estimate (disadv)		
	EBacc APS		
No. of complaints			

Financial decision making approval thresholds

Duty	Value	Delegated authority	Method	Review period
Virements of budget provision between budget headings	Up to £10,000	Headteacher	Consult CFO	As required
	£10,001 to £30,000	Headteacher with approval of the CEO		
	Over £30,000	CEO/CFO	Resources Committee	
Ordering goods and services within the agreed budget	Up to £2,000	Budget holder & Academy Finance Lead or Senior Finance Assistant	Where applicable, selection from preferred supplier list, unless otherwise agreed with the Academy Finance Lead.	As required
	£2,001 to £5,000	Budget holder & Academy Finance Lead	Where applicable, selection from preferred supplier list, unless otherwise agreed with the Academy Finance Lead.	

	£5,001 to £10,000	Budget holder with the approval of the Headteacher and Academy Finance Lead.	Where applicable, selection from preferred supplier list, unless otherwise agreed with the Academy Finance Lead.	
	£10,001 to £30,000	Headteacher in consultation with CFO CEO/Deputy in consultation with the CFO	Minimum of three quotes required and report to CEO or CFO as appropriate unless agreed by the CFO or resources committee	
	£30,001 to £100,000	CEO/CFO reporting to the Resources Committee	CFO determines if formal tendering process is required. , Advertise in the FTS where necessary.	
	Over £100,000	Resources Committee reporting trust board		
Signatories for cheques and direct debit mandates	Any	Central FCAT signatories from CFO, CEO, DCEOs, Head of HR	Two signatories per transaction are required.	As required
BACS payment authorisations, bank transfers, ESFA grant claims and ESFA returns	Any	Academy Finance Lead/CFO plus Headteacher, CEO, FCAT Head of Finance and other specified senior academy personnel	Two on line signatories per transaction are required.	Weekly

Charge cards and online purchases	All should have a pre approved purchase order	Approval in line with purchase order approval limits above.	Charge cards will be kept in a safe and secure location when not in use. Statements require checking by another delegated authority.	Monthly

Authorising invoices	Up to £5,000	Budget holder and Academy Finance Lead.	Using the financial management software	As required
	£5,001 - £10,000	Budget holder with the approval of the Headteacher and Academy Finance Lead.		
	£10,001 to £30,000	Headteacher with CFO CEO/Deputy with CFO		
	£30,000 to £100,000	CEO/CFO reporting to the Resources Committee	Using the financial management software	
	Over £100,000	Resources Committee reporting trust board		
Collecting income	Up to £5,000	Academy Finance Lead		
	£5,001 to £10,000	Headteacher / CFO		
	£10,001 to £100,000	Resources Committee		
	Over £100,000	Trust board		
Approving Unbudgeted expenditure in year	Up to £5,000	Academy Finance Lead		As required
	Up to £10,000	Headteacher	Reported to the CEO/EHT	
	£10,000 to £50,000	CEO/Deputy/EHT/CFO	Resources Committee	

	Over £50,001, but within the trust's reserves	Resources Committee	Reported to the full governing board.	
Banking cash and cheques	Any	Cheques - Academy Finance staff member Cash - Two academy staff members, one of which must be a finance team member	Cash kept on school property must not exceed £1,000. Cheques and cash greater than £1,000 must be banked within 1 week of receipt.	As required

Disposal of assets (non Land & Buildings)	Up to £500	Academy Finance Lead	Original cost, maintaining the principles of regularity, propriety and value for money. Disposal form to be completed and submitted to Central Finance to update the asset register.	As required
	£501 to £4,000	Headteacher		
	£4,000 - £45,000	CFO		
	Over £45,000	Resources Committee		
	Land, buildings and heritage assets	Governing board plus prior written approval of the ESFA		
Acquiring of assets	Freehold of land or buildings	Governing board plus prior written approval of the ESFA		
Writing-off debts	Up to £2,000	Headteacher, reporting to the CFO	Anything above these limits requires approval by the Secretary of State through the ESFA.	Annual
	£2,001 to £10,000	CFO reporting to CEO		
	Over £10,000 and below 1% of total annual income or £45,000 (whichever is smaller) per single transaction subject to a maximum of £250,000	Full Trust board and the ESFA where applicable		

Special payments, including staff severance and compensation payments (Non-Statutory / Non-Contractual payments)	Up to £49,999	Headteacher / CFO		As required
	Over £50,000	Trust board plus ESFA approval before an offer is made to the employee		
Ex-gratia payments	Any	ESFA prior approval required		As required

Novel or contentious payments	Any	Resources Committee plus prior ESFA approval		
Leasehold or tenancy agreement exceeding seven years	Any	Governing board plus prior ESFA approval		As required
Borrowing	Any	ESFA approval required		As required

Operating Model

A MAT is different to a stand-alone trust or maintained school. Some decision making responsibilities are retained in the 'centre', some are delegated in order to give schools the freedoms needed to flourish and meet the needs of pupils in their context. FCAT believes schools must collaborate to achieve excellence, but individual school identity matters. The benefits of mutual accountability and collaboration between schools is capitalised on in this model in order to give the best possible education for pupils and working environment and opportunities for our staff.

The model will be regularly reviewed by trustees to ensure it remains fit for purpose.

In aspects of the model that are delegated to schools, it is expected that where excellent practice exists or develops it is offered to schools for adoption, thus aligning systems across schools to reduce workload, encourage collaboration, professional development and maximise pupil progress.

The areas of our model are:

1. **Curriculum and Timetable**
2. **Pedagogy and Assessment**
3. **Management Structure and Approach**
4. **Professional and Labour Model**
5. **Financial Model**

Other areas can be added to this core model as the organisation develops based on need. For example we may add attendance and behaviour as an area should this be an aspect in the future where we feel there should be common approaches across schools.

1. **Curriculum and Timetable**

The curriculum model and effective scheduling of staff is an important leadership activity in all schools. We must all have high aspirations of the pupils in our charge and the provision we offer will play a significant part in the success and future prospects of our pupils. We recognise our schools serve diverse communities and have comprehensive intakes, we therefore believe our schools should have as much flexibility as possible to meet the needs of the communities they serve.

All schools:

- Take part in standardisation and moderation systems at each key stage assessment.
- Develop a curriculum model which provides opportunity to
    - develop knowledge and skills through a schema that recognises progression and how knowledge transfers between subjects as they progress through each key stage
    - meets or exceeds the national curriculum ambition
    - remains broad and balanced throughout each key stage
    - is equally ambitious for SEND and PP pupils and provides equity in opportunity

- All schools have a clear rationale for their curriculum which outlines the intent, implementation and impact to assess the quality of education. The curriculum should follow the national curriculum as a minimum.
- All schools calendar a minimum of two days to FCAT inset and include trust priorities in their professional development calendar.
- All schools plan to release staff for development work in our schools.
- Support joint practice development to maximise the expertise of teachers and reduce workload. For example at secondary level schools should use a common GCSE specification for each subject.

Flexibility for schools to develop:

- Programmes of study or schemes of work
- curriculum content
- Pupil contact time (must meet minimum DfE expectations)
- Subject contact time
- Catch up strategy
- Pupil Premium strategy
- Staff allocations

This list is not inclusive but highlights the flexibility available to schools

2. Pedagogy and Assessment

All schools:

- Provide assessment calendars to allow for achievement data to be evaluated and presented to Trustees for scrutiny (the primary purpose of assessment is to identify gaps in knowledge in order to inform future planning).
- Provide key performance indicator information in the form of exception reports, to identify areas for development, compare with national performance indicators and measure against targets.
- Conduct regular pupil assessments, including an annual assessment, whilst giving due regard to teacher workload..
- In the year that pupils are entered for external assessment, conduct internal pre-public examinations (KS 2/4 'mocks').
- Following mocks a diagnostic approach should be adopted to provide personalised interventions for pupils identifying specific areas requiring development.
- Trust quality assurance is given due priority by schools to enable effective support to be provided.

Flexibility for schools to develop:

Teaching styles, learning styles and the decisions on how best to deliver high quality learning and teaching lie completely with individual schools, who in the first instance will be accountable to their local governing body.

3. Management Structure and Approach

As considerable flexibility and cultural autonomy is given to schools in section 1 and 2 the management structure and approach needs to afford clear lines of accountability between executive officers and school leaders. As detailed in the scheme of delegation.

The key operational group, made up of all Headteachers, Executive Headteachers and Executive Officers, will be accountable in the first instance to the standards committee and resources committee respectively.

Senior Leaders, Executive Headteachers and Headteachers will meet regularly to work collaboratively to support and challenge each other. A schedule of Trust reviews form the basis of the Trust''s quality assurance programmes. Active engagement of schools in the reviews will provide valuable professional development. Executive governance (EG) will identify areas of

development across all schools and agree school to school support by utilising existing expertise within schools or commissioning services. EG will also actively seek to work in partnership with other schools and Trusts to enhance school improvement.

Trust reviews shall scrutinise the accountability systems in schools to ensure these processes are securing improvements in the:

- quality of education and the curriculum;
- effective leadership and management and safeguarding;
- personal development, behaviour and attitudes;
- outcomes for pupils.

Reviews will involve senior leaders in schools to develop their expertise and raise their level of accountability. Subject Directors and specialist leaders (for example in safeguarding) will also have a key leadership role within their specialist area and will play an active role in the development across all schools.

In addition, where school structures include lead practitioners, not only do these key roles increase capacity but the expertise available in respect of teaching and learning is significantly enhanced. Clear evidence will be gathered to demonstrate the impact of lead practitioners in order to maximise their deployment.

To further develop senior leaders across all schools, opportunities will be created to ensure all senior leaders can serve on local governing bodies. This will be valuable development and ensure a high level of educational knowledge on the LGBs, whilst creating a different level of accountability and understanding of leadership.

Where areas of development have been identified and subsequent actions have not resulted in the required improvement, executive officers and or the LGB will direct school improvement measures.

4. Professional and Labour Model

Staff in our schools are our most valuable resource. Staff development, talent management, succession planning and facilitating effective school to school support are fundamental to the success of FCAT. We aim to grow our own leaders.

All schools:

- Use the agreed FCAT HR policies e.g. Pay, Appraisal, Recruitment etc.
- Undertake roles and responsibilities as line managers.
- Align professional development calendars to maximise access to joint sessions.
- Coordinate 'in school' development programmes to avoid unnecessary duplication.
- Coordinate centrally, applications to the suite of 'National Professional Qualifications' to ensure value for money and succession planning needs are met.
- Commit to the Team FCAT Work and Wellbeing Charter.
- Seek to identify methods of reducing workload.
- Support the improvement of staff satisfaction and engagement year on year.
- Effective staff appraisal systems designed to develop expertise and support colleagues.

Flexibility for schools to develop:

- Bespoke development programmes based on the needs of the practitioner and the school's priorities for improvement.
- Innovative ways in which to deliver staff development.
- Identify staff and the most appropriate career development pathway.
- Ensure accelerated pay progression is used effectively to reward and incentivise staff.
- Review and evaluate the success of professional development programmes.
- Commission external support for staff development.

Executive Governance:

- Coordinate and deploy central staff in order to best develop individual practitioner expertise.
- Establish and maintain curriculum group meetings, prioritising joint planning, subject standardisation and moderation.
- Measuring impact of QIGS on performance

5. **Financial Model**

FCAT operates a treasury model and each school uses the same finance software to allow continuity between schools. The model operates effectively with accurate management accounts in place. Based on the agreed school budget, funds are available as the remittance from ESFA is received. Access to reserves must be planned and agreed in the same way as the budget. The Trust is expected to hold minimum reserves equivalent to 5% of non-capital income.

Budgets for individual schools will be agreed between the Headteacher and the CFO, with input from the CEO if appropriate. Once agreed, the resources committee will accept the budget or direct revision(s) before approval.

Schools receive 94.75% of the General Annual Grant and 100% of the Pupil Premium Funding. This is subject to annual review by the resources committee who will assess the needs of all schools and the resources needed to deliver school improvement. Should there be proposals for changing the funding, a consultation process will take place to assess the impact on schools.

Schools are able to determine the allocation of funds as required to maintain a balanced budget. Decisions on expenditure in year are made by the Headteacher according to the scheme of financial delegation. Reporting to Trustees throughout the year is on an exceptions basis.

All schools will be expected to set a balanced budget and a three year forecast. A deficit budget will only be presented to the resources committee with the prior approval of the CEO and CFO. Where a deficit budget is presented to the resources committee an accompanying business plan should be included that outlines the steps required to recover the deficit to enable a balanced budget to be set in the future and the reasons why the school seeks to draw down reserves.

Where individual schools require additional financial support they may submit a business plan that details need, impact and repayment schedule. The resources committee approves the use of reserves.

As SLAs become available for renegotiating, work with the CFO to take advantage of joint procurement opportunities to reduce costs and increase efficiencies.

All schools follow the Trust's recruitment process to ensure all appointments meet equalities and value for money assessments.

FCAT Support for Schools - Schools will have different levels of support based on the criteria below;

Ofsted grade is inadequate Or QA or self-evaluation identifies serious concerns	**Serious Concern**	An Executive Headteacher will work with the school and be responsible for assuring and ensuring improvements. FCAT expertise made available as a priority. Exception reports used to update governors and trustees.
Ofsted grade is requires improvement Or QA or self-evaluation judges the school to have aspects that are a concern and require improvement.	**Concern**	Regular meetings between the CEO/Executive Leader and Headteacher focused on the school's priorities, improvements made and improvements yet to be made. Exception reports used to update governors and trustees. Use of evidence based interventions to address concerns. Specialist expertise provided in priority aspects
Ofsted grade is Good or Outstanding And The school is secure in the areas in which it has capacity to offer support to other schools	**Available to Support**	Collaboration and support as determined in the operating model. Exception reports used to update governors and trustees.