

Academy Council Handbook 2026/27

The Role of Academy Councils in Governance

Shaw Education Trust Academy Councils are a sub-committee of our Trust Board and provide an invaluable source of challenge and support to our academies. Academy Councils are the local 'eyes and ears' of the Trust Board and, as such, are a valued and appreciated part of our governance structure. Our Academy Councillors have a unique role to play in quality assuring and evaluating the progress that an academy is making beyond that done directly by the Trust Board through the SET Executive Team. They know the academy and the community it serves well, their local knowledge and their wisdom and expertise are a key asset in helping our academies to thrive. As such, Academy Councillors play a vital role in the leadership and governance structure of Shaw Education Trust.

As with any form of governance, the primary role of Academy Councillors is to act as the academy's 'critical friend': providing both support and challenge to leaders so that they have an opportunity to reflect on their practice. They also play a vital role in the leadership and governance structure of SET.

Our Governance Handbook sets the formal expectations of Academy Councils and their role in governance. This Academy Council Handbook is intended to support Councillors in their role, leading the highly effective, efficient and impactful governance across the Trust and within each academy.

The Academy Council Handbook contains:

- Shaw Education Trust vision, values, mission and strategic objectives
- The Shaw Education Trust 5-year-plan and the role of Academy Councils in delivering this
- Requirements re meeting schedules and agendas
- Dashboard overview to support meeting expectations and information sharing
- Supplementary questions guide for each element of the agenda
- Feedback mechanisms between the Academy Council and the Trust Board
- The working relationship and communication links between Academy Councils and SET Executive Team
- Academy Councillor Code of Conduct for working with school staff and making visits to schools
- SET contact list for key members of the SET Executive Team
- The role of the Academy Council in Headteacher Appraisal
- A dedicated Scheme of Delegation, with linked resources, to ensure clarity regarding Academy Council responsibilities

Shaw Education Trust vision, values, mission

Our Vision



Our Values

Opportunity: Ensuring every student and staff member has access to high-quality education and development, support, and pathways that enable them to grow, succeed, and reach their full potential.

Integrity: Acting with honesty, transparency, and consistency in all decisions and relationships, so that students, staff, families, and communities can place their trust in the way our organisation is led and governed at all levels.

Community: Working collaboratively across schools, families, and local partners to create a supportive, inclusive environment where everyone feels a sense of belonging, is valued, connected, and responsible for each other's success, and shares a feeling of pride in what we are achieving together.

Equity: Recognising and responding to different needs so that resources, support, and opportunities are allocated fairly, ensuring every pupil and member of staff can thrive because they are cared about as an individual through our philosophy of 'one size fits one'. This is not everyone getting the same, it is much deeper, it is everyone getting what they need, to have the same opportunities and chance at success.

Our Mission

Working together to inspire communities where every school is valued, every voice matters and every learner thrives.

The Shaw Education Trust 5-year-plan and the role of Academy Councils

The SET 5-year-plan focuses on delivering our four strategic objectives:

- Ensure inclusive, high performing schools where every student reaches their potential
- Build and nurture a thriving workforce
- Secure a safe and sustainable future through creativity and innovation
- Harness meaningful alliances and partnerships

Our academies play an essential role in the Trust achieving its vision through meeting the strategic objectives and targets as these are all based around excellence for students, colleagues and the communities we serve. Each academy is unique and has its own specific challenges to address and successes to celebrate based on its own context, but as part of the SET community, they also need to contribute to the success of other academies and the Trust as a whole.

To enable academies to do this effectively, Academy Councils should:

- Keep the four SET strategic objectives at the forefront of their minds, giving appropriate focus on these and ensuring academies play their part in achieving the targets
- Ensure the academy is accurately self-evaluating its work and appropriately identifying areas of challenge and success
- Be clear how Trust objectives and academy priorities are aligned, it is unlikely academies will have priorities that do not fit within the Trust objectives but if they do have these, they should be approved by the Academy Council
- Build their programme of work to reflect the focus on both the Trust strategic objectives and academy priorities appropriately

Requirements re meeting schedules and agendas

Academy Councils are required to meet formally on four occasions during the year: in September and then again once per term. ACs should agree mutually convenient dates and times for meetings with Headteachers/Principals, bearing in mind the workload and well-being of schools leaders who will be

required to attend. As a guide, meetings should last between 2-3 hours to effectively discuss agendas and fulfil responsibilities.

Aligned to the Trust Strategic Objectives, and bearing in mind the Academy Council and SET Central Team responsibility to challenge issues and celebrate success, AC agenda areas of focus are listed below, alongside ideas of what programmes of work could include compared to the SET Central Team.

Academy Councils are required to have a named AC Link for Safeguarding, Pupil Premium and SEND. If ACs in consultation with Headteachers/Principals would like AC Links in other areas, they are free to do so whilst being mindful of the workload and well-being of leaders who may be involved.

Trust Objective	Area of Focus	Example of AC Activity	Example of SET Activity
Ensure inclusive, high performing schools where every student reaches their potential	Academy Self-Evaluation Form and priorities for the academic year	Use information provided in meetings and experience of being in school to support and challenge school judgements	QAL to formally QA the SEF and approve academy priorities
	Academy Policies - Approval of school-based policies - Effective implementation of attendance and behaviour policies	Formal approval at meetings or via email Implementation checks on annual basis Feedback from staff, students, parents on aspects of policy (eg SEND adaptations)	No approval of policies, work may include QA/ implementation checks
	Attendance - Overall - Persistent Absence (PA) - Severe Absence (SA)	Receive/discuss data at meetings; ask for individual case studies	Regular QA of processes; impact of work on data/ individuals; register coding checks
	Behaviour - Low level disruption (detentions; isolation as appropriate) - Suspensions - Permanent Exclusions	Receive/discuss data at meetings; visit a detention/isolation room and talk to students; culture walks around school; contribute to suspension/PEX panels	QA of processes; review of documentation; lesson visits; culture walks around school
	Student Outcomes appropriate to age range - Primary schools: Good Level of Development (EYFS); Phonics (KS1); SATS (KS2) - Secondary schools: GCSE (KS4); A levels/L3 Vocational (KS5) - Special schools: above as appropriate for individuals plus progress against EHCP targets (all ages)	Receive/discuss data at meetings; ask for individual case studies; presentations from school/subject leaders	Interrogation of data; lesson observations and feedback; Impact of intervention analysis; review and impact of the curriculum and effectiveness of assessment, judge the quality of teaching and learning
	Personal Development - Student leadership - Careers - Other opportunities	Receive/discuss data at meetings; talk to students about their experience; contribute to opportunities	Interrogate range and uptake of opportunities
	Designated Groups - Pupil Premium; - Students with SEND	Receive/discuss data at meetings; approve Pupil Premium Strategy; SEND Link AC; PP Link AC (see Code of Conduct)	Interrogate data; impact of specific strategies
	Student surveys - outcome and school response "You said, we listened" approach	Receive/discuss data at meetings; challenge schools re their response; ensure communication back to students; support with student voice	Review data in light of quality assurance, evaluation and school priorities

Build and nurture a thriving workforce	Staff workload and well-being Staff survey – outcome and school response “You said, we listened” approach	Receive/discuss data at meetings; challenge schools re their response; ensure communication back to staff; support with staff voice	Review data in light of quality assurance, evaluation and school priorities; ensure leadership focus on workload and well-being
Secure a safe and sustainable future through creativity and innovation	Safeguarding Digital strategy Estates/Environment Receipt of budget for information only Risk management – local level mitigations	Link Safeguarding AC (see Code of Conduct); receipt/discuss audit and data; feedback local response re all areas; review school risk register; activities to support student recruitment; talk to students/staff about their use of technology; walk the site to observe use and quality of facilities and feedback	Undertake annual audit and follow-up, SCR checks; Drive strategy in all areas; setting and approval of budgets; high risk mitigations; student recruitment strategy review
Harness meaningful alliances and partnerships	Parent partnerships - Opportunities for development - Parent surveys – outcome and school response “You said, we listened” approach Community links & opportunities Business links & opportunities	Receive/discuss data at meetings; challenge schools re their response; ensure communication back to parents; support with parent voice; attend parents evenings and other events; proactive in making links for the school; review Stage 2 complaints	Review data in light of quality assurance, evaluation and school priorities; manage Stage 3 complaints

Supplementary questions guide for each element of the agenda

We recognise that many Academy Councillors will not be educational specialists but are committed individuals from a wide range of backgrounds who share a common goal of working together for the benefit of their school. Non-specialists bring a unique lens to school improvement which results in meaningful and impactful dialogue. To further support our ACs, we have provided examples of questions which, from an educational perspective, can add further value.

Appendix 1 includes lists of questions for each area which could be used by Academy Councillors to support their work. The questions are designed to support Academy Councillors in holding leaders to account and fulfilling their strategic oversight role. They can be used during meetings or during academy councillor link visits. Rather than focusing on operational detail, the questions help councillors probe leadership thinking, evaluate impact, and ensure decisions are informed by evidence. They also encourage reflective dialogue, highlight areas of strength, and identify where further support or challenge may be needed. Academy councillors do not need to ask every question each time—selecting a few key questions relevant to the agenda or current priorities is most effective. These should be used in conjunction with the AC agendas.

Dashboard overview to support meeting expectations and information sharing

Headteachers/Principals are expected to complete a set of Dashboards to support Academy Councils in their understanding of school performance. The data in the dashboards is pulled from our MIS, Arbor, with notes added, by exception, by school leaders. The Dashboards can be found in Appendix 2. Dashboards will be uploaded to Governor Hub by schools one week in advance of the meeting to allow Academy Councillors time to review and prepare any questions prior to the meeting.

Feedback mechanisms between the Academy Council and the Trust Board

At the end of each Academy Council meeting, Councillors are requested to complete their Trust Board Feedback Form (see below). The purpose of this form is to aid communication directly between the Academy Council and the Trust Board so that Trustees can have a clear account of the performance of

schools directly and understand any risks that they may represent. This is structured feedback to ensure focus on priorities, however there is also free text space for Academy Council use.

Feedback forms are sent to the Senior Director of Governance, who will collate and present to Trust Board at their termly meeting. Following review, Trustees have the opportunity to communicate back to Academy Councils. If any serious concerns arise, Academy Councillors should contact the Senior Director Governance at the earliest opportunity.

Academy Council Feedback Form to Trust Board

SET Quality Descriptors: The 6 Pillars <i>Please RAG according to your views of the RISK related to this area for the Trust</i>						
We believe the school is strong in this area and presents no risk to the Trust		This is an improving area of the school with mitigations which have reduced the risk to the Trust		We are concerned regarding performance in this area and believe it may represent a risk to the Trust		We are unable to RAG at this time and are uncertain of the risk to the Trust
Academy Name:	High Quality & Inclusive Education	Workforce	Finance	Estates & Digital	Governance & Safeguarding	Strategy & Leadership
RAG rating						
Please note below, succinct details of specific risks in any areas marked as red:						
Please note below, any other comments from Academy Councillors for Trustees to note:						

The working relationship and communication links between Academy Councils and the SET Central Team

Separately, both our Academy Councils and Central Team undertake important work to support and challenge are schools. However, their work overlaps regularly and it is vitally important that we understand the interrelation of these two groups to avoid placing additional workload and stress upon school leaders. There is high risk of repetition of work, the burden of multiple meetings and visits and variation in advice and guidance. There are key differences between the role of each

Academy Council Role	SET Central Team Role
- Representatives of the Trust Board - Challenge and support - Monitoring of school progress	- Representatives of SET - Specialist advice and guidance - Quality Assurance - Evaluation and commissioning expert support
Shared Roles The Chair of Governors and the National Education Director hold Headteachers to account Reporting to Trust Board on school progress	

Academy Councillor code of conduct for working with school staff and making visits to schools

Appendix 3 details the AC Code of Conduct, this can be used to frame the work of the Academy Council, enabling them to fulfil the duties of their role whilst also recognising the workload and well-being of school-based colleagues. There are a number of fundamental points regarding the role of the Academy Council that should inform any work undertaken, these are that the role of the Academy Council is :

- To represent the Trust Board by providing strategic challenge and support to school leaders, holding them to account for the performance of key areas of the school
- To adhere to the Scheme of Delegation which sets out their accountability, responsibility and contributions
- Not to get involved/interfere with operational management of the school
- To ensure the school meets the needs of the local community and that their remit does not include pursuing personal agendas or bringing representation on behalf of other individuals
- Not to provide educational input or expertise beyond their knowledge/experience, this is provided by the SET Central Team specialists

SET contact list for key members of the Central Team

Role	Name	Email
Chief Executive Officer	Kerry Inscker	Kerry.Inscker@shaw-education.org.uk
Deputy Chief Executive Officer	Neil Warner	Neil.Warner@shaw-education.org.uk
Chief People Officer	Becky Beaty	Becky.Beaty@shaw-education.org.uk
Chief Finance Officer	Catherine Hughes	Catherine.Hughes@shaw-education.org.uk
Chief Infrastructure Officer	Pete Potts	Peter.Potts@shaw-education.org.uk
Chief Digital Officer	Nikki Labrum	Nikki.Labrum@shaw-education.org.uk
National Education Director: Secondary and School Improvement	Sarah Murcott	Sarah.Murcott@shaw-education.org.uk
National Education Director: Primary and Literacy	Helen Cunliffe	Helen.Cunliffe@shaw-education.org.uk
National Education Director: Special and Inclusion	Ian Armstrong	Ian.Armstrong@shaw-education.org.uk
National Education Director: All-Through, PP, Attendance & Ofsted	Mark Howes	Mark.Howes@shaw-education.org.uk
Senior Director of Safeguarding	Brian Duffy	Brian.Duffy@shaw-education.org.uk
Senior Director of Governance	Beth Barlow	Beth.Barlow@shaw-education.org.uk
Director of HR	Jo Collingwood	Joanne.Collingwood@shaw-education.org.uk
Director of Workforce Planning & Acquisition	Natalie Turner	Natalie.Turner@shaw-education.org.uk
Director of Finance	Michelle Hopkinson	Michelle.Hopkinson@shaw-education.org.uk
Director of Estates	Chris Williams	Chris.Williams@shaw-education.org.uk
Director of Digital Support	Dave Orum	Dave.Orum@shaw-education.org.uk
Director of Systems Information and Data	Leona Bateman	Leona.Bateman@shaw-education.org.uk

The role of the Academy Council in Headteacher Appraisal

Headteachers/Principals participate in the SET Agile Appraisal Process, however due to their level of responsibility, this differs from other staff in school (see Agile Appraisal Policy). Appraisal is an important mechanism which allows the Trust Board and Academy Councils to hold Headteachers/Principals to account for the performance of their schools.

Objectives and targets are set in October, through a meeting with the Headteacher/Principal, National Director and Chair of Academy Council (or their nominated representative). During the year there is a review meeting during the Spring Term to evaluate progress towards meeting the objectives and to build in any additional support that may be required.

Early in September (starting in September 2026) there is an evaluation meeting and recommendations made to the Trust Board People & Culture Committee with regards to Headteacher/Principal pay

progression. The Academy Council play an important role in Headteacher/Principal appraisal, they understand the issues facing an individual school, are well-placed to recommend support which may be needed and judge the impact of the Headteacher/Principal's performance on the progress the school is making.

A dedicated Scheme of Delegation, with linked resources, to ensure clarity regarding Academy Council responsibilities

The SET Scheme of Delegation is used to ensure clarity regarding Accountability/Responsibility for each key leadership tier within the Trust. It clarifies the roles of the:

- Trust Board
- Chief Executive Officer
- Chief Officers within ELT
- SET Central Team Leaders
- Academy Councillors
- Headteachers/Principals

Beyond this, and to aid explicit understanding of the delegation to Academy Councillors, there is an Academy Council Dedicated Scheme of Delegation (see Appendix 4).

Academy Councillors are reminded of the importance of this document in enabling the Trust to fulfil its fiduciary responsibility and that they are responsible for understanding their role working with this. Failure to comply with the Scheme of Delegation is a serious matter which could result in the removal of an individual or group of Academy Councillors.

Appendix 1

Academy Council Example Questions

Trust Objective	Area of Focus	Example Questions
Ensure inclusive, high performing schools where every student reaches their potential	School Self-Evaluation Form and priorities for the academic year	- What evidence does the school have to support their judgements? - What are the current school improvement priorities, and how are we measuring progress against them? - How does the leadership team engage with pupils, staff, and parents to shape school improvement?
	Policies - Approval of school-based policies - Effective implementation of attendance and behaviour policies	- Are school policies effective at establishing expectations and driving school improvement? - Do policies meet the needs of all students, are their appropriate and reasonable adjustments for students with SEND? - How are policies communicated to staff, students and parents appropriate? - Are policies published on the school website and are they up-to-date? - How do leaders know that policies are consistently applied across the school? - How do leaders monitor the workload impact of policies? - Is there any evidence that policies need to be revised or further embedded and what are the school doing about this?
	Attendance - Overall - Persistent Absence (PA) - Severe Absence (SA)	- What is our current overall attendance figure, and how does it compare to national averages? - What is our current rate of persistent absence, and how has it changed over time? - Are there specific year groups, pupil groups (e.g., SEND, disadvantaged), or times of year where attendance is lower? - How does the school engage with data from the DfE – including banding data / attendance data reports (where applicable)? - What systems do we have in place to monitor and track attendance? - How do we identify and intervene with pupils at risk of poor attendance? - How soon after absence do staff follow up with families, and how is this recorded? - What are the most common barriers to attendance in our school? - How do we work with families to overcome these barriers? - How do we promote the importance of attendance to pupils/parents? - What partnerships (e.g. EWO) are in place to support attendance? - What impact have our attendance strategies had so far? - What are our strategic priorities for improving attendance this year?
	Behaviour - Low level disruption (detentions; isolation as appropriate) - Suspensions - Permanent Exclusions	- What is the overall behaviour culture in the school, and how is it maintained? - How do pupils demonstrate the school's values in their behaviour? - How do we promote positive behaviour and build respectful relationships across the school? - What is our behaviour policy, and is it applied consistently across all year groups and staff? - How is behaviour tracked and monitored? What patterns or trends have emerged? - How do staff respond to incidents of poor behaviour, and what restorative practices are in place? - How many fixed-term or permanent exclusions have we had this year, and what were the main reasons? - What interventions are in place to reduce exclusions and support pupils at risk of repeated sanctions? - Are any groups disproportionately affected by exclusions or sanctions (e.g., SEND, disadvantaged pupils)? - How do we gather pupil voice on behaviour/feeling safe in school? - What support is in place for pupils struggling with behaviour or self-regulation? - How are parents/carers involved when there are behaviour concerns?

	Student Performance appropriate to age range • Primary schools: Good Level of Development (EYFS); Phonics (KS1); SATS (KS2) • Secondary schools: GCSE (KS4); A levels/L3 Vocational (KS5) • Special schools: above as appropriate for individuals plus progress against EHCP targets (all ages)	• What do our most recent internal and external data tell us about pupil attainment and progress? • How are we addressing any underperformance or achievement gaps (e.g. disadvantaged pupils, SEND, boys/girls)? • What impact are interventions having on pupil progress? • What are our targets for pupil performance, and how realistic and ambitious are they?
	Personal Development • Student leadership • Personal development • Careers	• How are we preparing pupils for the next stage of education or employment? • How does our school promote equality, diversity, and inclusion in its vision and daily practice? • Do we have up-to-date policies in place for EDI, and how are these monitored for impact? • How do we ensure that the curriculum reflects and celebrates diverse cultures, identities and perspectives? • How do pupils feel about inclusion and belonging in the school? • How do we monitor and evaluate the impact of our EDI strategies? • How are pupils given opportunities to engage with the wider world and community (e.g. trips, speakers, volunteering)? • How do we ensure all pupils, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, can access enrichment and extracurricular activities?
	Designated Groups • Pupil Premium • Students with SEND	• How are pupils with SEND identified, supported, and monitored? • How does the school engage with the trust SEND strategy 'SENDing Pupils Soaring'? • What training do staff receive to support pupils with diverse needs? • How do we work with external agencies and families to support pupils with SEND? • Are SEND pupils achieving as well as they should be, and what are we doing if they're not? • Who is responsible for the Pupil Premium strategy, and how is accountability maintained? • Are all staff aware of which pupils are eligible for PP, and how are they supported to meet their needs? • What training have staff received on addressing the needs of disadvantaged pupils? • How is our Pupil Premium strategy aligned with our overall school improvement plan? • What specific barriers to learning have we identified for our disadvantaged pupils? • How did we decide which interventions and strategies to invest in? • What evidence do we use to measure the impact of Pupil Premium spending? • Do we use Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) evidence or other research to guide our choices? • Which strategies have been the most and least effective? • What changes have we made in response to underperformance or poor impact from certain interventions? • How do we engage parents and carers of disadvantaged pupils? • What pastoral or wider support (e.g., attendance, mental health) is funded by Pupil Premium? • Is our Pupil Premium strategy published and compliant with DfE requirements? • How are we evaluating and updating our strategy each year?

	Student surveys - outcome and school response "You said, we listened" approach	- What does the student survey tell us about what we do well as a school and what we need to improve – does this align with leaders' views? - What do students say about bullying and how does the school respond? - What do students say most concerns them, how is the school responding? - How will the school communicate back to students the findings and their actions? - What follow up is needed to check that actions are leading to the required improvements?
Build and nurture a thriving workforce	Staff workload and well-being Staff survey – outcome and school response "You said, we listened" approach	- What succession planning is in place for key leadership roles? - How do we monitor and support staff wellbeing for all staff? - What indicators do we use to assess staff morale and wellbeing? - What feedback mechanisms are in place for staff to raise concerns confidentially? - What steps have leaders taken to reduce workload for staff? - How have we responded to staff feedback on workload pressures (e.g. marking, meetings, planning)? - What does the staff survey tell us about what we do well as a school and what we need to improve – does this align with leaders' views? - What do staff say most concerns them, how is school responding? - How will the school inform staff of the findings and their actions? - What follow up is needed to check that actions are leading to the required improvements? - What is our current staff turnover rate, and what are the reasons behind staff leaving? - What is the level of staff absence, and are there patterns suggesting underlying issues? - How are we supporting staff returning from long-term absence or experiencing burnout? - What is our long-term strategy for promoting staff wellbeing? - How does leadership model a positive approach to work-life balance? - How do we ensure representation and inclusivity across staffing, leadership, and governance? - How does our school promote equality, diversity, and inclusion in its vision and daily practice for staff? - Do we have up-to-date policies in place for EDI, and how are these monitored for impact? - How do staff feel about inclusion and belonging in the school? - What training have staff and leaders received in relation to unconscious bias, inclusive teaching, or equity? - How confident are staff in dealing with issues such as racism, homophobia, or other forms of discrimination? - How do we monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of EDI strategies? - How do we act on findings from staff surveys, or complaints related to discrimination or exclusion?
Secure a safe and sustainable future through creativity and innovation	Safeguarding Digital strategy Estates/Environment Receipt of budget for information only Risk management – local level mitigations	- What has the report from the Trust's Director of Safeguarding told us about our practice? What are our areas of strength and areas of improvement? - How do we, as ACs receive the appropriate level of training in Safeguarding? - How do we ensure that safeguarding policies and practices are up to date and followed by all staff? Are all relevant policies and procedures on the website and up to date? - How do school leaders identify trends and patterns in safeguarding data and make any necessary adjustments to the curriculum? - What training have staff received on safeguarding, and how do leaders know it is effective? - How are safeguarding concerns recorded and followed up? - How do we ensure pupils know how to keep themselves safe (including online)?

		• How do we know that the school culture prioritises the safety and wellbeing of pupils? • How do we monitor the safeguarding of vulnerable groups, such as children with SEND or those with social workers?
	Benedict's Law – Allergy Safety	• Do we have an allergy safety policy in place? • Is our allergy safety policy easily accessible to parents/carers and staff? • What training do we provide to staff on allergy awareness? • Do we have arrangements in place to make sure that: ○ Pupils can access their own prescribed adrenaline devices? ○ Spare adrenaline devices can be accessed quickly in an emergency? • Have there been any serious incidents or near misses in the last year? If so, has the allergy safety policy been reviewed and any improvements made? • What are we doing to promote the wellbeing of pupils with allergies?
	Parent partnerships • Opportunities for development • Parent surveys – outcome and school response "You said, we listened" approach Community links & opportunities • Business links & opportunities	• What is the school digital strategy? • How are staff prepared to use and to teach about technology in their phase/subject/role? • What value is the use of technology adding to students (attendance/engagement/ achievement)? • How much money is the school investing in technology and is this sufficient to achieve the school priorities? • Does the school appear clean, tidy and in good repair? • Are specialist areas well-stocked and fit for purpose? • Does the school budget enable leaders to achieve their priorities, provide a first-class education for students and provide staff with the resources they need? • How is the school meeting its needs alongside remaining in budget for the next three years? • What are the greatest risks to the school being successful and achieving its aims? • What mitigations are in place to address these risks and how do you know if these are effective? • Has the school practiced termly fire drills and twice yearly lock-down procedures, what did this tell leaders and what improvements have been made?
Harness meaningful alliances and partnerships	Student surveys • outcome and school response • "You said, we listened" approach	• How do we build positive relationships and effective communication with parents/carers? • What does the parent survey tell us about what we do well as a school and what we need to improve – does this align with leaders' views? • What does feedback from parent surveys or forums tell us, and how have we responded? • What do parents say most concerns them, how is the school responding? • How will the school communicate back to parents the findings and their actions? • What follow up is needed to check that actions are leading to the required improvements? • How inclusive and accessible are our communications with families from diverse backgrounds? • What partnerships do we have with local organisations, businesses, faith groups, or charities? • How do we involve the local community in school life (e.g. events, volunteering, mentoring)? • What is our long-term plan for strengthening community engagement? • How do we evaluate the impact of community partnerships on pupil outcomes or wellbeing? • Are there any areas where we can help the school by being proactive in making links with the local community and businesses?

Appendix 2

Dashboards

Templates are currently being updated for 2026/2027 and will be available via GovernorHub here:

<https://app.governorhub.com/s/theshaweducationtrust/resources/671a5d2db4a4fcf61ee6546a>

Appendix 3

Academy Councillors Code of Conduct: Visiting Schools & Working with Leaders

Purpose:

Support your strategic role while respecting the workload and well-being of school leaders.

Remember:

You're there to *monitor and support strategically*, not to manage operations.

Respect, trust, and professionalism keep governance effective.

✅ Before Your Visit

- Book in advance with the Headteacher, if other visitors are in school you may need to rearrange
- Agree a clear focus linked to the Trust strategic objectives and school priorities
- Avoid peak workload periods (exams, inspections, reporting deadlines)
- Be clear of the purpose of your visit, agree a schedule of work which delivers this
- Avoid following personal agendas or representing individuals

👂 During Your Visit

- Be a guest, not an inspector
- Follow safeguarding procedures at all times, raise any issues with Headteachers on the day
- Observe, don't disrupt learning or leadership work
- Be respectful & curious – seek to understand, consider what questions you want to ask
- Keep information confidential

🗨️ Communicating with Leaders

- Use agreed channels which are usually via Headteacher or a designated representative
- Respect availability – avoid out-of-hours contact
- Be constructive – focus on support and solutions, ask questions rather than making judgements

💡 After Your Visit

- Share reflections with the Headteacher first
- Report strategically to the governing body
- Highlight successes as well as areas for development

🌱 Ongoing Commitment

- Attend training on governance and workload awareness
- Reflect on your own conduct regularly
- Promote a culture that values leaders' well-being

Appendix 4

Academy Council Dedicated Scheme of Delegation

The 2026/2027 Scheme of Delegation is currently in the approval stages and will be available here:

<https://app.governorhub.com/s/theshaweducationtrust/resources/6aa032abe4f7a4c45d9bc943>