



SECAT

Academy Committee Governor Recruitment Pack

2026/27

EMPOWERING CHILDREN AND SCHOOLS

Join an Academy Committee and help our schools improve outcomes for children and young people in their local communities.

An opportunity to make a local difference

Our governors bring experience, curiosity and community insight to school improvement, keeping SECAT's mission, values and strategy at the heart of their support and challenge.

Southend East Community Academy Trust

Welcome from our Chief Executive Officer

Thank you for considering joining an Academy Committee at SECAT. Our mission is to empower children and young people to embrace learning, preparing them for their futures. Governors help us keep that purpose at the centre of our work.

Our six schools each have their own character and community. Together, they form one Trust, united by our values and our ambition for children. Our Strategy 2025–2030 focuses on teaching and learning, empowering schools and community. We need governors who will help us understand how these ambitions are being realised in each school.

You will bring a valuable perspective: asking thoughtful questions, offering constructive challenge and helping us understand the experiences of pupils and families. You do not need to have worked in education. A commitment to our values, a willingness to learn and the time to contribute are what matter.

We will support you through induction, training and guidance from our governance team and fellow governors. I hope this pack encourages you to explore the role and the difference you could make.

Ben Stickley
Chief Executive Officer

Who we are

SECAT is one organisation made up of a family of six schools in Southend, serving children and young people from age two to 18. This pack explains the role, the commitment involved and how to join us.

Our mission and vision

Our mission is to empower children and young people to embrace learning, preparing them for their futures.

Our vision is for children and schools to be empowered by SECAT.

Our school communities

Governors get to know their school and its community while contributing to the wider Trust. Bournes Green's two schools share an Academy Committee; our other schools each have their own Committee.



Bournes Green Infant School

Bournes Green Infant School provides a safe, inclusive environment where children are nurtured and encouraged to aim high. Its outdoor learning spaces include an Early Years area, and its shared school values are Believe, Grow, Succeed.



Bournes Green Junior School

Bournes Green Junior School shares a leadership team with the infant school, supporting a smooth transition and consistency in teaching and learning. The schools promote the values Believe, Grow, Succeed and offer extensive grounds for outdoor learning.



Hinguar Primary School and Nursery

Hinguar describes itself as a fully inclusive school with high expectations and an ambitious learning environment. Its broad, balanced education recognises individual talents and encourages confidence, responsibility, discussion and respect for different views and beliefs.



Richmond Avenue Primary School and Nursery

Richmond Avenue promotes learning and achieving together through a purposeful, balanced curriculum. Its learning environment supports each child's potential, personal growth, independence and self-confidence, with shared expectations to be kind, safe and responsible and enjoy learning.



Shoeburyness High School

Shoeburyness High School is an inclusive comprehensive academy at the heart of its community. Its seven-year curriculum, extracurricular opportunities and pastoral support help pupils develop knowledge, skills and resilience, guided by the principle Expect Excellence.



Thorpedene Primary School and Nursery

Thorpedene Primary School and Nursery offers a happy, safe learning environment and a purposeful, balanced curriculum that develops independence and confidence. Its core values are Achieving, Caring, Respecting with Confidence, alongside responsibility and care for the wider community.

Our values and strategy

SECAT's values apply to everyone, including volunteers. They shape how we work together, how we ask questions and how we consider the needs of children and families.

INCLUSIVE Everyone can take part equitably.	ASPIRATIONAL Ambition for everyone, whatever their background.	COLLABORATIVE Working collectively and sharing knowledge.	NURTURING Creating the support people need to flourish.	RESPECTFUL Professional, accountable and respectful when views differ.
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What this means for Governors

We look for Governors who will work collaboratively, act respectfully, support inclusive decision-making, maintain high aspirations for every child and school, and contribute to a culture in which people can flourish.

Our Strategy 2025 to 2030

Our strategy sets three priority themes. Each year, its goals are translated into practical steps through school improvement plans and strategic service plans. Academy Committees help the Trust understand how those priorities are progressing in each school.

Teaching and learning

Inclusive education, strong outcomes and equitable access to experiences. Governors consider curriculum delivery, pupil progress and whether the school's plans are making a difference, including for pupils with SEND and disadvantaged pupils.

Empowering schools

Safe, secure and inclusive environments, supported by Trust expertise. Governors bring local insight and raise any concerns through agreed routes so that leaders and the Board can respond appropriately.

Community

Stronger relationships with our communities and opportunities that align with our mission and values. Governors help the Committee understand parent and carer perspectives and how the school responds to feedback.

The difference Academy Committees make

Academy Committees are a formal part of SECAT's governance structure. They provide local monitoring, support, scrutiny and constructive challenge on behalf of the Trust Board. Their remit is set by the Trust's Scheme of Delegation and Academy Committee Terms of Reference.

Where you fit

Part of SECAT	Role
Members	Provide oversight of the Trust's constitutional arrangements and exercise powers under its Articles.
Trust Board	Sets strategy and retains collective accountability for the whole Trust. Trustees are charity trustees and company directors.
Board committees	Audit, Risk and Resources and Curriculum and Pupil Matters provide scrutiny and carry out delegated responsibilities.
Academy Committees	Provide school-level assurance and community insight within the remit delegated by the Board.
Executive and school leaders	Lead delivery and manage the Trust and schools day to day.

An Academy Committee governor is not a company director or charity trustee simply by holding this role. You contribute to the interests of your school within one Trust, rather than representing an individual family or interest group.

Your Committee's focus

- Progress against the School Improvement Plan, known as the SIP.
- Special educational needs and disabilities, known as SEND.
- Curriculum delivery and pupil outcomes.
- The use and impact of Pupil Premium and, where applicable, Sports Premium.
- Engagement with parents, carers and the community.
- Sustainability within the Committee's agreed remit.

The SIP is a collective responsibility of the Committee. Link roles provide additional focus; they do not transfer responsibility to one governor. Safeguarding concerns must always be raised promptly through the school's safeguarding procedures.

How we govern at SECAT

We are strengthening governance following our review of effectiveness. For Academy Committees, this means clearer priorities, consistent monitoring guidance and a stronger focus on evidence, constructive challenge, follow-up and impact.

Purposeful monitoring

Start with the question: What does the Academy Committee need assurance about? The Chair and Headteacher agree a monitoring schedule linked to SIP priorities, link roles and areas needing further scrutiny. Each governor should normally undertake at least one purposeful monitoring visit per term.

You might discuss progress with leaders, consider performance information, take part in an agreed learning walk or hear pupil, staff or parent and carer perspectives. Looking across appropriate sources helps governors test the assurance provided. Visits are planned with the school and kept proportionate.

Constructive questions and follow through

Useful questions include: What evidence shows progress? Are all groups of pupils benefiting? What has changed as a result of the action taken? What remains a concern, and when will we review it again?

The SECAT visit report template helps capture the purpose, evidence considered, challenge, assurance gained and follow-up. Findings return to the Committee so that questions and agreed actions are followed through to evidence of impact.

Connecting local insight with Trust assurance

The governance team brings together key themes, risks, challenge and assurance from AC meetings and monitoring through the AC Feedback and Escalation arrangements. This supports the Curriculum and Pupil Matters Committee and, where appropriate, the Trust Board.

Governors use the agreed visit report and Committee processes. They are not expected to produce additional CPMC reports or complete the Trust Board dashboard. Urgent concerns should be raised promptly through the appropriate route rather than waiting for the next meeting.

Keeping the role strategic

Governors seek assurance; they do not manage staff, inspect lessons, evaluate individual teachers or direct operational decisions. They do not investigate individual parent complaints or act as an alternative route around school procedures. If you are unsure about a boundary or concern, ask the Chair or governance team for guidance.

What we ask and how we support you

Who we are looking for

You do not need to work in education or have previous governance experience. We value a range of backgrounds, perspectives and life experiences. You should care about children's education, share SECAT's values and be willing to learn.

- Listen, work as part of a team and ask thoughtful questions.
- Consider evidence, use independent judgement and challenge respectfully.
- Prepare for meetings, attend reliably and follow through agreed activity.
- Maintain confidentiality, declare interests and put pupils' interests first.
- Build your understanding of the school, its community and its priorities.

Experience in education, inclusion, community engagement, sustainability, data or other professional fields can be useful. The most important contribution is a commitment to the role and a willingness to engage.

Time commitment

For 2026/27, the usual pattern is a short September set-up meeting and four substantive meetings in November, January, April and June. Allow time to read papers beforehand, undertake at least one purposeful visit per term, record findings and complete training. Meeting times and visit arrangements vary by school; we will discuss these with you before appointment.

Some monitoring takes place during the school day. Chairs, Vice Chairs and governors undertaking additional agreed responsibilities will need more time. This is an unpaid volunteer role; the governance team can explain the applicable expenses arrangements.

Induction and ongoing support

You will have support from the Academy Committee Chair, governance team and meeting clerk, alongside induction materials, clear role descriptions and monitoring templates. Buddying with an experienced governor can help you build confidence in a link role.

SECAT is offering new governor training this year, including for governors in post for up to 18 months. National College learning plans cover required safeguarding, data protection and GDPR, Prevent and NCSC cyber security training. NGA Learning Link supports wider development, and the Chairs and Vice Chairs network shares practice.

GovernorHub is our shared platform for papers, records, communications and declarations. You will be supported to use it, confirm acceptance of the Code of Conduct and keep required information up to date. The documents are there to support you: please ask the governance team to clarify anything.

Joining us

Conduct and suitability

SECAT is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all volunteers to share this commitment. Appointment is subject to eligibility and suitability checks, including an enhanced DBS check and other checks appropriate to the role. The governance team will explain the requirements and guide you through them.

Governors must follow the Code of Conduct, manage conflicts of interest and uphold the seven principles of public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership. Interests and relevant governance information must be declared and published where required.

The recruitment process

- Contact the governance team to express interest and discuss available roles.
- Have an initial conversation with the relevant Chair and governance team about the school, your interests and the practical commitment.
- Complete the application and provide the information needed for the relevant appointment or election route and suitability checks.
- For appointed roles, the proposed appointment is considered by the Trust Board. Parent and staff positions follow the applicable election arrangements.
- Once the appointment and required checks are confirmed, begin induction, activate GovernorHub and agree your initial monitoring responsibilities.

The governance team will confirm the relevant route, term of office and next steps. Please tell us if an adjustment would help you participate in recruitment or carry out the role.

Common questions

Do I need to be a parent at the school? No. Community governors can bring valuable experience and independent perspectives. Parent positions have separate eligibility and election arrangements.

Will I need to be a subject specialist? No. Training, role guidance and support will help you ask informed questions and understand the evidence.

What if I have a child at the school or another connection? Tell us about relevant connections and interests. These can often be managed, but you must not use the role to pursue individual concerns or personal interests.

Contact us

Interested in joining us? Contact Katy Love, Governance Manager, at KatyLove@secat.co.uk for an informal conversation or an application. You may send a CV if you have one. We will be happy to discuss available roles and how your skills and interests could contribute.

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Further reading: SECAT Strategy 2025–2030; Scheme of Delegation; AC Terms of Reference and Code of Conduct; Link Governor Monitoring Guidance. Formal governance documents determine the remit and appointment arrangements.