

1. Purpose and Scope

1.1 Academy Committees act as a 'critical friend' to their school. They are not responsible for operational management, but provide monitoring, support, and challenge in the following areas:

- Progress against School Improvement Plan (SIP)
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- Curriculum
- Pupil Premium and Sports Premium
- Community engagement
- Sustainability

1.2 Academy Committees act as the 'eyes and ears of the Trust Board' at school level, ensuring that the Trust's values and strategic priorities are lived out in each school.

1.3 Academy Committees report formally to the Trust Board through termly reports, structured feedback, and escalation of risks or concerns where appropriate.

2. Composition and Academy Committee membership

2.1 Chair

- Each Academy Committee shall have a Chair nominated by the Committee and approved by the Trust Board.
- Term: 1 year, renewable.
- If no suitable candidate is approved, the Trust Board may appoint a Chair.

2.2 Vice Chair

- Elected annually by the Academy Committee.
- Chairs meetings in the absence of the Chair.

2.3 Headteacher/Senior Leadership Team (SLT) Academy Committee Representative

- The Headteacher or nominated SLT Academy Committee Representative of the school is an ex-officio Academy Committee Representative. This may be on a rota basis.

2.4 Parent/Carer Representatives

As per the SECAT Articles of Association, articles 46c and 53–56, there is no requirement for Academy Committees to appoint parent/carers representatives.

However, Academy Committees are strongly encouraged to include parent/carers representatives, subject to the following terms:

- Up to 3 representatives for primary schools, and up to 4 representatives for secondary schools or multi-school Committees.
- The SECAT Articles of Association require an election to be held (or nomination if no candidates).
- Appointments must be approved by the Trust Board.
- Term of office: 4 years.
- Must be a parent/carer of a pupil within the Trust.
- Must step down if employed by the Trust.

2.5 Community Representatives

- Minimum of 3 per Committee.
- Nominated by the Academy Committee, approved by the Trust Board.
- Must not be a member of Trust staff.
- Term: 4 years.

2.6 Governance Professional

- Appointed by the Trust Board. Usually the Trust Governance Advisor.
- Duties include arranging meetings, circulating papers, recording minutes, tracking actions, and supporting compliance.

2.7 Size of Committee

- Primary: maximum 9 representatives.
- Secondary or multi-school: maximum 12 representatives.

2.8 Term Limits

- Academy Committee Representatives may serve a maximum of 2 terms (normally 8 years).

2.9 Diversity

- Committees should seek to reflect the diversity of their school community in Academy Committee membership.

3. Quorum

3.1 There must be three Academy Committee Representatives in attendance at a meeting consisting of a minimum of two non-staff Academy Committee Representatives for the meeting to be quorate. If the meeting is not quorate, no business can be undertaken, and the meeting must be rearranged.

4. Appointment Requirements

Prior to confirmation as an Academy Committee Representative, all appointees must:

- Complete an Enhanced DBS check (and any other safeguarding checks as required).
- Provide contact details.
- Sign the Code of Conduct.
- Sign the Declaration of Business Interests.
- Consent to required details being published on the school website.
- Complete the induction programme for new Academy Committee Representatives.

5. Conditions of Academy Committee membership

5.1 Academy Committee Representatives are expected to contribute actively and positively to the work of the Committee.

5.2 An Academy Committee Representative must be removed if they:

- Refuse to complete safeguarding checks.
- Fail to attend 3 meetings in one academic year (or miss 6 months consecutively).

5.3 An Academy Committee Representative may be removed if they:

- Breach the Code of Conduct.
- Fail to disclose a relevant business interest.
- Become subject to disciplinary or legal dispute with the Trust.
- Act in a way inconsistent with the ethos of the school or Trust.

6. Meetings

6.1 Frequency: at least once per term, more if required.

6.2 Agenda: agreed between the Chair and Governance Advisor, with input from the Headteacher and Governance Manager.

6.3 Safeguarding updates will be provided at every meeting as a standing agenda item, and Academy Committee members will complete safeguarding training annually. Responsibility for safeguarding oversight remains with the Trust Board.

6.4 The CEO, COO, and Trustees may attend and contribute.

6.5 Trustees may not serve as Academy Committee Representatives without Trust Board approval (reviewed every 6 months).

6.6 All declarations of interest must be made at the start of each meeting and recorded in the minutes.

6.7 Resignations must be announced at meetings and are only valid once formally minuted.

7. Remit and Role

The Academy Committee supports the Trust Board in the following key areas:

- SEND monitoring.
- Curriculum delivery and outcomes.
- Monitoring use and impact of Pupil Premium and Sports Premium.
- Monitoring implementation of the School Improvement Plan.
- Engagement with parents, carers, and the community.
- Promoting sustainability.

The Academy Committee will act as a critical friend: questioning, monitoring, supporting, and challenging.

Additional Responsibilities

- Opt in to participate in Trust panels (e.g. behaviour, exclusions, complaints) once trained.
- Undertake an annual skills audit to ensure Academy Committee Representatives have the necessary expertise.
- Keep the Register of Business Interests up to date.
- Produce an annual schedule of business.
- Complete an annual impact evaluation of the Committee's work.
- Conduct annual contribution reviews of Academy Committee Representatives.
- Support succession planning and ongoing CPD for Academy Committee Representatives.

8. Review

- These Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually by the Trust Board.