

## 1. Purpose and scope

1.1 Academy Committees are not responsible for operational issues.

They act as a 'critical friend' by:

- providing strategic governance support to monitor pupils receive the best possible education
- monitoring and evaluating school performance
- providing support and challenge to the head teacher and senior leadership team
- engaging with the wider community.

## 2. Composition and membership of the Academy Committee

2.1 Each Academy Committee shall have a Chair. Each Academy Committee Chair shall only take up the role once their appointment is approved by the Trust Board. Each Academy Committee chooses the person they wish to nominate as Chair and to be approved by the Trust Board. The term of their post is one year. They may be put forward for approval for a further year, but the Chair should serve no more than six years as Academy Committee Chair. The Trust Board has the right to appoint a Chair of its choosing should a suitable candidate not be identified or if it does not approve the nominated Chair or alternative put forward by the Academy Committee.

2.2 Each Academy Committee shall have a Vice Chair. The Vice Chair will be elected by the Academy Committee annually and lead the meeting in the absence of the Chair. In the absence of the Chair and Vice Chair, the committee shall choose an acting chair for that meeting from among their number, but this shall not be the Headteacher.

2.3 The Headteacher of each school shall be a member of the Academy Committee that serves the school of which they are headteacher.

2.4 Each Academy Committee shall have a minimum of two governors who are also members of staff of the school/s that the Academy Committee serves. The term of their post is four years. The Academy Committee shall approve the appointment of staff governors to the Academy Committee.

2.5 Subject to vacancies, each Academy Committee can nominate up to two parent/carer governors for primary schools and up to three for secondary schools or joint Academy Committees. As per the SECAT Articles of Association, article numbers 46c and 53-56, there is no requirement for Academy Committees to appoint parent/carer governors. Appointments are approved by the Trust Board.

To be eligible as a governor, the person must be a parent/carer of a child who attends the school that the Academy Committee serves. The term of their post is four years. A parent/carer governor:

- a) May choose to serve to the end of the term of their post, even if their child leaves the school.
- b) Must leave their post if they become employed by the Trust
- c) Should have a willingness to serve the Academy Committee
- d) Should have useful skills and/or experience to assist and support the school and the Academy Committee
- e) Are elected by the Academy Committee governors where posts vacant exceed or equal the number of candidates

- f) Are confirmed by Academy Committee governors if elected after a vote from the parent/carer body in the event that candidates exceed the number of post vacant.

2.6 Each Academy Committee shall have a minimum of three community governors. The term of their post is four years. They are:

- a) Nominated by the Academy Committee governors but their appointment must be approved by the Trust Board
- b) They may be a parent/carer of a child at another school within the MAT
- c) They must not be a member of staff of the Trust
- d) Should have a willingness to serve the Academy Committee
- e) Should have useful skills and/or experience to assist and support the school and the Academy Committee.

2.7 Each Academy Committee shall have a clerk. The clerk shall be appointed by the Trust Board and will usually be the clerk to the Trust Board. If the clerk cannot be present at an Academy Committee meeting, the clerk will arrange for another person to attend and take minutes. The role of the clerk is to:

- a) Take minutes of the meeting
- b) Remind and clarify for the Academy Committee governors any legal obligations
- c) Send finalised approved minutes of meetings to the Trust Board (of which the CEO is a member) including those marked confidential
- d) Send to the Academy Committee governors the finalised approved minutes of the Trust Board meetings
- e) Arrange the Academy Committee meetings
- f) Disseminate the papers in advance of the Academy Committee meetings.
- g) Agree the agenda of the Academy Committee meeting with the Chair of the Academy Committee
- h) Make a record of all proceedings at each meeting. Minutes will be circulated to Academy Committee governors within 10 school days of the meeting (or as agreed) and presented with the agenda for the next Academy Committee meeting.

2.8 Each Primary Academy Committee should have a maximum of 9 governors and each Secondary Academy Committee should have a maximum of 12 governors. Where an Academy Committee is responsible for multiple schools, there should be a maximum of 12 governors.

### **3. Quorum**

3.1 The quorum will be three Academy Committee members, consisting of a minimum of two non-staff governors.

### **4. Conditions of accepting a post as an Academy Committee governor**

4.1 Prior to confirmation to the role of Academy Committee governor, the proposed governor must:

- a) Attend as directed with identification as directed to complete an application for an Enhanced Check via the Disclosure and Barring Service (a 'DBS check')
- b) Provide their contact details as requested
- c) Read, complete, and sign the Trust Code of Conduct of the MAT
- d) Read, complete, and sign the Disclosure of Business Interest form produced by the MAT and in particular, read the policy for disclosure of pecuniary interests
- e) Consent to their information being posted on the school website, which is a legal requirement
- f) Commit to completing the induction programme for new governors.

4.2 If any prospective Academy Committee governor:

- a) does not wish to make the applications or disclosures referred to above; or
- b) the result of a DBS check is not clear, then their appointment will not be confirmed and they are not permitted to serve on the Academy Committee.

## **5. Conditions of remaining as an Academy Committee Member, once elected**

5.1 The Trust Board hopes that once elected and the necessary safeguarding checks are returned and are satisfactory, that each Academy Committee governor will enjoy an interesting and fulfilling role with their Academy Committee.

5.2 However, there are certain situations where the term of appointment of an Academy Committee governor can be brought to an earlier end.

5.3 A governor must be removed from post if:

- a) They refuse to undertake a DBS check, or any other safeguarding check directed by the Trust Board.
- b) They fail to attend three Academy Committee meetings in one academic year or a period of six months or more. This results in a mandatory removal from post.

5.4 A governor may be removed from post in the following circumstances:

- a) They are in breach of the Code of Conduct approved by the Trust Board
- b) They are in the employ of the MAT and are the subject of disciplinary proceedings in relation to their employment
- c) They failed to disclose a material business interest that affects or could be seen to affect their independence in the role of governor
- d) They provide services to the MAT and there is a dispute between them and the MAT in respect of the services provided
- e) They are in dispute with the MAT in respect of monies due for services rendered by the MAT and/or one of the schools in the MAT
- f) They have acted in a way that is inconsistent with the school's ethos and have brought or are likely to bring the MAT or the school they serve into disrepute.

## **6. Attending meetings**

6.1 There must be three Academy Committee governors in attendance at a meeting consisting of a minimum of two non-staff governors for the meeting to be quorate. If the meeting is not quorate, no business can be undertaken and the meeting must be rearranged. The Trust Board must be notified should this occur, and the clerk will do that.

6.2 The Academy Committee will meet as often as is necessary to fulfil its responsibilities but at least once per academic term. The clerk will arrange the meetings.

6.3 The Academy Committee Chair sets agenda items with the clerk, taking account of the views of:

- a) the Headteacher
- b) the clerk
- c) the Trust Board.

6.4 The CEO and/or the COO may attend and contribute to an Academy Committee meeting (but will not have voting privileges on any Academy Committee decision).

6.5 Any member of the Trust Board may attend an Academy Committee meeting (but they will not have voting privileges on any Academy Committee decision unless they are a member of the Committee as per 6.6).

6.6 The Trust Board have resolved that no Trustee should be an Academy Committee governor unless approved by the Trust Board and any such appointment will be reviewed every six months by the Trust Board.

6.7 When decisions requiring a vote are raised, each Academy Committee governor will have one equal vote. Where there is an equal division of votes, the casting vote resides with the Chair. Attendance and voting cannot be by proxy.

6.8 Any Academy Committee governor may request that the Chair invites additional guests to attend or contribute to a meeting (but this person will not have any voting privileges).

6.9 Resignations (actual or planned) should be announced at meetings. Any resignation does not become formal until accepted and recorded in the meeting minutes.

## **7. What is the remit and role of the Academy Committee?**

7.1 The Academy Committee is effectively the eyes and ears of the Trust Board within the school that they serve. The Academy Committee is asked by the Trust Board to work essentially in three key areas. They are:

- a) **Safeguarding.** Whilst the legal responsibility rests with the Trust Board, we ask the Academy Committee to help us by ensuring our safeguarding policies are followed and alerting us to any areas of concern
- b) **Use of financial resources.** The budgets for the schools are set by the Central Office of the MAT working with the Headteachers. We ask for your help to monitor that the money allocated is being spent in the right way and with the best outcome
- c) **Achievements and outcomes.** We measure our success not in money but in the success, achievements, and outcomes for children. We need your help looking at the information for your school to make sure we are on track to achieve this. We need you to help us monitor that pupil premium and sports premium is spent appropriately to improve outcomes and that progress is being made across the entire school cohort. We need you to help us monitor that funding for children with SEND is being used appropriately and adequately supports provision to ensure progress for these children.

7.2 Your Academy Committee will do this by acting as a critical friend, to question and evaluate, and:

### Generally:

- l) contributing to and monitoring the progress of, the Academy Improvement Plan, and developing relative effective working practices

- 2) considering safeguarding and equalities implications when undertaking all committee functions
- 3) producing an annual report on the work of the Academy Committee for submission to the Trust and publication on the school website
- 4) commissioning, and reviewing, for approval and submitting to the Trust Board any addendum required to the central Trust Policies relevant for a particular school over and above the central policy
- 5) being aware of and understanding the structure of the MAT, roles and responsibilities, input, and delegations
- 6) dealing with complaints about a school in accordance with the MAT Complaints Policy
- 7) dealing with ratification of the recommendation from the Headteacher to impose a temporary or permanent exclusion
- 8) dealing with appeals against disciplinary sanctions imposed upon a pupil, other than temporary or permanent exclusion.

#### Oversight of Safeguarding and health and safety

- 1) To appoint an Academy Committee governor for SEND to liaise with the member of the Trust Board appointed as safeguarding lead for the Trust. The role of this governor will be to monitor that the Trust policies around SEND are being implemented and to report any areas of concern to the centre.
- 2) To monitor and challenge implementation of statutory safeguarding obligations and policies in the school
- 3) To supplement the Trust Health and Safety Policy by way of an addendum specific to the school, if considered relevant
- 4) To regularly review and make recommendations about the Academy Accessibility Plan
- 5) To set and review annually the school Business Continuity Plans, including a Critical Incident Plan in co-operation with the COO
- 6) To review the risk element of Educational Visits, residential trips and dangerous or outdoor activities
- 7) To follow and implement Trust Policies.

#### Oversight of the use of financial resources

- 1) To make recommendations and observations to the Trust Board about staffing and budget through.....
- 2) To review the school Risk Register termly
- 3) To monitor that the school is staffed sufficiently for the fulfilment of the Academy Improvement Plan and the effective operation of the school
- 4) To oversee compliance with the Trust's Performance Management/Appraisal Policy within the school for all staff, including provision of advice from the Academy Committee Chair in the Headteacher's Performance Management Review (PMR) together with the CEO to be responsible for communicating pay decisions to staff once determination has been made by the Trust Board Personnel and Pay Committee, except for the Headteacher
- 5) To follow Trust Policy and procedure for advertising, recruitment, and appointment of staff
- 6) To monitor that staffing procedures follow equalities legislation
- 7) To monitor that the school's staffing structure is commensurate with the needs of the school based on pupil numbers
- 8) To keep under review staff work/life balance, working conditions and well-being, including the monitoring of absence
- 9) To monitor the annual CPD budget based on the school's needs
- 10) To monitor and make decisions regarding catering related capital expenditure, referring any items above the delegated authorities to Trust Board.

#### Achievements and outcomes

- 1) To monitor and challenge implementation of SEND policies and the performance of pupils with SEND in the school

- 2) To monitor that the requirements of children with SEND are met, as laid out in the Code of Practice, and receive termly reports from the Headteacher/SENCO and an annual report from the SEND Academy Committee governor
- 3) To monitor anticipated achievement against data drop benchmarks
- 4) To view critically and challenge programmes or support put in place by the school to monitor effectiveness shown by outcomes improving
- 5) To view critically and challenge the curriculum pathways set by the professional teaching staff with a view to improving outcomes
- 6) To evaluate school effectiveness against its Academy Improvement Plan and any external information.

8.3 Your Academy Committee will show best practice in undertaking these responsibilities by:

- 1) undertaking an annual governor skills audit to monitor that your Academy Committee governors have the skills needed to undertake their responsibilities
- 2) carrying out annual 360 review on the Academy Committee Chair's performance based on the DfE's governance competency framework, managed by the Governance Manager
- 3) monitoring that the Register of Business Interests is kept up to date
- 4) engaging with stakeholders, including parent/carers and members of the community
- 5) producing an annual schedule of business for the Academy Committee
- 6) completing an annual evaluation of impact of the Academy Committee
- 7) completing an annual Academy Committee governor contribution review
- 8) succession planning for the Academy Committee
- 9) producing and monitoring CPD for the Academy Committee governors

## **9. Terms of Reference**

9.1 Reviewed annually by the Trust Board.