

## Role Description

# Chair of Trustees

### Role's purpose

To provide leadership to the trust board, ensuring that it fulfils its functions effectively, and to work closely with the CEO to support, advise and help shape proposals to be discussed at board meetings, ensuring the focus is strategic.

Working closely with the CEO and the Head of Governance and Compliance, the Chair of Trustees will do the following:

### Leading governance

- ensure the board sets a clear vision and strategy for the trust
- lead the board in monitoring the implementation of the strategy
- set the culture of the board, balancing and valuing the support and challenge responsibilities, the generative and fiduciary modes of operation
- ensure the board acts as a team
- collaborate with leaders across the trust to ensure that all levels of governance are effective and receive adequate governance professional support
- where required, represent the trust board in its dealings with external partners and be an advocate for the trust
- chair meetings of the Governor Board
- meet with local governors at two link schools as part of the Trust's Framework for Increasing Links between Local Governors and Trustees
- report to the trust's Members, in particular at the AGM

### Leading and developing the team

- ensure the board has the required skills and commitment to govern well, and that identified skills gaps are filled
- ensure a diverse team that reflects the communities served with a mix of new and experienced trustees and a variety of backgrounds
- ensure all trustees have a thorough understanding of their role and receive appropriate induction and training as required
- encourage the board, and individual trustees, to conduct annual self-evaluation
- ensure that trustees are involved and feel valued and their skills are developed
- model and reinforce the board's agreed code of conduct
- develop a good working relationship with the vice chair, ensuring they are kept fully informed and delegating tasks as appropriate
- ensure that there is a plan for succession for the chair, vice chair and any committee chairs

## Working with the CEO

- build a professional relationship with the CEO that allows for honest conversations, acting as a sounding board and ensuring there are no surprises at meetings
- meet regularly (approximately monthly) with the CEO
- ensure there are transparent and effective processes for the recruitment and induction of the CEO
- ensure appropriate trustee involvement in the recruitment of other executive leaders
- ensure all trustees concentrate on their strategic role in holding the executive to account
- ensure that trust leaders provide information that allows the board to fulfil its functions
- oversee and participate in the CEO's appraisal ensuring that appropriate continuing professional development (CPD) is provided
- ensure the workload and wellbeing of executive leaders is considered
- play a lead role in any HR matters relating to the CEO, including performance management through to any decision to suspend the CEO

## Leading improvement

- ensure the board is involved at a strategic level in the trust's self-evaluation process and that this feeds into its key priorities
- ensure the board's business is focused on the trust's strategic priorities
- ensure the board has the information it needs to monitor the progress of pupils and consider appropriate actions to improve outcomes
- ensure the board has the information it needs to monitor the financial position of the trust and consider appropriate actions to ensure the best use of resources
- ensure the board has good knowledge of the schools and the work of the trust
- ensure there are mechanisms in place to listen to the views of parents, pupils and staff

## Leading trust board business

- work with the Head of Governance and Compliance and the CEO to plan for board meetings, ensuring that agendas focus on the board's key responsibilities and strategic priorities and avoid unnecessary paperwork
- chair meetings effectively, promoting an open culture that allows ideas and discussion to thrive while ensuring clear decisions are reached as quickly as possible
- ensure that decisions taken at the meetings of the trust board are recorded and implemented
- ensure that effective arrangements are in place for dealing with complaints made to the trust board under the adopted complaints procedure
- ensure that effective arrangements are in place for dealing with employment matters, (for example, grievance, disciplinary, capability) under the adopted procedures of the trust

### Person specification

Candidates for the role of chair should be able to demonstrate the following qualities:

- Negotiation and diplomacy skills with the ability to have courageous conversations
- The capacity to process information quickly and understand relevant data, drawing valid conclusions with a considered approach to risk
- The ability to trust the judgement of a highly experienced CEO and probe their reasoning whilst discerning and supporting their development needs
- An openness to encouraging differing views and ideas without judgement in order to reach agreement on strategic issues
- The understanding needed to build and get the best out of a team of volunteers
- The ability to present as the leader of the Trust Board to a range of audiences

Candidates for the role should possess the following experience:

- Experience of a role at a senior level in a large organisation, ideally in a regulated sector.
- Experience of chairing a board in an education setting or otherwise
- Experience of navigating the boundary between executive and non-executive roles and responsibilities
- Experience of working with volunteers