

The Enquire Learning Trust

Trustees: Terms of Reference

1. Introduction

The values we hold, the expectations we have and the commitments we make to learners, families and one another are the elements, which bind Enquire Learning Trust Academies together. We work collaboratively to enhance the progress of every learner and leaders across our academies expect achievement to be high and outcomes strong.

A passionate commitment to professional development as the root of improvement and all of our academies embrace the spirit of **enquiry** as a means of affirming, sharing, sharpening and developing practice. Through **collaborative enquiry** we also ensure all voices are heard, valued and make a contribution to the on-going development of the Trust. This is our academy trust, it belongs to all of us, and everyone works together to make it a great place for professionals to work and a fantastic place for children to learn.

2. The Trustees role and purpose

The Enquire Learning Trust is a limited company with charitable aims. The trust is governed by the Board of Trustees, who are responsible for, and oversee, the management and administration of the trust and the academies run by the trust.

The Trustees are accountable to the Department for Education (DfE) and external government agencies, including the Charity Commission, for the quality of education they provide and the effect use of the associated academy funding. They are required to have systems in place through which they can assure themselves of quality, financial probity, safety and good practice.

These terms of reference explain the ways in which the board fulfills its responsibilities for the leadership and management of the trust. They have **been adopted by the board in accordance with the trust's Articles of Association** and should be read in conjunction with those Articles.

2. Trustees' powers and responsibilities

The Trustees take responsibility for pupil outcomes in all our academies within the trust. The Trustees appoint the company members of Enquire Learning Trust and in turn the members appoint the Trustees.

The Trustees are responsible for the strategic direction, broad policy framework and oversight of the trust and all its academies in order to ensure that the vision and values underpin the work and direction of travel.

The Trustees should also ensure the solvency of the trust, safeguarding its assets and delivering its charitable outcomes. The board oversees the performance of the trust, including the management of risk. This is largely exercised through strategic planning, and the setting of policy. It is managed through business planning, monitoring of budgets, performance management, the setting of standards and the implementation of quality assurance processes. The Trustees have the power to direct change where performance falls short of expectations of good to outstanding academies.

Trustees will have regard to the interests of all academies for which the trust is responsible in deciding and implementing trust – wide policies or exercising any authority in respect of an academy.

The Trust is the sole legal entity for all central operations and for the academies in the trust. As detailed in the Articles and Master Funding Agreement, the Trustees have sole responsibility for the strategic decision making in the trust. On behalf of the trust, the Trustees can decide to delegate some (but not all) of its decision making to the board committees and Local Governing Bodies. The extent of the delegation will be determined in the Scheme of Delegation.

These delegations must take full account of the trust's legal responsibilities and ensure effective risk management. The framework for delegated decision-making is described in the Scheme of Delegation.

Membership

The Members, who determine the number of Trustees, appoint trustees.

The quorum for the trust board meetings will be 5 Trustees.

Trustees are appointed because of the range of skills and expertise they can bring to help to realise trusts vision and values.

Appointment of Chair and vice – chair

The chair and vice – chair of the board of Trustees is appointed by the Accountable Officer and will hold office for two years. He or She is eligible for re-election.

The Board of Trustees can choose to vary the term of office of individual Trustees up to a maximum of four years in order to ensure continuity and sustainability.

If the chair and vice – chair are absent from any meeting of the board the members shall choose one of their number to act as chair for the meeting.

Meetings

The trust board and board sub- committees shall meet every term. Extraordinary meetings may be called at short notice if there are urgent issues that need board discussion and/or a board decision.

The Trustees will appoint a clerk to the board.

Terms of reference:

The responsibility of the Board of trustees shall be:

Setting strategic direction

- **To ensure that the trust's vision and values underpin the way in which** the trust works and relationships within the trust;
- To determine the educational character, religious ethos and mission of the trust;
- To approve the trust and individual academy annual and three year strategic plan and review annually;

Ensuring high standards of achievement and improved performance

- To ensure that all academies in the trust are effectively challenged and support to maximize outcomes of children and young people who attend trust academies.
- To regularly review the key performance indicators of each academy and identify the trust strategic plan
- **To challenge and support the trust's** senior officers and academy leaders to achieve best value in terms of impact, outcomes, quality and cost;

Ensuring strong and robust governance

- To **ensure compliance with the trust's** duties under company law and charity law and agreements made with the Department for Education

(DfE) including Master Funding Agreement and Supplemental Funding Agreements;

- To ensure the continued charitable status of the trust;
- To approve the trust **board's** terms of reference and keep them under regular review;
- To approve the trust's scheme of delegation and keep it under regular review;
- To approve the terms of reference of the audit committee and keep them under regular review;
- To **approve the trust's** policy framework that identifies responsibilities for approving specific policies and keeping this under regular review;
- To take timely action to address decisions for which there is a legal requirement for board approval;
- To ensure effective consultation and communication with all constituent parts of the trust;
- To review its own effectiveness regularly and agree appropriate actions to improve its performance;

Ensuring sound financial practices

- To **approve the trust's annual budget and keep it under regular review** by receiving a report from the Chief Finance Officer at every board meeting;
- To **approve each trust academy's bottom line annual budget, review** annually and endorse plans to address identified over or underspends;
- To agree the scheme of financial delegation to trust academies and review this annually;
- To **receive the annual report from the trust's auditors and take the** appropriate actions to respond positively to any recommendations;

Becoming the employer of choice

- To approve trust wide employment policies for all trust employees;

Ensuring a secure health and safety environment

- To **approve the trust's health and safety policy and review its** implementation annually;

Ensuring effective child protection and safeguarding

- To **approve the trust's safeguarding policy and keep it under regular** review;
- To receive an annual report on the effectiveness of safeguarding practices in trust academies and within the trust;

Acting as the admissions authority

- As the admissions authority for all trust academies, determine the admissions arrangements for all academies and review annually;

Reporting procedures

- The clerk to the trust board shall circulate minutes of the meetings, the agenda and any associated papers for forthcoming meetings at least seven working days before the date of the board meeting.