

Guidance for and Remit of Academy Councils

September 2020

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1. Background

For the past two to three years the Trustees have considered how to build Trust governance that is not only fit-for-purpose but is also future-proof in what we envisage to be a growing MAT. Also, how to achieve the balance necessary between the Board's accountability with its capacity to support and challenge both our schools and our Central Team (CT). This document seeks to clarify the underlining structure of governance detailed in our Scheme of Delegation (SoD):

- An efficient, compliant and value-for-money business capacity supporting our academies;
- Academy Councils undertaking the support and challenge function regarding student outcomes and welfare on the Trustee's behalf as sub-committees of the Board;
- Leading, managing and facilitating much of this through the MAT's CT.

This document provides an overview which ACs will develop over the next academic year.

2. Key roles of our Academy Councils

- Know and understand TPLT values
- Know and understand Strategic Plan – TPLT 2020-23
- Know and monitor Trust and school policies
- Approve, monitor and evaluate the School Improvement Plan
- Agree with oversight the school's 's risk document (5 main risks to the success of the school)
- Ensure the school balances the delegated budget in year
- Approve and monitor financial and procurement procedures ensuring compliance with the financial scheme of delegation
- Challenge and support the Principal and LT and other key staff on student outcomes - to include attendance and student numbers as key metrics
- Specifically monitor the progress of Pupil Premium and SEND pupils – key groups

- Ensure pay decisions are linked to performance with performance targets linked to agreed priorities

3. Common agenda

1. Welcome and apologies
2. Pecuniary interest declaration
3. Minutes of previous Meeting and any Matters Arising not on the Agenda
4. Any up-date from the Chair regarding the Trust
5. Principal's report to include KPIs and key risks to the Trust/Academy regarding:
 - a. School improvement visit notes
 - b. Update on School Improvement Plan and feedback on reviews
 - c. Learning and teaching, progress and outcomes, attendance and behaviour
 - d. Safeguarding, personal development and well-being
6. Governor or other visits to the Academy – to share good practice seen and raise any questions
7. Governor training update and Academy Council self-review – for governors to share key headlines
8. Reports from Central Team to include any other key risks to the Trust/Academy managed primarily by the CT – FYI – this would be a written report by Central Team – no more than 2 sides of A4
9. Any other business

4. From S of D – 'tasks' for the AC

- Elect and have confirmed by the Trustees, the appointment a Chair and Vice Chair of the Academy Council
- Monitor the implementation of Trust Policies
- Approve school policies
- Monitor the implementation of school policies

- Approve and monitor the School Improvement Plan (SIP)
- Monitor the provision for daily collective worship [* VA]
- Submit to the Trustees the school budget for the three academic years for approval
- To monitor effective deployment of Pupil Premium across the Trust and report finding to the Board
- To enter into contracts within the terms of the Financial Scheme of Delegation
- Approve and monitor financial and procurement policies for their school which are consistent with those of the Trust
- Manage appeals following absence warnings at Stage 1 and 2 for school staff
- Manage an appeal against a warning for school staff
- Hear stakeholders' complaints appeals
- Manage appeals due to capability for all staff within their schools
- Manage appeals due to capability for all staff within their schools
- Approve recommendations from the Principals for pay progression all teaching and learning school staff
- Manage appeals against pay decisions by an Academy Council
- Approve a Risk Management Document for the school
- Make first instance admissions application decisions
- Consider reinstatement and inform parents of outcome
- Arrange suitable full-time education for fixed period exclusions of more than

5 school days

- Consider parents' representations about an exclusion
- Reconsider an exclusion within 10 school days of receipt of notice of independent review panel decision and inform Principal, parents and LA of its reconsideration
- Ensure that a student is removed from the school roll following permanent exclusion
- Consider reinstatement of a pupil who has been excluded
- Appoint a Designated Safeguarding Lead

5. Background information

From The Key

The key roles of the 'Governing Body' (read AC) are:

- Strategic Leadership – the decision making based around the values, aims and aspirations of the school
- Support and Challenge – the monitoring and evaluation of the school's effectiveness, asking challenging questions and pressing for improvement
- Accountability – the Principal is accountable to the CEO / Board / Governing Body for the attainment and progress of every pupil in the school, the curriculum they receive and the leadership and management decisions that help this to happen.

The key responsibilities of the Governing Body (read AC) are:

- Pupil achievement – It will identify how well the school and individual pupils are achieving and challenge any underperformance of cohorts and groups each year and over time. It identifies whether pupils are making expected progress, and where pupils fall behind, what action the school is taking to support those pupils, and whether that remedial action is successful

- Staffing – whilst recruitment and appointment of new staff is the responsibility of the Principal. The total number of staff employed remains the Trust Board’s responsibility. CEO / Board appoint the Principal and carry out the performance management of the Principal each year with the Chair of AC. Retention of good staff and leadership planning is still an important consideration for the AC.

Information from Browne Jacobson

- How well do governors know their school ?
- Need for the values of the Trust to resonant with governors
- AC are there to serve the community of the academy and bring experience to it
- Parents need to have a voice
- AC should have a bird’s eye view
- Risk management with open communication between ACs and Trust Board
- Common agenda at all meetings