



Role of a Trustee

Introduction

The purpose of governance is to provide confident, strategic leadership and to create robust accountability, oversight and assurance for educational and financial performance. Effective governance is based on six key features:

- **Strategic leadership** that sets and champions vision, ethos and strategy
- **Accountability** that drives up educational standards and financial performance
- **People** with the right skills, experience, qualities and capacity
- **Structures** that reinforce clearly defined roles and responsibilities
- **Compliance** with statutory and contractual requirements
- **Evaluation** to monitor and improve the quality and impact of governance

The role of a school trustee at Robert May's School (RMS) is to contribute to the work of the Trust Board (TB) so as to secure high standards of achievement for all members of the school community by:

- **Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction**
The school seeks to provide an outstanding all round education provision with high academic achievement at its heart. Working with senior leaders, the TB sets strategic objectives to help the school reach its goals.
- **Holding the Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff**
The TB creates robust accountability for the Headteacher through rigorous analysis of performance data and financial information.
- **Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent**
Trustees are responsible for ensuring that the school operates with regularity, propriety and value for money, using only the resources it has available

The Trust Board's function is strategic, rather than operational. Trustees should not be involved in the day to day running of the school or operational tasks such as writing school policies, auditing of accounts or health and safety procedures or undertaking classroom observations to make judgments on quality of teaching.

Activities

As part of the Trust Board, a trustee is expected to:

Contribute to all strategic discussions at Trust meetings, the functions of which are to:

- Determine and shape the vision and ethos of the school, setting clear and ambitious strategic priorities and targets within the context of enhancing social mobility and diversity
- Oversee the school's financial performance by approving the annual budget, agreeing resource allocation and monitoring expenditure
- Ensure that all students have access to a broad and balanced curriculum, ensuring that resources (including the pupil premium) are used to overcome any barriers to learning
- Oversee staffing and personnel matters including the staff structure and key staff policies
- Provide support and challenge to the Headteacher and senior leadership team



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- Ensure that safeguarding requirements are fully met
- Ensure the Academy Trust is compliant with legal requirements, including that all statutory policies and documents are in place
- Approve and review school policies, and hold staff to account for their implementation
- Carry out the appointment and performance management of the Headteacher
- Monitor health and safety in the school

Hold the senior leaders to account by monitoring the school's performance. This includes:

- Agreeing the outcomes from the school's self-evaluation form (SEF) and ensuring they are used to inform the priorities in the school improvement plan (SIP)
- Considering all relevant data and feedback provided on request by school leaders and external sources on all aspects of school performance
- Asking challenging questions of the Headteacher and senior leadership team
- Ensuring that senior leaders have arranged for any required audits to be carried out and receiving the results of those audits

Ensure that staff have the resources and support they require to do their jobs well, including the necessary expertise on business management, external advice where necessary, effective appraisal and Continuing Professional Development, and suitable premises, and that the way in which those resources are used has impact.

Listen to and reporting to the school's stakeholders: pupils, parents, staff, and the wider community.

Contribute to the Trust Board's evaluation of its own functions and performance; including annual completion of a skills audit and governor questionnaire.

RMS governance structure

The size and composition of the TB is set out in the Articles of Association. Trustees of an Academy Trust are both Trustees for the purposes of the Charities Act 2011 and Directors of the company limited by guarantee for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006. The school's liability insurance policy provides the necessary cover for trustees acting in good faith.

Trustees are required to sign the Trustee code of conduct and declaration of interests at the first TB meeting of each academic year. Trustees are required to respect the confidentiality of items of business which are deemed confidential and support a decision under collective responsibility.

All trustees are required to complete safeguarding training and other training as appropriate to any specific TB responsibilities. All training is evaluated and reported to the TB.

The TB meets two times per term (six times a year) and currently has four committees (Resources; Teaching, Learning and Wellbeing, Pay and Performance, Strategy and Nominations) as well as the Headteacher performance review panel. Committees meet formally once a term except for Pay and Performance which meets once per year.



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Trustees may be asked to contribute to the work of one or more of these committees or panels. Trustees may also be asked to take on the role of “link trustee” on a specific issue of importance, reporting to the TB on progress in relation to that issue. Current designated roles include Pupil Premium, Behaviour & Attendance, Student Experience, Looked After Children, Quality of Teaching and Learning, Safeguarding, Health and Safety, Special educational needs or disabilities (SEND), Personal Development, British Values, Post 16 Pathways and Careers .

Trustees may be asked to be members of the appeals committee, trustee nominations panel or of a working group set up to look in depth at an issue of strategic importance and report back to the TB.

Detailed information on the role of trustees of Academy Trust can be found in the following documents:

Department for Education Governance Handbook and Competency Framework:
www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-handbook

Education and Skills Funding Agency Academies Financial Handbook:
www.gov.uk/government/publications/academies-financial-handbook

Charity Commission guidance on the role of charity trustees:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-essential-trustee-what-you-need-to-know-cc3>