



TRUSTEE OF
ADVANTAGE SCHOOLS
RECRUITMENT PACK

We believe, given the right circumstances, all children are



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Introduction

Become a Trustee at Advantage Schools

Lead a sector-defining trust. Raise standards for thousands of pupils.

Advantage Schools is a high-performing, fast-growing charity running schools across Bedfordshire. We exist because too many children are not as well served by schools as they could be. Our trustees set the strategic direction and hold leaders to account so that our schools show, concretely, how great education can be, and what it means to develop all children into educated people.

Why this role matters

- **Real impact, at scale:** Decisions you make will shape the education of **thousands of pupils** every day.
- **Sector-leading ambition:** We are unapologetically aiming to be a **top 1% trust**, known for academic excellence, strong personal development, and high expectations including of conduct.
- **Serious governance in a complex organisation:** We're a growing multi-academy trust with significant budgets, risk, and regulatory responsibilities. Trustees steward public money and ensure every pound advances pupil achievement.

Who we're looking for

You don't need specific qualifications. You do need:

- **Proven judgement and leadership:** the confidence to ask hard questions and back excellent decisions.
- **Time and reliability:** to prepare thoroughly, attend board/committee meetings, undertake training, and carry out school and trust monitoring visits.
- **Strategic grip:** the ability to focus on outcomes, safeguarding, finance, risk, people, and long-term sustainability.
- **Moral purpose:** an unwavering belief that **every** pupil can achieve highly, and that our job is to make that happen.

Experience in any of the following is especially valuable: education, finance/audit, risk, law, estates, HR/people, data, technology, organisational growth, or governance in complex organisations.

What you'll do

- **Set strategy and standards** that drive excellent teaching and strong outcomes for pupils.
- **Hold the executive to account** through sharp, evidence-based challenge and support.
- **Oversee resources and risk** so the trust remains financially sound, compliant, and safe.



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- **Champion our culture** of high expectations, professionalism, and service to our communities.

Commitment

Trustees commit to regular board and committee meetings across the year, school/trust visits, and ongoing training. Preparation and attendance are essential - our pupils deserve nothing less.

If you have the skills, integrity, and drive to help lead a top-tier trust, we'd love to hear from you.

Contact: Mikhaela Chapman mchapman@advantageschools.co.uk

Mikhaela can arrange a conversation with **Stuart Lock, CEO**, or **Mark McCourt, Chair of the Trust Board**.



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Message from the CEO

Dear Prospective Trustee,

Thank you for your interest in joining **Advantage Schools**.

When I joined Advantage Schools in 2017, I found a group of determined trustees who shared my conviction that schools and the school system in England can be much better. Since then, with their challenge, support, and direction, I have been able to build and lead a team that is showing, in practice, how much better schools can be.

Just over a year ago, we completed a major merger. This was and remains one of the most significant steps in our development, and it has been a resounding success. We are now a **strong, growing, and ambitious medium-sized trust**, serving thousands of pupils across Bedfordshire and beyond.

Our next phase is about **leading the sector**, not following it. We want to help define what an excellent school trust looks like: one that combines rigorous academics, powerful personal development, and a culture of high expectations for every pupil. To do this, we need to add trustees with vision, bravery, resilience, and broad expertise. These are people who will challenge us, support us, and help shape the next stage of our journey.

If you are seeking a **non-executive, voluntary role with genuine strategic influence and moral purpose**, and want to make a measurable difference both locally and across the education system, I would be delighted to meet you. While this appointment rests with the Board, I am genuinely excited about the perspective, expertise, and insight that the successful candidate will bring, and I remain humble about how much I will learn from and with you.

I look forward to the possibility of working together to deliver on our shared ambition: **a school system that serves every child exceptionally well**.

Stuart Lock

Chief Executive Officer
Advantage Schools



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Letter from the Chair

Dear Prospective Trustee,

Thank you for your interest in joining the Board of Trustees at Advantage Schools.

We are a trust with a strong moral purpose: to ensure that every child, regardless of background, receives an exceptional education and leaves school equipped to live a fulfilling life. Since our foundation in 2017, we have built a family of schools across Bedfordshire that are academically ambitious, well-led, and rooted in integrity, excellence, and aspiration.

Our board is responsible for the strategic direction and governance of the organisation. We are accountable for educational outcomes, financial performance, and the long-term sustainability of the trust. We support and challenge our Chief Executive and his team to deliver on our mission and to do so with professionalism, transparency, and moral courage.

Advantage Schools has matured into a confident and outward-looking trust. We have successfully navigated major growth, including a recent merger that has strengthened both our capacity and our culture. We are now poised to play a greater role regionally and nationally, sharing what works and partnering with others to ensure that more children benefit from the kind of education our pupils enjoy. This next stage will require trustees of skill, wisdom, and resolve – people who can think strategically, analyse risk, and make decisions grounded in both evidence and principle.

Our board brings together a diverse range of professional expertise – from education and finance to law, business, and public service. Trusteeship is a voluntary role, but it is among the most rewarding contributions you can make to public life. You will be part of a dynamic, ambitious team committed to excellence and united by the belief that all children are capable of extraordinary things.

If you share our conviction that education is a moral and civic endeavour – and have the experience, judgement, and time to help guide our trust through its next chapter – I would be delighted to hear from you.

With best wishes,

Mark McCourt
Chair of the Board



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About Advantage Schools

We believe that, given the right circumstances, all children are capable of extraordinary things.

Advantage Schools was created in Bedfordshire, an area that has had historic poor academic performance in both primary and secondary phases. Families in and around Bedfordshire deserve better, and hence Advantage Schools exists to ‘run a family of phenomenal schools’.

Advantage Schools operates ten schools in Bedfordshire. These schools are:

- Bedford Free School (secondary)
- The Chalk Hills Academy (secondary)
- Elstow School (primary)
- Houstone School (secondary)
- Queen’s Park Academy (primary)
- Laburnum School (primary)
- The Linden Academy (primary)
- The Rushmere Park Academy (lower)
- The Stockwood Park Academy (secondary)
- The Vale Academy (primary)

Welcome to Advantage Schools

Our Vision

Every pupil enters adulthood with the knowledge that well-educated people take for granted when they communicate, equipping them with the character and confidence to lead, create and contribute meaningfully to society.

Our Mission

We educate all children, serve our communities, and aim for exceptional outcomes.

Our pupils receive a demanding academic education that enables them to take their place in the community of educated citizens. We provide every pupil with access to the best of what has been thought, said, and created. All pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, whatever their starting point, develop the knowledge, understanding, confidence and character to thrive and to contribute meaningfully to society.



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Our Core Values

Integrity – We are uncompromising in our commitment to our mission; we are open and honest in our reflections and subsequent actions. We demonstrate our values in our words and behaviours.

Ambition – We aim high for all of our pupils, staff, and schools, and are unyielding in our determination, despite difficulties that might occur.

Excellence – We deliver top-quality education and personal development to all pupils; we establish a culture of clarity, discipline, and care enabling every pupil to achieve the best that they are able to.

Why This Matters

Many of our pupils face challenges beyond school. Our duty is to ensure that they are not limited by them. That means delivering a consistent, excellent education and making decisions that are guided by what we know works.

Our Pupils' Entitlement

Every child in an Advantage Schools trust school is entitled to:

- A focused learning environment free from distraction
- An academic curriculum with very high expectations
- Well-qualified, well-trained teachers who are subject experts
- A rich set of experiences that broaden horizons
- Opportunities to contribute to and thrive in their communities.

We commit to ensuring that pupils can learn and teachers are able to teach in an environment free from distraction and disruption. We take this *really* seriously.

We believe that schools must be places of intellectual transformation. Our curriculum and systems are designed so that each pupil can access and succeed in the traditions that shape society.

For more information about our trust, see our website: www.advantageschools.co.uk



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Governance Structure





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Job Description

Summary of key areas of responsibility

- To ensure that the trust complies with its Articles of Association, funding agreements and Department for Education (DfE) requirements.
- To ensure that the trust upholds its vision and values.
- To ensure that the trust applies its resources effectively and in accordance with the Academy Trust Handbook and any DfE or Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) requirements.
- To contribute actively to the board of trustees' role in giving firm strategic direction to the organisation, setting overall policy, defining goals including trust growth strategy.
- To safeguard the good name and values of the trust.
- To represent the trust at functions and meetings as appropriate.
- To declare any conflicts of interest while carrying out the duties of a trustee.
- To be collectively responsible for the actions of the trust and other trustees.
- To abide by the trust's code of conduct.
- To appoint and support the CEO of the trust and monitor performance.
- In addition, each trustee should use any specific knowledge or experience they have to help the board of trustees reach sound decisions. This will involve scrutinising board papers, leading discussions, focusing on key issues, and providing advice and guidance requested by the board on new initiatives, or other issues relevant to the area of, the organisation's work in which the trustee has special expertise.
- To attend meetings, and to read papers in advance of the meetings.
- To attend sub-committee meetings as appropriate.
- To participate in other such tasks as arise from time to time.

Particular skills we are looking for

- HR recruitment and personnel management
- Growth
- Risk
- Educational expertise in primary, secondary or tertiary phases
- Finance
- Estates management
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Term of office

Trustees are appointed by the members for a term of four years. After the term is complete, the trustee can either step down or be re-elected.



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Expenses

While the role is voluntary, expenses, including travel expenses, may be claimed.

Meetings

- Trustees are expected to attend all meetings of the board.
- Attendance at sub-committees is only required where the trustee is a member of a committee.



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Person Specification

Candidates for the role of trustee should be able to demonstrate a good number of the following skills and attributes:

- commitment to the trust and its values, visions and objectives
- personal integrity
- willingness to take tough decisions in order to ensure that the trust serves its charitable objectives and leads the way in the education sector
- knowledge of appropriate domains that add to the trust board (e.g. legal, HR, compliance, business leadership, growth, education)
- an understanding and acceptability of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship
- willingness to devote the necessary time and effort to their duties as a trustee
- strategic thinker who can work with the other trustees and executive team to help develop a compelling vision for the trust
- have good, independent judgement
- ability to work effectively as a member of the team
- strong interpersonal, written and verbal communication skills
- knowledge of and an interest in the education sector and school trusts (sometimes known as MATs) and prior experience of school trust governance either at local level or trust board level
- good IT skills



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Application Process

We want the very best!

Advantage Schools is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and expects all staff, trustees, governors and members to share this commitment.

The successful candidate will be subject to an enhanced DBS check.

To apply, please complete the trustee application form and send to Mikhaela Chapman, Company Secretary at mchapman@advantageschools.co.uk or for an informal and exploratory conversation.

Related documents:

Articles of Association

Scheme of Delegation