

## FAQs - about the role of being a Trustee

- *I have a full-time job and am concerned about the time commitment involved in being a trustee or local governor. What will this be and what are the essential tasks that I will have to perform?*

The amount of time that you will spend on your role varies as a trustee, there are a number of board meetings you are required to attend and it is likely you will also be a member of additional committees. We estimate that actual meeting time will be no more than two hours per meeting, but you should also allow time to prepare by reading the paperwork in advance. There are termly meetings of around two hours plus termly monitoring days to ensure you can see the school in action. You may also be asked to support a committee of the board depending on your expertise (optional). The leader of governance will be able to advise you of these things and issue you with a calendar of meetings for the year. In addition, you may periodically be sent other reading and be required to attend training, away days and school events.

Attendance: is important to ensure a meeting is quorate and that the decision-making process is robust. If there are any factors which might affect your ability to attend meetings, it is important that you discuss them with the chair and leader of governance.

- *When will I get the papers for each meeting?*

The Articles of Association and standing orders provides the statutory framework for our governance and stipulates that notice of meetings, with agendas, must be sent at least seven days before each meeting. Any supporting papers will usually be sent to you at the same time. If you require paper copies, you should raise this with the leader of governance.

- *I know nothing about the education sector. How can I find out more?*

We would encourage you to consider who we are and click on the links to our schools' websites, meet with our leaders and read background resources such as:

*Government departments and funding agencies:*

Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) – for funding and regulation

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/education-and-skills-funding-agency>

Department for Education (DfE) – for policy and general information

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education>

### *Standards*

Ofsted (Office of Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills) – her Majesty's Inspectorate, an independent body responsible for inspection reports for all schools and colleges <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted>

### *Education news*

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/topics/cdl8n2ede5zt>

<https://www.tes.com/magazine/news>

### *Harbour Learning Trust*

<https://harbourlearningtrust.com/>

Our leader of governance will also be able to provide additional material and information to help you to get to know the trust and our academies.

- *In what ways will I get involved in the management of the trust and its academies?*

The short answer is that you won't. It is very important that, as a trustee you understand the difference between your strategic role and the executive role of the CEO and the headteachers – which is operational. There are many definitions of governance, but it is generally accepted that the governance of an organisation is an activity distinct from, but complementary to, the management of the organisation.

- *What sort of training should I expect and who will organise this?*

All new Trustees will receive an induction to give them the basic tools and information so they can commence the role. In addition, there are some key responsibilities of which trustees will need to have knowledge. These include teaching and learning and curriculum issues, financial monitoring; and the legal areas of safeguarding, equality and diversity, and health and safety.

- *I have been told that my term of office is four years, but I am happy to serve for longer. Can I do this?*

Many trustees serve a second term of office, but this will be subject to a decision by the board of trustees.

- *My partner works for a building contractor which occasionally does work for the school. Should I tell the trust about this?*

All trustees are required on appointment to declare any interests that may potentially conflict with their role as trustee or governor and the interests of the trust. These are often financial interests but can also include membership of or connections with other organisations or interest groups. The register of conflicts of interests covers your close relatives, including your partner. The acid test is whether the other interest might

compromise your independent judgement. Once an interest is declared, the trust will decide whether you will need to withdraw from consideration of any item where a conflict might occur.

- *I have been to my first meeting and have a concern about one of the decisions that was made. What should I do?*

The board are a collective decision-making body, which means that individual trustees are bound to abide with a decision, even if they disagree with it, if it has been made reasonably and honestly. If, however, you have very serious concern about a decision you can make a request to the chair to put the item back on the agenda at the next meeting.