



Trustee Information Pack 2024-25

Introduction

Here at Cheshire Academies Trust (CAT) we understand that strong and ethical governance is vital to the success of our trust, its schools, staff and pupils. This pack provides information about the role of the trustee at CAT. If you are passionate about education and want to make a meaningful difference to the lives of children, we would love to hear from you!



Contents:

- **Welcome from the chair of the trust board**
- **Trustee role description**
- **Trustee person specification**
- **Being a trustee, a guide for employers**
- **Governance structure of Cheshire Academies Trust**

—



Cheshire Academies Trust
Inspiring hearts and minds

Cheshire Academies Trust
Inspiring hearts and minds

Flat Lane, Kelsall
Cheshire
CW6 0PU

CEO: Steve Ellis (BEd Hons) NLE
Email: info@cheshireacademiestrust.co.uk
Twitter: @CAcademiesTrust

Thank you for considering becoming a trustee at Cheshire Academies Trust and we hope that you find the information in this pack useful.

Cheshire Academies Trust (CAT) comprises 10 primary schools and one special school. The core purpose of CAT is to inspire the hearts and minds of pupils and staff through care, deep collaboration and creativity. CAT's embedded culture is to support our academies to thrive by developing and sharing best practices/systems across our academies, through rigorous internal challenge and decisive early intervention, to secure improvement where needed.

We have created a Trust in which schools support each other and children and staff thrive through a innovative approach to collaboration. There is therefore a strong sense of ownership and belonging in CAT; this ensures schools will continue to benefit from opportunities to collaborate and work together. CAT has a strong moral purpose to provide the best education and opportunities for children through its core values of care, collaboration and creativity.

CAT has a Board of Trustees whose combined skills offer a wealth of experience to support the Trust and our academies in their activities. The Board of Trustees is responsible for delivering the core governance functions, making key decisions and conducting the business of the Trust. We are seeking to appoint new Trustees and we would welcome applications from candidates with a broad range of backgrounds.

The estimated time commitment for Trustees is up to ten meetings per year. This is in addition to occasional academy visits and frequent email communication with Board and Senior Leadership Team colleagues. The Board is required to follow the principles of public conduct set out by the Nolan Committee, including the declaration of individual Trustees' interests. This is a voluntary role and as such it is not paid, however the Trust will reimburse reasonable expenses incurred in carrying out Trust duties.

If you are interested in applying for the role of trustee we will make arrangements for you to have an initial conversation with the Governance Director for the Trust. Please email debbie.tomkinson@cheshireacademiestrust.co.uk outlining your contact details and what time of day is best to contact you.

You can find out more about Cheshire Academies Trust via our website :www.cheshireacademiestrust.co.uk;

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'E. Wright'.

Emlyn Wright,
Chair, Cheshire Academies Trust

TRUSTEE ROLE DESCRIPTION

Summary

Cheshire Academies Trust (CAT) comprises ten primary schools, one special school and a teaching school (CLTA). The core purpose of Cheshire Academies Trust (CAT) is to inspire hearts and minds through care, collaboration and creativity. Within our trust, we value uniqueness, provide a great education, share the same values, build unity and autonomy, empower communication, invest in people, and create the conditions for success.

Purpose of Governance:

Trustees work together to provide:

- Strategic leadership
- Accountability and assurance
- Strategic engagement

Trustees are responsible for governing a charitable company and directing how it is managed and run. Trustees must also ensure that the trust complies with all legal and statutory requirements. Trustees should seek the advice of the board's governance professional and other professional advice as appropriate.

The trust board's strategic responsibilities

The trust board works closely with the senior executive leaders. Senior executive leaders are responsible for day-to-day operational management of the trust and its schools, whereas the role of the board is strategic. As such, trustees are responsible for:

- determining the mission, values and long-term ambitious vision for the trust
- deciding the principles that guide trust policies and approving key policies
- appointing and appraising the senior executive leader and making pay recommendations
- working with senior leaders to develop a strategy for achieving the vision
- ensuring that stakeholders are involved, consulted and informed as appropriate
- ensuring that all schools in the trust deliver a broad and balanced curriculum such that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education and adult life
- taking ownership of the trust's financial sustainability and ensuring effective resource management across the trust
- agreeing the trust's staffing structure and keeping it under review to ensure it supports delivery of the strategy
- ensuring robust risk management policy and procedures are in place and that risk control measures are appropriate and effective

Monitoring and evaluating trust performance

Trustees must monitor the priorities that have been set to ensure progress is being made by:

- measuring the trust's impact and progress towards its strategic objectives
- ensuring the required policies and procedures are in place and the trust is operating effectively in line with these policies
- holding the senior executive leader to account for standards, financial probity and compliance with agreed policies
- evaluating relevant data and feedback provided by senior executive leaders and external reporting on all aspects of trust performance
- asking challenging questions of the senior executive leader in order to hold them to account
- ensuring that there are policies and procedures in place to deal with complaints effectively

Local governance arrangements

Cheshire Academies Trust has governance below the trust level in the form of local governing bodies (LGBs). The responsibilities of the LGBs are set out in the trust's Scheme of Delegation and Terms of Reference.

Trustees are responsible for:

- ensuring that the trust's governance structure meets the needs of the trust
- agreeing clear schemes of delegation, outlining the responsibilities delegated to the senior executive leader and the responsibilities of the board and academy committees
- ensuring effective communication channels are in place

What is the Commitment Required?

Trustees should ensure that they are making a positive and meaningful contribution to the board by:

- attending meetings typically 6 full board meetings each year plus additional committee meetings (usually an additional four times per year) reading papers and preparing questions for the senior executive leader in advance
- undertaking duties in a manner that reflects CAT values and ethos; in a manner which is open, non-oppressive, respectful, user-centred and committed to equality of opportunity. We uphold the 'Seven Principles of Public Life' (Nolan Principles)
- establishing and maintaining professional relationships with senior executive leaders and colleagues on the board of trustees
- getting to know schools within the trust, including visiting occasionally during school hours
- undertaking induction training and developing knowledge and skills on an ongoing basis

Expenses

Whilst the role of trustee is a voluntary one, Cheshire Academies Trust has an expenses policy. Trustees are able to claim incidental expenses, such as travel and dependency care, but not loss of earnings.

Equity and Diversity

Cheshire Academies Trust is committed to equity and diversity and would welcome applications from under-represented groups.

What impact the opportunity will have?

This is an opportunity to be involved with a highly respected charitable organisation which is in the forefront of education in the North West. You will contribute to delivering excellent standards of governance which will impact on our children, parents and our wider school communities.

Essential Attributes

- Knowledge of, or interest in, education;
- A willingness and ability to devote the necessary time and effort to supporting your colleagues on the CAT Board and our Senior Leadership Team by attending meetings and being involved in supporting our academies and their local governing bodies;
- An ability to think strategically and creatively;
- Good independent judgement;
- An understanding of and a commitment to CAT aims, objectives and values;
- An understanding of and compliance with the Trust's Code of Conduct;
- An understanding of and compliance with the boundaries around the role of a Board member;
- Ability to communicate clearly and sensitively and to take part in discussions;
- An understanding of or a willingness to assimilate and accept the legal responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship;
- Ability to work effectively in small groups;
- Understanding of ways in which issues of race, racism, culture, gender, sexuality and disability affect our strategic and operational direction, policies and practice;
- A willingness to take on agreed specific tasks and projects outside of scheduled meetings.

Being a trustee – a guide for employers

Employers can make a huge contribution to their community by encouraging their staff to govern.

What do trustees do?

In trusts, the purpose of governance is to provide:

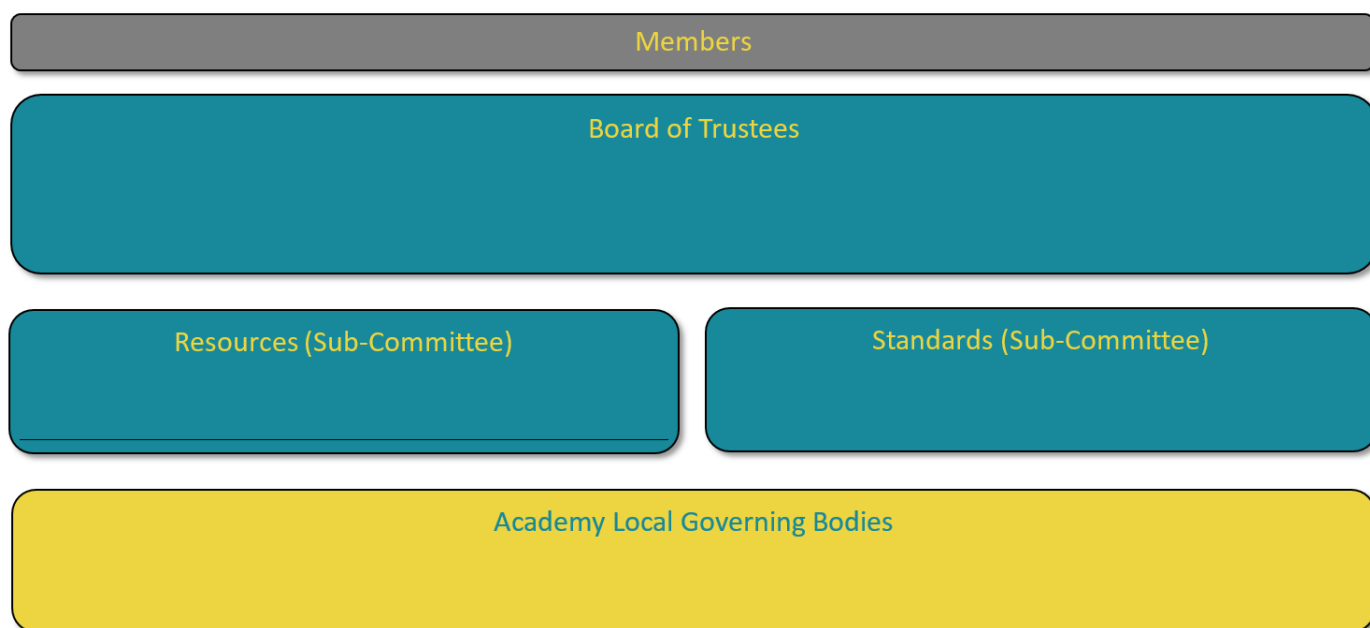
- Strategic leadership
- Accountability and assurance
- Strategic engagement

What are the benefits to my organisation?

Being a school governor offers employees many benefits including:

- **Community Engagement:** being a school governor allows employees contribute positively to the local community helping to improve brand awareness and reputation for your organisation.
- **Leadership Skills Development:** Trustees will gain board-level experience in areas such as strategic leadership, financial oversight and risk management. Trustees at Cheshire Academies Trust have access to training and other professional and personal development opportunities.
- **Recruitment and Retention:** employer supported volunteering promotes employee satisfaction, loyalty and engagement. Organisations who encourage their staff to volunteer may find it easier to attract people who value social responsibility.

Governance Structure of Cheshire Academies Trust



Members

Academy trusts are founded by Members who have an 'eyes on, hands off' role although they are responsible for ensuring that governance in the trust is effective.

Members have a range of powers including:

- Appointing and removing trustees
- Appointing and removing members
- Can direct trustees to take certain action where trustees are unable or unwilling to act in the best interests of the trust
- Amending the trust's Articles of Association
- Appointing and removing auditors

There is a requirement for an academy trust to have at least three members. Further information about the members can be seen by following the link below:

[Cheshire Academies Trust - Members](#)

Board of Trustees

The trust board is the decision-making body of the academy trust and is accountable and responsible for all of the academies within the trust. Academy trustees are both the charity trustees and company directors. The role of trustee is a strategic role with a focus on holding executive leaders to account. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, trustees should avoid involvement in operational matters.

The trust board of Cheshire Academies Trust operates a committee structure:

1. Standards and Curriculum committee which assists the Trust Board in holding executive leaders to account for the education performance of pupils in the Trust's schools, to ensure high educational performance standards across the Trust are maintained and ensuring compliance with statutory and contractual requirements.

2. Resources Committee assists the Trust Board in ensuring that assets are dealt with in accordance with the Academies Financial Handbook and the Academy Funding Agreement and are used to ensure the best outcomes of pupils.

More information about the trustees can be seen by following the link below:

[Cheshire Academies Trust - Trustees](#)

Local Governing Boards

Local Governing Boards operate in each of the Trust's schools and are made up of community representatives, parents and school staff. The Trust Board delegates a number of responsibilities to the Local Governing Boards and these are set out in the Scheme of Delegation and Terms of Reference.

Articles of Association

The Articles of Association are the written rules about running the Trust.

Scheme of Delegation and Terms of Reference

The Scheme of Delegation and Terms of Reference sets out the roles and responsibilities of the Trust Board and Local Governing Board and how they are to fulfil their responsibilities.

Both documents can be found on the Trust website at:

[Cheshire Academies Trust - Governance Documents](#)