



ADVANTAGE
SCHOOLS

**TRUSTEE
RECRUITMENT PACK**

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Introduction

Advantage Schools has an exciting opportunity for an experienced professional looking to develop new skills as well as making a positive contribution to the local communities in Bedfordshire.

Ideally suited to professionals with experience of leadership and decision-making, the role of trustee is challenging but very rewarding, with a real scope for personal and professional development as well as enhancing the life chances of our pupils.

No specific qualifications are required to become a trustee, but there are certain expectations. We are seeking people who have enthusiasm, time, and a real desire to make a significant difference to children. You will need to be able to work as part of a team and commit to attend meetings, training and school and trust monitoring visits. You will need to take a strategic view of the priorities in running a charity.

We would love to hear from you if you feel you have skills that the board and trust would benefit from. If this opportunity interests you and you would like to discuss further, please contact Mikhaela Chapman at mchapman@advantageschools.co.uk who will be able to arrange a meeting with Stuart Lock, CEO or Mark McCourt, Chair of the Trust Board.

Message from the CEO

Dear Prospective Trustee,

Thank you for your interest in joining Advantage Schools.

I joined Advantage Schools in September 2017 because I found a group of determined directors/trustees who agreed with me that schools and the school system in England can be much better.

I have been given the opportunity, support, and challenge with a healthy dose of direction to build and develop a team that is showing how much better schools can be.

Just over eighteen months ago, we undertook a really significant merger and this has been a major success.

We are now an established, medium-sized trust. We believe that we are in a position to really create a system that serves England's children even better, and that we will act on that system to create it with other people. This will require vision, bravery, resilience, and a great deal of broad expertise. I expect that trustees will work with me to achieve this.

Should you be looking for a non-executive voluntary opportunity that can have significant impact locally and across the sector, I'd be delighted to meet you. Whilst this is not my appointment, I am excited about the next steps and remain humble about the amount that I have to learn from and with the successful candidate.

I look forward to meeting you soon.

Stuart Lock, Chief Executive Officer

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

About Advantage Schools

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

Advantage Schools was created in Bedford, 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

Educating children, serving the community, achieving exceptional outcomes.

Advantage Schools aims to provide every child with the highest quality teaching of an excellent academic curriculum, enabling them to become highly educated and active participants in society.

We believe that all children are capable of extraordinary things when provided with the right circumstances.

We do not make exceptions in our high aspirations.

At Advantage Schools, we are proud to be unapologetically ambitious.

We believe that all children, regardless of background, are capable of extraordinary things.

We do this by fostering a culture where very high academic expectations meet a deep commitment to personal growth, professional integrity, and service to our communities.

Our family of schools shares our values ensuring that we hence have a relentless focus on what works.

We are unafraid to be different in the service of children and their families: an Advantage Schools education is rooted in scholarship, delivered effectively, and driven by a belief that our pupils can and should be entitled to the very best schooling that is possible. Our pupils leave us having acquired knowledge taken for granted by educated people.

Our Vision and Values

We aim to be the best school trust in the country. Our vision is anchored in our belief that education is a moral and civic endeavour, and that schools should develop thoughtful, knowledgeable, and grounded young people prepared to contribute meaningfully to society.

Our core values are:

- Integrity – Transparency, honesty, and respect underpin everything we do.
- Ambition – We aspire for excellence for every pupil, colleague, and school.
- Excellence – We pursue the highest academic and professional standards.

We believe in the power of schooling as a means of shaping young people into educated citizens. Every child who passes through our schools should be equipped to take their place in the *community of educated citizens*: thoughtful, knowledgeable, and grounded in our shared intellectual and cultural inheritance. On leaving, our pupils share the knowledge that educated people take for granted.

To achieve this, our pupils are entitled to:

- understand the origins and development of human knowledge and intellectual traditions
- engage with the best that has been thought, said, and created across disciplines
- learn to participate in what Michael Oakeshott called *the conversation of mankind*, a continuous dialogue across generations, rooted in the pursuit of understanding.

As a growing trust that prioritises providing a transformational education for the children and young people in our care, we are looking for great people with the knowledge and skills to support us in achieving this aim.

Our values are aspiration, integrity, and excellence, and we are creating a broader family of exceptional schools, within which pupils are empowered and supported to achieve extraordinary outcomes. Our pupils will leave our schools prepared for a fulfilling life, including the opportunity to go to a great university and pursue the career of their choice.

We achieve our goals through the recruitment and retention the best colleagues and school leaders, developing talent through sector-leading professional learning. We foster collaborative work, both across our trust and our extensive network of professional contacts to ensure our staff are able to learn from and contribute significantly to the wider educational system.

We believe great staff make a great school, so we look after our colleagues well. We value hard work, but we do all we can to identify and eliminate unnecessary workload that could result in burnout. In return, we ask that our staff share our three key expectations:

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.

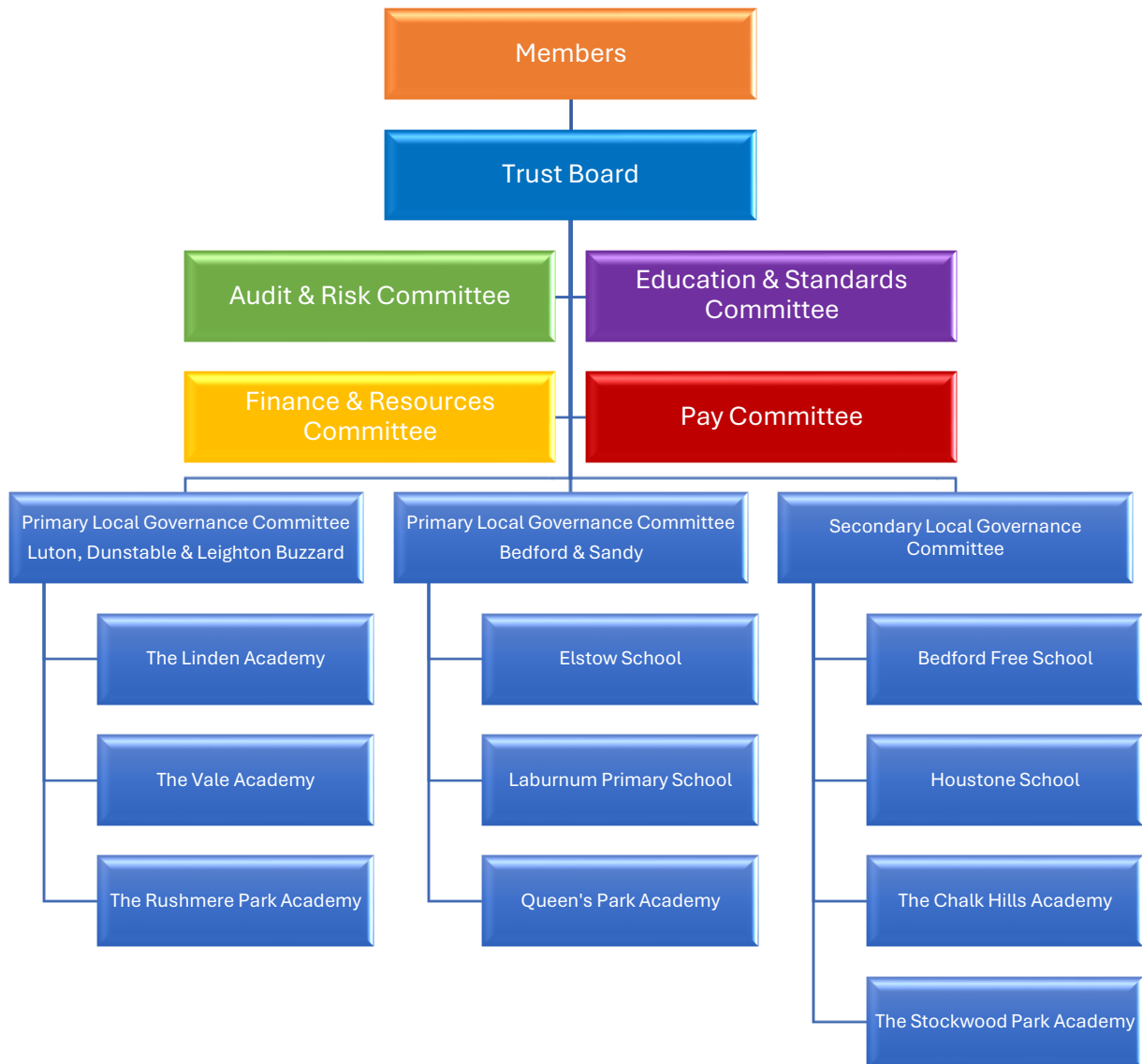


We commit to ensuring that pupils can learn and teachers are able to teach in an environment free from distraction and disruption. We take this *really* seriously.

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

Governance Structure



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
- Mergers and acquisitions
- Audit
- Risk
- Finance

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.

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.

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

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