ACET
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Empowering Achievement
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Audit and Risk Committee Terms of Reference

DATE: September 2026
POLICY LEAD: Director of Governance Risk & Compliance
APPROVED BY: Trustees
CHAIR OF THE COMMITTEE: To be approved at the first meeting

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Policy Level	Trust
Approved By	Trustees
Approval Date	October 2026

This policy remains valid until it is reviewed and replaced; it does not expire by date alone. Policies are reviewed annually, or sooner if required by statutory or legislative changes, in line with best practice

Policy Lead / Author	Director of Governance Risk and Compliance

Version Number	***Date Issued***	***Updated Information***
Please complete this section with a brief summary of the changes you have made or if this is a full re-write / new policy. The contents of this version control box will be shared with trustees / the LGB as part of the approval process – Thank you		
V	September 2026	Updated in line with changes to ATH and ATGG 2026

PURPOSE & RESPONSIBILITIES	**The committee will monitor, evaluate and report on:** **Audit and Risk** 1. oversee and approve the trust's programme of internal scrutiny 2. support development and review of the trust's risk management policy, setting out the framework the trust has adopted for risk management. 3. ensure that risks are being addressed appropriately through internal scrutiny 4. Evaluate the adequacy of the trust's internal control framework, including financial and non-financial controls and management of risks and report this to the trust board 5. assess whether procedures are designed effectively and efficiently, and check whether agreed procedures have been followed 6. review the external auditor's plan each year 7. review the annual report and accounts 8. review the auditor's findings and actions taken by the trust's leaders in response to those findings 9. review findings from other assurance activities by third parties including ESFA financial management and governance reviews, funding audits and investigations 10. assess the effectiveness and resources of the external auditor – refer to section 4.15 of ATH 11. produce an annual report of the committee's conclusions on the above assessment to advise the board of trustees and members, including recommendations on the reappointment or dismissal or retendering of the external auditor, and their remuneration 12. to seek assurance that the risks identified are those which may occur, for example, operational risk, financial risk, compliance risk, regulatory and legal risk, major accident 13. review the ratings and responses on the risk register to inform contingency and business continuity planning and the programme of work, ensuring risks and control measures are adequately identified and modified as appropriate 14. Oversee organisational resilience, emergency planning and business continuity arrangements across the Trust. 15. provide a report for each full trust board meeting, highlighting emerging risks or significant anomalies at the earliest opportunity 16. agree a programme of work annually to deliver internal scrutiny that provides coverage across the year 17. agree who will perform the work 18. consider reports at each meeting from those carrying out the programme of internal scrutiny 19. consider progress in addressing recommendations 20. recommend to members the appointment of an external auditor (in accordance with the trust's Articles of Association) 21. receive the external auditors' annual plan, annual report, and accounts and recommend appropriate actions to the trust board in response to the findings 22. to review the trust's insurance cover in compliance with its legal obligations Suggested from NGA: 23. Recommend and periodically review the Trust's risk appetite and risk management framework. 24. Monitor strategic risks and assurance arrangements to ensure risks are appropriately identified, assessed and mitigated. 25. Receive assurance regarding operation of the Trust's whistleblowing arrangements and any themes, concerns or compliance issues arising. **Premises, health and safety responsibilities**

	1. approve the trust-wide estate vision, strategy and asset management plan, ensuring the trust is aware of and compliant with the DfE Good Estate Management Standards 2. ensure that safeguarding policies, procedures and training is effective and complies with the law at all times, having regard to statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education 3. receive an annual health and safety audit report and monitor any arising actions 4. receive regular reports on accident statistics, near misses, incidents of violence or aggression 5. ensure that a process is in place to approve educational visits, ensuring that health and safety planning and risk assessments have been undertaken for them 6. ensure that inspections of the trust premises and equipment take place (annually and at appropriate intervals), and a report is received identifying any issues 7. monitor the health and safety training that staff and trustees undertake 8. Ensure the Trust's estate strategy contributes to environmental sustainability and climate resilience objectives. **IT & Cybersecurity** 1. Ensure the Trust is working towards the six core DfE Digital and Technology Standards 2. Receive assurance regarding compliance with DfE cyber security expectations and cyber incident response arrangements. 3. Receive assurance regarding information governance, data protection compliance and significant data security incidents. 4. Receive regular reports from the Data Protection Officer, including breaches, complaints, ICO matters and emerging information governance risks. Safeguarding • Receive and scrutinise trust-wide safeguarding assurance reports. • Monitor safeguarding culture, safeguarding compliance and the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements across the Trust. • Scrutinise safeguarding trends, audits, reviews and actions arising from safeguarding assurance activity.
POLICIES AND COMPLIANCE	The committee will review and ratify the following ACET policies - Health & Safety & Premises Management - Supporting pupils with medical needs - Allergen (inc. Asthma) - Risk Management - Cybersecurity, Disaster Recovery & IT Incident Management - Business Continuity Plan - IT Disaster Recovery Procedure and Plan
MEMBERSHIP	The Audit and Risk Committee will consist of no fewer than **four** Trustees. Members of the committee are appointed annually. The Chair of the Trust Board cannot be Chair of this committee. The Board shall ensure that the committee includes members with appropriate financial, audit, risk, governance and compliance expertise sufficient to provide effective challenge and assurance.

	Up to three external co-opted members may also be appointed who are not members of the Board. The Board may not co-opt an employee of the Academy Trust. Members of the Executive Team may be in attendance and shall attend meetings as and when required by the Chair. Staff employed by the Trust should not be members of the Audit and Risk Committee. The Chief Finance Officer and other members of the Trust's staff may be invited to attend but will have no voting rights. the Accounting Officer (CEO) may also be invited to attend meetings, in order to provide information and participate in discussions. The Audit and Risk Committee is responsible to the Board. The Committee's Terms of Reference are adopted by the Board and may only be amended with the approval of the Board. The Chair and Vice Chair of the committee will be elected annually by the Committee. If the Chair is absent from a meeting, the Vice Chair shall act as Chair for the purpose of the meeting. Members of the Executive Team may be in attendance and shall attend meetings as and when required by the Chair.
QUORUM	Subject to Article 119, the quorum for a meeting of the Trustees, and any vote on any matter thereat, shall be any **three** Trustees, or where greater, any one third (rounded up to a whole number) of the total number of Trustees holding office at the date of the meeting, who are in each case present at the meeting and entitled to vote on the matters to be resolved. Decisions to be made at meetings of the Committee shall be determined by a majority of votes of eligible members present and voting. Where there is an equal division of votes the Chair shall have a second or casting vote. If a member of the Committee withdraws from the meeting due to a conflict (or potential conflict) of interests, the meeting must still be quorate in order for a vote to be conducted.
MEETINGS	The Governance Leader shall be the Clerk to the Committee. The agenda for meetings will be agreed in advance by the Chair of the Committee and papers will be circulated to members and attendees at least 5 working days in advance of the meeting. Minutes of meetings will be taken and will be submitted in the next scheduled meeting of the Board, once approved in draft by the Chair of the committee. The committee will meet at least once per term. The Chair or any two members may call an additional meeting. All meetings will have a hybrid function.