ACET

Striving for **Excellence**
Empowering Achievement
Shaping **Learning**

Trust Board Terms of Reference

DATE: July 2026
POLICY LEAD: Director of Governance Risk & Compliance
APPROVED BY: Trustees
CHAIR OF THE BOARD: Craig McGowan

Excellence Equity Empowerment

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***
V2	September 2026	Reviewed and updated in line with ATH and ATGG 2026 and wider updates to the ACET Scheme of Delegation

PURPOSE & RESPONSIBILITIES	The Trust Board's purpose is to strategically lead the Trust, defining the vision for high-quality and inclusive education in line with its charitable objects. The Board has robust effective oversight of the operations and performance of the trust and a strategic oversight of stakeholder relationships. The Board must ensure that trust funds are managed responsibly, ensuring that money is used appropriately, ensuring value for money. The Trust Board operates in accordance with the Trust Scheme of Delegation and Financial Scheme of Delegation. These documents define the distribution of decision-making authority across the Trust. The Board retains ultimate accountability for all aspects of governance, finance and educational performance, regardless of delegation. The Board of Trustees are also the Company Directors. The Trustees must ensure compliance with the Trust's charitable objects and with company and charity law, and adherence to the Trust's Funding Agreement with the Secretary of State. They exercise their responsibilities through setting the vision and policies for the Trust, ensuring strong and effective governance, entering into contractual relationships with third parties, and exercising powers of intervention if required. They have legal obligations through the Articles of the Trust, and also under company law as Directors and under charity law as Trustees, for the proper conduct of the business of the Trust. The Board of Trustees manage the business of the Trust and should focus strongly on the core functions of governance: 1. ensuring an organisation achieves its mission by setting the ethos, culture and vision. 2. Making decisions about policy and strategy 3. Overseeing and scrutinising organisational performance 4. Ensuring organisational accountability The Board of Trustees may appoint and establish separate committees as appropriate, bringing in expertise in the six areas of effective governance: 1. Strategic Leadership 2. Accountability 3. People 4. Structures 5. Compliance 6. Evaluation Trustees are responsible for the general control, and management of the Trust, in accordance with the provisions set out in the memorandum and articles of association and its funding agreements. It is legally responsible and accountable for all statutory functions, for the performance of all schools within the Trust. In order to fulfil their duties, Trustees are expected to: 1. establish and regularly review the vision, values and objectives of the Trust in consultation with constituent academies and entities 2. ensure that the Trust complies with charity and company law 3. operate the Trust in accordance with the Funding Agreement signed by the Secretary of State 4. ensure the quality of education provision and oversee standards and outcomes across the Trust, including: • annual target setting for the Trust in general • overseeing key performance data for the Trust

- challenging and monitoring the performance of individual academies
- review the recommendations made by its committees
- review recommendations of the committee in relation to the CEO's remuneration

The Board will hold the Chief Executive Officer, as Accounting Officer, to account for the overall performance of the Trust and for compliance with statutory, regulatory and funding requirements.

The Board retains accountability for Chief Executive Officer performance and remuneration but delegates the annual appraisal and performance management process to the Remuneration Committee (RemCo), including the Chair of Trustees.

The RemCo will report the outcome of the appraisal process to the Board and make recommendations regarding Chief Executive Officer remuneration. All decisions relating to Chief Executive Officer remuneration and the approval of the Executive Pay Framework remain reserved to the Trust Board in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation.

5. manage the Trust's finance and property, including:
    - approving the Trust-wide budget, consolidated forecasts and any material revisions
    - approving academy budgets based on recommendations from Local Governing Bodies and the Finance, Risk, Audit & People Committee
    - overseeing the finances of the Trust, including financial sustainability and risk
    - holding the CEO (Accounting Officer) to account for regularity, propriety and value for money
    - ensuring compliance with the Academy Trust Handbook and Trust Financial Regulations
    - oversight of the Estates Strategy for the Trust and capital investment decisions
    - ensuring financial decisions are taken in line with the Financial Scheme of Delegation, including approval thresholds and procurement requirements

The Board will receive regular reports to support effective oversight, including:

- management accounts and forecast updates
- reports on financial risks, including deficits and sustainability concerns
- audit findings and compliance assurance
- recommendations and assurance from the Finance & People Committee, Audit & Risk Committee and Curriculum & Standards Committee.

6. determine the extent of services provided centrally and the allocation of cost
7. establish pay, appraisal (Professional Growth) and HR policies for the staff employed by the Trust
8. fulfil the role of admissions authority for all academies within the Trust (within the context of national and local agreements)
9. nominate one member of the Board of Trustees to be the Safeguarding, SEND and Careers Lead for the Trust
10. receive copies of DfE letters issued to the Accounting Officer
11. Receive regular assurance regarding information governance, data protection compliance and significant data security incidents.
12. Receive assurance regarding the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements, safeguarding culture and statutory safeguarding compliance across the Trust.
13. Receive assurance regarding cyber security, digital resilience and compliance with DfE cyber security expectations.

	14. Monitor the effectiveness of SEND provision and outcomes for pupils with SEND across the Trust. In line with the Trust's governance framework: • the Trust Borad retains accountability for financial sustainability, compliance and performance • the CEO (Accounting Officer) is responsible for operational delivery • the CFO provides professional financial oversight and assurance • Local Governing Bodies provide scrutiny and challenge The Trust Board may delegate certain functions to its committees and Local Governing Bodies as defined within the Scheme of Delegation and committee Terms of Reference. Such delegation does not remove the Board's accountability, and the Board will receive assurance on the exercise of these delegated functions.
POLICIES & COMPLIANCE	The Board will review and ratify the following ACET policies - Uniform - Admissions Arrangements - Complaints - Governor Allowances - Data Protection and Privacy Notices - Trust Scheme of Financial Delegation - SEND - Suspensions & Exclusions - RSHE Primary and Secondary - Executive Pay - AI Policy for Staff and Students - Conflict of Interest - Privacy Notices
MEMBERSHIP	The Members may appoint by ordinary resolution up to 11 trustees The total number of Trustees including the Chief Executive Officer if they so choose to act as Trustee under Article 57 who are employees of the Academy Trust shall not exceed one third of the total number of Trustees. In circumstances where the Trustees have not appointed Local Governing Bodies in respect of the Academies as envisaged in Article 100a or if no provision is made for at least two Parent Local Governors on each established Local Governing Body pursuant to Article 101A there shall be a minimum of two Parent Trustees and otherwise such number as the Members shall decide who shall be appointed or elected in accordance with Articles 54 - 56. The Trustees may appoint Co-opted Trustees. A 'Co-opted Trustee' means a person who is appointed to be a Trustee by being Co-opted by Trustees who have not themselves been so appointed. The Trustees may not co-opt an employee of the Academy Trust as a Co-opted Trustee if thereby the number of Trustees who are employees of the Academy Trust would exceed one third of the total number of Trustees including the Chief Executive Officer or any Principal to the extent they are a Trustee. The term of office for any Trustee shall be four years, save that: • This time limit shall not apply to any post which is held ex officio. • The term of office may be shorter than four years for any Trustee except for Parent Trustees, if the Members (or in the case of a Co-opted Trustee, the Trustees) determine this at the time of appointment of such Trustee.

	Subject to remaining eligible to be a particular type of Trustee, any Trustee may be re-appointed or re-elected. The Chair and Vice Chair of the trust will be elected annually by the Board. If the Chair is absent from a meeting, the Vice Chair shall act as chair for the purpose of the meeting.
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.
MEETINGS	Subject to the Articles, the Trustees: a. may appoint committees to be known as Local Governing Bodies for each Academy (and the same Local Governing Body may be appointed for more than one Academy); and b. may establish any other committee. Administrative support at trust level will be provided by the Governance Leader. The agenda for meetings will be agreed in advance by the Chair of the Trust 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. The Trust Board will meet at least six times per year. The Chair or any two trustees may call an additional meeting. All meetings will have a hybrid function.