

Trustee Role description

For trustees in an academy trust

(Updated October 2026)

Role purpose

Trustees work together to fulfil the purpose of the trust board:

Strategic leadership – defining the vision, fostering the trust’s culture and setting the strategy.

Accountability and assurance – robust and effective oversight of trust operations and performance.

Strategic engagement – oversight of relationships with stakeholders, ensuring decision-making is supported by meaningful 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 their senior executive leader. 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.

Contribution to the trust board

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

- Attending meetings (typically 8 full board meetings are held each year), reading papers and preparing questions for the senior executive leader in advance.
- 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.

Governance structure and responsibilities

Within the TAMAT governance structure, the Local Academy Boards (LABs) for each school form a level of governance below the trust level and are delegated to provide governance monitoring at school level. 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 local academy boards.
- Ensuring effective communication channels are in place.

Trustee skills and experience

- Trustees play a key strategic role and should be able to solve complex problems.
- Ability to work within a team or experience of governance in any sector.
- Trustees should be able to understand high levels of analysis of data and be able to support the school in its evaluation.
- Trustees should have a sound understanding of finances.
- Trustees should be able to have a sound understanding of how to manage the performance of individuals and the organisation.

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- Any knowledge of the local community, risk assessment, safeguarding, Special Educational Needs, handling complaints, grievances or appeals, teaching & pedagogy, legal, procurement is particularly welcome.

As a Trustee you will be committed to:

- Raising aspirations, expectations and standards of achievement in the trusts' schools. Helping the school provide the best possible education for its pupils.
- Regularly attending and contributing to meetings and workings of the Trust Board. It is an expectation that Trustees will attend all meetings, save for unexpected/exceptional circumstances. Should this arise, apologies should be communicated to the Governance Professional, and the trust will consider whether to accept the apology.
- Promoting and supporting equal opportunities for all members of the school community.
- Serving for a period of up to four years (as a standard term of office).
- Focusing on a key aspect of the school such as the Link Trustee role. In the capacity of a Link Trustee, meet with the relevant Lead to develop their understanding of how their 'area' works within the school for the benefit of the pupils, and observe the school in action (such visits are not assessments, but observations).
- Undertaking training identified by the Trustees' skills audit and keep themselves up to date on educational matters.
- Proving objectivity in debate and decision making.
- Holding the reputation of the Trust and its schools at the forefront of actions and behaving professionally.