



Terms of reference for the Academy Committees of South Essex Academy Trust (SEAT)

The Board of Directors shall establish an Academy Committee for each of the trust's schools.

General terms

- To assist the decision making of the Board of Directors, by enabling more detailed consideration of matters delegated to the committee.
- To act on matters delegated by the Board of Directors.
- To make recommendations to the Board of Directors.
- To consider safeguarding and equalities implications when undertaking all committee functions.

Quorum and voting

- The quorum for each meeting will be one half of the members, not including vacancies.
- The chair will have a casting vote on any equality of votes.
- Any decisions taken must be determined by a majority of committee members present and voting.
- No member can participate in discussion or vote if they have a pecuniary or other interest in the matter under discussion.
- There should be at least one non-staff member in attendance.

Membership

- The committee will be constituted as follows:
 - Headteacher
 - Two parent members elected or appointed according to the articles of association
 - At least one and no more than two staff members elected by the staff of the academy
 - Up to 5 members appointed by the Board of Directors
- Minimum membership is five. There must be at least two members appointed by the Board of Directors.
- Committee membership will be published on the trust website.
- Term of office for all members shall be four years, with the exception of the headteacher which is ex officio.
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Chair and vice chair

- Members of the Academy Committee shall each year elect a person from among their number (excluding the headteacher and staff members) as their nominee for chair of the committee. The members of the Academy Committee will recommend their nominee for appointment to the Board of Directors. The Board of Directors shall not unreasonably withhold their approval of the appointment of the nominee and in the event of doing so will set out their reasons in writing. The term of office for the chair will be one year and they shall be appointed in the summer term of each school year in readiness to begin their term on the following 1st September following a timeline and process determined by the Trust Board.
- Members of the Academy Committee shall each year elect from among their number a vice chair following a process set out by the Board of Directors. The term of office for the chair will be one year and they shall be appointed in the summer term of each school year in readiness to begin their term on the following 1st September following a timeline and process determined by the Trust Board.
- The Board of Directors shall have the right to remove the chair and vice chair.

Meetings

- The Academy Committee will meet once per term as set out in the governance calendar and shall hold such other meetings as may be necessary.
- The Board of Directors shall appoint a clerk to the Academy Committee.
- The clerk shall convene meetings of the AC and send written notice of the meeting and a copy of the agreed agenda at least 7 days in advance of the meeting. Where there are matters demanding urgent attention the chair, or in the absence of the chair, the vice chair, may waive the need for seven days' notice and substitute such notice as she/he thinks fit and call an extraordinary meeting.
- Meetings can take place remotely where it is the preference of the AC.
- The committee meetings will not be open to the public, but minutes shall be made available on request.
- Meetings will be limited to two hours duration and where necessary will be reconvened within seven days.
- Information relating to a named person or any other matter that the committee considers confidential does not have to be made available for inspection.
- Agendas and associated papers for forthcoming meetings will be made available to all committee members at least seven days in advance of the meeting.
- In the absence of the chair and vice chair the committee shall choose an acting chair for that meeting from among their number.
- In the absence of the clerk the committee shall choose a clerk for that meeting from among their number (someone who is not the headteacher/principal).
- The draft minutes of each meeting will be circulated to committee members once agreed by the chair and headteacher.
- Agreed minutes will be approved and signed by the committee chair at the next committee meeting.
- Agreed and/or approved minutes will be presented to the Board of Directors at their next meeting.
- The chair of the committee (or in his/her absence another member of the committee) will report to the Board of Directors any recommendations made by the committee and any delegated decisions taken by the committee.
- The CEO and directors may attend meetings of the Academy Committee.

Role of the Academy Committee

The remit of the Academy Committee (AC) should be focused on their role in better enabling Directors and school leaders to deliver on their responsibilities and the strategic objectives of the Trust. AC Members are expected to have a greater familiarity with their schools than it is possible for Directors to have.

As a result:

- Academy Committees are best placed to monitor school performance and outcomes and to challenge school leaders on that performance.
- They are best placed to identify and agree school improvement priorities and to monitor progress against those priorities within the Single Plan.
- They have a fundamental role in leading the strategic oversight of safeguarding and assuring the Board of Directors that effective safeguarding is in place in the school. This includes Safeguarding in its widest form focusing on attendance, welfare and pastoral care.
- Finally, they are also best placed to take primary responsibility for the Trust's strategic ambitions for effective community engagement and promotion of the school in its community.

It is important that Academy Committees understand their role in the governance of the Trust, and their accountabilities to the Board of Directors. It is also vital that Academy Committee Chairs understand that they have a Trust-wide leadership role in ensuring that Academy Committees fulfil these accountabilities and maintain effective communication with the Board of Directors and the CEO.

In summary the committee will:

- Commit to the Trust's vision and values.
- Ensure a robust culture of safeguarding.
- Work with the Headteacher to achieve the highest possible outcomes for all pupils.
- Work proactively with the local community.
- Create a positive forum for open and reflective discussion between committee members, the Headteacher and the Trust's Executive Leadership Team
- Celebrate the school's successes.
- Use members' own expertise and connections to create opportunities for the school.

Tasks and Duties

- Ensure the school is providing a broad and balanced curriculum with clear intent, implementation, and impact.
- Challenge and hold the Headteacher to account for the quality of teaching and learning and ensure leaders are taking decisive action to improve outcomes.

- Monitor performance against the Single Plan and challenge when targets are not being met.
- Receive feedback on improvement plans and monitor impact of improvement work.
- Monitor the progress and attainment of all pupils.
- Monitor the attainment and progress of vulnerable groups.
- Monitor the progress of pupils in receipt of Pupil Premium grant and ensure the grant is being spent effectively.
- Monitor the impact of the Sports Premium grant and ensure it is being spent effectively.
- Receive annually the school's curriculum plan.
- Monitor behaviour, including exclusions, bullying, racist and homophobic incidents.
- Monitor attendance, including whole school figures, year group figures, attendance of those in vulnerable groups and persistent absence figures.
- Monitor SEND ensuring statutory requirements are complied with.
- Appoint a member to take lead responsibility for safeguarding.
- Ensure rigorous and effective safeguarding is in place, including ensuring SCR compliance, reviewing the safeguarding audit and action plan, ensuring training compliance and monitoring referrals.
- Prepare for and attend school Ofsted inspections to share the work of the school and the impact that the AC has had on pupil outcomes.
- Support the school to achieve the very best outcomes for pupils by being prepared and willing to participate in meetings and the life of the school.
- Undertake visits to the school to focus on the areas detailed in these terms of reference.
- Report outcomes of monitoring to the Board of Directors.
- Ensure all committee members undertake and continue with training and development opportunities provided by the Trust so that the committee remains an effective part of the school's leadership.

General

- Report any risk relating to the committee's area of operations to the Board of Directors.

