



Board Member Job Description and Person Specification



Cheshire Academies Trust

Summary

The core purpose of Cheshire Academies Trust (CAT) is to achieve continued and consistently high outcomes for children. CAT's embedded culture is to support our academies to thrive by developing and sharing best practices/systems across our academies, rigorous internal challenge and decisive early intervention to secure improvement where needed.

The role of a Board member is to work across the board, overseeing strategic direction and monitoring of educational standards. They will hold the Trust to account on policy and procedure and provide advice and guidance which will enable Cheshire Academies Trust to develop their future growth aspirations and support our network of schools to fulfil their highest ambitions.

Job Description

To oversee the strategic and operational management of CAT and the activities of the organisation:

- Trustees are expected to own the corporate decisions of the Board of Trustees which normally meets six times per year, with additional sub-group meetings as and when needed (usually an additional four times per year);
- Trustees are expected to attend training as required, undertake occasional school visits and engage in regular email correspondence with other Board members and CAT Senior Leadership Team members;
- Trustees are expected to undertake duties in a manner that reflects CAT values and ethos; in a manner which is open, non-oppressive, respectful, user-centred and committed to equality or opportunity. We uphold the 'Seven Principles of Public Life' (Nolan Principles);
- Ensure that CAT complies with its Memorandum and Articles of Association, its Funding Agreement, charity law, company law and other relevant legislation and regulations, and to approve official documents as necessary. To ensure that all activities and expenditure are in pursuit of CAT objectives and are as defined in its Governing documents;
- Contribute to the Board's thinking on strategic objectives and direction, setting overall policy defining goals and setting targets and evaluating performance against set targets;
- Evaluate the performance of CAT in relation to the Trust and Academy development plans;
- To safeguard the good name and values of CAT and all staff, children and other stakeholders connected with the organisation;
- To ensure the effective administration of CAT;
- To protect and manage the property of CAT and ensure the proper investment of the funds;
- To oversee the organisations financial affairs to ensure the stable financial growth of the Trust;
- To oversee the management and protection of CAT assets and to ensure that annual accounts are produced together with a report for the Annual General Meeting and submission to Companies House and the Education Funding Agency (EFA).

What impact the opportunity will have?

This is an opportunity to be involved with a highly respected, community based voluntary organisation which is in the forefront of education in Cheshire.

You will contribute to delivering excellent standards of governance which will impact on our children, parents and our wider school communities.

Person specification

Essential Attributes

- An understanding of and a commitment to, CAT aims, objectives and values;
- Knowledge of, or interest in primary education;

- A willingness and ability to devote the necessary time and effort to supporting your colleagues on the CAT Board and our Senior Leadership Team by attending meetings and being involved in supporting our academies and their local governing bodies;
- An ability to think strategically and creatively;
- Good independent judgement;
- An understanding of and compliance with the Trusts Code of Conduct;
- An understanding of and compliance with the boundaries around the role of a Board member;
- Ability to communicate clearly and sensitively and to take part in discussions;
- An understanding of or a willingness to assimilate and accept the legal responsibilities and liabilities of trusteeship;
- Ability to work effectively in small groups;
- Understanding of ways in which issues of race, racism, culture, gender, sexuality and disability affect our strategic and operational direction, policies and practice;
- A willingness to take on agreed specific tasks and projects outside of scheduled meetings.

Desirable Attributes

Skills or experience in one or more of the following areas

| Area of Expertise | Experience |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Business | Managing business growth (commercial, retail or industry). Experience in growing a business, chain of businesses or franchises Head Office and organisational development: creating, growing and managing a head office, including driving up business efficiency in central services; experience overseeing the establishment of a regional or cluster structure Planning for consolidation, including managing financial, personnel and reputational issues and consequences |
| Governance | Previous experience as a chair or board member, developing the people, processes and committees of a board, holding colleagues to account and engaging fellow senior board members in change Experience in leading or contributing to rigorous, independent board structures that are both compliant and effective Experience of operating within a large charity/not-for-profit organisation |
| HR | Skills to handle the personnel challenges of a large and growing staff body including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing the performance of multiple senior staff members • Remuneration decision-making to set salary scales • HR and legal expertise to handle grievance cases or where redundancies are planned • Recruitment skills to support growth and talent management • Succession planning at Board, Local Governing Body or Senior Leadership level • Staff engagement and development |
| Legal | Experience of legal practice and the ability to support with legal issues such as sponsorship of new schools, land acquisition, complex personnel cases etc |
| Financial | Independent scrutiny of financial planning and budgeting. Specifically experience or understanding of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prudent financial and budget management • Financial planning for sustainable growth • Overseeing budgets totalling £3m> • Audit experience • Procurement expertise • Experience in bidding for and securing grants |
| Asset Management | Property and capital or architectural experience, buildings and capital development, managing large scale and/or disbursement of asset portfolios and/or change programmes IT change programme – transforming and improving IT provision |
| Other Communications | Marketing and PR skills to support stakeholder engagement challenges around large change, growth, or reputational issues Developing relationships where the Trust is looking to strengthen or build new relationships |