



TRUSTEE ROLE DESCRIPTION

Summary

Cheshire Academies Trust (CAT) comprises five primary schools and a teaching school (CLTA) that chose to form a multi academy trust to further improve standards through formalised partnership. The core purpose of Cheshire Academies Trust (CAT) is to inspire hearts and minds through care, collaboration and creativity. Within our trust, we value uniqueness, provide a great education, share the same values, build unity and autonomy, empower communication, invest in people, and create the conditions for success.

Trustees work together to carry out their core functions:

1. ensuring there is clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
2. holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils and the performance management of staff
3. overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent
4. Trustees also recognise the following as the fourth core function of governance:
ensuring the voices of pupils, parents and staff are heard

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

Local governance arrangements

Cheshire Academies Trust has governance below the trust level in the form of local governing bodies (LGBs). The responsibilities of the LGBs are set out in the trust's Scheme of Delegation and Terms of Reference.

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 academy committees
- ensuring effective communication channels are in place

What is the Commitment Required?

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

- attending meetings typically 6 full board meetings each year plus additional committee meetings (usually an additional four times per year) reading papers and preparing questions for the senior executive leader in advance
- undertaking 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 of opportunity. We uphold the 'Seven Principles of Public Life' (Nolan Principles)
- 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

Expenses

Whilst the role of trustee is a voluntary one, Cheshire Academies Trust has an expenses policy. Trustees are able to claim incidental expenses, such as travel and dependency care, but not loss of earnings.

Equity and Diversity

Cheshire Academies Trust is committed to equity and diversity and would welcome applications from under-represented groups.

What impact the opportunity will have?

This is an opportunity to be involved with a highly respected charitable organisation which is in the forefront of education in the North West. 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

- 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 a commitment to CAT aims, objectives and values;
- An understanding of and compliance with the Trust's 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.