



## The Role of a Governor at The Link Academy

The Link Academy Trust is a company limited by guarantee and an exempt charity, regulated by the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

### The Link Academy Vision

- *Small Schools – Big Opportunities*
- *Unforgettable experiences – setting the foundations for life*
- *No ceiling, the highest possible achievement for all*
- *Individually valued, collaboration not competition*
- *People matter, every interaction, every moment*

Local Advisory Committees (LAC) are established by the Board of Trustees to carry out some governance functions at local level – they are a committee of the Board of Trustees. Each individual governor is a member of a LAC. Individual governors may not act independently of the rest of the LAC. They act in an advisory capacity to the Trust Board.

When governing in a multi academy trust (The Link Academy Trust), responsibilities will lie with the trust board as set out in the Scheme of Delegation.

Our Trust maintains a Local Advisory Committee (LAC) for each geographical area, currently Totnes, Moorland, Mid Devon and East Devon and the academies in each area rely on their supportive work. They need a group of volunteers that have a balance and diversity of knowledge, skills, and experience to be effective. The LACs focus on having knowledge of teaching and learning, the day-to-day operation of the academies, including safeguarding, health and safety and security. Ofsted (the national inspection body for schools) has repeatedly noted that the most effective schools demonstrate effective leadership and management - including by the LACs.

Being a governor is a challenging but hugely rewarding role. It will give you the chance to make a real difference to our pupils in The Link Academy Trust, give something back to your local community and use and develop your skills in a school environment. Academies need and benefit from a range of professional knowledge on their Local Advisory Committee, but the main focus for us is the effective education and well-being of our pupils as the Board of Trustees carries the overall responsibility for decision making.

Governors in our organisation offer the support, challenge and learning to every Academy Head that ensures there is an effective and close link between the performance of academies within the LAC and the Trust Board. Their role is vital in ensuring Trustees have the knowledge and understanding of the academies to be able to fulfil their role effectively. It is a very important and highly valued role.

As a governor, you will be able to:

- Bring your unique experiences, perspectives, and insights to inform conversations and learn about how our Academies operate to provide the best possible education for our pupils.
- Develop and utilise your skills in a local board-level environment and make a valuable contribution to education and your community.
- Support and challenge the Academies so that it continues to advance pupils and staff through regular visits and close liaison with Academy Heads.

The Local Advisory Committees supports accountability in Academies. It has the following key functions:

- Understand the educational performance of the school through discussions with Academy Heads and staff while making sure all pupils make good progress.
- Consider how Pupil Premium Grant and the Sports Grant are well spent to have maximum impact.
- Support the Academy Heads to account for the educational performance of the academies by **learning** about educational pedagogy and research, **supporting** school actions and **challenging** outcomes and impact.
- Ensure clarity of vision, ethos, and operational direction at Academy level; in our Church Academies this includes Christian distinctiveness.

Governors support the monitoring and evaluation processes to have a good understanding of Academy progress and act as a source of challenge and support to the Academy Heads. In action, this means:

- Engaging with pupils, staff, parents, and the Academies' community.
- Considering and discussing a range of education issues in partnership with the Academy Heads including disadvantaged pupils, pupils with special needs, staff workload and levels.
- Looking at data and evidence to ask questions and have challenging conversations about the Academies operation and performance.
- Fulfil the expectations set out in the Scheme of Delegation.

Governors must be prepared to adopt the 7 Nolan principles of public life: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

Governors should also be committed to their role and to young people; confident in having courageous conversations; curious with an enquiring mind; able to challenge the status quo to improve things; collaborative to build strong relationships; critical to improve their own work and that of the board; and creative in problem solving and being innovative.

The average time commitment is five to eight hours per month, although it will vary depending on the needs of the Academies. This includes meetings, background reading and school visits. As well as LAC meetings, there are specific governor roles which you may like to contribute to, examples include the representative for Local Advisory Committees on the Trustees' Standards and Curriculum committee (two-hour meeting minimum of five times a year).

The Link Academy Trust sets a term of office for its governors, this is four years. Many people choose to serve multiple terms, however as a volunteer you can resign before your term is finished if your circumstances change and you cannot commit fully to the role.

Like magistrates or members of a jury, governors have a right to reasonable time off work for their public duties, although this may be unpaid. Your company's HR department will be able to tell you about its policy.

Governance is a voluntary role and therefore it is not paid. The Link Academy pay travel and other expenses, as set out in the policy Director and Governor Allowances.

As it is good practice for Trusts to take up references before confirming their decision to appoint, so please be prepared to provide these if requested. You will need to complete a declaration of interests to declare any conflicts of interest you will have including conflicts of loyalty and financial interests. The following information will be published on the Trust website and with Get Information about Schools (GIAS): - full name of any local governor who has served for more than 12 months along with their date of appointment, term of office, date they stepped down (where applicable), who appointed them, attendance at meetings and relevant business and pecuniary interests including governance roles in other educational institutions. You must undergo an enhanced DBS check, and your appointment will be subject to this – this will be carried out by the Trust.

***In summary, to perform this role well, a governor is expected to: -***

- get to know the Academy, including visiting the Academy at least every half term, during school hours whenever possible and in agreement with the Academy Head to gain a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
- attend induction training and regular relevant training and development events, including online training.
- attend Local Advisory Committee meetings regularly and read all the papers before the meeting.
- act in the best interests of all the pupils of the Academies.
- behave in a professional manner, as set down in the Trust's Code of Practice, including acting in strict confidence.