



Chair of Local Academy Committee role description

For those governing in PolyMAT Trust schools

Dated September 2023

Role purpose

To provide leadership to the Local Academy Committee, ensuring that it fulfils its functions well, and to work closely with the Head of School to support, advise and help shape proposals to be discussed at Committee meetings, ensuring the focus is strategic.

Leading governance

- ensure the Committee and Head of School have a shared vision and sense of purpose
- ensure the Committee sets a clear vision and strategy for the school
- lead the Committee in monitoring the implementation of the strategy
- set the culture of the Committee, balancing and valuing the support and challenge responsibilities, the generative and fiduciary modes of operation
- ensure the Committee acts as a team where required
- represent the Local Academy Committee in its dealings with external partners and be an advocate for the school
- attend school and trust functions (performances/sports days/prize-giving) as appropriate and encourage other Academy Committee members to do so

Leading and developing the team

- ensure the Committee has the required skills and commitment to govern well, and that identified skills gaps are filled
- ensure a diverse team that reflects the communities served with a mix of new and experienced members and a variety of backgrounds
- ensure all members of the Committee have a thorough understanding of their role and receive appropriate induction and training as required
- encourage the Committee, and individual Committee members, to conduct annual self-evaluation (and model this approach to others through a chair's 360 review)
- ensure that Committee members are involved and feel valued
- carry out a performance review of each Committee member (or delegate this to the vice chair)
- encourage the development of Committee members
- model and reinforce the Committee's agreed code of conduct
- develop a good working relationship with the vice chair, ensuring they are kept fully informed and delegating tasks as appropriate
- ensure that there is a plan for succession for the chair, vice chair and any committee chairs

Working with the Head of School/ Headteacher

- build a professional relationship with the Head of School/ Headteacher that allows for honest conversations, acting as a sounding Committee and ensuring there are no surprises at meetings
- meet regularly (normally monthly) with the Head of School/ Headteacher

- ensure there are transparent and effective processes for the recruitment and induction of the Head of School / Headteacher
- ensure appropriate governor/trustee involvement in recruiting other senior leaders
- ensure all Committee members concentrate on their strategic role and hold the Head of School/ Headteacher to account
- ensure that school leaders provide information that allows the Committee to fulfil its function
- oversee and participate in the Head of School's appraisal ensuring that appropriate continuing professional development (CPD) is provided (if chairing a local academy committee, the Head of School will be line managed by a trust executive, but the chair should still be involved in the appraisal)
- ensure the workload and wellbeing of senior leaders is considered
- ensure the Head of School/ Headteacher provides staff with an understanding of the role of the Local Academy Committee and acts as link between the two
- play a lead role in any decision to suspend the Head of School/ Headteacher (the chair of an academy committee will have a reduced role in this)

Leading improvement

- ensure the Committee is involved at a strategic level in the school's self-evaluation process and that this feeds into its key priorities
- ensure the Committee's business is focused on the strategic priorities
- ensure the Committee has the information it needs to monitor the progress of pupils and consider appropriate actions to improve outcomes
- ensure the Committee has good knowledge of the school
- ensure there are mechanisms in place to listen to the views of parents, pupils and staff

Leading Local Academy Committee business

- collaborate with the Trust and local governance professional to establish effective working procedures and, where relevant, sound committee structures
- work with the local governance professional and the lead executive to plan for Committee meetings, ensuring that agendas focus on the Committee's key responsibilities and strategic priorities and avoid unnecessary paperwork
- chair meetings effectively, promoting an open culture that allows ideas and discussion to thrive while ensuring clear decisions are reached as quickly as possible
- ensure that decisions taken at the meetings of the Local Academy Committee are implemented

- ensure that effective arrangements are in place for dealing with complaints made to the Local Academy Committee under the adopted complaints procedure
- ensure that effective arrangements are in place for dealing with employment matters, (for example, grievance, disciplinary, capability) under the adopted procedures of PolyMAT

Person specification

Candidates for the role of chair of the Local Academy Committee should be able to demonstrate a good number of the following skills and attributes:

- commitment to the school/trust and its vision/ values
- personal integrity
- good understanding of the environment in which the school/trust is operating
- good understanding of the role and legal responsibilities of the board and its members
- strong relationship-building and communication skills
- negotiation and diplomacy skills with the ability to have courageous conversations
- ability to think strategically and objectively, take the long view and prioritise
- capacity to process information quickly and understand relevant data, drawing valid conclusions with a considered approach to risk
- ability to chair meetings well, encouraging debate and facilitating decision-making
- ability to build and get the best out of a team while addressing any skills or experience gaps
- Ability to undertake Chairs' training and attend the Polymat Chairs Forum
- ability and willingness to delegate and trust others