



Audit and Risk Committee - Terms of Reference

Appendix 4

The Academy's Board of Trustees has established an Audit and Risk Committee as a Committee of the Board to support them in their responsibilities for issues of risk, control and governance by reviewing the comprehensiveness of assurances and reviewing the reliability and integrity of these assurances.

1. Responsibilities

The Audit and Risk Committee is a sub-committee of the school's Academy Trust Board and it is responsible for:

- Maintaining an oversight of the Academy Trust's financial, governance, risk management and internal control systems.
- Reporting findings (termly and annually) to the Board of Trustees and the Accounting Officer as a critical element of the Academy Trust's annual reporting requirements.

2. Authority

The Audit and Risk Committee is a sub-committee of the Academy Trust Board and is authorised to investigate any activity within its Terms of Reference or specifically delegated to it by the Academy Trust Board.

The Audit and Risk Committee is authorised to:

- Request any information it requires from any employee, external audit, internal audit, or other assurance provider.
- Obtain outside legal or independent professional advice it considers necessary (normally in consultation with the Accounting Officer and/or the Board of Trustees).

3. Membership

The Audit and Risk Committee will comprise of:

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|--------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| • Mrs. Lorna Stafford | Trustee | (Chair of the Committee) |
| • Mr. Peter Ingham | Trustee | |
| • Mrs. Bev Worthington | Trustee | |
| • Mrs. Julie Murphy | Governance Professional to the Board of Trustees | |
| • Mrs. Stephanie Bateman | Headteacher (Accounting Officer) | |
| • Mr. Matthew Myers | Business Manager (Chief Financial Officer) | |

Audit and Risk Committee meetings will be chaired by **Mrs. Lorna Stafford**.

The Quorum is:

- **Three** (Chairperson and two additional Trustees)

Any Trustee may attend a meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee (including those who are not members of the Committee).

The Audit and Risk Committee may ask any other officials of the Academy Trust Board or Senior Leadership Team members to attend meetings to assist it with its discussions on a particular matter.

4. Reporting

Formal minutes will be recorded of each meeting of the Audit and Risk Committee. The Chairperson of the Audit and Risk Committee will report to the Academy Board of Trustees each term and submit an annual summary report provided by the internal auditor on the areas reviewed by internal audit; this will cover key findings, recommendations and conclusions.

5. Objectives

The Audit and Risk Committee will:

- Advise the Board of Trustees on the effectiveness and resources of the external and internal auditors to provide a basis for their reappointment, dismissal, retendering or remuneration.
- Ensure there is co-ordination between internal audit/scrutiny and external audit and any other review bodies that are relevant.
- Consider the reports of the auditors and, when appropriate, advise the Board of Trustees of material control issues.
- Agree who will perform the Internal Audit work.
- Investigate and report on any allegations of fraud.
- Encourage a culture within the school whereby each individual feels he or she has a part to play in guarding the probity of the Trust and is able to take any concerns or worries to an appropriate member of the management team or in exceptional circumstances directly to the Board of Trustees.
- Provide minutes of all Audit and Risk Committee meetings for review at Board of Trustees meetings

External Audit

- Review the auditor's findings and actions taken by the Trust's Senior Leadership Team in response to those findings.
- Produce an annual report of the Committee's conclusions to advise the Board of Trustees and Members.

Internal Audit

- Take delegated responsibility on behalf of the Board of Trustees for examining and reviewing all systems and methods of control (both financial and otherwise) including risk analysis and risk management and for ensuring the Academy Trust Board is complying with the overall requirements for internal scrutiny, as specified in the Academy Trust Handbook 2023.
 - Conduct a regular review of the risk register.
 - Agree an annual programme of internal scrutiny/audit which is objective and independent covering systems, controls, transactions, and risks.
 - Advise the Board of Trustees on the adequacy and effectiveness of the Trust's systems of internal control, governance, and risk management processes.
 - Consider the appropriateness of executive action following internal audit/internal scrutiny reviews and advise the Board on any additional or alternative steps to be taken.
 - Oversee the annual review of the Trust's risk register.

6. Meetings

The Audit and Risk Assurance Committee will meet at least **four** times a year.

The Chairperson of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee will convene additional meetings as deemed necessary.

Similarly, the Board of Trustees or Accounting Officer may ask the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee to convene further meetings to discuss particular issues on which they want the Committee's advice.

For each meeting the members of the Audit and Risk Assurance Committee will be provided (seven working days in advance) with:

- An invitation to the meeting, an agenda and all relevant papers relating to the agenda items.
- A report summarising any significant changes to the organisation's strategic risks and a copy of the strategic/corporate risk register.
- A progress report from the internal auditor summarising the work performed (and a comparison with work planned).

The Governance Professional to the Board of Trustees will record all of the proceedings at the meeting and the minutes will be circulated to all Audit and Risk Assurance Committee members via the Governance Professional.