

FAIRFIELD HIGH SCHOOL FOR GIRLS



TRUST BOARD, COMMITTEES AND SCHEME OF DELEGATION

SEPTEMBER 2023

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"Excellence in a Caring Environment"

1. Introduction

Fairfield High School for Girls is an Academy Trust. The Academy Trust is a charitable company limited by guarantee. As a 'standalone' Academy Trust, it has a single legal entity responsible for one Academy and has its own Articles of Association and Funding Agreement with the Secretary of State.

Academies are self-governing, responsible for their own finances and accountable for all aspects of their performance.

There are three core functions of effective governance:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction.
- Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils and the effective and efficient performance management of staff.
- Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent.

The Board of Trustees is accountable for all major decisions within the Academy. This does not, however, mean that the Board of Trustees will make every decision within the Trust; some governance and decision-making responsibilities are delegated to Committees and officers

This document sets out the governance arrangements within the Trust, detailing the lines of responsibility and accountability to ensure that the Members, Trustees, Board Committees and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) understand their roles and responsibilities. The Scheme of Delegation incorporates the responsibilities entrusted to Members and Trustees as specified in the Articles of Association and the Academy Trust Handbook 2023.

This document will be reviewed annually to ensure that any changes to legislation, policy and guidance are addressed and governance structures adapted accordingly.

2. The Principles of Public Life

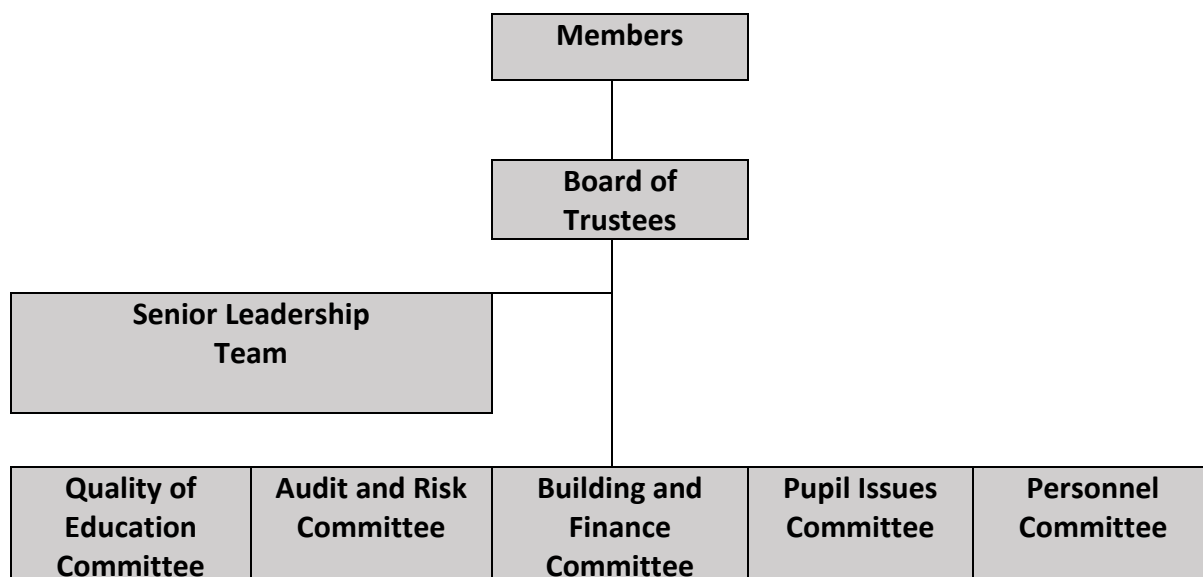
Everyone working within the governance structures of Fairfield High School for Girls must accept the seven principles of public life that outline the ethical standards those working in the public sector are expected to adhere to.

These are:

- **Selflessness** - acting solely in terms of the public interest.
- **Integrity** - not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.
- **Objectivity** - act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.
- **Accountability** – accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.
- **Openness** - act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.
- **Honesty** - be truthful.
- **Leadership** - actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

3. Governance Structure of the Academy

The diagram below sets out the Academy Trust governance structure.



4. Roles and Responsibilities

Members

Members have a limited but important role to play in safeguarding Academy Trust Governance. This is similar to the role of shareholders of a company limited by shares. They have a duty to ensure the Academy Trust meets its overarching objectives of advancing (for the public benefit) education in the United Kingdom. Members will also ensure that the school is governed in accordance with the culture, values and ethos of its unique history.

The Trust currently has five Members and these are independent of the Board of Trustees.

Their main responsibilities are to:

- Sign the memorandum and articles of association and amend the articles of association subject to any restrictions created by the funding agreement or charity law.
- Appoint and remove Members and Trustees.
- Appoint and remove the Auditors.
- Receive a copy of the Annual Accounts and Report.
- Ensure the success of the Trust.
- By special resolution, issue direction to the Trustees to take a specific action.
- Meet (usually once a year) at an Annual General Meeting similar to shareholders.
- Dissolve the Trust.

They do not, however, get involved with the day to day running of the school nor tell the Trustees how to run the Trust.

Members meet as required in accordance with their guardianship responsibilities but this must include an Annual General Meeting to receive the Board of Trustees Annual Report.

Trustees

The Trustees are both charity Trustees and Company Directors.

They have a legal responsibility to ensure robust governance of the school, promoting high standards of educational achievement and financial performance for the success of the Academy Trust. Trustees are responsible and accountable for all major decisions about the school and its future.

Trustees' responsibilities include:

- Ensuring compliance with the Trusts Charitable objectives and with company and charity law.
- Ensuring compliance with their funding agreement with the Secretary of State.
- Ensuring the school meets its obligations as an employer as set out in employment and health and safety legislation.
- Setting the school's vision and strategic aims and monitoring and evaluating performance.
- Acting as a critical friend to the Accounting Officer (Headteacher) by providing support and challenge.
- Ensuring the school is accountable to those it serves.

All Trustees are required to demonstrate the six key features of effective Governance:

- Strategic Leadership (that sets and champions vision, ethos and strategy).
- Accountability (that drives up educational standards and financial performance).
- People (with the right skills, experience, qualities and capacity).
- Structures (that reinforce clearly defined roles and responsibilities).
- Compliance (with statutory and contractual requirements).
- Evaluation (to monitor and improve the quality and impact of governance).

The term of office for Trustees is determined by the Board of Trustees.

Parent Trustees

Parent Trustees are elected as representatives of the interests of parents/carers of pupils currently attending the school and their wider communities and are responsible for ensuring they are aware of the concerns and opinions of the majority of parents/carers and as such exercise their best judgement when contributing to the decisions of the Board of Trustees. They may continue to serve as a Trustee until the end of their four-year term of office (even if their daughter leaves the school during the period).

Board of Trustees (The Board)

The Board of Trustees of Fairfield High School for Girls sets the vision and strategic direction for the school. It plays a vital role in ensuring that every pupil receives the best possible education by creating robust accountability for school leaders.

The Trustees should focus on the three core functions:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction.
- Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils and the performance management of staff.
- Overseeing and ensuring effective financial performance.

The Board of Trustees meets once every half term and its primary purpose is to receive, evaluate and monitor reports on the implementation and impact of the Academy's curriculum and the quality of teaching and learning on targets and pupil attainment, progress and achievement whilst ensuring that the Academy represents value for money and that all human and physical resources are managed and maintained within the parameters of the school's strategic plan.

In addition, the Board of Trustees maintains a consistent focus on the adequacy of the Academy's safeguarding and child protection measures and the impact of the Academy's behaviour and welfare policies.

The Board of Trustees is also responsible for ensuring that the Academy prepares pupils for life and the workplace by building their character and resilience and by implementing their **'Prevent'** duty and promoting fundamental **'British Values'** to protect them from the risks of extremism and radicalisation.

The Board of Trustees at Fairfield High School for Girls currently comprises of:

- 5 x Trustees (Member Appointed)
- 1 x Parent Trustee (Elected)

Only named Trustees have voting rights.

Details of Members and Trustees are outlined in **'Appendix 1'** and the Terms of Reference for the Board meeting is detailed in **'Appendix 2'**.

The Chair of the Board of Trustees

The Chair and the Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees (elected annually at the first meeting at the start of each academic year) play a key pivotal role in the effectiveness of the structure and processes. The Chair leads the Board of Trustees but does not have any power as an individual to exercise the functions of the Board without instructions (except in certain cases of urgency).

The Chair is responsible for:

- Ensuring the effective functioning of the Board.
- Setting the highest standards of expectations for professional standards of Governance.
- Providing clear leadership and direction, ensuring focus on the core strategic functions.
- Building a cohesive team of Trustees and delegating tasks to ensure all Trustees contribute and share responsibility whilst developing their knowledge skills and experience.
- Ensuring effective communication with the Accounting Officer (Headteacher) and Trustees and between Board of Trustees and sub-committees.
- Providing line management, support and development for the Accounting Officer (Headteacher).

Supporting the work of the Trustees and in attendance at Board Meetings are:

The Accounting Officer

The Headteacher of Fairfield High School for Girls is appointed as the Accounting Officer (AO). The Accounting Officer role includes specific responsibilities for financial matters. It includes a personal responsibility to Parliament and to Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) Accounting Officer for the Trust's financial resources.

The Headteacher, as the principal manager for the school, has delegated responsibility for the internal organisation, management and control of the school; for advising the Trustees and for implementing the strategic framework.

Incorporated in the role of advising the Trustees are:

- Formulating targets for the school, for adoption, modification or rejection by the Board of Trustees.
- Formulating policies for the Board of Trustees to consider adopting.
- Reporting to the Board of Trustees and Committees on progress.

The Chief Financial Officer

The Business Manager of Fairfield High School for Girls is appointed as the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and as such is responsible for the schools detailed financial procedures. The CFO works very closely with the AO to fulfil these responsibilities.

A Teacher Representative

A Teacher is elected as a representative of the interests of the teaching staff of the school. They are expected to give the views of teaching staff to the Board of Trustees and to feedback on Board discussions where appropriate. Whilst they are free to express their personal views they do not have any voting rights and may be asked to leave the meeting for **'confidential'** Trustee discussions.

A Support Staff Representative

A representative is elected from among the support staff (all staff employed at the school other than in a teaching capacity) at the school. They are expected to give the views of support staff to the Board of Trustees and to feedback on Board discussions where appropriate. Whilst they are free to express their personal views they do not have any voting rights and may be asked to leave the meeting for **'confidential'** Trustee discussions.

The Governance Professional to the Trust Board

The Governance Professional to the Trustees attends the Board Meetings and its sub-committees, convening the meetings and keeping a record of the important matters discussed and decisions taken during the meetings in the form of accurate minutes.

The Governance Professional provides guidance to ensure that the Board works in compliance with the appropriate legal and regulatory framework and understands the potential consequences of non-compliance.

The Governance Professional ensures that the work of the Board is well organised, provides advice on procedural matters and maintains a register of Trustees.

3. Trustee Committees

The Board of Trustees is accountable for all major decisions about the Academy. This does not, however, mean that the Board will make every decision within the school. The Board can (under Article 102) delegate particular powers or functions to any Committee, or the Accounting Officer (Headteacher).

The Board has a range of Committees to discharge statutory functions. Each Committee operates to the same level of standards and procedures with its role and responsibilities clearly agreed by Board.

The Board is advised by five Committees:

- Quality of Education
- Audit and Risk
- Buildings and Finance
- Pupil Issues - incorporating the Admissions Committee, Pupil Disciplinary Committee and Pupil Issues Panel
- Personnel - incorporating the Staff Appointments Committee, Pay Committee, Staff Dismissal Committee and Staff Dismissal Appeal Committee

The aim of these Committees is to inform the Board of academic standards and financial probity resulting from more detailed scrutiny of academic and financial performance of the school. These Committees consist of Trustees, officers and co-opted professionals.

Their role is to:

- Monitor the progress of actions outlined in the Strategic Plan (as appropriate to their Committee); highlighting to the Board any areas of concern.

- Advise the Board on strategic need and direction.
- Undertake any tasks specifically delegated to them by the Board.

Terms of Reference for these Committees are included as Appendices.

Meetings

All Committee meetings operate under the Terms of Reference specified in this document and in compliance with existing legislation. The Board will review the establishment, Terms of Reference and membership of committees at least once a year.

The Role of Committee Chairs

In addition to chairing Committee meetings, the Committee Chairs have responsibility to set the agenda with reference to the Committee's Terms of Reference, and including matters referred by the Board of Trustees and the Accounting Officer (Headteacher). The Committee Chairs have responsibility to report on the work of their Committee to the Board.

Link Trustees

Trustees work in partnership with the Accounting Officer (Headteacher) and other school staff to promote high standards of educational achievement at the school. The role of the link Academy Trustee is a strategic role; ensuring that someone has oversight of a particular area and to deepen the Academy Trustees' and the Boards knowledge of a particular area.

At Fairfield High School for Girls, a named Trustee is linked to each member of the Senior Leadership Team and its Associates.

Link Trustees are expected to come into school to meet with key staff at least once a term to provide support and understand how strategic objectives are being embedded, how money is being spent and any issues affecting delivery. Link Trustees report on their visits at the full meeting of the Board.

Confidentiality

The Board of Trustee meetings are not open to the public. Visitors may attend by invitation but may be asked to leave if a '**confidential**' item is discussed.

Trustees observe confidentiality regarding proceedings of the Board in meetings and from their visits to school as Trustees. How an individual Trustee votes will always be regarded as '**confidential**'.

The minutes of any part of the meeting that are '**confidential**' are kept separate. In the main, '**confidential**' items will be those where the privacy of an individual needs to be respected.

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