

The Link Academy Trust – Scheme of Delegation

Introduction

The Link Academy Trust is the statutory body for all the academies within the Multi Academy Trust (MAT). The Object of the MAT is:

“to advance for the public benefit education in the United Kingdom, in particular but without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing by establishing, maintaining, carrying on, managing and developing Academies which shall offer a broad and balanced curriculum and which shall include:

(i) Church of England Academies designated as such which shall be conducted in accordance with the principles, practices and tenets of the Church of England both generally and in particular in relation to arranging for religious education and daily acts of worship, and having regard to any advice issued by the Diocesan Board of Education; and

(ii) other Academies whether with or without a designated religious character; but in relation to each of the Academies to recognise and support their individual ethos, whether or not designated Church of England.

Schools joining the MAT will promote, adhere to and be guided by the underlying objectives and principles of the MAT as agreed by its Trust Board. This scheme of delegation should be read in conjunction with the Trust’s Articles of Association and where there is an unintended conflict the Articles shall take preference. As a private company limited by guarantee and an exempt charity, the Link Academy Trust will uphold the Seven Principles of Public Life.

1.0 Members

Five Members of which no more than one can be a trustee and none can be employees of the Trust. They will be ultimately responsible for the MAT achieving its charitable objectives. Subject to approval by Companies House and the Charity Commission, they can amend the Articles of Association and have the power to appoint and remove trustees.

2.0 Trustees/ Trust Board

The Board will comprise up to 15 trustees as follows:

- Up to eight must be Foundation Trustees with a specific duty to uphold the Christian Values of the church schools
- Up to six will be non-Foundation Trustees, appointed by the non-Foundation Members
- The Chief Executive Officer

The Trust Board will deliver the three core functions common to academy governance, namely;

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- Holding the Chief Executive Officer, the Executive Principal and the Heads of School to account for the educational performance of the schools and their pupils, and the appraisal of its staff and;
- Overseeing the financial performance of the Trust and the academies within, making sure its money is well spent.

3.0 Chief Executive Officer/ Accounting Officer (CEO)

The Trust Board will appoint the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Trust. He/she:

- has the delegated responsibility for the operation and performance of the schools including appraising the Executive Leadership Team in collaboration with the Local Governing Body (LGB);
- is the Accounting Officer so has overall responsibility for the operation of the Trust to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and must ensure that the organisation is run with financial effectiveness and stability, avoiding waste and securing value for money;
- leads the Executive Leadership Team of the MAT. The CEO will delegate executive functions to the Executive Leadership Team and is accountable to the Trust Board for the performance of the Executive Leadership Team.

The Trust Board, together with the CEO/Accounting Officer have ultimate accountability and responsibility for all aspects of the schools in the Trust. The Board delegates aspects of its responsibility in accordance with the following principles:

- The overriding aim of working together to build great schools is best achieved by each school developing its own individual identity and ethos within the overall framework, policies and ethos of the Trust.
- Responsibility is delegated in accordance with the ability of the school and its staff to meet the Trust's expectations. The Scheme of Delegation can be adjusted by the Board for any individual school.
- Wherever an authority is held by the Board, it is assumed the relevant Executive Officer undertakes the necessary preparatory work, and likewise the Principal or other Executive Officer carries out that work for the LGB
- Those to whom responsibility is delegated exercise that authority in line with good leadership practice, consulting with and keeping informed other staff and governors as appropriate.

4.00 Chief Finance Officer (CFO) / Trust Business Manager (TBM)

The Trust Board will appoint the Chief Finance Officer (CFO) of the Trust and their overriding responsibility is to manage the financial performance of the Trust and the academies within the Trust. The Board has appointed a Trust Business Manager (TBM) who fulfils the role of the Chief Finance Officer (CFO).

The CFO is expected to provide accurate information to the Accounting Officer, work with the Trust's Auditors, the Audit and the Finance & General Purposes Committees to ensure there is proper and regular use of its public funds.

They will be expected to implement systems that ensure that all financial procedures for the Trust are transparent and effective, including Finance and HR policies, payroll, estate and property maintenance and advise the Board on the capital development of the estate. The CFO will ensure that procedures are in place within each academy to adopt and comply with appropriate Health and Safety and environmental legislation.

The CFO will line manage and liaise with academy administrators to ensure practice is consistent and effective.

5.00 Trustee Committees (Finance & General Purpose (F&GP), Standards & Curriculum (S&C), Audit (A) and Remuneration (R))

The Trust Board has established four committees to which some responsibilities are delegated. The main roles and responsibilities of these committees are as follows:

5.1 Finance & General Purposes Committee (F&GP)

The key delegated responsibilities of the F&GP Committee are to oversee the financial performance of the MAT as a whole and the schools within it, making sure the Trust's money is spent effectively and that there is proper use of its public funds. The Committee will prepare an annual budget and financial forecasts for recommendation to the Trust Board for approval; once approved, the Committee will monitor the Trust's financial performance throughout the year. The F&GP Committee advises the Trust Board on HR issues including determining the pay policy for the Trust and reviewing and adopting other HR policies and procedures for the Trust. The Committee ensures that future capital improvements are prioritised according to the funding available and monitor that Health and Safety legislation is being complied with, supported by regular reports from Trust staff.

5.2 Standards & Curriculum Committee (S&C)

The key delegated responsibilities of the Standards & Curriculum Committee are to advise the Trust Board on the performance of children in the Link Academy Trust schools. The Committee will work with the local governing bodies in their principal role of safeguarding standards of teaching and learning by monitoring key indicators such as children's attainment, progress, attendance and exclusions.

5.3 Audit Committee

The key delegated responsibilities of the Audit Committee are to ensure that the Trust has in place sound internal controls (financial and otherwise), risk management and assurance processes that adequately identify and manage risk across all schools in the Trust. The Committee will monitor that these processes are operating effectively through reports from the internal and external auditors and ensuring that recommendations for improvement are implemented in a timely way. The Audit Committee takes responsibility for developing, maintaining and monitoring the risk register and advising the Board accordingly. In recognition of its independence, the Audit Committee will commission any investigation arising from a cause for concern through Public Interest Disclosure, Security and Fraud, subject to any conflicts of interest.

5.4 Remuneration Committee

The key delegated responsibilities of the Remuneration Committee are to advise the Trust Board on performance and remuneration issues including setting appraisal targets for, and remuneration of, the CEO and other members of the Executive Leadership Team and Central Services Team (in conjunction with the CEO); and receiving and assessing the recommendations for pay progression from each school ensuring consistency and equality across all schools.

6.00 Executive Principal

The Trust Board will appoint the Executive Principal and he/she will be expected to provide the Trustees/Trust Board and the CEO with school performance information and be responsible for school improvement on a day to day basis.

Taking strategic responsibility for the educational standards of the MAT schools, the Executive Principal will collaborate with the Local Governing Boards on aspects of teaching and learning, providing them with accurate information on standards and performance, including safeguarding issues and the day to day operation of academies within the Trust.

The Executive Principal will report to the Standards & Curriculum Committee with accurate information and data to demonstrate that the MAT schools are achieving the highest educational standards.

He/ she will also develop the Trust-wide Improvement plan and oversee the individual academy improvement plans through agreed programmes of CPD which will enable outcomes to be achieved and improvements to be made.

7.00 Local Governing Board

Each hub of schools within the Trust will have its own Local Governing Board (LGB) whose membership will include parental and staff representation as governors, and may also include members of the local community. The responsibilities of the LGB, which are more precisely defined in the LGB Terms of Reference, will include:

- Monitoring whether the academies are:
 - a. Meeting agreed targets with regard to the educational performance of the schools and their children
 - b. Implementing approved improvement plans to advance teaching and learning to meet or exceed national targets
 - c. Working within agreed policies; and
- Building a good working relationship with the Heads of School to gain an understanding of how the school is led and managed;
- Engaging with stakeholders; and
- Reporting to the Trust Board.

8.00 Heads of School

Heads of school are accountable to the Executive Principal for standards in teaching and learning and the Chief Executive Officer in respect of the financial and operational running of the school.

Heads of School are responsible for the smooth day to day running of the school, ensuring high standards of operation and pupil outcomes. They are expected to manage safeguarding, health and safety issues and communication with stakeholders, especially families and pupils.

This Scheme of Delegation should be used in conjunction with the Articles of Association, the ESFA Financial Handbook, the DfE Academies Governance Handbook, approved policies, Committees' terms of reference and job descriptions.

Scheme of Delegation – Key

Key

Level 1: Members

Level 2: Trustees

Level 3: Chief Executive Officer/ Accounting Officer (CEO)

Level 4: Chief Finance Officer (**CFO**)/ Trust Business Manager (**TBM**)

Level 5: Trustee Committees (F&GP, S&C, A and R)

Level 6: Executive Principal (EP)

Level 7: Local Governing Board (LGB)

Level 8: Head of School (HoS)

S= Statutory requirement. Action /approval to be undertaken at this level

✓ Delegated decision making

A Provide advice and support, propose or recommend to those accountable for decision making

< > Direction of advice and support

Area	Decision	Delegation							
		Members	Trustees	CEO	CFO	Committees	EP	LGB	HoS
1.	Governance framework - people								
1.1	Members: appoint/remove	S							
1.2	Foundation directors/trustees: appoint/remove	S	<						
1.3	Non-Foundation directors/trustees: appoint/remove	S	<						
1.4	Chair of Trust Board: appoint/remove		S						
1.5	Vice Chair of Trust Board: appoint/remove		S						
1.6	Board Advisors: appoint/remove		S						
1.7	Committee Chairs: appoint/remove		S			< All			
1.8	Committee members: appoint/remove		S			< All			
1.9	Non-elected LGB members (Co-opted): appoint/remove		S				<	<	
1.10	LGB Chairs: appoint/remove		S					<	
1.11	LGB Committee members: appoint/remove		S					✓	
1.12	Clerk to board: appoint and remove		S						
1.13	Clerk to LGB: appoint and remove		S						
1.14	Training & Professional development for Members, Trustees and Local Governing Board		S	<		<	<	<	

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		Members	Trustees	CEO	CFO	Committees	EP	LGB	HoS
2.	Governance systems and structures								
2.1	Articles of association: agree and review	S	<	<					
2.2	Governance structure (committees) for the trust: establish and review annually		S	<		< All			
2.3	Approve Trust Board Terms of Reference		S						
2.4	Terms of reference for trust committees: agree & review annually		S	<	<	<All			
2.5	Terms of reference for LGBs: agree and review annually		S	<		< S&C	< >	<	
2.6	Approve Trust Scheme of Delegation		S	<	<	<	<	<	
2.7	Skills audit of Trustee Board: complete to arrange training and recruitment to fill gaps		S	<		<			
2.8	Annual self- review of trust board and committee performance		S			<			
2.9	Annual self- review of LGB performance		S	<			✓	✓	<
2.10	LGB Chair's performance: carry out 360 review periodically		S	<			✓	✓	
2.11	Succession at Trust Board and LGB level: plan		S	<			<	<	
2.12	Approve new convertor or sponsored academies joining the MAT		S	<					
2.13	Establish LGB working groups						>	✓	<
2.14	Organise calendar of Trust Board and LGB meetings		S	<				✓	
2.15	Approve Trustee & governors expenses policy		S	<					
2.16	Annual cycle of business for trust board: agree		S	<					
2.17	Annual cycle of business for committees: agree					✓ All			
2.18	Annual cycle of business for LGB: agree						>	✓	<

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3.	Reporting								
3.1	Trust governance details on trust website: ensure accuracy and compliance		S	<		<Audit			
3.2	Academy governance details on academy websites: ensure accuracy and compliance		S	<		<Audit		✓	
3.3	Register of all interests, business, pecuniary for members/trustees/committee members/governors: establish and publish annually	>	S	<	<	<	<	<	
3.4	Chair's Annual report on performance of the trust: submit to Members and publish		S	<	<		<	<	
3.5	Annual report and accounts, signed statement on regularity, propriety and compliance, incorporating governance statement demonstrating value for money: submit		S	<	<	<Audit <F&GP			
3.6	Submit non-confidential Committee minutes to next Board meeting					✓ All			
3.7	Submit non-confidential LGB minutes to Trust Board							✓	
3.8	Annual report of work of LGB: submit to Trust						<>	✓	<

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4.	Strategic								
4.1	Determine trust wide policies which reflect the trust's ethos and values (see policy review schedule): approve		S	<		<All			
4.2	Monitor the impact of collective worship on the school community (church schools)						>	✓	<
4.3	Ensure that the teaching of religious education is effective		S	<			>	✓	<
4.4	Engagement with stakeholders		S	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
4.5	Trust's vision and strategy (strategic plan), agreeing key priorities and key performance indicators (KPIs) against which progress towards achieving the vision can be measured: approve		S	<			<		
4.6	Academy's vision and strategy: approve		S	<	<	<	<	<	<
4.7	Chief executive officer: Appoint and dismiss		S						
4.8	Executive Principal: Appoint and dismiss		S	<					
4.9	Academy Head of School : Appoint and dismiss		S	<			<	<	
4.10	Trust Business Manager: Approve, appoint & dismiss		S	<	<CFO	F&GP	<		
4.11	Risk Management Plan: Implement and Monitor		S	<	<	Audit/All		<	
4.12	Critical Incident Plan/Business Continuity Plan: Monitor		S	<	<	Audit	<	<	

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5.	Trust & Academy Performance, Curriculum & Teaching								
5.1	Monitor quality of teaching and learning across the Trust and agree strategies for improvement if required		S	<		S&C	<		
5.2	Monitor within academy: academic performance, the quality of provision and the quality of care		S	<		S&C	<>	✓	<
5.3	Set, agree and monitor pupil level targets across the Trust		S	<		S&C	<		
5.4	Set, agree and monitor pupil level targets in the academy hub)						>	✓	<
5.5	Trust Improvement Plan (MAT IP)		S	<		S&C	<		
5.6	Academy 1 Year School Improvement Plan (SIP) & SEF: approve and monitor		S	<		S&C	<>	✓	<
5.7	Propose individual SIP: Approve and review progress against MAT Improvement Plan (MIP)						>	✓	<
5.8	Approval of cross-MAT curriculum policies, schemes of work and development.		S	<		S&C	<		
5.7	Auditing and reporting arrangements for matters of compliance (eg safeguarding, H&S, employment): agree		S	<	<	Audit S&C	<>	✓	<
5.9	SIAMS – academy level monitoring of local framework in church schools						>	✓	<
5.10	SIAMS - High level monitoring of local frameworks for development in faith schools- Trust Level		S	<			<	<	<

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6.	Financial Governance & Management								
6.1	Trust Business Manager: appoint/remove		S	<		<F&GP			
6.2	Trust's and academies' scheme of financial delegation & authorisation limits: establish and review		S	<	<	<F&GP			
6.3	External auditors' report: receive and respond	S	<	<	<	<Audit			
6.4	Trust & Academy Financial Regulations		S	<	<	<F&GP			
6.5	Appoint Trust auditors	S	<		<	<Audit			
6.6	Trust 3 year Budget Plan		S	<	<	<F&GP			
6.7	Trust 1 year Budget		S	<	<	<F&GP			
6.8	Trust Interim Year End Accounts		S	<	<	<F&GP			
6.9	Trust Annual Accounts		S	<	<	<F&GP			
6.10	Trustees' Report		S	<	<				
6.11	Trust Academies' Accounts Return to ESFA (ensure)		S	<	<				
6.12	Response to Auditor's Management Letter		S	<	<	<Audit			
6.13	Academy 3 year Budget Plan		S	<	<	<F&GP	<	<	<
6.14	Academy 1 year Budget		S	<	<	<F&GP	<	<	<
6.15	Academy YTD reports/budgets to review, recommend to the Trust Board and monitor		S	<	<	✓ F&GP	<		<
6.16	Trust annual budget - to review, recommend to the Trust Board and monitor		S	<	<	✓ F&GP			
6.17	Academy Interim Year End Accounts		S	<	<	✓ F&GP			
6.18	Academy Accounts Return to ESFA		S	<	<	F&GP			
6.19	CEO and EP pay award: agree		S		<	<Remun			
6.20	Academy head of school pay award		S	<		✓Remun	<		
6.21	Staff appraisal procedure and pay progression		S			✓Remun	<		<
6.22	Benchmarking and trust wide value for money: ensure robustness		S	<	<	<F&GP <Audit			
6.23	Benchmarking and academy value for money: ensure robustness		S	<	<	<F&GP	<	<	

6.24	Insurance arrangements to support activities as an employer - agree		S	<	<	F&GP			
6.25	Central spend / academy contribution: agree		S	<	<	F&GP			
6.26	Recruit and appoint internal auditor		S	<	<	<Audit			
6.27	Plan and implement the internal audit programme including the checking of financial controls, systems, transactions and risks		S	<	<	Audit			
6.28	Management of risk: establish register, review and monitor		S	<	<	Audit		<	
6.29	To approve policies relating to the Trust's financial governance and operation, including investment policy		S	<	<	<Audit <F&GP			
6.30	Develop trust wide procurement strategies and efficiency savings programme		S	<	<	<F&GP			

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7.	Financial Authorisation								
7.1	Expenditure or contracts up to Lower Limit (£300)		S	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
7.2	Expenditure or contracts up to £3,000		S	✓	✓	F&GP	✓		
7.3	Expenditure or contracts over £3,000- £5,000		S	>	>	Chair of F&GP			
7.4	Expenditure or contracts from £5,000 to £20,000		S	<	<	✓F&GP			
7.5	Expenditure or contracts over £20,000		S	<	<	<	<		
7.6	Disposals or write off of stock, assets or debts up to Lower Limit (£3,000)		S	✓	<				
7.7	Disposals or write off of stock, assets or debts over £3,000 up to £5,000		S	>	>	✓F&GP			
7.8	Disposals or write off of stock, assets or debts over £5,000		S	<	<	<			
7.9	To approve compensation payments up to £50,000		S						

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		Members	Trustees	CEO	CFO	Committees	EP	LGB	HoS
8.	Staff & Performance Management								
8.1	Trust's staffing structure: agree		S	<	<	F&GP	<		
8.2	Academy staffing structure: agree		S	<	<	F&GP	<	<	
8.3	Performance management of the Chief Executive Officer: undertake (CEO Appraisal Panel)	<	S			Remun			
8.4	Performance management of academy heads of School : undertake						✓	<	
8.5	Performance management of academy heads of School : monitor					Remun	✓	<	
8.6	CEO/Exec Principal appointment		S						
8.7	Trust Business Manager appointment		S	<		F&GP			
8.8	Head of School appointments within school		S	<		Remun	<	<	
8.9	Teaching staff appointments		S	<		Remun	<	<	
8.10	Support staff appointments			>		Remun	✓	<	
8.11	Suspension of CEO/Exec Principal		S						
8.12	Return of CEO/Exec Principal after suspension		S						
8.13	Suspension of Head of School		S	<			<	<	
8.14	Return of Head of School after suspension		S	<			<	<	
8.15	Suspension of teaching and support staff		S	✓			✓	<	
8.16	Return of teaching and support staff after suspension		S	✓			✓	<	
8.17	Redundancy of staff, F&GP to consider and respond to proposals		S	<	<	F&GP	<		
8.18	Restructuring of staff, F&GP to consider and respond to proposals		S	<	<	F&GP	<	<	
8.19	Staff, HR, Pay Performance & Disciplinary Policies: Review, propose and approve		S	<	<	F&GP Remun	<		

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9.	Academy Policies & Procedures								
9.1	MAT term and holidays		S	<		S&C	<		
9.2	Change of Academy Age Range		S	<		S&C	<		
9.3	Expansion of Academy PAN		S	<		S&C	<		
9.4	Extension of Academy provision (EYFS)		S	<		S&C	<		
9.5	Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy		S	<		S&C	<	<	<
9.6	Attendance Policy & Plan					S&C	>	✓	<
9.7	Pupil Behaviour Policy (including exclusions)					S&C	>	✓	<
9.8	Short-term Exclusion					S&C	>	✓	<
9.9	Return after short-term exclusion					S&C	>	✓	<
9.10	Permanent Exclusions		S				<	<	<
9.11	Appeals against Permanent Exclusion		S				<	<	<
9.12	Complaints Policy		S	<					
9.13	Complaints Appeals		S	<					
9.14	Admissions Policy		S	<					
9.15	Allocation of places against Admissions Policy		S	<					
9.16	Admissions Appeals - panel		S	<					
9.17	SEN Policy		S	<					
9.18	Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy		S	<					
9.19	Academy- based policies					S&C>	>	✓	<

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10.	Premises & Health & Safety								
10.1	Asset Management Policy & Plan		S	<	<	F&GP			
10.2	Academy asset management plan - review		S	<	<	F&GP			
10.3	Review & approve MAT Health & Safety Policy		S	<	<	Audit			
10.4	Commissioning of repairs or works up to £3,000		S	<	✓	F&GP			
10.5	Commissioning of repairs or works up to £5,000		S	>	>	✓F&GP			
10.6	Commissioning of capital expenditure or repairs or works over £5,000		S	<	<	<F&GP			
10.7	Approval of applications for capital funding		S	<	<	F&GP			
10.8	Premises policies: Review, propose and approve		S	<	<	F&GP			
10.9	Implementation of Health & Safety Procedures		S	<	<	F&GP Audit	<	<	<
10.10	Health & Safety policies: Review, propose and approve		S	<	<	F&GP Audit			
10.11	Insurance requirements		S	<	<	F&GP			