



# GREENWOOD ACADEMIES TRUST

## Terms of Reference for Academy Advisory Councils

### **Constitution**

The Trust Board hereby resolves to establish a number of committees to be known as the Academy Advisory Councils (AACs). There will be an Academy Advisory Council for each Academy within the Trust. Note that, in exceptional circumstances, there could be a single Council for more than one Academy (for instance where an Infant and neighbouring Junior Academy share the same Council).

### **Background**

The AAC is a small group of individuals representing staff, parents and the local community. It is not, however, the same as a traditional governing body of a local authority maintained school. These responsibilities are held by the Trust Board, who will review and determine the role of the AAC on a regular basis.

The main purpose of the AAC is to ensure the academy is finding out the views of local stakeholders, including the pupils, parents and staff; listening and responding to them, therefore providing feedback and advice from a parental and community perspective.

To support its work, the Principal will ensure the AAC has an accurate picture of the standards of education it provides, listening and responding to views expressed by members of the AAC to further improve the achievement of pupils within the Academy.

The AAC will then ensure that it reports the achievements and key matters for concern to the Trust Board, demonstrating that it is the eyes and ears of the trust board at academy level.

### **Membership**

The membership of the Councils shall be managed by the Academy Principal, who shall also be responsible for recruiting and appointing members, with the support of the clerk and Chair. Membership must include:

- The Academy Principal
- Between two and four members of the community or key representatives of local businesses
- Between two and four parents (who at the time of appointment have a child at a GAT Academy)
- Up to two members of staff from the Academy
- A minimum of five members and a maximum of nine, constituted from the above, ensuring that the composition of the board contains more non-members of trust staff than members.

The members shall appoint a Chair from amongst their number at the first meeting of each academic year, to serve for the following two calendar years, and this Chair should not be an employee from the academy.

The standard term of office shall be three (3) years, and members shall be eligible to put themselves forward for reappointment so long as they continue to meet the above criteria.

Each academy has a link Central Team Education Advisor, who should be invited to attend meetings. In exceptional circumstances, e.g. to ensure that the AAC is able to constitute a Disciplinary Committee with sufficient training and experience, and for a limited period only, a member of GAT Central staff or other suitable individual may take one or more of the above places in order to meet the minimum requirements.

A quorum shall be three members, of which two must be non-staff members.

The Principal will also appoint a clerk to the Academy Advisory Council. The Trust Governance Manager will provide governance advice and support to the Principal and academy clerk.

### **Attendance at Meetings**

If the Academy Principal cannot attend a particular meeting, then the meeting may need to be rearranged. If the Chair cannot attend then a non-staff member may chair the meeting.

GAT trustees are not eligible to be members of AACs, although on occasions Trustees can request to observe meetings or could be invited by the AAC to discuss specific agenda items relating to the Trust. In addition, the Trust Governance Manager may also request to attend any AAC meeting, as part of their responsibilities to ensure effective governance practices are being observed across the Trust.

### **Frequency of Meetings**

Meetings shall be held not less than three (3) times a year.

### **Purpose**

To provide a forum for consultation and engagement with community, parental and staff representatives, and a mechanism to ensure the efficient and effective flow of relevant information through to the Trust Board.

To support the Principal from a parental and community perspective in the appropriate day to day procedures of the Academy (through feedback and advice) and, where appropriate to identify local opportunities to further improve the achievements of pupils within the academy.

To consider and monitor policies in line with the scheme of delegation and provide representation on matters such as some pupil exclusions.

### **Responsibilities**

The responsibilities of the Academy Advisory Councils are:

- To receive and consider updates from the Academy Principal on the performance and running of the Academy, providing constructive feedback on areas for further improvement.
- To receive information from the Trust when appropriate, and consider and debate items that the Trust Board members or Education Directors may request to be on the agenda from time to time.
- To consider and recommend any policies to which the Trust Board has delegated responsibility to the Principal for personalisation or development at academy level.
- To ensure the academy is finding out the views of pupils, parents and staff, considering reports of activities undertaken to determine these and is listening to and, responding to them.
- To ensure that any areas of concern about the Academy, including those around pupil outcomes, are raised and documented in the minutes so that they can be brought to the attention of the Trust Board, through the Standards and Inclusion Committee.
- To provide representation on matters such as pupil exclusions, in line with powers delegated by the Trust Board.
- To be proactive in supporting the principal in developing greater links with the local community.

### **Reporting Procedures**

The Chair of the Council, through the Clerk, shall ensure that minutes are submitted to all members of the Council and Trust Governance Manager within two weeks of the meeting, and that they are signed at the next meeting to confirm their accuracy. Each meeting should include a standard item allowing unresolved issues to be raised with the Standards and Inclusion Committee.

A report will be provided to the Standards and Inclusion Committee detailing any items in AAC minutes requested to be raised with the Committee, and these will in turn will be reported in the Standards and Inclusion Committee minutes to the Trust Board. This is the mechanism for local issues to be raised with Trustees. It is hoped, however, that most local issues can be resolved between the AAC and the Principal, linked Education Advisor or Education Director. Issues should only be escalated to the Standards and Inclusion Committee if queries have not been satisfactorily resolved at these levels initially. The AAC handbook provides further details of this process.

### **Communication between AACs and the Trust Board**

There are opportunities through the year for Chairs of AACs to meet each other and with Trustees. A summary of Trust Board minutes will be sent to AAC clerks and should be tabled at each AAC meeting.