

THE ROLE OF A SCHOOL TRUSTEE

The role of a School Trustee is to:

- Contribute to the work of the trust board in ensuring high standards of achievement for all children in the school by:
- 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 of its staff; and
- Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent

To perform this well, a Trustee is expected to:

- Get to know the school, including visiting the school occasionally during school hours and in agreement with the Headteacher, and gaining a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses
- Attend induction training and regular relevant training and development events
- Attend meetings (full trust board meetings and committee meetings) and read all the papers before the meeting
- Act in the best interests of all the pupils in the school
- Behave in a professional manner, as set down in the trust board's code of conduct, including acting in strict confidence.

Activities

- Contribute to the strategic discussions at trust board meetings which determine:
 - The vision and ethos of the school
 - Clear and ambitious strategic priorities and targets for the school
 - That all children, including those with special educational needs, have access to a broad and balanced curriculum
 - The school's budget, including the expenditure of the pupil premium allocation
 - The school's staffing structure and key staffing policies
 - The principles to be used by school leaders to set other school policies
- Hold executive leaders to account by monitoring the school's performance: this includes
 - Agreeing the outcomes from the school's self-evaluation and ensuring they are used to inform the priorities in the school development plan
 - Considering all the relevant data and feedback on request by school leaders and external sources on all aspects of school performance
 - Asking challenging questions of school leaders
 - Ensuring school leaders have arranged for the required audits to be carried out and receive the results of those audits
 - Ensuring senior leaders have developed the required policies and procedures and the school is operating effectively according to those policies
 - Acting as a link trustee on a specific issue, making relevant enquiries of the relevant staff, and reporting to the board of trustees on the progress on the relevant priority
 - Listening to and reporting to the school's stakeholders: pupils, parents, and the wider community, including local employers
- Ensure the school staff have the resources and support they require to do their jobs well, including the necessary expertise on business management, external advice where necessary, effective appraisal and CPD, and suitable premises and that the way in which those resources are used has impact

When required, serve on panels of Trustees to:

- Appoint the headteacher and participate in the selection of other school staff
- Appraise the Headteacher
- Set the Headteacher's pay and agree the pay recommendations for other staff
- Hear the second stage of staff grievances and disciplinary matters
- Hear complaints and appeals about pupil exclusions

Being a Trustee is largely a thinking and questioning role, not a doing role. **A Trustee does NOT:**

- Write school policies
- Spend much time with the pupils of the school (If you want to work directly with children there are other voluntary and valuable roles within a school)
- Fundraise – this is the role of the PTA – the trust board should consider income streams and the potential for income generation, but not carry out fundraising tasks
- Undertake classroom observations to make judgements on the quality of teaching – the trust board monitors the quality of teaching in the school by requiring data from the senior staff, by undertaking learning walks, and from external sources
- Do the job of the school staff; if there is not enough capacity within the paid staff team to carry out the necessary tasks, the trust board need to consider and rectify this

With more experience as a Trustee, there are other roles for which can be undertaken, which would increase the degree of involvement and level of responsibility eg chair a committee.

Trustees are expected to demonstrate [the Nolan principles of public life](#) (selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty, leadership).

Trustees may receive out of pocket expenses incurred as a result of fulfilling their role and there is a Harlands Expenses policy. Payments can include incidental expenses, such as travel and childcare, but not loss of earnings.