Ethos and Advisory Committee
Terms of Reference
2024 – 2025

Review frequency	Annual
Approved by Trust Board	

FLOURISHING FUTURES

Summary of Changes

Summer 2024	Transition Ethos & Advisory Committee included for Schools in their first year with the Trust and governance structure updated to reflect this
Summer 2023	Revised name of Committee from LEGC to EAC Updated Role of the EAC
Spring 2023	Appointment of Parent Representatives (page 8) – provision for flexibility on number of parent representatives upon academy conversion
Autumn 2022	Representation by member of business support team and executive head removed Updated Governance structure chart with new Hubs
Spring 2022	Updated with new Mission, Vision, Values and Beliefs Revised structure diagram to include West Devon
Autumn 2021	Page 3 and 4 – addition of Local Admissions Panel
Summer 2021	Revised membership of committee Governance table revised to remove Teaching School
Spring 2021	Revised membership of hub committees Revised structure diagram to include Dartington & Paignton Term of office increased from 2 to 4 years There will be a minimum of two parents in a hub LEGC minutes will be reviewed by the Chairs Forum Revised appointments of Foundation and Parent representatives

Contents

1. Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to play a valuable role as a member of an Ethos & Advisory Committee (EAC). The Learning Academy Partnership recognises and values the significant role that the EACs play in supporting effective governance across the Trust and crucially, in supporting the improvement and success of schools rooted within their local communities.

The Board of Trustees are the responsible body ensuring compliance with all aspects of regulation and operates within the requirements set out in the Memorandum and Articles of Association, Funding Agreement and Academies Trust Handbook. ⌷

[The Scheme of Delegation](#) sets out where responsibility is held, where it is delegated and where it is in consultation.

An EAC operates in an advisory capacity at local level; we ask that you read and consider these Terms of Reference. The EAC is a committee of the Trust Board.

The Nolan Principles (7 principles of public life) apply to all holders of public office and EAC members should actively promote and robustly support the principles.
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life/the-7-principles-of-public-life--2

These terms of reference are drafted, maintained and reviewed by the Board of Trustees.

2. Quorum

The quorum will be a minimum of 3 committee members in addition to a minimum of one Head Teacher.

3. Role of the Ethos & Advisory Committee

The Ethos & Advisory Committee is an advisory committee of the Trust Board and accountable to the Trust Board. The Trust Board delegates responsibilities but no delegated powers to the EAC, recognising the Trust as a single legal entity. The [Scheme of Delegation](#) sets out defined areas that EAC monitor and consult on.

Main Role and Responsibilities:

As a single organisation, each member of the Trust is responsible for all children, no matter which academy they attend. Ethos and Advisory Committee members are there to support all children in the hub and wider Trust in the role that they play and are ambassadors for the Trust as well as the local hub.

The EAC is a local voice and a link with local communities and churches (Church Schools). The role of the EAC is to support, inform, advise and challenge provision and ensure the academies are a good articulation of the Trust mission (Flourishing Futures) within the distinctive community that it serves.

By comparison to a traditional school Governing Body, the EAC's role is not to "manage" the academies and is not required to take operational, staff or financial decisions which are completed by the Head Teacher, Trust Executive Team and Board of Trustees. The Trust Executive holds the Headteacher performance to account.

The EAC offers challenge, support and advice on the overarching question:

How is the academy a good articulation of the Trust [mission](#) in the local community?

Which is determined through 4 key questions:

- *What is the experience for pupils?*
- *What is the experience for parents?*
- *What is the experience for staff?*
- *How is the ethos/Christian Distinctiveness upheld in the academies?*

The EAC will:
- Carry out three learning walks a year.
- Attend three meetings per year.
- Attend training twice per year.
- Complete the suite of safeguarding training requirements.
- Attend and participate in academy events as a visible and positive presence.
- Report and communicate with the Board of Trustees through the Chairs Forum.
- Nominated committee members will attend SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) and Ofsted inspections and talk knowledgeably about the strengths and challenges in the academy.
- Review and contribute to the academy/academies risk register.
- Elected committee members will hold portfolios for *Inclusion* or *Ethos and Christian Distinctiveness*
- Elected Admissions Panel members will Determine all admission rounds and in year admission applications through the Local Admissions Panel
- Committee members will form Exclusions, Appeals, and Complaints panels as required
- Preserve and support the Trust Foundation and the Christian Distinctiveness of Church School academies, including RE (Religious Education) and ethos of community academies.

4. Portfolio Holders

See TOR for each portfolio holder

In addition to the termly meetings and learning walks committee members will be elected to hold portfolios and will meet individually with school leaders to have knowledge and understanding of key areas in order to support, challenge, inform and advise school leaders and committee members. All portfolio holders should be appointed at the first meeting.

1. **Ethos & Christian Distinctiveness** The Ethos & Christian Distinctiveness portfolio holder ensures the academies preserve and develop their ethos and Christian character and distinctiveness, which includes the pastoral care of the children and staff within those academies. They will meet with a school leader once per year and will visit at least one Act of Worship/Assembly (in community schools) and where possible, attend a church service celebration for the hub. They will attend SIAMS inspections and meet with inspectors as required. See TOR for detail.

2. **Inclusion** The Inclusion Portfolio holder will meet with SEND/Safeguarding leads twice per year and will hold the portfolio for the following areas:

   Safeguarding: to have knowledge of how the academies are implementing statutory requirements to create a robust safeguarding culture.

   SEND (Special Education Needs and Disability): to having knowledge of the relevant policies, practices and procedures in place which are being implemented for all vulnerable groups and children with SEND.

   Pupil Premium: to have knowledge and understanding of how practice advantages disadvantaged children through the Pupil Premium strategy. See TOR for detail.

3. **Hub Admissions Committee** Two EAC members to sit on the Local Admissions Panel with an Executive Lead as required. See TOR.

5. Panels

Hub Admissions:

Admission Appeals are delegated to the Admissions Committee in line with the Trust's Scheme of Delegation.

Three members of the EAC will form a Local Admissions Panel (to include Executive Lead and 2 other members of the EAC). The Local Admissions Panel will determine all admission rounds and in year admissions. As and when an application for admission to an academy is received, the Academy Administrator, in conjunction with the Head Teacher will email the Local Admissions Panel with a recommendation to either: offer or refuse an application with reasoning and justification. The Local Admissions Panel will have 2 days to consider the request and respond with the majority decision to the email. Once received by the Academy Administrator the decision will be cc'd to the Admissions Officer and relayed to the admission authority.

Complaints Panel

Formal Complaints are delegated to the Ethos & Advisory Committee in line with the Trust's Scheme of Delegation and Complaints Policy.

Exclusions Panel

Exclusions are delegated to the Ethos & Advisory Committee in line with the Trust's Policy and Scheme of Delegation.

6. Organisation

An EAC will be organised as a hub of schools based in a locality.

Where an academy is causing concern as identified by the Trust Board Trust Executive or is a sponsored academy a *Rapid Intervention Board* may be established (Terms of Reference) until the academy was deemed no longer at risk.

Transition Ethos and Advisory Committee

When a new school joins the Trust the Trust Board may deem that a Transition Ethos and Advisory Committee (TEAC) is implemented to support the transition of the governance and the school into the Trust. This decision will be based on several factors including category of the school, stability of governance and other factors within the Hub the school will be joining.

The TEAC will mirror the membership requirements and align to the Scheme of Delegation, Terms of Reference and quality assurance cycle. The Chair of the TEAC will attend the Chairs' Forum with the Board and be an active participant, ensuring the reciprocal feedback processes are adhered to as set out in the Terms of Reference. The TEAC may be supported by members of the Executive Team, Senior Leadership team or another EAC member to support the transition.
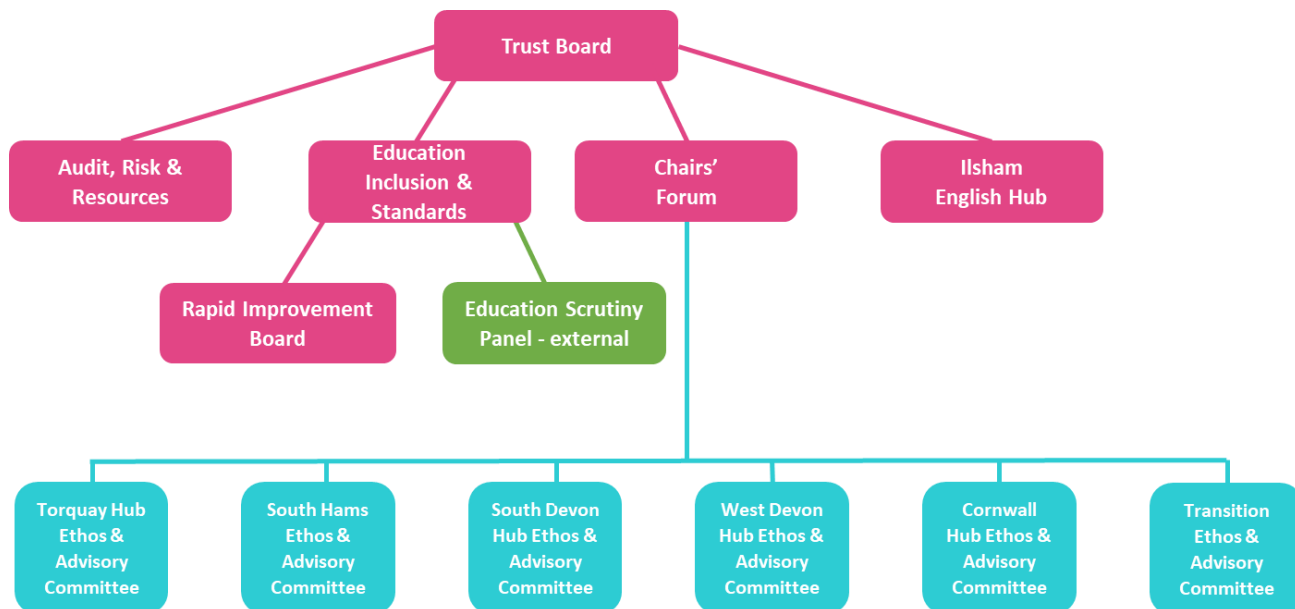
The TEAC will be in place for no longer than 1 year where the transition into the Hub EAC will take place. The Trust Board can decide to disband the TEAC at any point during the year.

7. Membership

There is a clear separation between Members, Board, and Ethos & Advisory Committees and members at each tier do not serve on any other layer of governance. However, the Board reserves the right to intervene at EAC level if a concern is raised.

The Chair of the EAC is elected by the committee and approved by the Trust Board, subject to the necessary DBS checks, completion of safeguarding training and induction procedures.

Ethos & Advisory Committee hub membership

The membership of an Ethos & Advisory Committee hub is as follows:

- The Head Teachers within the Hub
- A minimum of two foundation members
- A minimum of two parent representatives
- A member of the Trust Senior Leadership Team
- Other members will be appointed with the appropriate required skill base

Or, if there are no church schools within the hub:

- The Head Teachers within the Hub
- A minimum of two parent representatives
- A member of the Trust Senior Leadership Team
- Other members will be appointed with the appropriate required skill base.

8. Appointments

Appointment of Chair and Vice Chair

1. The Chair and Vice Chair of the EAC shall be appointed at the start of each academic year.
2. The Chair of the EAC will be ratified by the Board of Trustees who will consider any representations made by the Committee prior to appointment.
3. In the absence of the Chair and Vice Chair, the committee will elect a temporary replacement from among the committee members present at the meeting.

The Role of Chair See Job Description.

Committee Administrator

The Committee Administrator for the EAC will be provided by the Trust.

The Committee Administrator to the EAC will circulate an agenda for each meeting and papers at least one week before the meeting.

Appointment of Foundation Committee Members

Local Foundation committee members serve in church academy and mixed academy hubs which are part of the Trust. These members of the committee are appointed with the approval of Exeter Diocesan Education Network (EDEN).

The role is to undertake those responsibilities outlined in the Scheme of Delegation agreed by the Trust. It is the responsibility for the Foundation Committee members to understand the Scheme of Delegation with regards to Christian distinctiveness and ethos and specifically support and challenge the academies/Hub.

Foundation committee vacancies will be publicised and nominees will complete an application form. The chair of the committee, along with the Exec Lead, will undertake an interview considering the skills and experience of the nominee. If the nominee is a church leader, approval will still be sought from EDEN. Once approval is received, the appointment will be confirmed by the Trustees and they may start to attend committee meetings in their capacity as a Foundation member.

Any person employed by the Trust is not eligible to apply to become a Foundation committee member.

Appointment of Parent Representatives

Elections

There will be a minimum of two parent representatives on a Hub committee. Additional Parent representatives may be appointed, so long as the number of parent committee members across the Hub remains a minority. If there is only one academy in the Hub, two will be appointed. Where there is more than one expression of interest it will be necessary to hold an election per academy. Parents will be asked to complete a nomination form. A pen portrait for each nomination, together with the process and the closing date for voting will be sent to all eligible parents for registered pupils. One vote per parent is allowed regardless of how many children they may have in the academy.

Voting must be open for a minimum of one full school week.

The count will be conducted by the Head Teacher or his/her nominee and should be witnessed by at least one person unconnected to the election. The candidate(s) to be elected will be the

candidate(s) gaining the highest number of votes in the election. If there is a tie in the numbers of votes cast, the first step should be to recount the votes. If the votes are still equal for two or more candidates, then arrangements will be made to draw lots. The count should normally take place at the academy, after the closing time for voting on the day (or the following day) by which completed ballot papers are to be returned. Nomination forms and ballot papers that are returned outside the return dates will be treated as invalid. The decision as to whether a vote is valid falls to the Head Teacher. Completed ballot papers should be kept in a safe place for a period of three months, after which they may be destroyed.

9. Term of office

The term of office for committee members shall be four years. Subject to remaining eligible, a committee member may be reappointed for a period not normally exceeding 8 years in total, unless agreed by the Trustees. For further avoidance of doubt, a term of office shall not include any time served as a governor of a predecessor school.

The time limit will not apply to members of Trust staff whose terms are ongoing. Each year at the first meeting the committee is reviewed.

A committee member may resign their office by giving notice in writing to the Committee Administrator to the EAC. A committee member shall cease to hold office if they are removed by the Board of Trustees.

The Trustees may terminate the appointment of any committee member whose presence or conduct is deemed by the Trustees not to be in the best interests of the Trust or academy.

When a Committee Member has not attended 2 consecutive meetings, the Chair will contact the member and advise that the Trustees may resolve to remove them from the EAC. The next Trustee meeting will consider any statement given by the non-attending Committee Member and agree what action should be taken.

10. Training

All Members of the EAC Committee will undertake appropriate induction training, including Safeguarding, Prevent, and GDPR, and will commit to a maximum of 2 days' training and professional development to support the role throughout the academic year.   Training may also be offered to support knowledge and experience to undertake possible roles including reviews, panels and appeals.

If EAC members do not complete their Safeguarding and Prevent training at the time it becomes due, it may be necessary to place a temporary suspension on the membership until the until the committee member is compliant with safeguarding requirements.

11. Conflict of Interest

Any EAC member who has or can have any direct or indirect duty or personal interest which conflicts or may conflict with his duties as a committee member shall disclose that fact to the Chair as soon as they become aware of it. If it is the Chair, then disclosure should be made to the Director of Education.

A committee member must distance themselves from any discussions in which it is possible that a conflict will arise between their duty to act solely in the interests of the Trust and any duty or personal

interest (including but not limited to any personal financial interest). It may be appropriate for a member to withdraw from a meeting if there is a conflict of interests.

All EAC members shall complete a declaration of business interests form on joining the advisory committee and at the start of each academic year. Declarations of business interests and attendance at meetings will be reported on the academy websites.

12. Confidentiality

All EAC members are bound by confidentiality and will not share details and decisions from meetings with anyone from outside of the Trust. Committee Members are a voice of the community and not the voice to the community. Any requests for information from the meetings by parents or the community should be directed to the Headteacher. Any breaches of confidentiality will be referred to the Trust Board and may result in removal from the EAC.

13. GDPR

All EAC members will adhere to GDPR guidelines and complete annual training. All papers and information for meetings will be shared through Trust emails and TEAMS. Information cannot be sent to or shared via personal emails.

14. Effective Date

These Terms of Reference shall come into effect, in relation to an Ethos & Advisory Committee, on the establishment of the EAC or where revised on a date specified by the Trustees.