

Title	Community Councils - Terms of Reference
Prepared by	Jem Shuttleworth and Madison Gough
Date	September 2021



## Purpose

- Within the Elliot Foundation a Community Council is a group of volunteers appointed by the Trust to offer challenging but positive and proactive support to the Principal and Senior Leadership on behalf of the children and community that the school serves.
- They do this by knowing and celebrating the strengths of the community that the school serves alongside holding the highest aspirations and expectations for all children.
- Community Councils are, whilst a full and formal part of the governance structure in line with the Trust's Articles of Association, wholly advisory bodies focused on;
  - The ethos and values of the school
  - The ambition, appropriateness and effectiveness of the school's curriculum for its children
  - The wellbeing of pupils, families and staff
- Community Councils support the Trust to work as one entity, in the interests of all its schools equally.
- Community Councils provide a mechanism for meaningful Trust Board engagement with a school, its parents and local community enabling trustees to understand stakeholder views, needs and listen to their feedback. Each Community Council must have at least x 2 councillors who are parents/carers.

## Membership and Training

- Reflective of the community that the school / federation serves
- X 9 councillors -
  - Principal (or by exception designated representative such as HoS);
  - Parents/Carers of pupils at the respective school (up to x 3 and ideally drawn from each KS) elected by the parent body. If not enough candidates put themselves forward, the Trust can appoint;
  - Staff (up to x 2 and drawn from KS, role, specific expertise or federated partner school) elected by the staff body. If not enough candidates put themselves forward, the Trust can appoint;
  - Balance of membership may be drawn from the wider community (could include those that the school is already working with or those that the school has identified as being integral to developing community and curriculum links). Trustees may choose to appoint people to sit on a Community Council who provide links to the local community and / or whose expertise meets an identified school need, in addition to parents and / or

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- Balance of membership may be drawn from pupils of the school / federation. This is for each school to determine based on their existing models of Pupil Voice, Pupil Leaders and Subject Champions. Terms of Office for pupils to be determined at a local level.
- Councillors are required to act in the best interests of the school rather than act as a representative of their respective stakeholder group; to adhere to the Nolan Principles of public life and at no time to bring the school into disrepute as a result of their actions.
- Chair of a Community Council to be appointed annually by the Trust Board with all working to a collective responsibility model.
- Councillors may, where useful, be linked to specific areas of responsibility. The role of a Link Councillor is to ensure specific oversight of a particular area and deepen the Community Council's knowledge of that particular area. This role remains strategic and not operational.
- Term of Office - x 4 years (maximum of two terms). Election of staff and parents to continue as is currently with all other councillors appointed by the Trust. Each councillor will be required to have an enhanced DBS check.
- Associate Membership as an alternative to full for pupils of the school / federation. This is for each school to determine based on their existing models of Pupil Voice, Pupil Leaders and Subject Champions. Terms of Office for pupils to be determined at a local level.
- All Community Council members will be supported throughout by; virtual regional sessions, Keeping in Touch meetings, Flick Learning modules, bespoke training sessions on curriculum and wellbeing, a half termly newsletter and regular guidance on relevant topics.

## Meetings and Visits

- Quorum for both - Principal + 3 (ie: not quorate without the Principal or by exception designated representative such as HoS)
- X 4 meetings across an academic year (x 2 in the Autumn, x 1 in the Spring and x 1 in the Summer) with an expectation that at least two of those meetings will be directly linked to visits by members during the school day. In this way councillors can visit together and have an opportunity to feedback, discuss and triangulate evidence immediately following the visit. Mindful of the collective responsibility model and the nature of this voluntary role it is not expected that each member will attend all school visits.
- The specific timings of the meetings and visits are for each school / federation to determine locally with due regard to the agreed Trust priority of reducing workload, supporting staff wellbeing and enabling Associate members to actively contribute.

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- Agenda items should be agreed at the start of the year (template to be provided) and aligned to the areas of responsibility with visits allowing an opportunity to explore a particular line of enquiry in more detail.
- Each meeting and school visit should be supported administratively to ensure that an accurate record of a meeting (template to be provided) is made alongside ensuring completion of Notes of Visit (template to be provided). If it is more suitable to the school's needs that administrative support is provided other than through a formally recognised and qualified Clerk that is acceptable. Across all Community Councils professional governance advice guidance and, where necessary, instruction will be provided from the Trust. Instruction when given must be adhered to.
- All members are required to use a tenancy email address, noting that all tenancy email addresses are subject to eSafe monitoring. All documentation to be retained within the Trust tenancy.
- When conducting school visits, members and leaders should think creatively about when and how visits are conducted to ensure visits are purposeful, clearly aligned to an area of responsibility and allow opportunity to engage directly with staff and pupils.

## Schedule of Responsibility

1. To ensure on behalf of the Trust Board that the strategic responsibility to set a clear and ambitious vision for each school / federation is acted upon and evidenced through strong shared values, a positive and respectful culture and a focus on the quality of education provided. Values should be lived not laminated!
2. To ensure that each school / federation engages effectively and positively with parents, stakeholders and the wider community and in such a way as to provide opportunities that are focused, purposeful and support pupils' education.
3. To ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to contribute positively to the life of the school / federation and wider community alongside a coherent and well planned offer of opportunities and experiences to support the personal development of all pupils.
4. To review the Academy Development Plan termly to be assured that it reflects the importance of a broad and balanced curriculum offer, that the offer is best placed to support improving outcomes for all pupils and to evaluate impact accordingly.

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5. To review termly attendance including patterns of attendance of different groups of pupils and to be assured that where necessary appropriate, swift and effective action is being taken to improve both attendance and lateness.
6. To review termly the impact of Pupil Premium Funding on the achievement and attainment of pupils; to be assured that the Pupil Premium Funding is used effectively and that this information is easily accessible to all stakeholders via the school website.
7. To review annually the impact of Sports Premium Funding on the achievement and attainment of pupils; to be assured that the Sports Premium Funding is used effectively and that this information is easily accessible to all stakeholders via the school website.
8. To promote and model a strong and positive safeguarding culture; to ensure that local contextual information regarding safeguarding is regularly considered in the curriculum provision.
9. To review the information about the curriculum that is made available to pupils and stakeholders; to ensure that information about the work and impact of the Community Council is shared regularly with stakeholders and is accessible to stakeholders via the school website.

## Lines of Enquiry

### 1. Vision, engagement and wellbeing

- a) What is the vision statement for the school and what are the ambitions and hopes of the staff and pupils in the school? What evidence do we have of this?
- b) How as a school we gather the views of pupils on aspects of school life (behaviour, safeguarding, provision, wellbeing, school environment and ambience; the overall lived experience of being a pupil at the school) alongside ensuring provision of meaningful leadership opportunities for pupils
- c) How as a school we gather views from our parents, staff and wider community and how, where appropriate, we use those views to inform our next steps
- d) How differing approaches and CPD are identified and implemented to support all staff in further developing their expertise alongside taking into account reducing their workload and supporting wellbeing

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## 2. Curriculum

- a) The curriculum offer – breadth, depth and ambition across all subjects
- b) How the curriculum takes account of local context and addresses typical gaps in pupils' knowledge and skills
- c) How the curriculum reflects pupils' cultural diversity and is relevant to their life experience
- d) How the curriculum expands pupil's horizons, fosters ambition and creates a climate of high expectations
- e) How visits, trips or partnerships with external organisations expand the offer and raise aspirations
- f) What extra-curricular provision is on offer and how does it add value to pupil's experience
- g) What does the data and other sources of evidence tell the school about the impact of the curriculum offer on attainment and progress
- h) What does the data and other sources of evidence tell the school about the strengths and areas for improvement in the school
- i) Pupil groups – do some children perform better / less well than others. If so why and how is the school closing the gap
- j) Pupil premium and Sports Premium spending and impact
- k) How does the curriculum support and develop children's understanding about how to keep themselves safe? For example, in a digital environment, in leading a healthy participative lifestyle and having safe online/offline relationships.
- l) How do local safeguarding challenges inform the curriculum
- m) How is pupil voice heard and used to inform the schools safeguarding culture and the curriculum

## Role in broader school life

- The intention on the part of the Trust is that Community Council members are recognised and supported to add significant value at a local level to a school / federation with local governance being meaningful, effective and enjoyable.
- As such it is hoped that Community Council members will be able to actively contribute to the broader life of the school; be that through attendance at class and whole school events, supporting identified local initiatives and positively promoting the school amongst the wider community.
- It is also hoped that the Chair of a Community Council will act as a sounding board for the Principal and by so doing provide support and proportionate challenge within the recognised role of critical friend.
- Community Council members will be invited to join Principals in providing annual feedback to the Trust Board alongside participating themselves in an annual end of

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academic year Trust initiated review of their own effectiveness in supporting school improvement.

## Role in supporting compliance

- As indicated by the Scheme of Delegation
- A Community Council member will, as per the Concerns and Complaints Policy, participate in a Stage 3 Complaint Panel alongside a member of the Operations Group and a 3rd independent panel member.
- A Community Council member (s) will be invited to participate in the Trust led recruitment process for the Executive Principal or Principal of the school.
- A Community Council member may be invited to participate in an Ofsted inspection alongside representatives of the Trust Board and Operations Group subject to the applicable inspection framework and the identified needs of the school.
- Please note with reference to the Ofsted published inspection report, the chair of the trust board will always be named in the schools detail section not the chair of any local governance group. This is because Ofsted recognise that the chair of the trust is the legal head of governance, irrespective of any delegation, and as such the trust board remains accountable and responsible for all decisions made.