



Academy Advisory
Committee
Terms of Reference

Primary and Secondary Academies

March 2021

Purpose and scope

Advisory committees are not responsible for operational issues. They act as a 'critical friend' by: -

- providing strategic governance support to ensure pupils receive the best possible education
- monitoring and evaluating school performance
- providing support and challenge to the head teacher and senior leadership team
- engaging with the wider community

Composition of the academy advisory committee

Academy advisory committees of NSCT academies will comprise a seven members with the option to expand to nine (depending on the needs of or size of the school): -

1 x Co-opted education governor

- Education governors will have school senior leadership team experience and will usually be appointed by the NSCT Trustees / CEO. This post will be designated as 'Chair'.
- They will be neither a member of NSCT Academies staff nor a parent of a NSCT Academy pupil. They may be a Trustee if they have the education experience the role requires.

2 x Co-opted community governors (with an optional third post)

- Any potential new co-opted governors must satisfy the existing advisory committee that they have the requisite skills to effectively govern the academy prior to co-option.
- Co-opted governors are appointed to the advisory committee by the governance team / CEO
- So long as they meet the criteria and are not also a member of Trust staff, one co-opted governor may be the parent of a child who is on roll at another academy within the Trust

3 x Parent governors (with an optional fourth post)

- Any potential new parent governors must satisfy the existing advisory committee that they have both a willingness to participate and ideally some useful skills / experience to assist support the academy.
- Parent governors shall be appointed by election unless the number nominated / interested in joining the advisory committee is fewer or equal to the number of vacancies available.
- Must be a parent of a child attending the academy to which the advisory committee relates.
- If they wish to, a parent governor may serve out their term of office once their child leaves the academy so long as there are always two parent governors of current, on roll pupils.
- Should an elected parent governor later become employed by the Trust, they must step down from their role as governor.

1 x Staff governor

- One staff governor will be the Head teacher of the academy, appointed 'ex officio'.

Term of office

- Other than the Head teacher, the standard term of office for advisory committee governors will be 4 years at which point re-appointment / re-election is required.
- The maximum length of service will be two terms of office, subject to possible extension as agreed by the Board of Trustees.

Roles and responsibilities of the academy advisory committee

The NSCT Board of Trustees requires each academy advisory committee to develop effective working practices relative to each academy's development plan objectives and targets: -

- Review outcomes for pupils, their attainment and progress (including pupil premium and sports premium where appropriate)
- Monitor and challenge implementation of LAC policies / performance of LAC pupils
- Monitor and challenge implementation of SEND policies / performance of SEND pupils
- Monitor and challenge implementation of statutory safeguarding obligations and policies
- Monitor implementation of pupil / student behaviour policies
- Monitor and review the quality of teaching, leadership and management
- Regularly review / make recommendations with regard to the Accessibility Plan
- Through the Chair, make recommendations / observations to the NSCT Board re: staffing and budget
- Support parent communication and community engagement
- Monitor and review pupil enrichment (e.g. trips and visits, breakfast and after school clubs, extracurricular activities, funding opportunities)
- To form a panel of governors¹ at Stage 3 of the complaints procedure
- Where required, co-opted governor to lead on complaints at Stage 3 (or where required by the CEO to oversee Stage 2.5) of the complaints procedure
- In line with the DfE statutory guidance on [Exclusions from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England](#), governors to form a panel of governors² to consider reinstatement of a permanently excluded pupil or when the total number of fixed term exclusion days exceeds 15 in a term.

A co-opted governor should lead on the exclusion panel.

As per the statutory guidance, governors are also required to meet following less severe exclusion penalties and / or where a parent requests that they do so. On these occasions governors do not have powers to decide whether to reinstate the pupil.

¹ One panel member must always be fully independent from the academy to which the complaint relates.

² It is good practice to attempt to ensure one panel member is fully independent from the academy to which the exclusion relates

Academy advisory committee termly cycle

- The Chair will meet with / contact the parent and co-opted governors at the start of each term in order to agree: -
 - the purpose and date(s) for that term's assessment and review
 - agenda items for the end of term meeting
 - tasks / purpose of school visits for governors including expected deadline for completion and reporting of any findings (and to whom)
- The parent and co-opted community governors will provide the education specialist(s) with the findings of their visits / reports
- The Head teacher will provide reports / data to the advisory committee
- The Chair will undertake a termly assessment and review of the academy and will collate both their and the parent / co-opted community governor's findings
- Findings will be presented / discussed at the end of term meeting along with the head teacher's report (and will be presented to the Trust Education Performance Committee as required)

Meeting etiquette

- The advisory committee will meet as often as is necessary to fulfil its responsibilities but at least once per academic term;
- The quorum for meetings shall comprise three governors; of which one should be co-opted;
- The Chair leads on and sets agenda items;
- Should any conflict specific to a meeting agenda item or relationship arise, governors must remove themselves from that part of the meeting;
- When decisions requiring a vote are raised, each member of the advisory committee will have one equal vote. Where there is an equal division of votes, the casting vote resides with the Chair. Attendance / voting cannot be by proxy but may be made by electronic means (e.g. skype or conference call) with prior notice;
- Any member of the advisory committee may request that the Chair invites additional guests to attend or contribute to a meeting (but this person will not have any voting privileges);
- Resignations (actual or planned) should be announced at meetings. Any resignation does not become formal until approved and recorded in the meeting minutes.

Administration timescales

- As final meeting agendas and supporting papers should be distributed to the advisory committee at least one week prior to the meeting, the Chair / Head teacher should ensure that these are prepared and provided to the governance support team in advance.

- It is expected that each member of the advisory committee will have read the papers in advance of the meeting.
- Any recommendations, decisions and action points will be recorded in minutes. Individuals should note and enforce any actions delegated to them.
- Draft minutes will be first forwarded to the Chair for initial content approval. The draft minutes will form part of the papers distributed with the subsequent meeting's agenda and will be approved in that meeting. Where possible, the draft minutes will also be distributed to the rest of the advisory committee as soon as practicable so that they have additional time to read them

Committee relationship with the NSCT Board of Trustees

- The terms of reference and structure provides the framework of the academy advisory committees and are approved by the NSCT Academies Board of Trustees who may amend them from time to time.
- The NSCT Board of Trustees relies on the academy advisory committee to assist its ambitions for each academy to be outstanding and may assist by appointing or removing members where appropriate.
- The academy advisory committee's recommendations and findings are formally reported to the Trust's Education Performance Committee as required.
- The Chair of each committee should meet once per term with the Chief Executive Officer of the Trust in order to provide feedback from the term / governing body meeting
- Academy advisory committee members may be invited to meet with representatives of the NSCT Board or committees either individually or collectively to discuss roles and responsibilities with regard to their academy's development plan and any other issues as appropriate. Discussion topics should be agreed in advance.
- Any member of the Board of Trustees may attend an academy advisory committee meeting (but they will not have voting privileges on any advisory committee decision).

Academy advisory committee termly cycle structure

CEG: Co-opted education governor

EPC: NSCT Trust's Education Performance Committee

Diaries permitting, Governor's termly task could occasionally be to support the co-opted education governor's termly assessment and review visit which may occur on the same day as the AAC termly evening meeting

