

# Short guide to our governance arrangements

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## Summary of our governance model

Manor Multi Academy Trust (MAT) is a charitable company that operates multiple academies (or schools) as one legal entity. Our model of governance allows for strategic Board decision making, focused and effective executive leadership, and local engagement and input from stakeholders. Each tier of governance contributes to helping establish each of our schools' values and ethos, monitoring educational and financial performance and linking them with their communities.

This short guide provides an overview of our governance arrangements but should be read in conjunction with key documents referenced within the text.

## Our tiers of governance are:

- **Members:** The role of Members is to hold our Directors to account, assure themselves that the governance of our Trust is effective and that Directors are acting in accordance with our charitable objects as detailed in our Articles of Association. Members are not involved in the day-to-day business of our Trust. However, Members have key powers, including the appointment and removal of Directors and amending our Articles of Association.
- **Directors:** Our Directors form a Trust Board, which is the legally responsible and accountable body for every school in our Trust. The Trust Board holds legal liability for areas that would normally be the responsibility of a Local Governing Body in a maintained school, such as the Single Central Register and policies, with support from our central team. While the Trust Board may delegate many of its functions (for example, to the executive leadership team or a committee), Directors remain accountable for these functions.
- **Committees:** Through our governance framework and scheme of delegation, Directors delegate authority and responsibility for a range of duties to the following groups to ensure effective leadership and governance of our Trust:
  - **Audit and Risk Committee:** Responsible for monitoring and reviewing governance, compliance, risk management and internal controls.
  - **Finance and general Purposes Committee:** Responsible for monitoring and reviewing annual budgets, long-term financial strategy and planning, investment and reserves, pensions and financial submissions.
  - **Progress Boards:** Responsible for monitoring, scrutinising and advising on educational performance and strategy, safeguarding practice, pupil and staff wellbeing, behaviour and attendance.
  - **Pay, Personnel and Performance Management Committee:** Responsible for reviewing salaries, performance and advising on pay policies.
  - **Panel meetings:** As required, panels will be formed to consider specific matters such as complaints (Stage 3), pupil discipline or staff discipline matters.

- **Parent and Community Advisory Forums (PCAFs):** Responsible for localised challenge and support on community-facing aspects of school and stakeholder engagement, but advisory in nature with no legal liability or final approval of core policies. They also provide local assurance for Directors and executive leaders on the experiences of pupils, parents and the wider school community.
- **Advocates:** Our Directors have appointed individuals from amongst their number to act as Advocates in a number of areas:
  - **Support and challenge:** support Heads to be great leaders, monitor impact, champion vision, review progress and priorities, ensure children are at the heart of all we do, act as an escalation avenue, invited to PCAF meetings, attend termly Progress Board meetings
  - **Safeguarding:** work alongside DSLs, attend Network meetings, understand strengths and areas for development locally and more widely, provide challenge and support, consulted when reviewing policy, strategic overview
  - **SEND:** champion focus on SEND children, work with schools, develop understanding of barriers and feedback to Directors, contribute knowledge, offer challenge and support, feedback to Directors, attend Network meetings, strategic overview
  - **Christian Distinctiveness:** work alongside CE Heads to support and champion distinctively Christian nature, conduct regular school visits, undertake Diocesan training, report to Directors
  - **EYFS:** attend Network meetings, conduct regular school visits, undertake training, report to Directors
  - **ICT/cyber security:** undertake training, meeting with Head of ICT and report to Directors

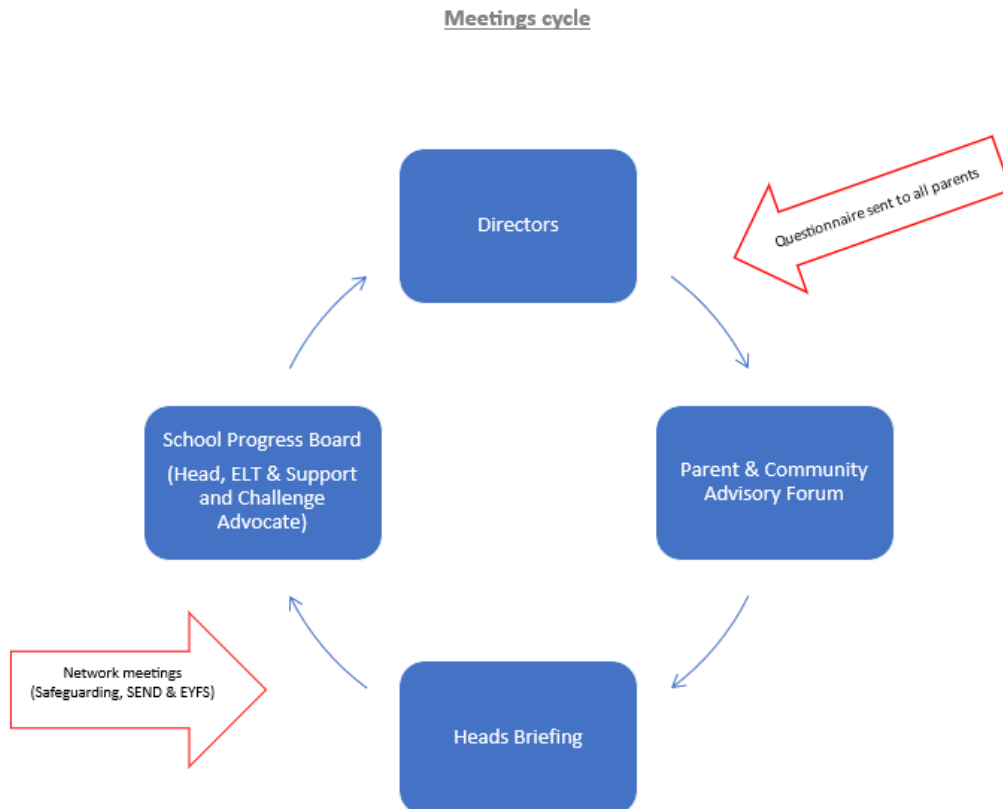
## The executive and senior leaders

Through the governance framework and scheme of delegation, the board delegates authority and responsibility for a range of duties to the executive which includes:

- **Executive leadership team and Trust central team:** Responsibility for the delivery of strategic goals and educational, financial and operational outcomes as agreed with Directors.
- **School Headteachers:** Responsibility for delivering all educational and operational outcomes in their individual school(s) and management of financial and HR matters at school level, with the support of our Trust central team.

## How do Directors obtain assurance that functions are carried out properly?

Our meetings cycle is strategically planned to provide a constant feedback loop, with information flowing between tiers and informing decision-making. PCAFs are provided with a termly MAT newsletter, evidencing that their work directly impacts on their school and – where appropriate – the Trust.



## How we differ from maintained schools

Academies deliberately operate under a different structure of governance from maintained schools, which are supported by local authorities. Governance structures in maintained schools are predominantly determined by legislation, whereas Trusts have the ability to set their own approach to better reflect their organisation and local circumstances.

## How do our PCAFs differ from local governing boards?

PCAFs exist within the overall governance framework of our Trust and have specific delegations, just like other committees of the Trust Board. It is important that everybody understands the logic and efficiency of Trust governance, and how and why it differs from a ‘standalone’ school governance model. PCAF representatives are not ‘governors’ as the role is defined for maintained schools; this means that at Manor MAT, our **Directors** are responsible for:

- 1) vision, ethos and strategic direction
- 2) educational performance
- 3) financial performance

Our PCAFs are designed to provide us with local information and viewpoints on school and Trust priorities, enabling us to obtain relevant stakeholder feedback. Stakeholder engagement is an essential part of our governance structure, in recognition of the importance of our schools as being at the heart of our local communities.

## What does this mean for school inspection?

### Establishing responsibility for leadership and governance

The Ofsted [School Inspection Handbook](#) (SIH) states: “There are a wide variety of leadership and governance models in the school sector, so it is essential that inspectors establish who is responsible for what.” Lead inspectors will therefore need to establish “the different levels of responsibility and oversight within the trust” and “who they need to meet from the trust, for example who (in the trust and in the school) is responsible for key decisions about safeguarding, behaviour and curriculum content”. The SIH makes clear:

“When inspecting academies, inspectors will need to bear in mind that governance functions can be quite different from those in a maintained school. Some functions that a governing body in a maintained school would carry out may be done by the trust’s leaders or staff. If this is the case, it will be important for inspectors to ascertain the board of trustees’ role in that process and how it ensures and assures that these functions are carried out properly.”

### Who attends inspections on behalf of the Trust?

For leadership, the SIH makes clear that leaders “will include the CEO and anyone else agreed between the headteacher, CEO and lead inspector” and inspectors “will, as a minimum, want to meet the CEO if possible but will recognise that (especially in large trusts) CEOs may need other senior trust leaders present to support these meetings.”

For governance, the SIH explains that inspectors “will recognise that trusts are a single legal entity and that decisions made by individual academies and those by trust leaders cannot easily be separated.” Inspectors should arrange for at least one meeting with the chair of the board of trustees or their delegate. As with the chief executive it will not always be possible for the chair to attend every inspection.

Our Chair of the Trust therefore usually attends the inspection as the primary delegate representative of Trust governance and leadership.

## Further information

For further information about our governance model, please visit the [governance page](#) on our website or contact our Governance Professional with your query:

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**[governanceprofessional@manormat.com](mailto:governanceprofessional@manormat.com)**

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