



# **A short guide to our Scheme of Delegation**

This short guide explains, in simple terms, how decision-making and accountability work within Exceed Academies Trust. It is intended to help trustees, local advisory board members, leaders, staff and external stakeholders (including Ofsted) quickly understand who is responsible for what across the Trust. It should be read alongside the full Governance Framework and Scheme of Delegation, which provides detailed tables and definitions.

## Together we **Exceed**

## Exceed Academies Trust – A short guide to our Scheme of Delegation

### Our governance model – at a glance

Exceed Academies Trust is a single legal entity. All schools are governed by one Trust and one Board of Trustees. While many responsibilities are delegated, legal accountability always remains with the Trust Board.

The Trust Board is the legal body named in inspection reports and is accountable for all academies within the Trust.

Our approach is designed to:

- provide strong strategic leadership at Trust level.
- ensure clear accountability and transparency.
- place decision-making as close as possible to pupils and schools.
- avoid duplication and confusion between governance layers.

### The tiers of governance

#### Members

Members are the guardians of the Trust's constitution (the Articles of Association). Their role is strategic and supervisory, not operational. They:

- hold the Trustees to account for effective governance.
- appoint and remove Trustees.
- amend the Articles of Association where necessary.
- appoint external auditors.

Members are not involved in the day-to-day running of schools.

#### Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees is the legally accountable body for all academies within Exceed. The Board:

- sets the Trust's vision, values and strategy.
- is accountable for educational quality, safeguarding and financial stewardship across all schools.
- approves key policies, budgets and strategic priorities.
- ensures effective systems of risk management, internal control and assurance, and that its decisions and delegated arrangements have a positive impact on pupils, staff and schools.

Although the Board delegates many functions, it cannot delegate its legal responsibility.

The Board is supported by formal committees, including:

- Audit & Risk Committee – oversight of risk, compliance, safeguarding, internal control and audit.
- Finance Committee – oversight of financial strategy, budgets, value for money and long-term sustainability.

## Executive leadership

The Board delegates operational leadership to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Executive (Central) Team. The CEO is also the Trust's Accounting Officer.

The executive team:

- delivers the Trust's strategy and priorities agreed by the Board.
- oversees educational, financial and operational performance across all schools.
- provides regular, structured reporting and assurance to the Board and its committees.
- supports and challenges schools appropriately, drawing on Trust-wide expertise.

## Headteachers

Headteachers are responsible for the day-to-day leadership and management of their schools. Within the agreed delegations, they:

- lead teaching, learning and pupil outcomes.
- manage staff and resources.
- implement Trust policies and procedures.
- ensure compliance with statutory requirements.
- report regularly on school performance, risks and priorities.

Some schools operate with an Executive Headteacher / Head of School model; accountability remains clear in all cases.

## Local Advisory Boards (LABs)

Local Advisory Boards are committees of the Trust Board. They provide a vital layer of local governance, challenge and assurance.

LABs have similar expected functions to Local Governing Bodies in maintained schools, but they operate within a Trust-wide governance framework and do not carry legal accountability. Their role is advisory and assurance-focused rather than executive.

LABs:

- provide local challenge, support and assurance on standards, safeguarding and inclusion.
- focus on school ethos, culture, behaviour and the lived experience of pupils, families and staff.
- support oversight of attendance, exclusions, complaints and stakeholder engagement in line with Trust policies.
- contribute to monitoring school improvement priorities and readiness for inspection.
- act as a key link between the school, the Trust and the local community.

LABs are not governing bodies in the maintained-school sense and do not duplicate the work of the Trust Board or executive leaders. They operate strictly within the Trust's Scheme of Delegation.

## Trust Appointed Governance Boards (TAGBs)

In certain circumstances, the Trust Board may establish a Trust Appointed Governance Board (TAGB) in place of a LAB.

TAGBs are used where enhanced oversight or governance intervention is required, for example where there are concerns relating to safeguarding, educational performance, finance, governance capacity, or when a new school joins the Trust. TAGBs are Trust Board committees with delegated responsibilities equivalent to a LAB for a defined period.

## What is the Scheme of Delegation?

The Scheme of Delegation:

- sets out who is accountable, who approves, who delivers and who is consulted for key decisions.
- covers core areas such as education, safeguarding, finance, staffing, estates, operations and governance.
- ensures clarity, consistency and effective decision-making across the Trust.

It does not list every task undertaken in the Trust but focuses on key decisions and areas of accountability where clarity is essential.

## How Trustees are kept informed about individual schools

Trustees maintain clear and regular oversight of each individual school, while avoiding operational duplication, through a structured flow of information and assurance. This includes:

- CEO reporting to the Trust Board on the performance, risks and priorities of individual schools.
- updates from key central executive leaders covering:
  - school improvement, outcomes and inspection readiness.
  - safeguarding, SEND and inclusion.
  - finance, budgets and financial sustainability.
  - estates, health and safety and compliance.
  - operations, ICT and data protection.
  - people and workforce matters (HR, staffing, wellbeing).
- committee scrutiny, where detailed information is explored and challenged before being reported to the full Board.
- access to Local Advisory Board documentation, including minutes, reports and escalation of concerns or assurance.
- direct engagement, such as school visits and focused discussions where appropriate.

This approach ensures Trustees have both a Trust-wide strategic view and a clear line of sight to individual schools.

## How the Trust assures itself

The Trust Board gains assurance through:

- regular, structured reports from the CEO and executive leaders
- detailed scrutiny and challenge through Board committees
- local assurance and intelligence from Local Advisory Boards
- triangulation of data, professional dialogue and school-level insight
- reports from independent/external professionals
- internal and external audit
- structured review of risk, performance and compliance

This enables the Board to demonstrate that delegated functions are carried out effectively and that pupils' education, welfare and public funds are well protected.

## What this means for inspection

Ofsted recognises that governance in academy trusts is different from maintained schools. Inspectors will establish:

- who is responsible for leadership and governance
- how decisions are made across the Trust
- how the Trust Board assures itself of quality, safety and compliance

The Scheme of Delegation provides a clear framework to support this understanding and ensures inspectors can quickly identify who is accountable for what.

## Further information

This guide provides a high-level overview only. For full details, please refer to the Governance Framework and Scheme of Delegation, available on the Trust website, or contact the Trust's Governance Team.