

Becoming a Trustee

Thank you for your interest in becoming a trustee at the Blue Kite Academy Trust in Swindon.

There are currently 15 schools within the trust – Abbey Meads Primary, Badbury Park Primary, Brook Field Primary, Catherine Wayte Primary, Colebrook Infants, Covingham Park Primary School, Even Swindon Primary, Ferndale Primary, Greenmeadow Primary School, Lethbridge Primary, Robert Le Kyng Primary, Oaktree Nursery and Primary School, Ruskin Junior, Wanborough Primary and William Morris Primary.

Trustees are collectively responsible for the strategic management of the trust and therefore crucial in ensuring progression and planning for the trust's future. Meeting 6 times a year, the trust board provides challenge and support to the Chief Executive Officer, oversees the budget and ensures that the vision is fulfilled. It's an exciting and varied role, with substantial benefits for the volunteer.

Trustees are also expected to sit on at least one of the committees which meet between 4 and 6 time a year, these are Education, Standards and Strategy, Finance, Staffing and Culture and Risk, Audit, Health and Safety and Premises.

Governance is a good opportunity for personal development - volunteers can be certain of developing new skills and gaining a broad knowledge of areas such as HR, finance and of course, the education system. The Blue Kite Academy Trust also provides a comprehensive training package, so there is plenty of opportunity to make the most of the role.

More than this though, school governance is a chance to make a substantial difference to the lives of local children

A role description is available to give a broader understanding of what is required and you do need to be aware of the disqualifications that will prohibit you from becoming a trustee.

Please note that should you wish to become a trustee you will be required to complete a DBS check (Disclosure and Barring Scheme) in order to check that you do not have a criminal record.

If you are interested in becoming a trustee then please email Anna Richardson, Head of Governance to arrange an informal meeting to discuss further and ask any questions.

arichardson@bluekitetrust.org

Trustees work together to carry out their core functions:

1. ensuring there is clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
2. holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils and the performance management of staff
3. overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent
4. ensuring the voices of stakeholders are heard

Trustees are responsible for governing a charitable company and directing how it is managed and run. Trustees must also ensure that the trust complies with all legal and statutory requirements. Trustees should seek the advice of the board's governance professional and other professional advice as appropriate.

The board of trustees' strategic responsibilities

The board of trustees works closely with the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The CEO is responsible for day to day operational management of the trust and its schools, whereas the role of the board is strategic. As such, trustees are responsible for:

- determining the mission, values and long-term ambitious vision for the trust
- deciding the principles that guide trust policies and approving key policies
- appointing and appraising the CEO and making pay recommendations
- working with senior leaders to develop a strategy for achieving the vision
- ensuring that stakeholders are involved, consulted and informed as appropriate
- ensuring that all schools in the trust deliver a broad and balanced curriculum such that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education and adult life
- taking ownership of the trust's financial sustainability and ensuring effective resource management across the trust
- agreeing the trust's staffing structure and keeping it under review to ensure it supports delivery of the strategy
- ensuring robust risk management policy and procedures are in place and that risk control measures are appropriate and effective

Monitoring and evaluating trust performance

Trustees must monitor the priorities that have been set to ensure progress is being made by:

- measuring the trust's impact and progress towards its strategic objectives
- ensuring the required policies and procedures are in place and the trust is operating effectively in line with these policies
- holding the CEO to account for standards, financial probity and compliance with agreed policies
- evaluating relevant data and feedback provided by senior executive leaders and external reporting on all aspects of trust performance
- asking challenging questions of the CEO in order to hold them to account

- ensuring that there are policies and procedures in place to deal with complaints effectively

Contribution to the trust board

Trustees should ensure that they are making a positive and meaningful contribution to the board by:

- attending meetings (typically 6 full board meetings each year), reading papers and preparing questions for the CEO in advance
- establishing and maintaining professional relationships with senior executive leaders and colleagues on the board of trustees
- getting to know schools within the trust, including visiting occasionally during school hours
- undertaking induction training and developing knowledge and skills on an ongoing basis

Trustees responsibilities towards the Local Governing Bodies (LGBs)

Trustees are responsible for:

- ensuring that the trust's governance structure meets the needs of the trust
- agreeing clear schemes of delegation, outlining the responsibilities delegated to the CEO and the responsibilities of the board, committees and LGBs
- ensuring effective communication channels are in place

Expenses

Trustees should receive out of pocket expenses incurred as a result of fulfilling their role as trustee. Payments can cover incidental expenses, such as travel and dependency care, but not loss of earnings.

Disqualifications from serving as a governor as per Articles of Association (article 69)

No person shall be qualified to be a governor unless he is aged 18 or over at the date of his election or appointment. No current pupil of any of the Academies shall be a governor.

A governor shall cease to hold office if he becomes incapable by reason of illness or injury of managing or administering his own affairs.

A governor shall cease to hold office if he is absent without the permission of the LGB from all their meetings held within a period of six months and the Trustees resolve that his office be vacated.

A person shall be disqualified from holding or continuing to hold office as a governor if

- a. he has been declared bankrupt and/or his estate has been seized from his possession for the benefit of his creditors and the declaration or seizure has not been discharged, annulled or reduced; or
- b. he is the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or an interim order.

A person shall be disqualified from holding or continuing to hold office as a governor at any time when he is subject to a disqualification order or a disqualification undertaking under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986 or to an order made under section 429(2)(b) of the Insolvency Act 1986 (failure to pay under county court administration order).

A governor shall cease to hold office if he ceases to be a governor by virtue of any provision in the Companies Act 2006, is disqualified from acting as a trustee by virtue of section 178 of the Charities Act 2011 (or any statutory re-enactment or modification of that provision).

A person shall be disqualified from holding or continuing to hold office as a governor if he has been removed from the office of charity trustee or trustee for a charity by an order made by the Charity Commission or the High Court on the grounds of any misconduct or mismanagement in the administration of the charity for which he was responsible or to which he was privy, or which he by his conduct contributed to or facilitated.

A person shall be disqualified from holding or continuing to hold office as a governor where he has, at any time, been convicted of any criminal offence, excluding any that have been spent under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 as amended, and excluding any offence for which the maximum sentence is a fine or a lesser sentence except where a person has been convicted of any offence which falls under section 178 of the Charities Act 2011.

After the first Academy has opened, a person shall be disqualified from holding or continuing to hold office as a governor if he has not provided to the chair of the LGB a criminal records certificate at an enhanced disclosure level under section 113B of the Police Act 1997. In the event that the certificate discloses any information which would in the opinion of either the chair or the Chief Executive Officer confirm their unsuitability to work with children that person shall be disqualified. If a dispute arises as to whether a person shall be disqualified, a referral shall be made to the Secretary of State to determine the matter. The determination of the Secretary of State shall be final.

Where, by virtue of these Articles a person becomes disqualified from holding, or continuing to hold office as a governor; and he is, or is proposed, to become such a governor, he shall upon becoming so disqualified give written notice of that fact to the governance professional.