



The Role of the Member of the Academy Trust

Esher Sixth Form College values its members' breadth of experience and skills and recognises the contribution that Members make to the effective oversight of the Board of Trustees. It also wants its Members to feel that their contribution is rewarding and satisfying. The following description has been developed to help ensure that potential Members have a better understanding of the role and the type of person who may be suitable. The College is committed to promoting equality and diversity and we welcome applications from all sections of the community.

What is the role of a Member?

The Members of Esher Sixth Form College Academy Trust are the guardians of the governance of the Trust. As such, the role of a Member is to keep an oversight of the Board of Trustees to ensure that the Trust is acting within its Objects as set out in the Trust's Articles of Association. Whilst the Trustees are responsible for the business of the Trust and exercise all the powers of the Trust on a day-to-day basis, the Trustees are ultimately accountable to the Members.

The primary responsibilities of the Members include: -

- To approve any changes to the Articles of Association of the Academy
- To hold an Annual General Meeting each academy financial year
- To appoint External Trustees
- To remove Trustees in exceptional circumstances, usually relating to a failure of effective governance
- To approve the appointment of the Trust's auditors
- To hold the Board of Trustees to account for the effective governance of the Academy Trust

Collectively, individual Members contribute their professional, specialist and general management skills to the Academy Trust in a non-executive role.

What is the composition of the Academy Trust?

The Academy Trust has been established for the purpose of conducting the business of Esher Sixth Form College Academy Trust. There are between five and seven Members all of whom give a commitment of their time and skills freely in the interests of the College and its community. In simple terms the Members "own" the Academy Trust.

How long would I expect to serve as a Member?

Members do not have terms of office, and a succession plan is in place.

How many meetings are held each year?

Typically, Members will only meet formally once a year at the Annual General Meeting (AGM), where they will conduct their Members' business. The AGM normally takes place in January on a Tuesday or Wednesday evening from 5pm for up to an hour.

The Board of Trustees normally meets 4 times a year, twice in the autumn term, and once each in the spring and summer terms. Members will be invited to attend all meetings of the Board of Trustees as observers.

Do I need to attend every meeting?

You should attend the Annual Members meeting and several of the Board of Trustees meetings as an observer. The annual Members meeting cannot take place if it is not quorate, as set out in the Articles of Association, so it is important to attend if you can. If you are not able to attend a meeting please advise the Clerk as soon as you can.

The Clerk keeps a record of attendance at meetings. If any Member does not attend a meeting for two successive years without the permission of the Chair, their membership will be reviewed.

How much time is involved in being a Member?

As a typical Member, you should expect to spend an average of twenty four hours per annum on your duties. In addition to attending meetings, for which there are papers to read, you are also encouraged to take part in relevant training events. You are also warmly invited to a wide range of College events.

Will I receive any training?

Yes. Training plays an important part in helping you work effectively. You will receive an induction programme, which includes an information pack, arrangements for a tour of the College and a meeting with the Principal and Chair of the Board of Trustees. You will also be assigned a mentor, who can act as a point of reference as you develop in the role. The Clerk is on hand to offer advice and guidance. Training is offered periodically through presentations at Trustee Board meetings, at the annual Trustees' Training Morning (both of which Members can attend as observers) occasional courses, mentoring, reading and online resources. The College meets the costs of any approved external training.

Will I be paid as a Member?

Academy Trust Members work on a voluntary basis – they do not get paid. However, you may be paid for any reasonable expenses incurred while carrying out your duties, for example for travel to external courses. You may be entitled to 'reasonable time' off work to go to meetings or to carry out your duties if you are an employee and work in a qualifying occupation. The time must be agreed with your employer beforehand, and your employer can refuse your request if it is unreasonable. A specific amount of time off is not laid down in law. Your employer doesn't have to pay you while you take time off for public duties, although many do. Your employment contract will normally say whether you are paid for this time off.

How are meetings run?

Each meeting follows an agenda and is supported by papers and reports originating from the College. The Clerk sends papers out electronically at least seven working days in advance of the meeting. The Chair leads the meeting through the business with contributions to the meeting made through the Chair. Every Member should feel able to contribute and seek clarification on any issue they are uncertain about. Decisions are reached through discussion and mutual agreement; a simple voting procedure determines the outcome of motions requiring approval. The Clerk takes minutes and offers advice on procedural matters.

How do you become the Chair of the Academy Trust?

The Members elect a Chair to lead its meetings, who are chosen from amongst the Members. They normally hold office for one year with the arrangements confirmed for each academic year.

What type of person makes a good Member?

The College has an inclusive approach and welcomes enquiries from all professions and sections of the community. It would particularly encourage applications from under-represented groups, including those with a background or interest in minority communities. If you have skills and experience drawn from your employment and/or community activities, which you feel would be relevant and beneficial to the College, we would be delighted to hear from you.

In seeking to fill any vacancy, the College endeavours to maintain a balance of skills and experience amongst its membership. Enthusiasm, commitment, and an interest in education are the most important qualities. The ability to “hold to account” and ensure proper governance is observed are key skills for Members. The following generic skills are a guide to the qualities sought although it is recognised that no candidate will possess the full range of skills listed.

Key skills	Details
Commitment to education	Able to demonstrate a commitment to the importance of learning and the role and mission of Esher Sixth Form College in developing young people, ensuring they have the skills and qualifications for future success.
Commitment to governance	Ability to demonstrate or acquire a full understanding and appreciation of the principles of governance, including the Seven Principles of Public Life*.
Holding to account	Ability to hold others to account for performance and outcomes. Able to absorb complex information and rationalise appropriately
Experience (either work or community related)	Potential Members should be able to offer <u>some</u> of the following attributes: • a keen interest in the education sector • an understanding of the national context in which education operates • experience of working in commerce, industry or public service at board or senior management level

	specialist expertise such as governance, community involvement, finance, or law
Equality and diversity opportunities and statutory requirements	Committed to ensuring that statutory requirements are fulfilled, such as equality and diversity, disability, safeguarding, and health and safety.
Eligibility	A person is not eligible to be a Member if they have been declared bankrupt within the last 3 years or served a sentence for a conviction within the last 5 years or been removed from office as a member of an educational institution within the last 10 years. All Members are required to agree to enhanced Disclosure and Barring service (DBS) checks for non-safeguarding convictions or cautions on appointment and on re-appointment.

If you wish to find out more about becoming a Member, please email the Clerk to the Academy Trust, Catherine Davies at cdavies@esher.ac.uk to arrange an appointment.

Appendix A Standards in Public Life

What standards would I be expected to follow?

The detailed duties of the Members (and Board of Trustees) are specified in the Academy Instruments and Articles of Association, enshrined in statute law.

All Members are expected to sign up to the Academy Trust's Code of Conduct, which requires Members to place the interests of the College and its students ahead of their own interests or those of any other group with which they are involved. The Code provides a framework for Members to work together co-operatively and share accountability for decisions made.

You are required to declare any general personal interests and record them annually in a Register of Interests, updating them through the Clerk. At the beginning of each meeting, you will be asked to declare if you have an interest in any items on the agenda and may take no part in those proceedings.

Being a Member is a highly valued and responsible position within the community; with it comes an expectation of personal integrity and accountability expected of all those taking on paid or voluntary roles in public life. Underpinning all activities are the Seven Principles of Public Life:

Public concern about the financial probity of members of parliament and other holders of public office led to the setting up in 1994 of the Committee on Standards in Public Life (chaired by Lord Nolan and later Lord Neill). The Committee drew up Seven Principles of Public Life as a yardstick against which public service may be measured:

- **Selflessness** – Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.
- **Integrity** – Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.
- **Objectivity** – Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.
- **Accountability** – Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.
- **Openness** – Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.
- **Honesty** – Holders of public office should be truthful.
- **Leadership** – Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.