

## **The Role of the Esher Sixth Form College Trustee**

- Esher Sixth Form College values its Trustees' breadth of experience and skills and recognises the contribution that Trustees make to the effective leadership and success of the College. It also wants its Trustees to feel that their contribution is rewarding and satisfying. The following description has been developed to help ensure that potential Trustees have a better understanding of the role of a Trustee and the type of person who may be suitable.
- Esher Sixth Form College is committed to promoting equality and diversity and we welcome applications from all sections of the community.
- The role of a Trustee is voluntary and unpaid, although external training and justified related travel will be paid for.

### **What is the role of a Trustee?**

The role of a Trustee is a strategic one, offering support and challenge to the College in its role as a public provider of high quality 6<sup>th</sup> form education. Trustees are sometimes also known as directors.

Collectively, individual Trustees contribute their professional, specialist and general management skills to the Academy Trust (and through its committees) in a non-executive role. A Trustee is required to be as flexible as possible in the conduct of their responsibilities and duties, ensuring that the strategic oversight of the College and its business does not interfere with the day-to-day, operational management of the College. The primary responsibilities of Trustees are to play an active role in the high-level strategic planning process of the College by contributing to:

- Setting the mission and strategic direction of the College;
- Approving the quality strategy of the College and contributing to the quality assurance process;
- The monitoring of financial management, including value for money;
- The setting of procedures to ensure the accountability of the Principal and senior leadership team, or equivalent;
- The setting of procedures for Trustees and supervisory bodies to assess and monitor risk;
- Ensuring that statutory requirements are fulfilled, such as those for equality and diversity, safeguarding, and health and safety.

### **What is the composition of the Academy Trust Board?**

The Academy Trust Board has been established for the purpose of conducting the business of Esher Sixth Form College Academy Trust. It has a maximum of 17 Trustees, drawn from the students, parents and the local community, all of whom give a commitment of their time and skills freely in the interests of the College and its community.

- Principal
- Students - up to 2 Trustees (Student Union President and Vice President)
- Parents –a minimum of 2 Trustees
- External Trustees up to 10 – Trustees

There are also a minimum of three “Members” of the Academy Trust. In simple terms the Members "own" the Academy Trust. They have a number of statutory rights set out in the Academy Trust's Articles of Association (the Articles). Typically, Members will only meet once a year at the Annual General Meeting (AGM), where they will conduct their Members’ business. However, it is the Trustees’ responsibility to ensure the effective operation of the Academy Trust.

### **How long would I expect to serve as a Trustee?**

External Trustees serve a four-year term of office initially. They are eligible to stand again at the end of their term of office, up to a maximum of two further consecutive terms, subject to the discretion of the Board of Trustees (the “Board”). Student Trustees serve a one-year term of office, and are elected by their fellow students in May of each year. Parent Trustees serve a two-year term of office; the parent body elects nominees. The Principal remains a Trustee throughout his/her tenure.

### **How many meetings are held each year?**

The Board normally meets 4 times a year, twice in the autumn term, and once each in the spring and summer terms. Committees meet two or three times a year and Trustees usually serve on two Committees. In exceptional circumstances, the Board or a Committee may arrange a special meeting to debate an important issue; Trustees will be given as much notice as possible in such circumstances.

Committee meetings normally take place on a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday evening from 6pm for up to two hours. The Board meetings are scheduled in the same way and can last for up to two and a half hours. Light refreshments are available. An annual calendar of meeting dates is agreed and published each July for the year ahead.

The regular Committees are:

- Audit
- Finance and Estates
- Quality and Standards
- Strategy and Policy

In addition, the Remuneration Committee, comprising the Chair of the Board and Committee Chairs, meets when appropriate to discuss the appraisal and salary of the senior postholders (Principal and Deputy Principal) and the Clerk. A Special Committee is convened to hear dismissal or notice of dismissal appeals, final grievance procedure appeals and student exclusion appeals. Such meetings are rare. Two members are drawn from the Board who have no vested interest in the matter under discussion and in addition an individual independent of the running and management of the College will join the Committee.

### **Do I need to attend every meeting?**

You should attend all Board meetings and meetings of the Committees to which you are assigned. Meetings cannot take place if they are 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. You do not need to attend Committee meetings if you are not a member, although you may choose to do so as an observer, at the discretion of the Chair.

The Clerk keeps a record of Trustee attendance at meetings. If any Trustee does not attend any Board or designated Committee meeting for 6 months without the permission of the Chair of the Board, their membership of the Board of Trustees will be deemed to have automatically lapsed and they will be informed in writing of the situation by the Clerk.

### **How much time is involved in being a Trustee?**

As a typical Trustee, you should expect to spend an average of 5 hours per month 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. The Chairs of Committees and Clerk are also on hand to offer advice and guidance. Training is offered periodically through presentations at Board meetings, at the annual Trustees' Training Morning, occasional courses, mentoring, reading and online resources. The College meets the costs of any approved external training.

An annual audit determines the current range and level of Trustee skills and experience available to the Board of Trustees, as well as identifying any areas for development. The audit is also used as the basis of determining individual training needs. Safeguarding and Equality and Diversity have a designated Trustee in a link role.

### **Will I be paid as a Trustee?**

College Trustees and 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 Committee has its own Terms of Reference, which are reviewed every year. Membership of each Committee is agreed by the Board, which seeks to strike a balance between Trustees' status, gender, skills and interests.

Each meeting follows an agenda, and is supported by discussion papers and regular reports originating from the College. Requests for additional information should be agreed at Committee or Board level. The Clerk sends committee papers out electronically at least seven working days in advance of the meeting. The Chair of the Committee leads the meeting through the business with contributions to the meeting made through the Chair. Every Trustee 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 Board or a Committee?**

The Board elects a Chair and Vice-Chair to lead its meetings, who are chosen from amongst those Trustees who are not employed or studying at the College. They normally hold office for a year with the arrangements confirmed by the first Board meeting of each academic year. The Chair and Vice-Chair are eligible for re-appointment at the end of their period of office, for such a period as the Board decides. Normally, this would not exceed three consecutive terms of office, except where the Board deems it appropriate. The Board determines committee membership and the appointment of the Committee Chair. As with the Chair of the Board, Committee Chairs normally hold office for a year, and are eligible for re-appointment along similar lines, normally for no more than three consecutive terms of office, except where the Board deems it appropriate.

### **What type of person makes a good Trustee?**

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 act as a "critical friend" – someone who can offer both support and friendly challenge - is a key skill. 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*.
Interpersonal and team work	Able to work positively with others and debate issues whilst maintaining a constructive atmosphere.
Communication	Able to express ideas/plans in a clear manner and to listen actively to other views. Able to communicate effectively.
Planning and organisation	Able to establish quickly an effective course of action for self and others to achieve goals that can be monitored by realistic performance targets. To be visionary for the future plans of the College.
Determination	Able to create the required energy/enthusiasm and commitment necessary to be effective and have the tenacity to overcome obstacles.
Strategic perspective	Able to develop a broad-based view of issues and events and perceive their long-term impact.
Ability and willingness to learn	Able to absorb sometimes complex information and rationalise appropriately. Able to think laterally and arrive at a pragmatic solution. Willingness to listen and learn and commitment to continuous improvement.
Leadership	Able to demonstrate behaviour and skills that motivate others to achieve, inspire confidence in others to achieve objectives, and respect the views of others.
Experience (either work or community related)	<p>Potential Trustees should be able to offer <i>some</i> of the following attributes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a keen interest in the education sector</li> <li>• an understanding of the national context in which education operates</li> <li>• a knowledge of other aspects of education and training provision</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• experience of working in commerce, industry or public service at board or senior management level</li> <li>• specialist expertise such as leadership, business planning, human resources management, estates management, community development, risk management, finance or law</li> </ul>
Circumstances	Available to attend scheduled meetings of the Board and Committees.
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	<p>A person is not eligible to be a Trustee 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.</p> <p>All Trustees are required to agree to enhanced Disclosure and Barring service (DBS) checks for non-safeguarding convictions or cautions on appointment.</p> <p>All Trustees have an entry on the Companies House register and identity verification is mandatory. This is a legal requirement under the Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act 2023.</p>

If you wish to find out more about becoming a Trustee, please contact the Clerk, Catherine Davies via email, [cdavies@esher.ac.uk](mailto:cdavies@esher.ac.uk).

## Appendix A Standards in Public Life

### What standards would I be expected to follow?

The detailed duties of the Board, Committees, senior postholders and Members are specified in the Academy Instruments and Articles of Association, enshrined in statute law.

The key structures and business processes are summarised in the Standing Orders for the use of the Board of Trustees, which are reviewed periodically.

All members are expected to sign up to the Academy Trust's Code of Conduct, which requires Trustees 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 Trustees 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 Trustee 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.