

## Mighty Oaks Academy Trust - June 2023

### Board Chair Role Description

The Chair of the Trust Board is a leadership role that provides clear direction to the Board who work as a team to challenge, support and contribute to the strategic leadership of the Trust.

### Trust Boards should focus on 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.

NGA recommends the following as the fourth core function of governance:

4. ensuring the voices of stakeholders are heard.

### Strategic and leadership responsibilities

The Chair provides strategic leadership that allows Trustees to fulfil their functions by:

- ensuring that there are transparent and effective processes for recruiting and inducting a new Chief Executive.
- ensuring appropriate Trustee involvement in the recruitment of senior leaders on the Central Team.
- ensuring the Board has good knowledge of the school(s) and has mechanisms in place to obtain and listen to the views of parents, pupils and staff.
- ensuring that the Trust Board sets a clear vision and strategy for the school(s).
- ensuring that the Trust Board and CEO have a shared vision and sense of purpose.
- leading the Board in monitoring the Chief Executive's implementation of the strategy.
- setting the culture of the Trust Board, balancing and valuing both the support and challenge responsibilities.
- ensuring the Board acts as a team.
- ensuring that there is a succession plan for the Chair, Vice Chair, and any committee Chairs.

### Wider leadership responsibilities

The Chair has wider leadership responsibilities associated with the role and status of lead Trustee on the Board, such as:

- being a first point of contact and playing a leading role in employment matters as required by the adopted procedures of the Trust (for example, grievance, disciplinary, capability).
- where required, acting as a first point of contact and respondent in matters raised with the school or Trust by external bodies (such as the Department for Education).

- where required, representing the Trust Board in its dealings with external partners and be an advocate for the Trust.
- attend school events as appropriate and encourage other Trustees and Governors to do so.

### Developing the Team

Trust Boards need a range of skills and knowledge to carry out their functions effectively. It is the responsibility of the Board's Chair to:

- ensure the board has the required skills and commitment to govern well, and that appointments made fill any identified skills gaps and ensure a diverse team.
- ensure all members of the Board have a thorough understanding of their role and receive appropriate induction and ongoing development as required.
- ensure that Board members are involved, feel valued and encourage their development.
- ensure members of the Board act reasonably and in line with the board's agreed code of conduct.
- develop a good working relationship with the Vice Chair, keeping them fully informed and delegating tasks as appropriate.

### Working with Trust Leaders

Chairs and Trust leaders (the Chief Executive) must develop effective working practices which are mutually supportive. It is the responsibility of Chair to:

- ensure that the Trust Board fulfils its duty of care to the Chief Executive, including ensuring a safe and secure working environment, a reasonable work-life balance, and support for their wellbeing.
- ensure all Board members concentrate on their strategic role and hold the Chief Executive to account.
- build and encourage a professional relationship with the Chief Executive which allows for honest conversations, acting as a sounding board and ensuring there are no surprises at meetings.
- meet regularly (normally monthly) with the Chief Executive.
- oversee and participate in the Chief Executive's performance review, ensuring that appropriate continuing professional development (CPD) is provided.
- ensure that the Chief Executive provides staff with an understanding of the role of the Trust Board and acts as link between the two.

### Influencing improvement and achieving outcomes

The Board's activities should be focused on Trust improvement and achieving the best outcomes for pupils. The Chair of the Board is expected to:

- ensure the Board is involved at a strategic level in the Trust's/school's self-evaluation process and that this feeds into its key priorities.
- ensure the Board's business is focused on the strategic priorities.

- collaborate with Trust leaders to ensure the Board has the information it needs to monitor the implementation of policies; pupil attainment and progress and the financial health and sustainability of the Trust.
- evaluate and question information in order to identify appropriate actions, modelling this approach for other Board members.
- take the lead in representing the Trust Board at relevant external meetings with agencies such as Ofsted, the DfE and the local authority.

### Leading Trust Board Business

Chairs are responsible for the smooth and effective running of Board meetings and so are required to:

- ensure that the Trust Board appoints a professional Clerk capable of advising the Board on its functions and relevant procedure.
- ensure that a development and appraisal process is in place for the Clerk that includes a conversation about the pay and remuneration they receive.
- work with the Clerk and the Chief Executive to plan for Board meetings, ensuring that agendas focus on the Board's key responsibilities and strategic priorities and reduce unnecessary paperwork.
- chair meetings effectively and promote an open culture on the Trust Board that allows ideas and discussion to thrive while ensuring clear decisions are reached as quickly as possible.
- collaborate with the Clerk to establish effective working procedures and sound committee structures.
- ensure that decisions taken at the meetings of the Trust Board are implemented.
- ensure that complaints made to the Trust Board are dealt with in a timely and effective manner through the adopted complaints procedure.

### Expenses

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