

Hope Learning Community Scheme of Delegation 2026/27

Trust Context, Vision and Values

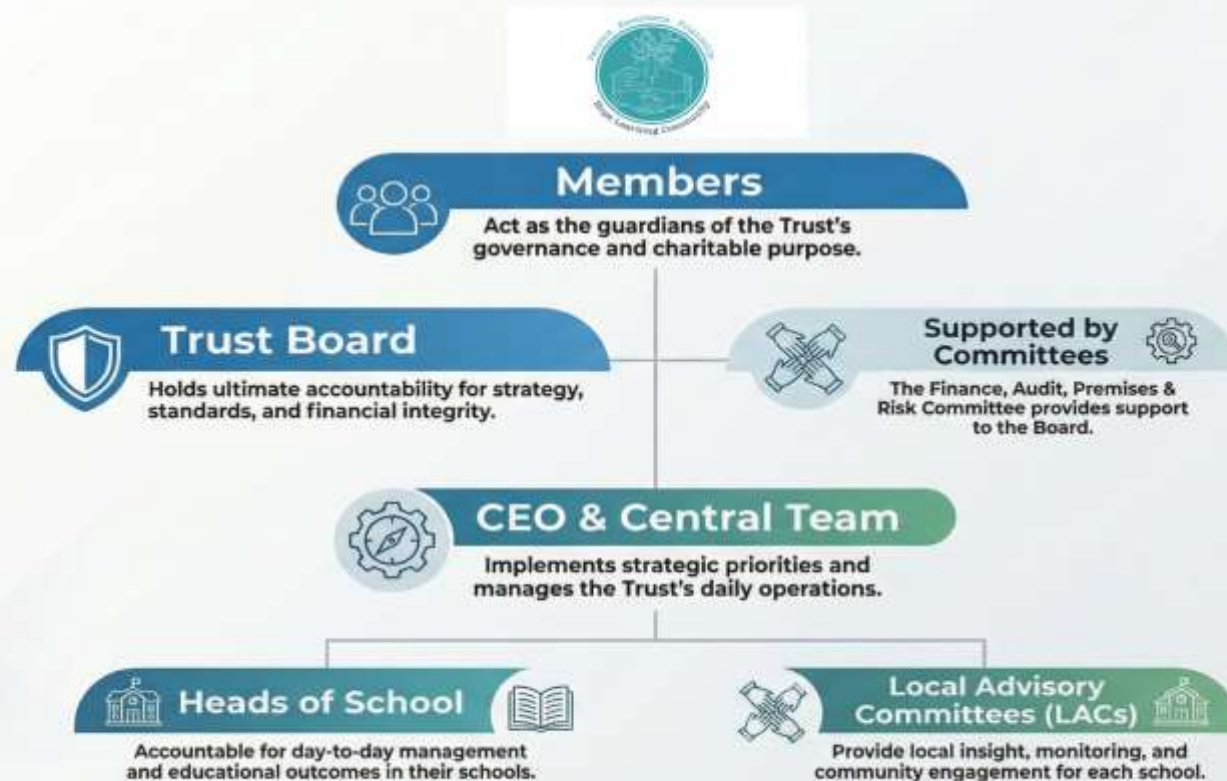
Hope Learning Community is a specialist multi-academy trust for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The Trust promotes a culture of inclusion, compassion, and excellence across all schools.

Our vision is to empower every learner to achieve their potential through specialist education, therapeutic support, and strong partnerships.

The Trust's values are:

- Inclusion – every learner valued and supported.
- Integrity – acting with honesty and transparency.
- Ambition – striving for excellence.
- Collaboration – working together for the best outcomes.

Hope Learning Community: Our Governance & Accountability



Summary of Governance Layers

Governance within HLC is structured to ensure clarity of accountability and collaboration at every level:

- Members – Guardians of the Trust's governance and charitable purpose.
- Trust Board – Holds ultimate accountability for the strategic direction, standards, compliance and financial integrity.
- Committees – The Board is supported by the Finance, Audit, Premises & Risk Committee
- CEO & Central Team – Responsible for implementing the Trust's strategic priorities and managing operations.
- Heads of School – Accountable for day-to-day management, educational outcomes, and compliance within their school.
- Local Advisory Committees – Provide local insight and monitoring, focusing on safeguarding, standards, SEND, and community engagement.

Chair's Action Between Meetings of the Board of Trustees

The Chair of Trustees may make urgent decisions between Board meetings when delay would be seriously detrimental to the Trust or its schools. Such actions must be reported to the next Board meeting.

Chair's action cannot be used for decisions relating to admissions, executive pay or financial transactions above £10,000

Where a committee chair or member becomes unavailable in a way that prevents the committee from functioning

e.g resignation, prolonged absence or inability to meet critical deadlines, the Chair of Trustees may, following consultation with the Governance Professional, appoint an interim member subject to reporting and ratification at the next board meeting.

Scheme of Delegation Framework

The Board of Trustees of Hope Learning Community retains ultimate accountability but delegates specific responsibilities to its committees, its CEO and Executive Team, Local Advisory Committees (LACs) and Heads of School. This Scheme of Delegation aligns with the trust's Articles of Association, Funding Agreement and the Academy Trust Handbook

Roles and Responsibilities

The following pages detail the specific responsibilities of the Trust Board, Executive Team, Local Advisory Committees and School Heads in the areas of:

governance; budgets; finance and risk; staffing and HR; standards, curriculum and target setting; safeguarding; SEND; complaints; health and safety and estates; information management, communication, marketing.

A school that has joined the Trust, or where there are concerns about leadership, governance or other areas, may have fewer delegated This will be determined on a case by case basis.

NOTE: Approval and management of non-statutory, operational policies lies with the Head Teacher/Head of School

The specific responsibilities of the Members are as follows:

- Review, amend and agree the Articles of Association
- Change the name of the Trust
- Receive an Annual Report from the Board and the CEO on the Trust's performance
- Appoint/remove Members
- Appoint up to eight Trustees and remove any Trustee
- Receive the Trust's audited annual accounts
- Appoint external auditors for the Trust and schools
- Approve any service contracts for Trustees

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Staffing and HR Area	Authority retained by the board?	CEO	Central Team	LAC	Head	Notes
Approve Central Trust staff structure & complement	Yes	Make recommendations	Make recommendations			
Central Trust staff appointments	No (except CEO, CFOO and DGC to comply with Academy Trust Handbook)		Delegated authority			
Approval of formal staff restructure plans which could involve a potential redundancy	Yes		Make recommendations	Consult	Consult	
RECRUITMENT						
Appoint CEO/Accounting Officer	Yes					the board should approach their Regional Director in advance when a senior executive leader (who is also the accounting officer) is planning to leave the trust, such as through retirement or resignation
Appointment of staff	No (except CEO, CFOO and DGC)		Delegated authority CEO and CFOO- appoint members of the Central Trust Team. Involved in appointment process for SLT	Participate in the process to appoint the senior leaders as requested by the Head	Delegated authority - appoint all other school teaching and non-teaching staff	
Appointment of school Safeguarding Lead	No				Delegated authority report to LAC and Board	
Appointment of Headteacher/Head of School	Yes	Make recommendations	Lead appointment process	Consult		
Approve requests for flexible working, secondment or leave of absence	No (chair approves requests from CEO)	Delegated authority - for SLT	Delegated authority CFOO- for Central Team, with advice from Trust HR, as required		Delegated authority for school staff, with advice from Trust HR, as required	
PAY POLICY						
Annual pay awards - teaching and support staff.	Yes					
Adopt a Trust-wide Pay Policy	Yes					
Review and approve pay progression recommendation for CEO, including appeals (Ref Pay Policy for details)	Yes (Exec pay and performance committee make recommendations)					
Individual performance pay awards	No (see relevant policies)					
OPERATION OF POLICIES						
Adopt Trust-wide HR policies and procedures	YES - (updates required by employment law may be approved by Central team and reported to board)		Develop policies and procedures and ensure their effective implementation/ compliance across the Trust.		Implement policies and procedures in the school	New policies and significant changes in policy principles require board approval.
CEO Performance management	Yes (Exec pay and performance committee)					
Authority to issue warnings or other disciplinary measures except dismissal	No (except CEO, CFOO and DGC)	Delegated authority Ref relevant HLC HR policy	Delegated authority Ref relevant HLC HR policy		Delegated authority Ref relevant HLC HR policy	
Suspension of teaching and support staff (excluding Head/CEO)	No (except CEO, CFOO and DGC)	Delegated authority Ref relevant HLC HR policy	Delegated authority Ref relevant HLC HR policy		Delegated authority Ref relevant HLC HR policy	
Suspension of Head/Return of Head	Yes	Make recommendations		Consult		
Suspension of CEO/Return of CEO	Yes					
Dismissal (Ref Relevant HLC HR Policy)	Yes (Except CEO, CFOO and DGC)	Delegated authority SLT and Central team			Delegated authority school staff Ref relevant HLC HR policy	
Dismissal of Head	Yes	Make recommendations		Consult		
Dismissal of CEO	Yes (Approach Regional Director)**					**regional-department-for-education-dfe-directors
Appeals against disciplinary action Ref Relevant HR Policy	No Except CEO or where CEO has heard original case		Ensure compliance and provide HR advice			
Grievance and disciplinary procedures	No		Ensure compliance and provide HR advice		Delegated authority school staff Ref relevant HLC HR policy	

Finance and Risk area	Authority retained by the board	DfE	CEO	Central Team	LAC	Head	Notes
Approve annual accounts / reports / returns to funding and regulatory bodies	Yes		Review	Prepare and review for recommendation to CEO and Board. Work with auditors to prepare Annual Accounts and Reports			
Complete and submit other accounting returns	Yes			Delegated authority			
Maintain a register of business interests for the Trust	No			Delegated authority		Maintain register for the school	
Authorised to complete PAYE returns	No			Delegated authority			
Authorised to complete VAT returns	No			Delegated authority			
Appoint the Accounting Officer	Yes		Act as AO				
BUDGET AND MANAGEMENT REPORTING							
Agree long term financial objectives of the Trust	Yes		Make recommendations	Make recommendations			
Approve annual Trust and school budgets	Yes		Endorsement as Accounting Officer	Prepare the annual budget for recommendation to Board. Monitor budget.		Prepare and monitor local budget	
Determine the proportion of the overall school budget to be retained for central services	Yes			Recommend			
Approve spend from the 'Internal Investment'" element of reserves	Yes (via Finance Audit Premises and Risk Committee, within agreed limits)		Review bids and make recommendations				
Approve any significant changes to the approved budgets	Yes			Consider any variances to delegated budget for Board approval			
Approval of expenditure not provided for in the annual budget (Limits set out in Finance Regulations)	No			Delegated authority - within agreed limits		Delegated authority - within agreed limits and supported by the appropriate business case proposal	
INTERNAL FINANCIAL CONTROLS							
Ensure proper financial controls are in place across the Trust	Yes		Provide assurance to DfE as Accounting Officer	Ensure adequate risk, financial and asset management systems are in place across the Trust		Ensure proper financial controls are in place at the school	
Procurement and tendering compliance	No		Ensure compliance and monitor value for money		Follow trust policy		

Risk management and risk registers oversight	Yes (acting through Finance Audit Premises and Risk Committee)			Regularly review Trust Risk Register and recommend changes to Board. Review any risks reported by the schools and report to Board as appropriate.	Report local risks	Manage local risks	
Adopt a Trust Finance Policy (Financial Regulations)	Yes			Develop policy. Monitor compliance with policy.		Comply with policy	
Appoint internal auditors for Trust and schools (Appointment of external auditors is by Members.)	Yes			Manage appointment process			
Ensure recommendations in internal and external audit reports are addressed	Yes		Report to Board	Review reports and ensure recommendations are addressed		Ensure school internal audit recommendations are addressed	
PURCHASING & PROCUREMENT							
Adopt a Trust-wide Procurement Policy	Yes (<i>acting through Finance Audit Premises and Risk Committee</i>)			Develop policy. Review opportunities for collaborative procurement.		Comply with policy	
Write off bad debts within limits	No (<i>delegated within DfE limits</i>)	Transactions 1% of annual income or £45K individually or 2.5% or 5% of annual income cumulatively		Delegated authority Approve within DfE limits			
ASSET MANAGEMENT							
Management of capital projects	No			Delegated authority - ensure management and governance arrangements are appropriate and report to Board			
Acquiring a freehold on land and buildings	N/A To approve for submission to DfE	DfE approval required		Recommend to Board for submission to DfE			
Disposal of a freehold on land and buildings	N/A To approve for submission to DfE	DfE approval required		Recommend to Board for submission to DfE			
Review and maintain a buildings' strategy and asset management planning arrangements	Yes			Make recommendations			
Acquisition of assets	No		Delegated authority - up to agreed limits	Delegated authority - up to agreed limits		Delegated authority - up to agreed limits	
Disposal of assets (<i>not land or buildings</i>)	No			Delegated authority - up to agreed limits		Delegated authority - up to agreed limits (unless agreed otherwise, or in deficit)	
Asset register / security / loan of assets	No			Delegated authority		Maintain assets register	
Approve insurance arrangements	No			Delegated authority			
LEASING							

Take up a finance lease	N/A To approve for submission to DfE	DfE approval required		Recommend to CEO for submission to Board			
Take up a leasehold on land and buildings	Yes Or approve for submission to DfE	DfE approval for lease >7 Years		Recommend approval to Board for leases <7 years			
Take up any other lease (Ref Trust Finance Regulations)	No		Delegated authority - up to agreed limits	Delegated authority - up to agreed limits			
Grant a lease on land and buildings	N/A To approve for submission to DfE	DfE approval required		Recommend approval to Board for submission to DfE			
SPECIAL PAYMENTS							
Staff severance and compensation	Yes - if ATH requirements met	DfE approval over £50K					The Board of Trustees has the authority to approve individual employee severance and compensation payments, provided they align with the Academy Trust Handbook (ATH)
Ex gratia payments	N/A To approve for submission to DfE	DfE approval required					
Adopt a Governance Allowances Policy in accordance with the Trust Finance Regulations	Yes			Develop policy	Comply with policy	Comply with policy	

Anti Fraud and Corruption policy	Yes (delegated to Finance, Audit premises and Risk committee)			Develop policy	Comply	Comply	
Accounting Policy	Yes (delegated to Finance, Audit premises and Risk committee)			Develop policy		Comply	
Investment Management Policy	Yes (delegated to Finance, Audit premises and Risk committee)			Develop policy		Comply	
Reserves Policy	Yes (recommended by FAPR committee)			Develop policy		Comply	
Asset Management Policy	Yes (delegated to Finance, Audit premises and Risk committee)			Develop policy		Comply	
Charging and Remissions policy	Yes (delegated to Finance, Audit premises and Risk committee)			Consult	Ensure fair implementation and communication to stakeholders	Develop policy in consultation with Central team	

Governance Area	Is Authority Retained by the Board? See overview for functions of the trust MEMBERS	CEO	CENTRAL TEAM	LACs	HEADS	Notes
Approve Terms of Reference for Board Committees	Yes		Develop			
Approve Trust Scheme of Delegation	Yes		Develop			
Appoint/remove board committee members	Yes		Make recommendations			
Appoint and remove co-opted trustees	Yes		Make recommendations			
Elect/Remove Chair and Vice-Chair of the Board in accordance with Articles of Association	Yes		Develop			
Appoint Chair of Local Advisory Committee (LAC)	No			Elect annually		
Appoint/remove Local Ambassadors (members of LACs)	Yes (other than parent or staff elected)		Support and advise on appointments	Provide local context and recommendations		
Change delegated power or membership of an LAC (where there are concerns about the school or its governance)	Yes		Make recommendations			
Appoint / remove the Trust Governance Professional	Yes		Manage appointment process			
Appoint / remove the local governance professional -clerk to the LACs	No		Manage appointment process			
Publish on HLC website required information on governance arrangements	No		Delegated			
Take out Director Indemnity Insurance Cover.	No		Delegated			
STRATEGY						
Determine the Vision and Values of the trust	Yes		Make recommendations	Champion the visions and values in school	Champion the vision and values in school	
Approve annual Trust Strategic Plan	Yes		Develop plan for approval and report progress			
Ensure that the school has a medium to long-term vision and that there is a robust strategy in place	No		Delegated authority in collaboration with the SLT	Champion and follow the school vision	Implement the school vision	
Approve school applications to join the Trust	Yes		Consider requests, conduct due diligence & make recommendations to Board.			
Enter into, or withdraw from, a formal partnership	No		Delegated authority and report to Board			
DEVELOPMENT OF POLICIES AND PROCEDURES						
Approve statutory Trust-wide policies (ref DfE guide to school policies)	Yes (if require board approval)		Delegated authority if do not require gov board approval**. Develop policies	Monitor implementation	Tailor policies to school (if directed) and implement	**See statutory policy schedule
Approve non statutory Trust wide policies	No		Delegated authority** develop policies	Monitor implementation	Tailor policies to school (if directed) and implement	**See statutory policy schedule

Approve statutory School policies	Yes (if require board approval)			Delegated authority if do not require gov board approval. **	Develop policies	**See statuory policy schedule
Approve non statutory School policies	No				Delegated authority. Determine which policies to have in place and how they will be approved.	
ORGANISATION OF TRUST						
Determine school term dates, length/organisation of school day, age ranges, extended school provision.	No (significant changes must be approved by the board)		Delegated authority, on recommendation from Head/LAC	Agree with head and consult where appropriate	Set in agreement with the LAC and the ET. Ensure school meets statutory requirements.	
Close school (due to weather, illness, industrial action, site problem	No		Delegated authority		Consult with ET	
Admission Arrangements	Yes (note the LA is the admitting authority)					
Free School Meals	No			Delegated authority. Monitor food standards	Delegated authority. (Ensure the provision of free school meals to eligible pupils)	
Chairs Action	Limits agreed 2022					t is resolved that in cases of urgency where a delay would be likely to be seriously
						detrimental to the interests of the school, a pupil, a parent or member of staff it is
						possible for the chair or vice chair (if the chair is unable to act) to make decisions
						independently. This does not extend to approving the annual budget, the suspension of
						governors or reviewing the exclusion of pupils except where permitted in accordance
						with the law around pupil exclusion.
						All decisions will be noted and reported to the next meeting of the trustees and recorded
						in the minutes.

Information Management	Authority retained by trust board?	CEO/Central team	LAC	Head
Data Protection and GDPR Compliance	Yes (via Finance Audit Premises and Risk Committee)	Ensure compliance via DPO	Monitor through reports	Implement
Website Compliance	No	Share central policies and information	Monitor	Maintain compliance
Trust and School Branding	Yes - approve major changes	Approve minor changes	Advise on community alignment	Apply brand guidelines

Health Safety and Estates Area	Authority retained by trust board?	CEO/Central team	LAC	Head	Notes	Column7
Health and Safety Policy	Yes (through the Finance Audit Premises and Risk Committee) Provide trust-level oversight of health and safety compliance, audit findings and risk. Review exception reports and action plans, challenge progress, and escalate unresolved risks to the Trust Board where required	Develop and implement trust policy. Ensure central coordination of health and safety arrangements, including audits and reporting.	Monitor compliance including reviewing health and safety audit reports and action plans. Identify and escalate by exception any overdue actions, repeated issues or high-risk concerns to the Trust	Implement health and safety arrangements within the school. Maintain the site safely and ensure audit actions are completed and evidenced.		
Critical Incident and Emergency Planning	Yes (oversight through the Finance Audit Premises and Risk Committee)	Ensure central co-ordination	Monitor compliance	Develop and implement.		
Site and Premises Maintenance	Yes (through the Finance Audit Premises and Risk Committee)	Monitor asset management and estates compliance		Maintain site safely		
Educational Visits policy	Yes		Approve overnight visits	Implement		
Lettings Policy	Yes (through the Finance Audit Premises and Risk Committee)		Monitor fair implementation. Ensure local communication with stakeholders	Implement		
Significant Premises modification - school	Yes (through the Finance Audit Premises and Risk Committee)	Recommend	Monitor impact - ensure communication with stakeholders	Recommend		

SAFEGUARDING

Safeguarding is the responsibility of all levels of governance. The Trust ensures compliance with statutory guidance and robust safeguarding practice across all schools.

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