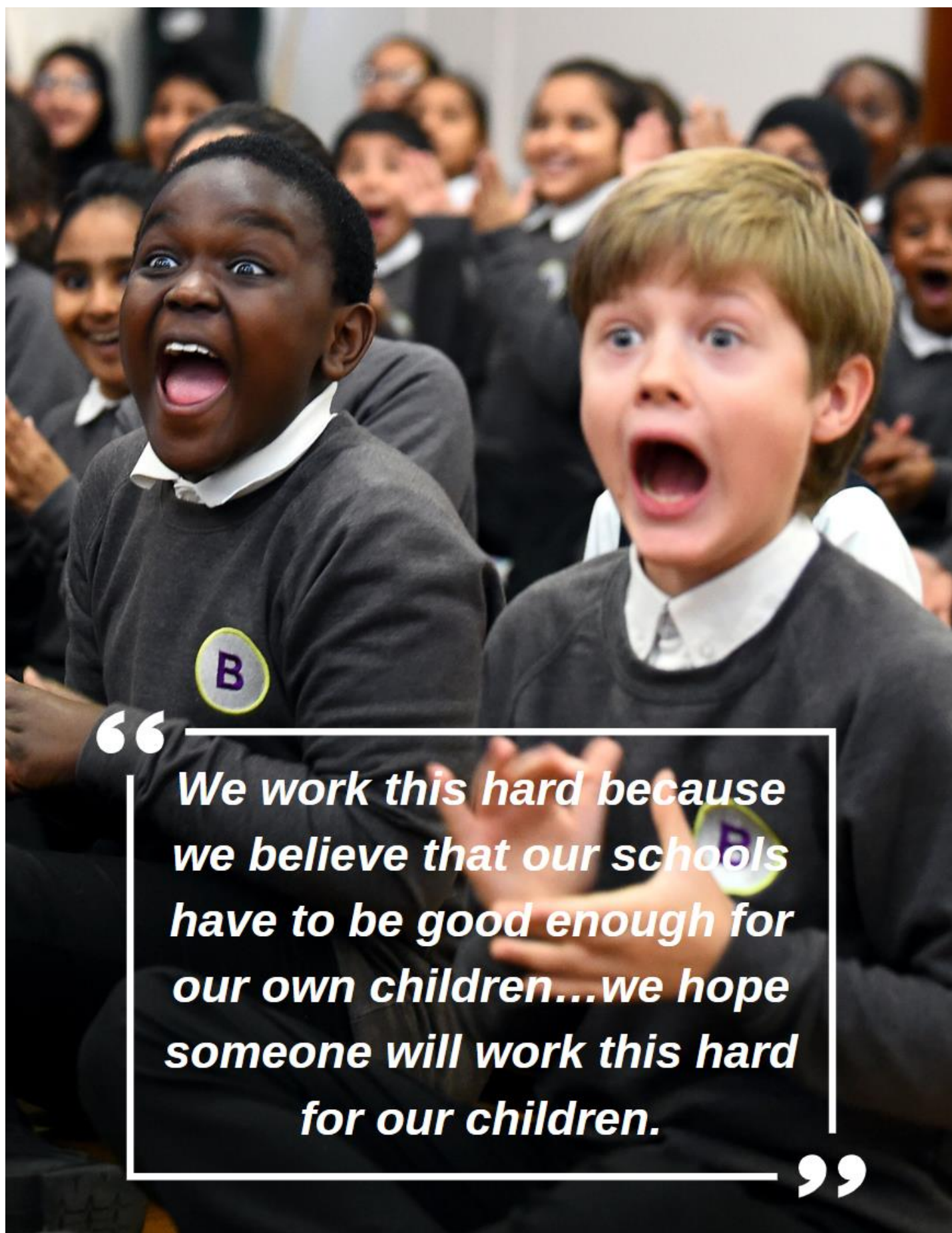




Prince Albert Community Trust Governance Charter

Supporting EMPOWER 2028 (three-year
strategic plan)

V3.2025



“ We work this hard because we believe that our schools have to be good enough for our own children...we hope someone will work this hard for our children. ”

Foreword from the Chair of the Board of Trustees:

Welcome to PACT

Being a PACT Trustee or Academy Committee Representative is a privilege. We are part of a team of volunteers committed to the values and principles of PACT who give their time and energy to the Trust and/or to our schools, for the benefit of the education of our young people. We work in partnership across the schools to improve the life chances of our young people. The Trust is now responsible for the educational outcomes and wellbeing of more than 3,000 children, the livelihoods of over 400 employees and the annual management of £21 million of tax payers' money. The effectiveness of the Trust's governance is central to ensuring that those resources are used to make the biggest possible difference to the education and life chances of children. We therefore need the highest standards of Governance and to achieve this, we need not only high calibre and dedicated staff - we need dedicated, skilled and experienced Trustees and Academy Committee Representatives.



This Governance Charter has been produced to support Trustees and Academy Committee Representatives to be effective in their respective roles by providing clarity about Trust governance structures, machinery and expectations. It outlines key roles and responsibilities at the different levels of governance and how those different levels work together for the benefit of the whole Trust. I do encourage you to get to know this document, and also the associated documents referred to in it, all of which are available on Governor Hub and use it as an accompaniment at meetings of the Trust Board/ Trust Board Committees and/or LACs. These documents will support you in beginning constructively to challenge and monitor the Trust Executive, or your school and its staff and pupils as they strive towards continuous school improvement, progress and achievement.

If you are not yet part of the PACT family, but are considering joining us, be assured that Trustees appreciate that effective governance needs a range of voices. We promote diversity across the Trust and welcome Expressions of Interest in becoming a Trustee or Academy Committee Representatives from people of all backgrounds and experience. The necessary skills and qualities are important of course (i.e. finance, legal, human resource management and experience of governance, etc.) but commitment to the role, support for schools/education and a desire to improve, through excellence in education, the life chances of all our students is key. If you are interested in supporting the Trust or one of our schools, please complete and return the Expression of Interest form available on our Vacancies & Careers webpages pages. I would like to thank you, whether as an established or a prospective Trustee or Academy Committee Representative, or as someone new to the Trust, for your interest. I am confident that you will find the contribution that you make and the commitment you will bring to the role satisfying and rewarding.

Chair of Board of Trustees, Abbie Vlahakis

Our Philosophy

We want our school leavers to have a strong sense of purpose and for them to understand that they can benefit from society but more importantly can be a benefit to society. We want our pupils to be hard working, ambitious and resilient. They will understand their rights and responsibilities as British citizens and their roles in improving their neighbourhoods and communities. They will have every opportunity to develop their emotional intelligence and decision making skills. They will develop an understanding of local, national and international issues and will have an awareness and understanding of their position as global citizens.

We have a fundamental and strongly held belief that our pupils have the potential to achieve the highest academic standards and to compete with high achieving pupils locally, nationally and internationally. We want to prepare our children for the very best job opportunities the world has to offer, to make this possible we are developing working partnerships with leading universities and business regionally, nationally and globally. The success of our schools is built on the relationship we enjoy with our families based on mutual trust and an understanding that we only want the very best for our pupils.



Effective Governance

This Governance Charter sets out the fundamental principles guiding our Trust and lays down the rules for its governance. The Charter expands the principles set out in the Trust's Articles of Association.

The Trust has constant regards to effective governance set out in the DfE's Academy Governance Guidance (DfE 2024) and sees these as essential elements of successful trustee leadership.

1. Strategic Leadership that sets and champions the vision, ethos and strategy of the Trust and its schools.
2. Accountability that is clear and drives up standards and financial performance.
3. People with the right skills, experience, qualities and capacity.

4. Structures that reinforce clearly defined roles and responsibilities.
5. Compliance with statutory and contractual requirements.
6. Evaluation to monitor and improve the quality and impact of governance.

Trustees recognise that the first two features of strategic leadership and accountability are the core pillars of the Board's role and purpose. The second two are about the way in which governance is organised across the Trust and the last two are about ensuring and improving the quality of governance at all levels.

The Trust Board reviews its Governance Model annually, against the seven Nolan Principles of Public Life:

1. Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

2. 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 in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

3. Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

4. 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.

5. 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.

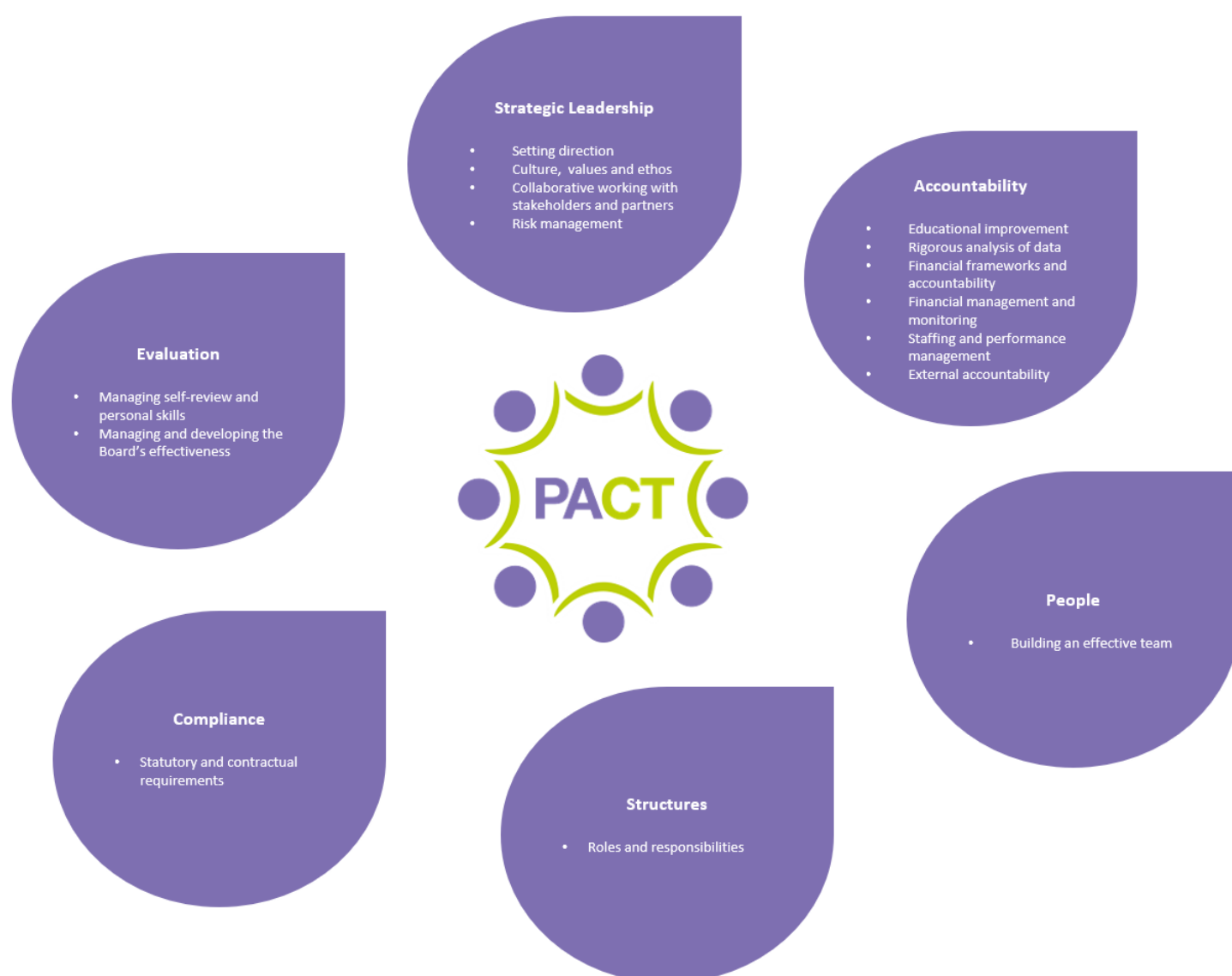
6. Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

7. Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour and treat others with respect. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

The Trust observes six features of effective governance as shown below:



Vision and Ethical Operating Principles

The Prince Albert Community Trust has been established through a shared belief that lives can be transformed by what goes on in schools.

Our vision is underpinned by a set of four operating principles, or values, which have become our key indicators of success. Our vision and ethical operating principles are what we aspire to and are relatable to every employee, trustee and partner as well as to our pupils and their families.

External Accountability

The Trust fully recognises the statutory, regulatory and mandatory frameworks imposed upon it by:

- the Companies Act 2006
- the Department for Education (DfE)
- Report and Accounts from the External Auditors
- The Regional Schools Commissioner/Director
- The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)
- Safer recruitment practices
- Ofsted
- Health and Safety Executive
- GDPR
- Equalities legislation

Trustee Code of Conduct

Trustees conduct their business and professional relationships in line with the long established 'Nolan Principles' used to underpin public services. These are reflected in the [Charity Governance Code](#).



OUR PURPOSE, AMBITION AND VALUES

OUR PURPOSE

To enable every individual to succeed in school and in life

OUR AMBITION

Exceptional students

Exceptional workforce and workplace

Exceptional social and corporate responsibility



OUR VALUES

In all that we do we demonstrate:

Passion – inspiring a love of learning and being determined to make a difference

Aspiration – wanting the very best for our pupils, our families, our communities and our staff

Collaboration – working positively with each other, with parents and carers, other stakeholders and partners to achieve our goals

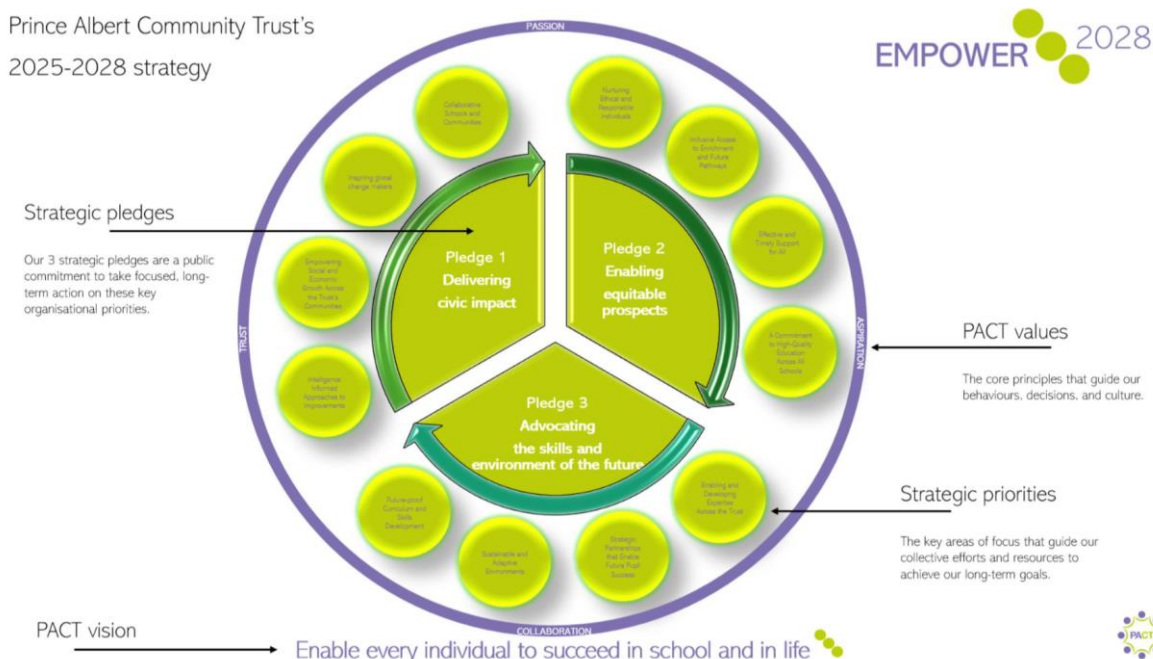
Trust – acting with integrity, being reliable and caring to create a safe and respectful environment for all to learn and work in

TO ENABLE EVERY INDIVIDUAL TO SUCCEED IN SCHOOL AND IN LIFE



EMPOWER 2028

Our ambition is driven by EMPOWER 2028, a three-year strategic plan which focus on the following strategic pledges and priorities:



At PACT, our vision is built on the insights and leadership of sector experts and diverse voices across our education community.

We believe that meaningful change emerges when the collective intelligence of leaders, educators, students, and stakeholders informs the design of frameworks that are responsive, inclusive, and effective.

As we launch EMPOWER 2028, we are committed to co-creating a strategic approach that harnesses this shared wisdom to drive continuous improvement, equity, and wellbeing for all.

Education is a powerful force for social justice and human dignity. Our schools must be inclusive environments where every person, student and staff alike, is seen, respected, and supported holistically to flourish with hope, resilience, and purpose.

Through sustainable working conditions, professional learning, and a culture rooted in empathy and respect, we aim to empower pioneering educators and communities. Together, we will build a future where belonging, voice, and opportunity are guaranteed, and where education acts as a catalyst for positive societal transformation.

EMPOWER 2028 is more than a plan; it is a framework grounded in collective intelligence and shared leadership — guiding us to realise a hopeful, just, and thriving educational landscape for Birmingham and beyond.

Our Governance Charter

Securing Accountability

Our Governance Charter outlines the rules and practices by which the Trust Board ensures effective compliance with its responsibilities for improvement, fairness, and transparency in relationships with all its stakeholders. These include children, families, employees, local and central government.

The Trust defines responsibility as:

‘The obligation and the ability of an individual or an organisation to clearly account for its activities, accept responsibility for the impact of them and disclose the results of those activities in a transparent, accurate and honest manner.’

The Governance Charter translates the Trust's vision and priorities for effective governance by:

- outlining the core role and functions of the Trust Board and its committees to ensure the Trust meets its statutory obligations and is fully compliant
- summarising and providing a first point of reference for all the legal duties of the Trust Board and signposting to more detailed information, guidance and resources as appropriate
- providing information about the support structures available and designed to ensure the Board and its committees function effectively and efficiently



The Governance Charter sets out the Trust's intention to secure:

1. full compliance with the DfE Academy Trust Handbook and Governance Guidance
2. clarity for stakeholders about the distribution of responsibilities and accountabilities across the Trust and its schools
3. procedures for highlighting the interests of stakeholders and maintaining transparent and fair decision making
4. procedures for the proper supervision, control, and information flows that serve as a system of checks and balances across the Trust

The Trust's Governance Charter should be viewed alongside the Trust's Scheme of Delegation. These two documents clarify where responsibility, accountability and decision-making sit in key statutory, strategic and operational areas. These relate to:

- Members
- Trustees
- CEO and Executive Leaders
- Heads
- Academy Committees
- Teachers and support staff
- Parents and communities
- Pupils

Background

PACT is a family of schools with one shared purpose:

Enable every pupil to succeed at school and in life

The Trust is constituted as one legal entity that is accountable for all schools. The Board of Trustees has ultimate responsibility for setting the strategic direction of the Trust and for the oversight of the performance of all trust schools.

The Trust's model of governance is designed to recognise the responsibilities of the Trust Board and delegations made to its sub-committees.

The Trust works to ensure it is compliant at all times. As an employer, the Trust is committed to ensuring it operates within UK employment legislation, recognising relevant unions and professional associations as appropriate.

The Trust's family of schools are led by empowering, resilient leaders who, through their deeply held beliefs and values, strive to make decisions in the best interests of pupils and local communities.

Everyone understands that common structures, systems and processes are central to the Trust's ability to govern, regulate and allocate resources fairly, ethically and efficiently.

Strong and robust governance is seen as a key asset in securing high standards.

Effective governance in the Trust is supported by the following:

- Trust Members: who act as the guardians of the constitution
- Trustees: responsible for the strategic oversight and performance of the Trust and its schools. Trustees also have responsibility for managing the finances of the Trust safely, mitigating risk and securing value for money and financial probity
- Trust Sub-Committees: responsible for providing advice and support, overseeing, and informing the work of the Trust. They may be delegated certain responsibilities on behalf of the Trust Board
- Local Academy Committees: each school has a committee that oversees school performance, pupil achievement and ensures the voice of parents and local communities are listened and responded to

The Trust's model of governance recognises the overall responsibility of the Trust Board and the valuable input and support to carry out its functions by the central support team.

Through this Governance Charter and Scheme of Delegation, the Trust will ensure that it is safely compliant with all statutory obligations as prescribed by the DfE, ESFA and the Charity Commission. All governance flows from the Trust Board and the following sections set out the Trust's governance arrangements in detail.

Measuring Success

The Trust Board is rigorous in monitoring and evaluating its impact. To do this, it uses a range of review tools and approaches. These include the following core performance indicators of effective governance.

1. Achieving the Trust's vision

- Keeping children safe
- Focus on educational standards and school improvement
- Ensuring pupils and families receive a good service
- Achieving good value for money

2. Defining functions and roles

- Being clear about the functions of each level of governance
- Absolute clarity about the responsibilities of members, trustees, executive leaders and headteachers
- Absolute clarity about the delegated functions of Trust sub-committees, working parties and task and finish groups

3. Living the values of the Trust

- Advocating the Trust's vision and values consistently
- Considering the diverse needs of all children and families
- Behaving in ways that uphold and exemplify governance

4. Using data and evidence well

- Ensuring decision-making is based on good quality data and information
- Using data to hold people to account
- Being rigorous and transparent about how decisions are made

5. Developing capacity and capability

- Making sure that members and trustees have the essential skills, expertise and experience to perform their duties well
- Securing a mix of skills on the Trust Board to meet the range of requirements and responsibilities
- Striking an effective balance in membership between continuity and renewal

6. Engaging with pupils, families and staff

- Understanding formal and informal accountability relationships
- Taking a planned approach to dialogue with pupils, families and communities
- Taking an active approach to communicating with staff
- Engaging creatively with wider stakeholders to improve partnerships, opportunities and outcomes

In line with the Academy Trust Handbook, the Trust Board conducts a regular review of its performance and impact. This includes a review of the Trustee Code of Conduct and individual trustee attendance.

Every three years the Trust Board commission a full external review of governance effectiveness (last conducted in 2024).

Public Benefit

In setting its objectives and planning activities, Trustees have given careful consideration to the Charity Commission's public benefit guidance. The Trust strives to deliver in its purpose of public benefit by, 'aiming to advance for the public benefit,

education in Birmingham and the surrounding area by offering a broad curriculum'. The Board evaluates this impact, outputs and outcomes on an ongoing basis.

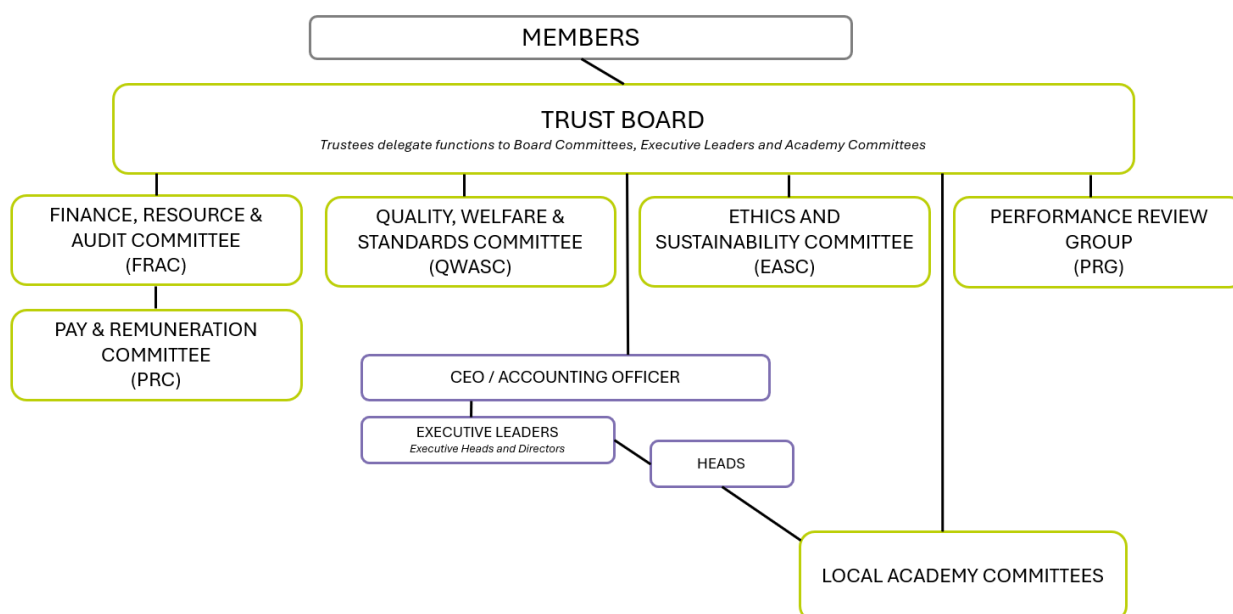
UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

The Trust is clear about the benefits of treating every pupil as a unique individual. The Rights Respecting Schools Award puts children's rights at the heart of all PACT schools. This approach sits alongside our vision and values. We have a deep respect for the dignity and agency of the child and believe this supports resilience and helps to develop personality, talents and abilities irrespective of ethnicity, culture or religion, home language, family background, learning difficulties, disabilities or gender.

All schools are involved in the UNICEF Rights Respecting Schools Programme.

Roles and responsibilities

Our Governance and Reporting Structure



Main Sub-committees to the Trust Board

PACT currently has four Board Committees:

- Finance, Resource and Audit Committee (FRAC) including sub-committee, Pay and Remuneration Committee (PRC)
- Quality, Welfare and Standards Committee (QWASC)
- Ethics and Sustainability Committee (EASC)
- Performance Review Group (including external member) that oversees the performance management of Executive Leadership (PRG)

Local Academy Committees (LAC)

The local academy committee serves as a knowledgeable resource within the community, offering a distinct perspective and the delegated duty to both assist and question the school and the Trust. Members of the local academy committee act as the Trustees' representatives in the community, providing valuable insight and feedback.

In line with the Trust's Scheme of Delegation, representatives are responsible for supporting school improvement and engaging with school leaders and the community in order to ensure that all pupils and students reach their full potential, regardless of background or level of ability.

Fully supported by the Trust's Board of Trustees and Governance team, representatives are responsible for:

- knowing, understanding and challenging pupils' overall progress and attainment. This means being clear about where the attainment gaps are, what provisions are in place to close those gaps and the impact of those provisions
- monitoring child protection and welfare in the school including attendance, behaviour, suspensions and permanent exclusions
- hearing any appeals as part of the complaints process and sitting on discipline panels in relation to suspensions and permanent exclusions
- evaluating their own effectiveness through the committee action plan, annual impact assessments, skills audits and governance professional facilitated self-evaluation

School visits help representatives to understand more about their school and the reality of school life. We encourage representatives to take on specific roles (Link or Lead Representatives), dependent upon their personal interests, professional skills, and experiences within the community.

Non-delegate elements of PACT's enhanced next-generation governance model

Student Ambassadors

As part of our commitment to inclusive and future-focused governance, we are proud to introduce Student Ambassadors to our local academy committees. Each year, two

students at each school will be appointed to represent the student voice, ensuring that young people have a platform to contribute to discussions that affect their education and school community. Student Ambassadors will respond to questions from committee representatives, share insights from their peers, and play an active role in shaping a culture of next generation governance across the Trust.

Shadow Board

PACT's Shadow Board is an internal advisory group that mirrors a formal governance board, giving staff from across the organisation a voice in strategic discussions. It provides fresh perspectives, promotes inclusive leadership, and helps inform decision-making while developing future leaders.

Review

The Governance Charter shall operate from the effective date in respect of the Trust and all schools. The Trustees will review the Governance Charter at least on an annual basis, and alter any provision of it. In considering any material changes to this Governance Charter or any framework on which it is based, the Trustees will have regard to and give due consideration of any views of the Executive Leaders and Academy Committees.