Finance Committee Terms of Reference

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DOCUMENT CONTROL

Unless there are legislative or regulatory changes in the interim, this policy will be reviewed every year. Should no substantive changes be required at that point, the policy will move to the next review cycle.

Version	Date	Changes
1.0	01/2026	This is a new document, created due to a change of committee structure

1. Purpose

1.1. Our Finance Committee is a committee of our Board of Trustees established under our Articles of Association.

1.2. The committee is established to meet the requirements of the Academy Trust Handbook.

1.3. The committee's role is advisory to the Board unless specific decision-making authority has been delegated to it by our Board.

1.1. The purpose of the Finance Committee is to support our Board in fulfilling its statutory and fiduciary responsibilities by providing effective oversight, scrutiny and challenge in relation to:

- 1.1.1. financial strategy and sustainability.
- 1.1.2. budget setting and monitoring.
- 1.1.3. financial planning and reserves.
- 1.1.4. estates and capital investment.
- 1.1.5. procurement and value for money.
- 1.1.6. technology and digital infrastructure investment.
- 1.1.7. the financial implications of strategic decision making.

1.2. The committee will support the Board in maintaining the trust as a going concern and ensuring that public funds are used with regularity, propriety and value for money.

2. Membership

2.1. The committee shall consist of five trustees appointed by our Board.

2.2. Our Board shall appoint the Chair of the committee.

2.3. The Chair of the Board may serve on the committee but should not chair it where this would create an inappropriate concentration of responsibility.

2.4. The Accounting Officer (CEO), Chief Financial Officer and other relevant staff shall attend meetings as required to provide information and participate in discussions but shall not be members of the committee.

2.5. The committee may invite external advisers or members of staff to attend meetings where specialist advice or information is required.

2.6. At least one member of the committee should have significant financial management experience.

2.7. Any trustee may attend meetings of the committee as an observer.

3. Quorum

3.1. The quorum for meetings shall be three trustees.

3.2. No vote may be taken at a meeting unless the meeting is quorate.

4. Meetings

4.1. The committee shall meet at least twice per academic year and more frequently where required.

4.2. Meeting dates shall be agreed annually.

4.3. Agenda and papers will normally be circulated at least seven days in advance of the meeting.

4.4. Meetings may take place in person or through electronic communication arrangements.

5. Clerking and Administration

5.1. Our Head of Governance shall clerk or arrange the clerking of the committee.

5.2. The clerk will:

- 5.2.1. convene meetings.
- 5.2.2. circulate agendas and papers.
- 5.2.3. take and retain accurate minutes.

5.2.4. maintain a record of actions and decisions.

5.2.5. ensure approved minutes are reported to our Board.

6. Authority

6.1. The committee is authorised by our Board to:

6.1.1. investigate any activity within its terms of reference.

6.1.2. request any information from any employee, officer or trustee of our trust.

6.1.3. obtain outside legal or professional advice, with prior consultation of our Accounting Officer and/or Chair of our Board where appropriate.

6.1.4. make recommendations to our Board on all matters within its remit.

7. Responsibilities

7.1. Financial Strategy and Sustainability

7.2. The committee shall:

7.2.1. review and recommend to the Board the trust's financial strategy.

7.2.2. support the Board in ensuring the trust remains financially sustainable and a going concern.

7.2.3. review medium-term financial plans and forecasts.

7.2.4. monitor key financial performance indicators.

7.2.5. consider the financial implications of strategic proposals.

7.2.6. review benchmarking and efficiency information.

7.2.7. support our Board in ensuring effective stewardship of public funds.

7.2.8. monitor compliance with the Academy Trust Handbook and our trust's financial procedures.

7.3. Financial Controls and Compliance

7.4. The committee shall:

7.4.1. review the effectiveness of our trust's financial controls and procedures.

7.4.2. monitor compliance with delegated authorities and approval limits.

7.4.3. review related party transactions and ensure compliance with regulatory requirements.

7.4.4. ensure procurement complies with relevant public procurement regulations and achieves value for money.

7.4.5. monitor compliance with value for money principles.

7.4.6. review financial policies delegated to the committee by our Board.

7.4.7. receive and scrutinise regular management accounts, including income and expenditure, cash flow and variance analysis.

7.5. Reserves and Investments

7.6. The committee shall:

7.6.1. review our trust's reserves policy annually and recommend it to our Board.

7.6.2. monitor the level and use of reserves.

7.6.3. review investment arrangements and cash management strategies;

7.6.4. ensure reserves are managed appropriately to support sustainability and strategic priorities.

7.7. Estates, Capital and Infrastructure

7.8. The committee shall:

7.8.1. monitor the financial implications of our trust's estates strategy.

7.8.2. review capital investment proposals and funding arrangements.

7.8.3. oversee the financial management of capital projects.

7.8.4. monitor the use of School Condition Allocation and other capital funding.

7.8.5. ensure appropriate financial oversight of estates maintenance and compliance expenditure.

7.8.6. consider long-term estate sustainability and prioritisation.

7.9. Technology and Digital Infrastructure

7.10. The committee shall:

7.10.1. monitor investment in technology and digital infrastructure.

7.10.2. review major ICT procurement and infrastructure projects.

7.10.3. ensure digital investment aligns DfE digital and technology standards.

7.10.4. receive assurance regarding cyber security investment and resilience planning.

7.11. Reporting

7.12. The committee shall:

7.12.1. report regularly to our Board on matters within its remit.

7.12.2. provide appropriate recommendations to our Board.

7.12.3. escalate any significant financial concerns to our Board and Audit and Risk Committee promptly.

8. Delegated Authority

8.1. The committee may exercise delegated authority only where specifically authorised by our Board and set out within our trust's Scheme of Delegation.

8.2. Our Board remains overall responsibility for:

8.2.1. approval of the annual budget.

8.2.2. approval of annual accounts.

8.2.3. approval of the reserves policy.

8.2.4. approval of significant financial commitment beyond delegated limits.

8.2.5. overall financial accountability.

9. Review of Effectiveness

9.1. The committee shall review its effectiveness and these Terms of Reference annually and recommend any changes to our Board.

10. Related Documents

10.1. The committee will operate in accordance with:

10.1.1. the Academy Trust Handbook.

10.1.2. our trust's Articles of Association.

10.1.3. our trust's Scheme of Delegation.

10.1.4. our trust's finance policy.

10.1.5. all relevant legislation and regulatory guidance.

10.2. The committee's role is primarily to provide detailed financial scrutiny and oversight on behalf of our Board and to make recommendations to our Board