



AVANTI SCHOOLS TRUST

Governance Handbook

A Guide to Trust Governance for Trustees and
Members of School Stakeholder Committees





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Welcome



Foreword from the Chair of the Board Trustees: Welcome to Avanti

I am delighted to extend a very warm welcome to the Avanti community.

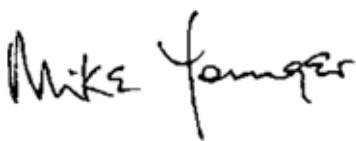
Being an Avanti Trustee or SSC Member is a privilege. We are part of a team of volunteers committed to the values and principles of Avanti who give their time and energy to the Trust and/or to our schools, for the benefit of the education of our young people. We work in partnership across the schools to improve the life chances of our young people.

The Trust is now responsible for the educational outcomes and wellbeing of more than 5,000 children, the livelihoods of over 600 employees and the annual management of £8 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 SSC Members.

This Handbook has been produced to support Trustees and SSC Members 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 SSCs. 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 Avanti 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 SSC Member 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 included with this Handbook.

I would like to thank you, whether as an established or a prospective Trustee or SSC Member, 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.



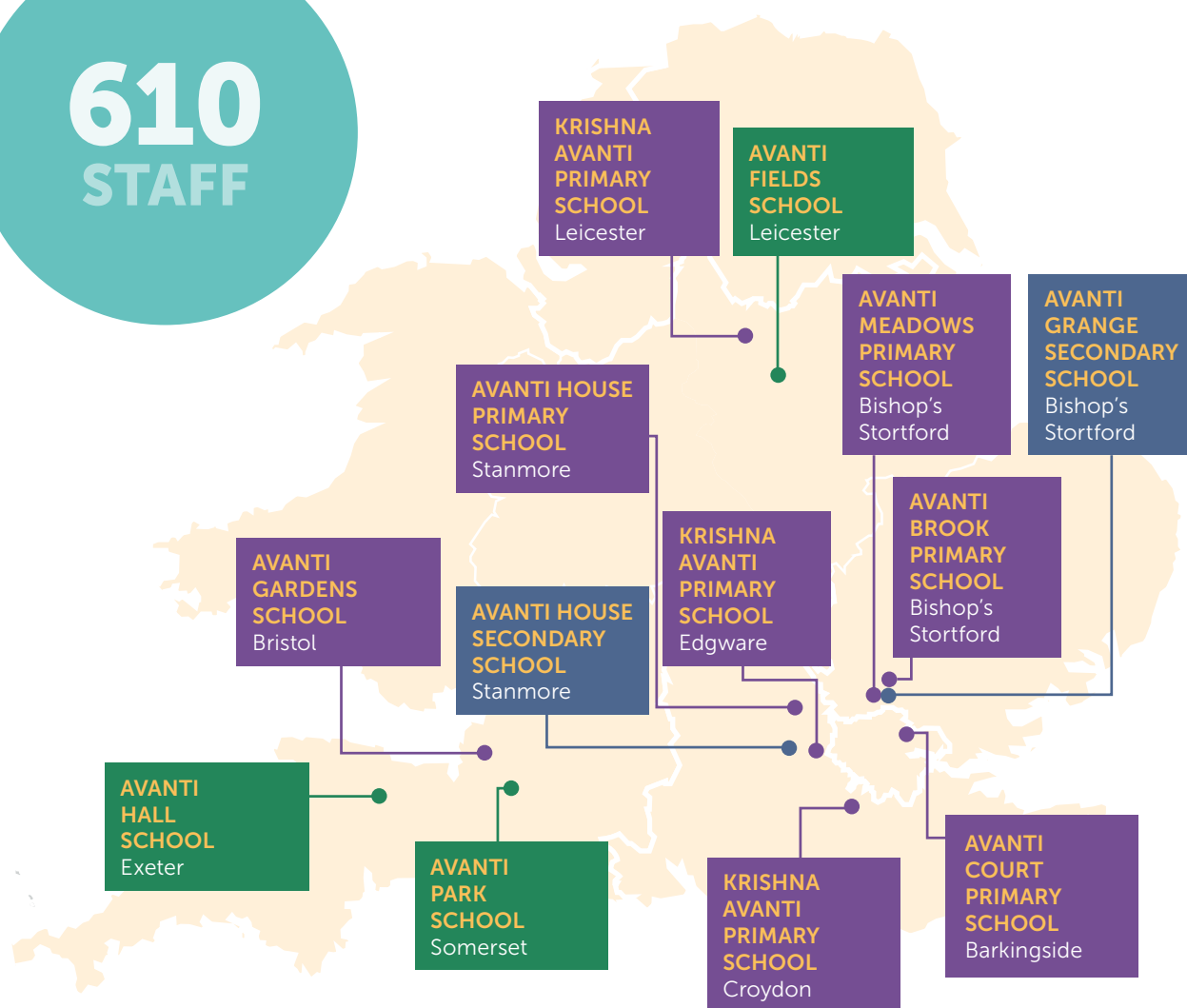
Chair of the Avanti Trust Board.

Purpose of this handbook

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STUDENTS

The purpose of this Handbook is to ensure that Trust Members, Trustees, Members of School Stakeholder Committees (SSCs) and all staff are clear about the structure of the Trust, including the respective authority, responsibilities, decision-making powers and procedures governing each tier of Trust governance. It also explains the roles and expectations of SSC Members, of which we will soon have more than 100.

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STAFF



Introduction to the Trust

The Avanti School Trust (the “MAT”) is a charitable company limited by guarantee.

The Trust has entered into a Master Funding Agreement with the Department for Education (DfE) and a Supplemental Funding Agreement in respect of each academy. Legally, the MAT is responsible to the DfE (and to the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)) for delivery of commitments under those Funding Agreements.

The DfE/ESFA require all MATs to comply with a range of regulations and guidance, much (but not all) of which is set out in the Academy Trust Handbook issued by ESFA and updated annually.

Additionally, the MAT is subject to the requirements of the Trust Articles of Association, (the “Articles”) which in summary, determine how the Trust is structured and constituted and the essential rules for how the Trust conducts itself.

Taken together, the Funding Agreements, Academy Trust Handbook, Trust Articles of Association and good practice guidance issued from time to time by e.g. The National Governance Association (NGA), establish the basis for the good governance of the Trust and to which the Trust Board is wholly committed.

CURRENT SCHOOL INFORMATION				
School	LA	Date joined Trust/opening	Age range	Ofsted grade
Krishna Avanti, Harrow	Harrow	2008	3-11	Good
Krishna Avanti, Leicester	Leicester	2011	4-11	Good
Avanti Court	Redbridge	2011	3-11	Good
Avanti House Primary	Harrow	2012	4-11	Good
Avanti House Secondary	Harrow	2012	11-18	Good
Krishna Avanti, Croydon	Croydon	2016	4-11	Good
Avanti Fields	Leicester	2018	3-11	N/A
Avanti Park	Somerset	2019	4-14	N/A
Avanti Gardens	Bristol	2019	4-11	N/A
Avanti Hall	Devon	2019	4-16	N/A
Avanti Meadows	Hertfordshire	2021	4-11	N/A
Avanti Grange	Hertfordshire	2022	11-18	N/A
Avanti Brook	Hertfordshire	2023	4-11	N/A

The structure of the Trust

Members

Trust Articles require that there should be a minimum of three Members. (In line with the minimum preference of the DfE the Trust currently has five Members).

The Articles allow Members to appoint additional Members but there is no set term of office: once appointed a Member remains in office until they resign (unless they are removed by a majority of the other Members).

The NGA describe the role of Members as “the guardians of the governance of the Trust”. Members sit at the top of the Trust governance structure. Their role is discreet and separate from that of Trustees, their focus being to ensure that the Trust Board (which reports to the Members) is performing well, that the charitable objectives of the Trust (in summary advancing education for public benefit) are being met in line with the Trust Vision and ensuring/seeking assurance that standards of governance across the Trust are high. Members do not have any role in, or responsibilities for,

the day-to-day strategic or operation of the MAT or the Academies. They do however have specific powers to:

- Appoint other Members;
- Amend the Articles of Association;
- Change the name of the Trust;
- Appoint or remove Trustees;
- Approve the appointment of the CEO as a Trustee;
- Appointment (or remove) Trust External Auditors;
- Dissolve the Trust.

Where required, Members normally make decisions by written resolution procedure rather than through a physical meeting. However, where the Trust Board consider it appropriate, a general meeting of the Members may be called to transact business. Where possible, any general meeting will precede a Trust Board meeting.



The Trust Board – Trustee

Company Articles specify that Members may appoint a maximum of 15 Trustees, all of whom sit on the Board together with the Chief Executive (CEO) who is an “ex-officio” Trustee. As an “ex-officio” Trustee the CEO remains a Trustee throughout their tenure as CEO. Subject to that, Trustees are appointed for a term of four years and may be re-appointed.

The Board is accountable to the DfE and ESFA for the performance of all Academies within the Trust. Trustees are charity trustees (within the terms of section 97(1) of the Charities Act 1993). They are responsible for setting the strategic direction and Vision of the Trust and for the overall control, management and administration of the MAT. Trustees and SSC Members are subject to the Trust Code of Conduct which includes the Nolan Principles of Standards in Public Life, breach of which can lead to suspension or dismissal. All Trustees and SSC Members are required annually to confirm their adherence to the Code. New Trustees and SSC Members are asked to sign a formal Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

The Board meets a minimum of six times each Academic Year and operates within the Trust Scheme of Delegation (“the Scheme” – see Delegations below).

Trust Board Committees

Trust Articles enable the Board to appoint Committees. These include School Stakeholder Committees (SSCs) which legally, are Committees of the Board. In addition to SSCs, the Board has appointed 5 Strategic Committees, the purpose of which is to support the Trust Board by undertaking the necessary level of detailed work that enables the Board to meet its responsibilities. The Committees are:

- **Audit and Risk Committee**
 - meets termly or more frequently as required, reporting to the Board on risk and any concerns arising from internal audit. Through the Trust Strategic Risk Register and the process of Internal Audit, the Committee reviews the effectiveness of Trust systems and procedures and assesses potential risks to the Trust arising from internal and external developments. The Committee sets the Annual Programme of Internal Audit and reviews the reports arising from this, ensuring that where required, appropriate actions are taken by the Executive. The Committee also receives and considers the annual report from the External Auditor including consideration of the Annual Report and Accounts in readiness for formal sign-off by the Board.
- **Finance Committee**
 - meets termly or more frequently if required. This Committee undertakes the detailed work necessary to review and monitor management of Trust finances. It is important to remember that legally, Trustees – through the Board – are accountable and responsible for the effective management of all Trust finances, including Trust Reserves which are pooled. The Committee reviews reports and makes recommendations to the Board on financial matters, policies and standards, including the annual Budget of the Trust and each school and management of Trust finances and reserves. The Committee alerts the Board to any financial and/or resource concerns and advises them of forecast financial trends.
- **Learning, Teaching and Standards Committee**
 - meets termly or more frequently as required, taking a strategic view and monitoring Academy performance and outcomes, school improvement and curriculum developments etc. The Committee is responsible for the overall quality of education, education policy, Safeguarding, SEND, Pupil Premium etc and other issues and themes relating to educational provision and improvement issues.
- **People, Compliance and Governance Committee** – as the name implies, this Committee is responsible for policies and issues relating to staffing, oversight of Trust staffing structures and related matters, compliance matters (e.g. Formal Complaints, GDPR etc) and Trust Governance (including SSCs) arrangements and effectiveness. The Committee meets termly or more frequently as required.
- **Remuneration Committee** – meets termly and has overall responsibility for Trust Pay policy, procedures and staff terms and conditions related to this. The Committee considers and reports to the Board on these matters including recommending any proposed changes to existing arrangements.
- **School Stakeholder Committees (SSCs)**
 - see pp 8–13.

The decisions of each Committee, taken under their delegations, are reported to the Trust Board (via the Minutes of their meetings) by the respective Committee Chairs. Where required by the Scheme of Delegation, Committees make recommendations to Trustees for determination by the full Trust Board.

Delegations

The Articles permit Trustees to delegate functions. The Trust Scheme of Delegation, ("the Scheme") (available on Governor Hub) which must be formally approved by the Trust Board and reviewed annually, provides the framework for the strategic, operational and governance management and oversight of the Trust.

Under the Scheme, Trustees retain ultimate responsibility for the conduct and performance of the Trust. Some decisions are reserved to the Board. All delegations may be extended or withdrawn at the discretion of the Board. Responsibility for all operational matters is delegated to the Executive which must:

- Seek guidance from the Board on strategic matters, resource use and the development and regular review of the Trust Strategic Plan;
- Report to the Board and Board Committees on developments and progress in relation to the Strategic Plan, many aspects of performance, actions taken under the Scheme of Delegation and issues of high risk/impact. This includes Safeguarding matters, the effectiveness of which underpins everything the Trust does; and
- Explore issues with Trustees, including proposals for and development or review of key policies, management and Trust governance and structure etc.

The Trust Scheme is in three parts:

- Delegations to Trust Board Committees;
- Operational delegations to the CEO; and
- Operational delegations by the CEO to the Executive Management Team

Operational Delegations

The MAT Board holds the Executive to account for the exercise of delegated operational responsibilities : it does this through oversight, assurance reporting and occasional reviews of key issues. Details of delegations are set out in the Trust Scheme of Delegation and are summarised in the Accountabilities Framework.

The Central MAT

The Central MAT comprises the CEO, Finance Director and Education Director. The Executive Management structure is set out at Appendix A.

The Executive Management Team oversee the teams of educationalists and business professionals whose role is to support Trust academies, as well as ensuring compliance with regulatory and legislative requirements for the Trust as a whole. In addition to School Improvement and Educational Support, the central MAT team provide a broad range of professional support services across the Trust:

- Estates
- Finance
- Governance, Compliance, Assurance and Trustee/SSC Members Support
- Health and Safety
- Human Resources
- IT Services
- Procurement



School Stakeholder Committees (SSCs)

SC Constitution and Membership – with the exception of the Principal, who is an ex-officio member of the SSC, all SSC Members are elected/appointed for a term of three years. Subject to this, there are four categories of SSC Member:

Parent/Carer members (2) – must be elected* (or appointed if an election is not possible due to the number of candidates).

Community members (2): these individuals are identified, nominated, approved and appointed by the SSC (subject to a formal procedure – details available on Governor Hub). Community Governors may be individuals from the local community with connections to or who work with or support the school in some way, the intention being that they are appointed from e.g. local business, the Community Police Officer, the local Parish or Community Council, local voluntary bodies or churches and/or partners with whom the school might work closely. Parents or carers of children at the school may be appointed as Community Members. An existing or former Parent Member whose child no longer attends the school, but who has made and is willing to continue to make a significant contribution in support of the school, may be appointed as a Community Member.

Staff members (2) – are elected* by the staff of the school. Each SSC must include two Staff Members (one elected by teaching staff, the other by support staff). Staff Governors are not representatives or delegates on behalf of their colleagues – once elected they have the same responsibilities as other SSC Members save that they have limited discretion to discuss staffing matters. Staff Governors play a useful role in explaining staff perspectives on issues discussed by the SSC and, subject always to confidentiality issues, reporting back to their colleagues on the items discussed at SSC meetings. Staff Members are required to declare a direct interest and withdraw from meetings when staffing issues or conditions of service are being considered. Failure to comply with this requirement may lead to suspension or removal from the SSC.

*SSC elections are managed by the school. Formal procedures are in place for this (available on Governor Hub).

Board appointed Members – a minimum of two (maximum of four) appointed by the Trust Board.

Trustees – are entitled to serve on any SSC but are not appointed as a matter of routine.





SSCs : How they work to support the Trust

SSCs meet formally three times each year (once each term). The Constitution and Terms of Reference (delegations) of the SSCs are included in the Scheme of Delegation and are available on Governor Hub together with the supporting Annex which provides further details on the expectations of SSCs and SSC Members.

At inspection, Ofsted are likely to look for evidence of an active SSC. It is important to evidence this at formal SSC meetings: SSC Governance Professionals (Clerks) are therefore instructed to ensure that relevant questions and constructive challenge from SSC Members are captured in the minutes. To support SSC Members in this important role, an SSC Member Toolkit is being developed. The School Principal (an ex-officio SSC Member) works closely with the SSC Chair to ensure an active and engaged SSC.

Agenda for scheduled termly SSC meetings are set centrally for local adaptation. The agenda format and content are aligned with the remit of the SSC. Designed to support SSC Members, the agenda enables the SSC to evidence, through discussion of the issues listed and the questions and challenges to, and responses from, the Principal, that the SSC is fulfilling its remit and actively engaging with and supporting the school.

A key aspect of SSCs is to capture and represent to the Board, through discussion at formal SSC meetings, their local parent/carer, community and pupil voice. All Academies within the Trust enjoy a level of local autonomy. It is important that the Board is advised of relevant local issues and concerns arising at, or which may affect, the school. Trustees are reliant on SSCs drawing any issues or concerns to their attention. The mechanism for this is to record concerns in the SSC Minutes. The Trust Governance Officer is alerted by the SSC Clerk to any issues raised. The Chair of the SSC may of course raise issues with the Governance Officer directly.

Each SSC must appoint a lead Safeguarding Member. This is a key responsibility, the purpose being to provide assurance to the SSC, and to the Board, that the Safeguarding policies and practices of the Trust are being followed. (The Board appoints a lead Safeguarding Trustee whose role includes liaison throughout the year with SSC safeguarding leads).



Developing the role of SSC Members: Getting to know your school – understanding performance

In addition to the Lead Safeguarding Member, SSCs are asked to appoint lead (or LINK) Members for SEND, Data and Outcomes, Health and Safety and Curriculum or Key Stages. All lead SSC Members should develop at least an appreciation of these issues, for which training is provided. (A Training Programme for Trustees and SSC Members is currently being developed, a draft of which is available in Governor Hub. SSCs should consider appointing an SSC Training LINK whose role would be to co-ordinate and track training for the SSC as a group, for individual SSC members and supporting the induction process for new SSC Members. The role also includes leading the regular skills audit exercise and supporting the related SSC effectiveness review.

The roles of LINK Members are subject to an agreed job role/description to be approved by the Trust Governance Officer in consultation with the Chair of the PGC Committee. (Details of established LINK roles are available on Governor Hub). The purpose of this is to support the lead in their role and to ensure there is clarity between their role and operational

responsibilities, on which lead roles must not encroach. Subject to this, SSCs are free to appoint at their discretion and within the Scheme of Delegation, lead SSC Members for other issues that reflect the local priorities of the School Improvement Plan and/or issues that may arise locally from time to time.

Visits and LINK Members

The contribution of SSC leads and other SSC Members can be developed through, for example, an Annual Programme of Governor Visits, to be agreed by the SSC Chair together with the Principal and focused around the school improvement targets for the year. These can be designed either for “pairs” of SSC Members who, subject to prior agreement with the Principal (or subject lead), can meet with staff to explore pupil progress etc. OR a group visit to familiarise Members with particular issues. Health and Safety, website compliance, parental engagement and governor training are other areas in which an SSC may wish to appoint a lead Member. To assist SSC leads, a formal reporting template together with guidance for Visits is available on Governor Hub

Informal “Engagement” Meetings

SSC Members have commented that, whilst they recognise the importance of the formal SSC termly meeting, the frequency of formal meetings and the necessary focus of those meetings on the formal business of the agenda can mitigate against their developing a thorough understanding of school life and issues.

As a means of addressing this, SSCs may wish to consider holding an occasional or a termly informal “Engagement Meeting”. The purpose of this would be to provide the opportunity for SSC Members to really get to know their school and to meet informally to review and discuss in depth aspects of school performance, policy and improvement. The focus of each “Engagement Meeting” would be a matter for the SSC Chair to agree with SSC member colleagues in consultation with the Principal, who may agree to facilitate the meetings or may nominate a colleague to do so (e.g. a subject leader or the school SENCo).

The Principal and colleagues have demanding workloads. It is therefore important that if the SSC support the “Engagement Meeting” approach, the meetings (and school Visits) are programmed well in advance in agreement with the Principal. (Ideally an annual Programme for the meetings and Visits should be set early in each Academic Year). The meetings and Visits may be held in school time so that SSC Members can gain first-hand experience of the workings and practices of the school and the challenges that teachers face day to day. The meetings/Visits also provide an opportunity to meet and receive parent/carer, community and pupil feedback about e.g. school performance, teaching and learning, pupil behaviour etc.

Options that SSCs may wish to consider for these meetings include:

- Keeping children safe (KCSiE);
- The learning environment and resources;
- Working with parents and carers – parental engagement;
- Exploring Ofsted inspection criteria: for example, what e.g. Quality of Education, Teaching and Learning, Leadership and Management, Personal Development and (where applicable) Early Years, means in practice;
- Safeguarding;
- The curriculum (including Intent, Implementation Impact and enrichment);
- SEND provision.

These and other key issues might be appropriate for a “deep dive” discussion at an informal meeting. SSCs are not directly accountable for these aspects – it is the Avanti Trust Board that holds schools to account. However, Trustees believes strongly that SSC Members should have a good appreciation of these issues and that as a collective, SSCs have a voice and should have the opportunity to say how they perceive that these issues affect their school and how they view the standard of provision.

Trustees also believe that developing an appreciation of these and other matters will support SSC Members in understanding the particular challenges to performance that their school may face. The informal meetings could include a briefing or a discussion with a question and answer session – perhaps to be timed immediately prior to Parents Evenings or School Events as a means of providing opportunities to relate to and obtain the views of parents and carers and of raising the profile of the SSC within the school.



Expectations of an Avanti SSC Member

A key requirement of SSC Members is a genuine and deep interest in the learning, development and enhancement of the life chances of our young people. In submitting Expressions of Interest to serve on an SSC, prospective SSC Members are asked to demonstrate their commitment to supporting their school and the Trust and to upholding the Values, Vision and Ethos of the Trust with the best interests of our children at heart.

So that SSC Members can challenge their Principal knowledgeably and in the right way, and that SSCs can seek the necessary assurances around performance, it is important that over time, they develop:

- An understanding and awareness of Year Groups and Disadvantaged Groups – and as related issues, the purpose and impact of Pupil Premium and other funding streams and, (Primary Schools only) Sports Premium funding;
- The ability to act as a ‘critical friend’ to the Principal – showing positive support for staff but also challenging appropriately by asking for explanation or further detail of the performance information provided in the termly report of the Principal. SSC Members should always consider how the school is progressing and performing in relation to performance targets and the School Self Evaluation (SEF) and School Improvement Plan (SIP);
- An understanding of the Ofsted inspection process. Whilst it is likely than an Ofsted Inspection Team will wish to discuss Trust/school governance and performance with a Trustee, it is also probable that they will wish to meet and discuss these issues with SSC Chairs and Members. Discussion can often focus on the understanding and knowledge of a Trustee or SSC Member of the current progress and attainment of the school, school improvement actions and Trust policies. You should therefore be prepared to take part in Ofsted inspections, for which you will need to have up-to-date knowledge and understanding of the school, its progress and challenges and the effectiveness of Trust governance. In addition to the educational aspects of an inspection, Ofsted judgements take a view on the quality and effectiveness of governance – part of the Ofsted Leadership and Management criteria which can include an assessment of the support and active involvement of Trustees and SSC Members. If Ofsted judge this to be weak, the school is at risk of being judged as Special Measures irrespective of the excellence of pupil outcomes.
- An awareness of Trust and school policies that set out a school’s approach to various areas of School life. All Trust policies are available on Governor Hub. Local school policies are available on request from the school.

SSC Members are expected to commit to:

- **Compliance with the Trust Code of Conduct*.** Reviewed annually, this includes annual declaration of interests (see separate guidance note on Governor Hub). Trustees and SSC Members are required to abide by the Code which they are asked to sign each year. Advice on the Code (and on Declarations of Interest) is available from the Trust Governance Officer and/or the SSC Clerk. Breaches of the Code are taken very seriously and may lead to suspension or removal from the SSC or the Trust Board.
- **Attending, as far as practically possible, the formal termly meeting* (and where arranged, the informal “Engagement Meeting”).** Apologies for absence from formal meetings and the reasons for this must be submitted to the Clerk or the Chair prior to the meeting and recorded in the minutes. Three consecutive absences (accepted or otherwise by the SSC) may result in removal from the SSC. The SSC may decline to accept an apology where SSC members agree that the reasons for absence are not acceptable;
- **Prepare for formal meetings by reading the agenda and supporting papers in advance*.** These are posted on Governor Hub seven days prior to each formal meeting;
- **Participating in the Programme of Training** provided by the Trust, some aspects of which are mandatory*. All Trustees and SSC Members are encouraged to take part in training, which is provided free of charge. An annual Training Programme (which highlights mandatory training including Safeguarding training) is available on Governor Hub.

As part of their support for Trustees/SSC Members, the Trust subscribes to the National Governance Association (NGA), an independent charity supported by Government representing and supporting governors (SSC Members), Trustees and Governance Professionals in MATs, academies and maintained schools in England. The goal of NGA is to improve the wellbeing of children and young people by increasing the effectiveness and promoting high standards of governance throughout the sector. Through the Trust subscription, all Trustees/SSC Members have a personal account with NGA. This provides access to the NGA Learning LINK, a series

of generic training modules, many of which are helpful to Avanti Trustees and SSC Members.

In addition to training, benefits of NGA membership include access to the members content on the NGA online guidance centre, receipt of "Governing Matters" magazine (six editions each year – this should be shared/circulated amongst all SSC Members) and a weekly e-newsletter during term time. NGA guides are available at discounted prices and one free place at NGA member events and conferences is also available. (Chairs are asked to advise SSC colleagues about these events and to ensure that they have an opportunity to attend – perhaps by establishing a rota. Those who attend NGA Events are asked to report back to their SSCs). Trustees/SSC Members should contact the Trust Governance Officer if they do not receive information from NGA or if they have difficulty accessing their personal NGA and/or Learning Link login/accounts

- **Visit the school** at least once per term during school hours and to complete and submit a brief Visit Report (see Visits Section above). All Visits must be agreed in advance with the Principal;
- **Support regular governance effective reviews** including SSC skills audits*. Good governance requires the Trust regularly to review its own effectiveness, arrangements for which are being developed. (Trusts are also recommended to arrange an independent external review of governance effectiveness every three – five years. Additionally, Ofsted may carry out, at its discretion, a review of Trust Governance. SSCs will form an important part of these reviews; and
- If possible, **participate as a member of a Panel*** (e.g. formal complaint, disciplinary, admissions appeal, exclusion etc.). Panels are an important aspect of Trust governance. They are appointed for a variety of reasons including formal complaint meetings, student and staff disciplinary hearings and appeals and Exclusion Hearings. Subject to training, all Trustees and SSC Members are encouraged to register their interest in serving on these Panels. The aim is to establish a list of Trustees and SSC Members for selection (by the Trust Governance Officer) to serve on Panels as and when they are needed. This approach provides independence of decision making on the part of the Panels and represents good governance when compared to the practice of Panels being formed from amongst SSC Members from a school in which an incident, complaint or other issue has arisen.

* a commitment also expected of Trustees.

- If you are interested in serving on a Panel please contact the Trust Governance Officer stuart.mcdonough@avanti.org.uk

SSC Chairs and Vice-Chairs

SSC Chairs and Vice-Chairs are appointed annually. The initial appointment of the Chair and Vice-Chair is subject to the approval of the Trust Board. A list of current SSC Chairs and Vice-Chairs is available on Governor Hub. The SSC Chair plays a vital role in ensuring the effectiveness and active engagement of the SSC. SSC agenda include an item for the Chair to report to the SSC – for example on developments across the Trust, outcomes from regular discussions with the Principal, oversight of SSC training, the arrangements for and outcomes from Visits and, where applicable, the annual Programme of "Engagement meetings".

The Chairs Forum

SSC Chairs meet as a Group with the Chair of the Trust Board and the Trust CEO each term. Each SSC Chair is invited to include an item(s) on the agenda which may include e.g. sharing particular good (or not so good!!!) experience of an SSC or seeking advice/mentoring support from a colleague Chair. Chairs are encouraged to consult their SSC colleagues on the issues they would like to be considered at these meetings.

SSC Differentiated Terms of Reference/Delegations

The Trust Board may occasionally exercise its right to vary the terms of reference/remit of an SSC. This may be due to the Board taking the view that an SSC is not as effective as perhaps it ought to be or where local circumstances may suggest that a variation to the standard remit may be helpful. An example of this is provided by the Joint Primary SSC, Bishop's Stortford. Here, the new Avanti Meadows School is about to establish their SSC and, later in the 2022/23 Academic Year, the new Avanti Brook school will be establishing an SSC. Because the schools and their respective SSCs are so new, the Trust Board took the view that it would be helpful to both SSCs to form a joint SSC, to be overseen by a local SSC Hub Board, which will include representatives from the new Avanti Grange Secondary SSC which is also due to be established in the 2022 Autumn term.



Eligibility criteria for becoming a Trustee or SSC member

All prospective Trustees and Governors are required to confirm that they meet the eligibility criteria, which is a statutory requirement (available on Governor Hub and provided to all prospective Trustees and SSC Members). Details are provided to potential SSC candidates by the school. (Separate arrangements are in place for Trustees).

The procedure for appointment as an SSC Member invites prospective candidates to complete an initial Expression of Interest (Eoi) on which they are asked to explain (maximum 160 words) why they are interested in becoming an SSC Member and the qualities and experience they feel they can bring to the SSC. Completed Eois are provided to the Chair who will often meet prospective SSC Members, together with the Principal, to explain in detail the responsibilities and commitment involved and the skill sets and experience that the SSC is looking to recruit. (All SSCs undertake a regular skills audit which not only informs the Annual Training Programme but also enables the Chair to identify the skills required to fill any skills gap that may arise when a Member leaves the SSC).

Where an election for a Parent/Carer or Staff Governor is required, the Eoi will be included with the ballot paper so that parent/carers (or staff) know a little about who they are voting for. The Eois from prospective Community Governors are presented to the SSC for consideration/approval.



Regulatory Compliance (DBS, S.128 and Right to Work)

All Trustee and SSC Member appointments are subject to satisfactory DBS, S.128 and Right to Work check. Prospective Trustees/SSC Members must therefore complete and meet the requirements of the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS - formerly the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB)). The Trust is also required to undertake a S.128 check (Register of Individuals designated as unfit to work with children) and the Right to Work check. All appointments are made subject to satisfactory clearance of these checks which are also related to Safeguarding.

Safeguarding

Effective safeguarding is at the heart of everything we do. The DBS procedure is designed to support this but, in addition, all Trustees, SSC Members and staff) are required annually to read key parts of the DfE Guidance "Keeping Children Safe in Education" (KCSiE). This is updated each year – Trustees, SSC Members and staff are required to sign a form to confirm that they have read and understood the updated version. Mandatory Training is provided in support of this.

Interests to Declare?

All Trustees and SSC Members must declare any financial or personal interests, whether these are direct or indirect, financial or non-financial. In summary, if an SSC Member has a professional, personal or financial relationship with the school (or the Trust) or with staff of the school (or the Trust), it is possible that they may have, or be perceived to have, a potential conflict of interest in an issue being considered or reported to the SSC (or to the Board or Board Committee). All such interests must be declared annually for recording in the School Register of Interests*. Guidance on Trustee and Governor interests is available on Governor Hub.

*The Register of Interests is published on the Trust (Trustees) and School (SSC Members) websites and available for public inspection.

GIAS

The names of Trustees and SSC Members must also be published on the publicly available DfE "Get Information About Schools" website. (Personal addresses are not revealed on this site).

Governor Hub

The Trust Governance archive and document management system

Governor Hub is the means by which Trustees and SSC Members can access key Trust governance records, including current and previous SSC agenda, supporting papers and minutes. Available from September 2022, the system is fully GDPR compliant and continues to be developed so that it will increasingly provide access to Trustee/SSC Member support, governance advice and the essential documentation that you will need to perform your role effectively.

The agenda and papers for all formal SSC and Panel meetings are provided to SSC Members, Trustees and Members electronically via Governor Hub. Paper copies of documents are not normally provided unless these are specifically requested from the school (or Trust Governance Officer) due to special personal circumstances. The system is easy to navigate and can be accessed at any time via p.c., laptop, tablet or smartphone – so that users are able to view documentation remotely and "on the go". The system also provides links to important DfE and related publications and has other helpful features including an education news briefing (updated daily). Other features include personalised Trustee and SSC Member training and attendance records.

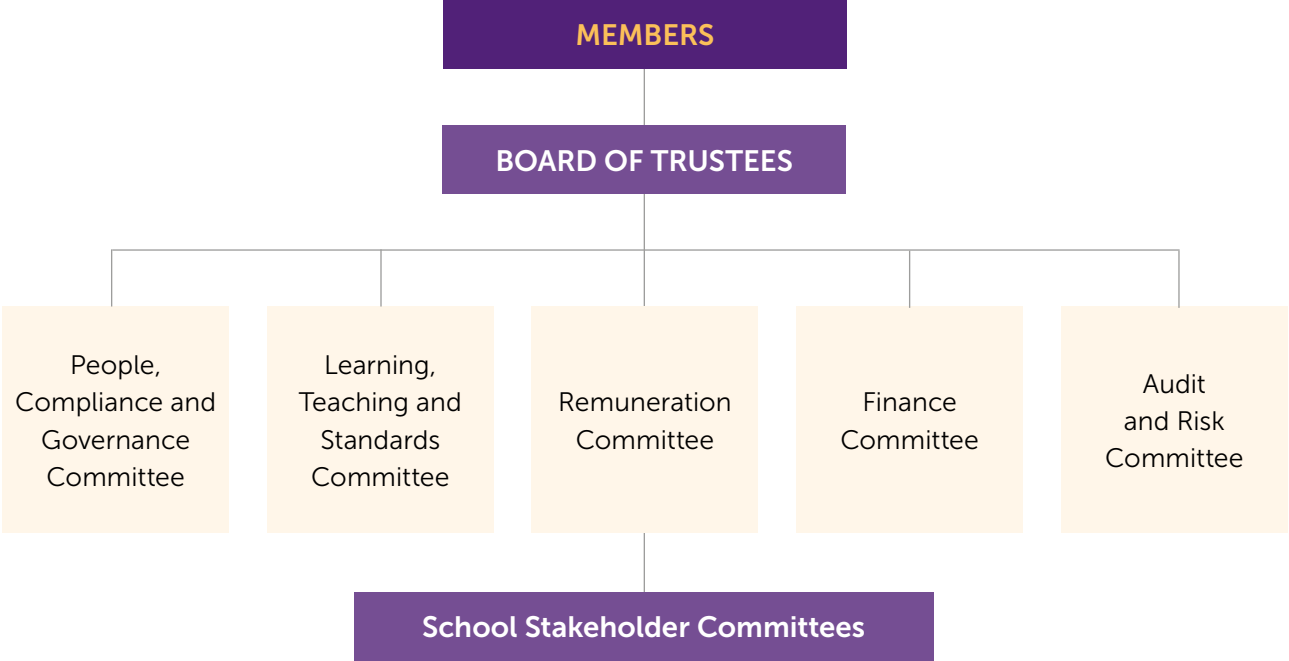
Registration on Governor Hub

On joining the Trust, you will be provided with an email invitation to register on the system. The process is simple and requires you to enter a password of your own choice. Registration is essential because this is the only means by which governance related papers are made available across the Trust. Governor Hub is managed by the Trust Governance Officer who will automatically enrol any new Trustee or SSC Member.

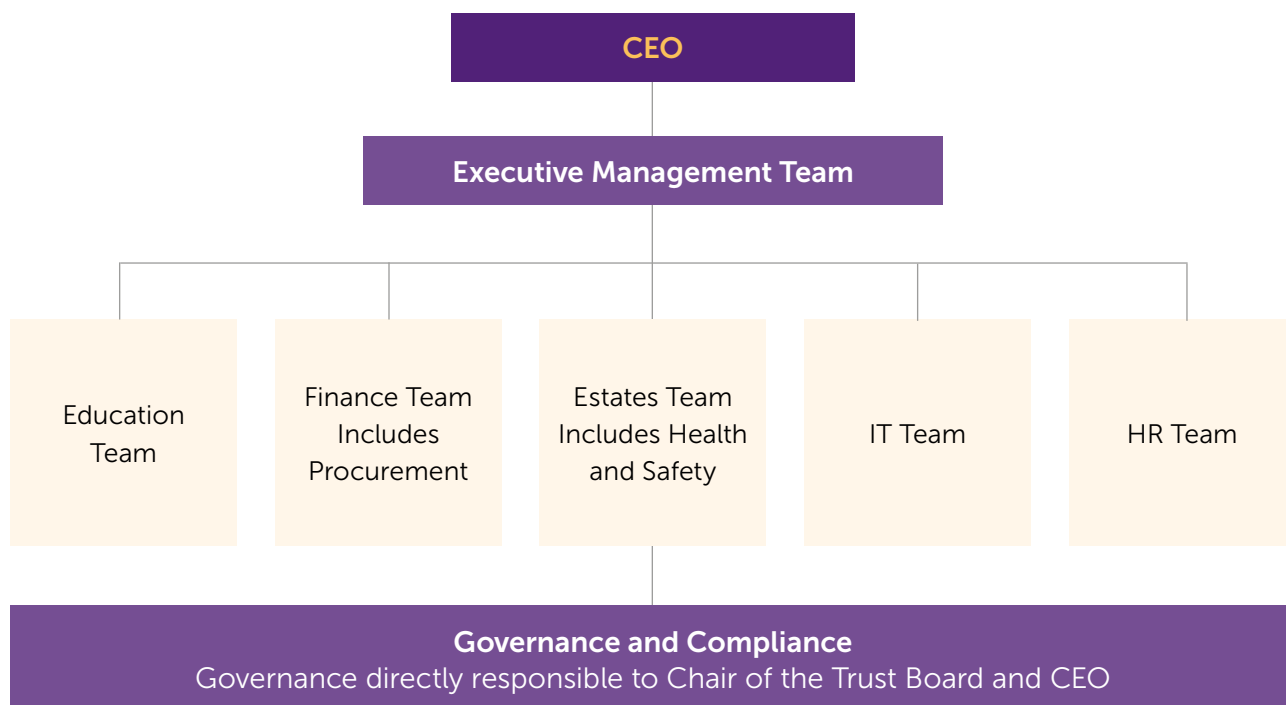
Support and advice

Any Trustee or SSC Members requiring advice, guidance or support about their role should contact the Trust Governance Officer.

Trust Governance Structure



Executive Management Structure



Appendix A: Common Education Acronyms/Glossary of Terms



A	M
A&R Audit and Risk Committee	MAT Multi Academy Trust
ADD Attention Deficit Disorder	MS Main Scale (Teaching Pay Scale Points 1-6)
ADHD Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder	N
AFL Assessment for Learning	NCTL National College for Teaching and Leadership
AHT Assistant Head Teacher	NGA National Governance Association
AP Alternative Provision	NLE National Leader of Education
ARE Age Related Expectations	NLG National Leader of Governance
AWPU Age Weighted Pupil Unit	NPQH National Professional Qualification for Headship
C	NQT Newly Qualified Teacher (first year of teaching post qualification) (now replaced by ECT (Early Career Teacher))
CAMHS Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service	NFER National Foundation for Educational Research
CEO Chief Executive Officer	O
CPD Continued Professional Development	OFSTED Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills.
CRB Criminal Records Bureau(now replaced by DBS checks – see below)	P
D	PAN Published Admissions Number. (Number of pupils to admit each academic year)
DBS Disclosure and Barring Service	PA Persistent Absence
DSL Designated Safeguarding Lead	PEX Permanent Exclusion
DfE Department for Education	PFI Private Finance Initiative
DHT Deputy Head Teacher	PPA Planning, Preparation and Assessment time for teaching staff
E	PP/PPG Pupil Premium/Pupil Premium Grant
EAL English as an Additional Language	PRP Performance Related Pay
EBACC English Baccalaureate	PRU Pupil Referral Unit
ECT Early Career Teacher	PSHE Personal, Social, Health and Education
EET Education Endowment Trust	R
ESFA Education Skills and Funding Agency	RI Requires Improvement (OFSTED grading)
EHCP Education Health Care Plan	RIDDOR Reporting of injuries, diseases and dangerous occurrences Regulations
EMT Executive Management Team	RQT Recently Qualified Teacher
EYFS Early Years Foundation Stage	RWM Reading, Writing and Maths
EWO Education Welfare Officer	RWM Combined - Reading, Writing and Maths combined
F	RSC Regional Schools Commissioner
FFT Fisher Family Trust	S
FSM Free School Meals	SAR Subject Access Request
FTE (Staff) Full-time Equivalent	SCR Single Central Record
FoI Freedom of Information request	SDP School Development Plan
FTE (Pupils) Fixed Term Exclusion	SEF Self-Evaluation Form (for schools)
G	SENCO Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator
GAG General Annual Grant	SEND Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
GDPR General Data Protection Regulations	SLE Specialist Leader of Education
GLD Good Level of Development (usually Early Years pupils)	SLT Senior Leadership Team
H	SMSC Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural
H&S Health and Safety	SPAG Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar
HLTA Higher Level Teaching Assistant	SSC School Stakeholder Committee
HT Headteacher	T
I	TA Teaching Assistant
IDA Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index	TLR Teaching and Learning Responsibility (allowance)
IEP Individual Education Plan	T&L Teaching and Learning
J	U
JNCC Joint Negotiation and Consultation Committee	UPS Upper Pay Scale (UPS1;UPS2;UPS3)
K	UQT Unqualified Teacher
KCSIE Keeping Children Safe in Education	T
KPI Key Performance Indicators	TA Teaching Assistant
KS1 Key Stage 1	TLR Teaching and Learning Responsibility (allowance)
L	T&L Teaching and Learning
LA Local Authority	U
LAC Looked After Children	UPS Upper Pay Scale (UPS1;UPS2;UPS3)
	UQT Unqualified Teacher

A Journey of Self-Discovery



Avanti Schools Trust
Wemborough Road
Stanmore HA7 2EQ

Phone: 020 203 304 334
Website: www.avanti.org.uk



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