

Embark Federation

Scheme of Delegation and Accountability Framework

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1. Trust Context, Vision and Values

Embark Federation is a family of 23 schools across Derbyshire who are working collaboratively to achieve our vision which is to 'create schools that stand out at the heart of their community'. We firmly believe that each school is unique and serves its community and as a Trust we can support schools to be able to do that effectively.

We are guided by our four core values; Family, Integrity, Teamwork and Success and have made all our key decisions as a Trust with these at the forefront of our mind.

Our purpose is to enable all our stakeholders to be able to 'Love Learning, Love Life' and this drives us forward every day.

Family is very important to our Trust. Like every family, we want our young people to feel safe and secure. In our family, we care for each other and hope, dream, learn and play together. Each school has its own unique family feel, but we also want all stakeholders to recognise that they are part of the wider Embark family and to understand and enjoy the benefits this brings.

To us, integrity means 'doing the right thing when nobody is watching'. Trust and respect are key values for us and are inherent in everything we do in our schools and as a federation. We expect everyone in our federation to maintain high standards in all that they do. Integrity involves being open, honest, and showing respect to each other.

We truly believe that we are stronger together, which is why we formed this federation. Sharing ideas and excellent practice, supporting our colleagues to overcome hurdles, and achieving greater things give us great satisfaction. Teamwork creates synergy, and we believe that when we work together, the effect is greater than the sum of our individual efforts. Being part of a team empowers everyone.

For us, success means every young person and member of staff fulfilling their potential. We do not place a ceiling on what can be achieved and strive for everyone in our federation to 'be the best they can be.' While academic success is important to us, we are also passionate about providing the best possible opportunities for the sports, arts and sciences, so young people can discover what makes them tick.

2. Introduction

As a Multi Academy Trust (MAT), the Trust Board of Embark Federation is accountable, in law, for all major decisions concerning their academies.

The Trust Board is not required to carry out all the Trust's governance functions and many can, and should, be delegated to the CEO & Executive Team and established sub-committees. The decision to delegate a function is made by the Trust Board. Without such delegation, the individual or Committee has no power to act.

The Scheme of Delegation (SoD) is the key document that defines lines of responsibility and accountability in a MAT to ensure that Members, Trustees, Trust Board Sub-Committees, School Committees (known locally as Local Governing Teams – LGT's), Executive Leadership and Headteachers understand their role and responsibilities.

This overarching SoD for decision making in the Trust should not be confused with the written Scheme of Delegation of Financial powers referred to in the Academy Trust Handbook.

3. Governance structure and accountability

The Trust Board is responsible for the three core governance functions set out in the Department for Education's (DfE) Academy Trust Handbook:

- **strategic leadership of the academy trust:** the board defines the trust vision for high quality and inclusive education in line with its charitable objects – it establishes and fosters the trust's culture and sets and champions the trust strategy including determining what, if any, governance functions are delegated to the local tier
- **accountability and assurance:** the board has robust effective oversight of the operations and performance of the academy trust, including the provision of education, pupil welfare, overseeing and ensuring appropriate use of funding and effective financial performance and keeping their estate safe and well-maintained
- **engagement:** the board has strategic oversight of relationships with stakeholders – the board involves parents, schools and communities so that decision-making is supported by meaningful engagement

The Trust Board appoint the Chief Executive (CEO), to whom it delegates responsibility for delivery of the vision and strategy of the Trust. The CEO is held to account for the conduct and performance of the Trust, including the performance of the schools and any subsidiary company within the Trust, and for financial management.

The CEO manages the Deputy CEO, Chief People Officer, Head of Office and the Chief Financial Officer, carrying out their performance management and setting their targets.

The Trust Board has established Board Committees with delegated powers for: Finance and Operations; Quality of Education and Standards; Audit & Risk; People and Remuneration and Safeguarding Committee. At least three Trustees sit on each Board Committee, with each having clear, specific Terms of Reference.

Local Governance are known as Local Governing Teams (LGTs) within Embark Federation are also a sub-committee of the Trust Board. LGTs also have clear Terms of Reference detailing the committees' composition, remit and meeting requirements.

4. Roles and responsibilities

Members

The Embark Federation Members appoint Trustees to ensure that the Trust's charitable objects are carried out. They are able to remove Trustees if they fail to fulfil this responsibility. Members are responsible for approving any amendments made to the Trust's Articles of Association.

The Members are accountable to the Secretary of State for effective governance of the Trust and the achievement of its objectives. Full details of Members remit, and responsibilities are included in the Articles of Association alongside which, reference should be made to the Master Funding Agreement.

There must be at least three Members, although the DfE prefers at least five. There must be a separation of powers between the Members and the Trust Board. Members are not permitted to be employees of the Academy Trust.

The DfE Academy Trust Handbook states that each Trust determines how best to keep Members informed so they can be assured that the Board is exercising effective governance and leadership of their Trust.

Trustees

Embark Federation, as a Multi-Academy Trust (MAT) is a charitable company and so Trustees are both charity Trustees (within the terms of section 177(1) of the Charities Act 2011) and Company Directors. Trustees are bound by both charity and company law. The terms 'Trustee' and 'Director' are often used interchangeably. Embark Federation uses the term 'Trustee'.

The Trustees are responsible for the general control and management of the administration of the Trust and, in accordance with the provisions set out in the Memorandum and Articles of Association, its Funding Agreement and the Academies Trust Handbook, they are legally responsible and accountable for all statutory functions, for the performance of all schools within the Trust, and for the approval of a written Scheme of Delegation of financial powers that maintains robust internal control arrangements. The Trust Board is legally responsible and accountable to the Department for Education (DfE).

The Board of Trustees has the right to review and adapt its governance structure at any time which includes removing any delegation.

The Board of Trustees will have a minimum of three persons and no maximum, of which up to six Trustees can be appointed by the Members. The membership will be kept under review and will expand or change as the needs of the Trust require. The Trustees are responsible and accountable to the DfE for the performance and efficiency of all Embark Federation and all of its schools.

The Board will always include a Chair - The Trustees shall each school year elect a chair from among their number (employees are not eligible).

The Chief Executive is responsible to the Board of Trustees for the effective management of the Trust and its constituent schools. A wide-ranging set of responsibilities have been delegated to the Chief Executive.

Full details of the remit of Trustees are covered in the Articles of Association but in brief:

- Trustees will ordinarily serve for 4 years;

- The Board shall hold at least 3 meetings in any school year;
- All Trustees will be expected to represent the interests of all schools as mandated in the 'Object' of the School and which is detailed in the Articles of Association.
- Trustees should not underestimate the commitment they need to make;
- Trustees are expected to play a full and active role in the governance of the Trust;

Trust Board Committees

The Trustees establish sub-committees to carry out some of their governance functions which may include making decisions, although any decisions made by established sub-committees in respects of functions and authorities delegated to them will be deemed decisions of the Trust Board. The membership (there must be at least three Trustees) and responsibilities of Board Committees are set out in each Committee's Terms of Reference. It is usual for the Trust Board to appoint Board Committee Chairs and Committee members according to their skills and experience.

The Trust Board Committees are:

Audit & Risk Committee (ARC)

The Academy Trust Handbook states that Trusts are required to establish an Audit and Risk committee. Trusts with an annual income over £50 million must have a dedicated Audit & Risk Committee.

Finance & Operations Committee (FOC)

The Finance and Operations Committee is responsible for financial oversight and scrutiny, ensuring that the Trust complies with its policies and procedures with a focus on financial planning, risks, reporting, and monitoring.

Quality of Education and Standards Committee (QESC)

The Quality of Education and Standards Committee is responsible for academic standards, school improvement and teaching and learning. The committee will monitor, challenge, support and, where appropriate, advise on all aspects of school improvement and outcomes.

People and Remuneration Committee (PRN)

The People and Remuneration Committee is responsible for overseeing staff pay, performance management, executive remuneration, and workforce policies, ensuring these align with the Trust's strategic objectives and statutory requirements. The committee advises the board on leadership pay and monitors HR practices to support recruitment, retention, and staff wellbeing.

Safeguarding Committee (SGC)

The Safeguarding Committee is responsible for overseeing the Trust's safeguarding and child protection arrangements, ensuring policies and practices meet statutory requirements and best practice. The committee monitors safeguarding performance across academies and provides assurance to the board on the effectiveness of safeguarding leadership, training, and culture.

Local Governing Teams (LGTs)

In the context of a MAT, the performance of every individual school is ultimately the responsibility of the Board of Trustees. The Board discharges this responsibility, primarily through the function of the Senior Leadership Team of the Trust, who themselves are responsible (to the Board) for the performance of the school leadership.

This is reinforced by the work of Local Governing Teams (LGTs), which are formal sub-committees of the Board, and have a brief to review and challenge performance at the working level in each school, independently of Trust management.

SLT (Senior Leadership Team)

Trust Leader (CEO) and Directors

The CEO has the delegated responsibility for the operation of the Trust including the performance of the Trust's academies. The CEO leads the Trust's Senior Leadership Team and is accountable for its performance.

The CEO is the Accounting Officer with overall responsibility for the operation of the Trust's financial responsibilities and must ensure that the organisation is run with financial effectiveness and stability.

The Chief Financial Officer, Deputy CEO, Chief People Officer and Head of Office report to the CEO.

Deputy CEO

The Deputy CEO supports the Chief Executive in delivering the Trust's strategic objectives and provides leadership across school improvement, including Safeguarding and SEND. The role deputises for the CEO when required, ensuring continuity of leadership and effective decision-making across the Trust.

Finance and Operations Lead (CFO)

The CFO is the Trust's Finance Director with delegated responsibility for the Trust's detailed financial procedures.

The Chief Finance Officer is responsible for the financial strategy, management, and compliance of the Trust, ensuring resources are used effectively to support educational priorities. The role oversees financial planning, reporting, estates management, and audit processes, providing assurance to the board on the Trust's financial health and sustainability.

People and Culture Lead (CPO)

The Chief People Officer is responsible for leading the Trust's people strategy, including recruitment, retention, workforce development, and staff wellbeing. The role oversees HR policies and practices to ensure compliance, consistency, and alignment with the Trust's values and strategic priorities.

Head of Office (HOO)

The Head of Office is responsible for ensuring the efficient operation of the Trust's central office, including managing administrative systems, governance and compliance processes, and supporting executive leaders and Trustees. The role oversees office resources and staff, coordinates communication across the Trust, and acts as a key point of contact for academy leaders and external stakeholders.

The headteacher is responsible for the day-to-day management of their school, reporting to the Deputy CEO. They report to the LGT, as applicable, on matters that have been delegated by the Trust Board.

Chairs Action between Trustee Meetings

No individual Trustee is empowered to make decisions on behalf of the Trust outside any specific authority set out in this scheme of delegation. However, as an exception, the Chair of Trustees can decide as a single Trustee when a delay in doing so:

- would be seriously detrimental to the interests of the Trust of any of its Schools, and
- would not be possible to postpone the decision to a meeting of Trustees (which the Chair can convene with less than 7 days' notice, if necessary, provided Trustees will have sufficient time to receive and consider relevant documents relating to the decision).

The following types of decisions cannot be made by "Chair's Action":

- decisions in relation to admissions.
- approvals of financial spend above £10,000.
- decisions on executive pay.

5. Scheme of delegation framework

The Trust Board holds the power to delegate certain authorities to other layers of governance in the Trust. This Scheme of Delegation outlines how these delegations are made to ensure clear and transparent governance arrangements. It aligns with the Trust's Articles of Association, internal Terms of Reference, and relevant government guidance as issued by the DfE.

This Scheme of Delegation is written according to the '**RACI**' framework, based on the various operational areas of activities at Embark Federation. It outlines who is:

- **Responsible** for delivering the area of activity/decision in line with agreed policies.
- **Accountable** for the area of activity/decision - this is usually the Trust Board as the legally accountable and liable body, there is only one person/group accountable for each item.
- **Consulted** on the area of activity/decision and entitled to give/receive feedback.
- **Informed** of the area of activity/decision through agreed communications channels. No feedback is required from this tier of governance.

Scheme of delegation format

The table which follows shows which tier(s) of governance are Responsible [R], Accountable [A], Consulted [C] or Informed [I] for each of the key areas of delivery. It outlines roles and responsibilities across key delivery areas between the Trust Board [TB] (including the Finance & Operations Committee [FOC], Audit & Risk Committee [ARC] and the Quality of Education & Standards Committee [QESC]), People and Remuneration Committee [PRC] and Safeguarding Committee [SGC] Senior Leadership Team [SLT] and Local Governing Team [LGT].

The Trust has a detailed Scheme of Delegation and Policy Framework that sits alongside this Scheme of Delegation, along with the HR delegation functions and Financial Thresholds.

Scheme of delegation policy escalation process

The Scheme of Delegation sets out key policies which must be approved by either the Trust Board or its sub-committees in line with the requirements of the Academy Trust Handbook and the recommendations of the DfE.

The Trust Board has elected to delegate those policies applicable to all Trust schools and all staff which fall outside of this list to the Trust's Senior Leadership Team. Those policies which are specific to a school and fall outside of this list are delegated to the Headteacher within school.

In the event of a significant change to any of the policies which fall outside of the scope specified within the SoD, the approver must consider whether those changes could constitute:

- a risk of failure to comply with any statutory obligation, or breach of a relevant law
- a risk to the reputation of the Trust
- a significant and/or untested departure from accepted industry standards.

Where one or more of these criteria is satisfied, the SLT will refer a policy for consultation with the Committee which historically approved that policy. This list of approvers is held centrally and should be referred to in the event of these circumstances arising.

Any committee consulted with shall reserve the right to require a referred policy to be presented for approval at a formal meeting of that committee should it see fit.

Scheme of Delegation

KEY: R = Responsible A = Accountable C = Consulted I = Informed

	Members	Trustees	ARC	FOC	QFSC	CEO	SLT	Headteachers	LGT
GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK									
To approve the scheme of delegation	I	A	C	I	I	I	R	I	I
Approve any temporary delegated authority to individuals or committees	I	A	C	I	I	R	R	I	I
Elect Chair and Vice Chair of Trustees	C	A	I	I	I		R	I	I
To appoint and remove Members	A/C	A/C					R		
Approve Terms of Reference for sub-committees of the Trust Board including local governance (LGTs)		A	C	C	C	R	R	I	I
Appoint or remove Chair for sub-committees of the Board of Trustees		A				C	R		I
Approve appointment or removal of Chair of LGTs	I	A	I	I	I	R	R	C	
Approve membership and composition of sub-committees of the Board of Trustees		A	I	I	I	C	R		I
Agree which sub-committee will approve each Trust policy		A	I	I	I	C	R	C	C
Appoint external auditors	A	C	C	R		C	R		I
Approve the annual schedule for internal audit		A	R			C	C		I
Approve the Trust Strategic Plan		A				R	C	C	I
Approve Governance Policy and Code of Conduct		A				C	R		I
Ensure an effective programme of stakeholder and community engagement is delivered		A					R	C	I
FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT INC TRUST GROWTH									
Set vision and targets for Trust growth		A				R	C	I	I
Undertake due diligence review process on potential schools joining Trust		A	C	C	C	R	R	I	I
Approve new schools joining Trust		A				R	R	I	I
Develop and approve annual budget and three-year outturn		A		R		C	R	I	I
Produce monthly management accounts in line with Academy Trust Handbook requirements		A		R		C	R	I	I
Manage cash position inc. reporting on cashflow & internal 'loans'		A		R		C	R	I	I
Manage procurement exercises in line with compliance requirements		A		R		C	R	I	I
Approve the Trust's Reserves Policy		A		R		C	R	I	I

Scheme of Delegation

KEY: R = Responsible A = Accountable C = Consulted I = Informed

	Members	Trustees	ARC	FRC	ESC	CEO	ELT	Headteachers	LGT
Approve the Trust's Investment Strategy		A		R		C	R	I	I
PREMISES/ESTATES									
Develop the Trust estates strategy		A		R		C	R	I	I
Procure new buildings in line with procedures and regulations		A		R		C	R	I	I
Maintain buildings, inc. properly funded maintenance programme		A		R		C	R	I	I
Set Health and Safety Policy		A		R		C	R	I	I
Respond to Health and Safety incidents in schools		A		R		C	R	I	I
Appoint person in charge of first aid in schools		A		R		C	R	I	I
Review risk assessments		A		R		C	R	I	I
RISK MANAGEMENT									
Approve the Trust Risk Management Framework		A	R			C	R		I
Approve the strategic risk appetite level		A	R			C	R		I
Approve the Data and Cyber Security Breach Prevention and Management Plan		A	R			C	R		I
Monitor and review the management of strategic risk		A	R			C	R		I
Provide independent challenge and support in relation to the management of local risk		A	C			C	R		I
EDUCATION FRAMEWORK									
Approve Curriculum Policy and plan		A			R	C	R	C	I
Approve school targets		A			R	C	R	C	I
Monitor school targets		A			R	C	R	C	I
Approve and monitor individual student targets		A			R	C	R	R	I
Approve school improvement and quality improvement framework		A			R	C	R	C	I
Exclude a pupil for more than 15 days or permanently		A			I		R	R	C
Provide independent challenge and support in relation to the execution of the School Improvement Plan		A			R	C	R	C	I

Scheme of Delegation

KEY: R = Responsible A = Accountable C = Consulted I = Informed

	Members	Trustees	ARC	FRC	ESC	CEO	ELT	Headteachers	LGT
APPOINTMENTS/DISMISSALS AND DESIGNATIONS									
Appoint/dismiss/suspend the Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	C	A					R	I	I
Appoint/dismiss/suspend a member of the Executive Leadership Team		A				R	C	I	I
Appoint/dismiss/suspend a Headteacher, Assistant Headteacher, or Deputy Headteacher		A			I	R	C		C
Appoint/dismiss/suspend school staff below Assistant Headteacher		A				I	C	R	C
PERFORMANCE MONITORING AND HOLDING TO ACCOUNT									
Undertake performance management of the Chief Executive Officer		A	C	C	C		R		
Undertake performance management of the Executive Leadership Team		A				R	C		
Undertake Performance management of Headteachers		A				I	C		R
To determine the pay progression / award for the Chief Executive Officer	I	A					C		
To determine the pay progression / award for the Executive Leadership Team	I	A				R	C		
To determine the pay progression for the Senior Leadership Team		A				C	R		I
To determine pay progression for Headteachers		A				I	R		C
To determine pay progression for school-based employees		A				I	C	R	I
Provide independent challenge and support in relation to school leadership		A			I	C	C		R
POLICY MANAGEMENT (FOR POLICIES NOT SPECIFIED ELSEWHERE)									
Approve the Articles of Association and any amendments thereof	A	R				C	C		I
Approve the Scheme of Delegation	I	A	I	I	I	R	C	I	I
Approve the Financial Regulations and Scheme of Financial Delegation		A		R		C	C	I	I
Approve the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy		A			C	C	R	I	I
Approve the Early Careers Teaching Policy		A			R		C	I	I
Approve the children with health needs who cannot attend school Policy		A			R		C	C	I
Approve the Protection of Biometric Information Policy		A	R			C	R		I
Approve any policy not specified elsewhere within this scheme of delegation		A	C	C	C	C	R		I



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