Academies Trust

Resolutions Team - Terms of Reference 2026-7

1. Delegation of Powers

1.1. The functions outlined in section 2 below are delegated by the Trust Board to the Academy Community Councils (ACCs) . The ACCs further delegate these powers to the resolution team to act on their behalf.

2. Purpose

2.1. The Resolutions Team will provide two or three members, depending on the nature of the process and which of the Trust's policies is being followed, to form a panel which will have delegated powers to determine the outcome of all human resources processes, complaints processes and exclusions, and suspensions processes in the Trust, where such a panel is required.

2.2. The specific nature of each panel will be determined by which of the Trust's policies is being followed.

2.3. Where an appeal is made against the decision of a panel, and where this is consistent with the relevant Trust policy, a further panel will be formed with from the Resolution Team's membership, with delegated authority to determine the outcome of the appeal; this panel will not include any members who were responsible for the original decision being appealed against.

2.4. At the request of the CEO, which may be made via the Deputy CEO or Regional Director, suitably trained members of the Resolutions Team may also be commissioned to undertake investigations in relation to any of the processes outlined in paragraph 2.1, or in relation to whistleblowing processes.

3. Membership

3.1. The membership of the Team will be approved on a termly basis by the Trust Board, Between Board meetings additional members will be approved by the Board Chair and these appointments will be reported back to the Board at its next meeting.

3.2. Membership will not be time limited but all members will be asked to confirm their willingness to continue to serve on the Team on an annual basis in the autumn term.

3.3. Members must have suitable skills and/or experience which ensure they will be able to give a fair hearing to both sides in any process and will be able to understand and analyse the issues involved.

3.4. Recruits to the team will be recommended by a Governance Officer and approved by the Head of Governance and Chief Executive Officer, before being recommended to the Board Chair for appointment.

3.5. Members of the team will be expected to commit to sitting on a minimum of three panels per year, or undertaking at least one investigation, and may be removed from the Team if this expectation is not fulfilled.

3.6. Members of the team who are not employees of the Trust will need to complete an enhanced DBS check and sign up to the Trustees' / Committee members' / Community Council Members' / Resolutions Teams' Code of Conduct on appointment.

4. Constitution

4.1. Members may be drawn from the ACCs or the equivalent local committee, the Trust's central team or from outside of the Trust. All trustees will be members of the team by virtue of their office but will only sit on panels in exceptional circumstances, e.g. where a complaint is raised against the CEO.

4.2. The size of the team will be dependent on the number of suitable individuals identified and the needs of the Trust in terms of volumes of processes and panels, but will not be subject to a minimum or maximum number of members.

4.3. Panels will be constituted by a Governance Officer in consultation with the Head of Governance, depending on member availability and the nature of members' skills and relevant experience in relation to the case under consideration.

4.4. Members of each individual panel will appoint a Chair for the meeting, with support from the attending clerk/adviser. Where it is necessary to identify a Chair in advance of the panel meeting the Governance Officer will determine this, based on the relative experience of the panel members or other relevant factors.

4.5. Panels will be supported by a member of the governance team and, in relation to HR processes, a member of the HR team. Suitable minutes will be drawn up for each panel meeting and agreed with the Chair of that panel. Investigating Officers will also be supported by a member of the governance team or other member of trust staff as appropriate.

5. Training

5.1. The Team will be supported by the Head of Governance, who will oversee recruitment and training of its members.

5.2. The training requirements and expectations of team members will be reviewed on an annual basis; all training will be provided/commissioned by the Trust and at the Trust's expense.

5.3. Members will be required to undertake appropriate training prior to undertaking work on the Team's behalf.

6. Remuneration

6.1. Team members will not normally be remunerated for their time but reasonable out of pocket expenses will be reimbursed.