



Consortium Trust

Our commitment to our communities

Consortium's fundamental aim is to maintain and enhance the position of schools at the heart of our communities across East Anglia.

We have a passion for, and recognise that, for our smaller schools and settings to remain vibrant and viable, closer integration and collaborative working is necessary to ensure that our curriculum is exciting, provision is full and the outcomes for pupils are exceptional.

Whatever the size, schools in rural locations face particular challenges, however, it is our belief and experience that such schools can provide an excellent standard of education and that the key to achieving this is collaborative working, school-to school support and delegated decision-making, creating an environment that enables exceptional education and opportunities to be offered.

Consortium Trust is conscious that to achieve this, our communities, our staff and our pupils all need to have a voice in our Trust governance structure and development strategies. This is achieved through developing and maintaining long-lasting relationships where we facilitate communication, we listen, and we respond.

Our Locality Committees are just one aspect of our commitment to our communities, and they are vitally important in linking our Trust Board, our Executive Team members, our Schools and our Communities.

There is acknowledgement that the governance accountability sits with the Trust Board, but in order for strong, evidence-based decisions to be made; the views of communities must be considered, and this is the fundamental role of our Locality Committees – being the eyes, ears and voice of our communities. To strengthen this position as 'sub committees' of the Trust Board, the Trust Board have established a Community Engagement Committee chaired by a Trustee. All Locality Committee members are invited to attend and contribute. This new Committee will meet termly and form a clear two-way communication link between the Locality Committees and the Trustees. Where specific themes are to be discussed, the Executive and Trustee links may be invited to contribute.

Through this, the voice of the school communities has a direct line of communication into the Trust Board and Executive; and the Trust Board has the opportunity to share their development work and progress with the Locality Committees. Each Locality Committee has a link Trustee and link Trustees will support the committee and attend meetings when they are available.

As laid out in the Scheme of Delegation the Locality Committees have the following responsibilities:

- Monitor the vision and ethos of the school to align with the vision and ethos of the Trust.
- Establish and maintain relationships with members of the local community acting as ambassadors for the school and Trust.
- Monitor the implementation of the policies of the school and the Trust.
- Participate in Trust reviews as appropriate.
- Participate in statutory panels (relating to staffing, pupils and complaints) at the relevant stage as specified in Consortium Trust Policies and when invited by Trustees.
- Carry out a skills audit and annual self-review of performance.
- Maintain effective communication between tiers of governance.
- Participate in termly meetings of the Community Engagement Committee



- Monitor the Key Performance Indicators relating to pupil standards.
- Monitor progress of the School Development Plan and School Evaluation Framework
- Monitor completion of actions arising from school audits relating to curriculum standards and safeguarding.
- Monitor pupil and parent feedback from surveys.

These areas are monitored during the termly Locality Committee meeting and through Connection meetings. A Connection meeting is not formal monitoring, but it is an opportunity for the LC member to connect with the school, meet with staff, discuss the theme and any issues, concerns or resources that are needed to ensure that we are providing the best possible opportunities for our young people. It is an expectation that the Locality Committee member will talk to children and get their opinions and thoughts on a topic as well as reflect on the school environment. It is expected that each Connection meeting will generate a report that will be reviewed and considered by the Locality Committee at their termly meeting.

Locality Committee meetings are supported by the Office Managers, who will take notes of the discussion that takes place and any actions that arise from the discussion. These are not verbatim or formal minutes, but a timely record of the content of the meeting. It is anticipated that Locality Committee meetings will be no longer than an hour and held at a time that is convenient to both LC members and Academy staff.

The Community Engagement Committee will be supported by the Governance Professional and will be minuted in line with other Trust Board meetings.

It is not expected that the Academy Head prepares a 'Headteacher style report' for their Locality Committee, but they must be prepared to outline what is going well and what are their identified areas of improvement and development in general terms in relation to their School Improvement Plan, but the focus of a Locality Committee meeting should be on the reports from Connection meetings and how this supports the SDP.

The structure and purpose of Locality Committees and their timetable of meetings ensures that they dovetail into the Executive accountability structures and Trust Board responsibilities, without duplication. Our governance structure is reliant on volunteers, and it is our commitment that their volunteer time, should be focused, purposeful and impactful; supported by training and guidance.

The Locality Committees are not the only way in which our schools will engage with our communities. Building strong relationships through the curriculum, external agencies, and facilities within the area is the role of our school leaders as is parental engagement and day to day relationships.

Effective governance is proactive governance – meetings, whilst important tools to share information, should be kept focused and concise – Effective Locality Committees are the eyes, ears and voice of our communities and as such should be active, listening, learning and supporting our schools to be the best they can be.