

AURIGA ACADEMY TRUST TRUSTEE/GOVERNOR INDUCTION WELCOME PACK

“The Auriga Academy Trust aims to provide outstanding special needs education for the local community close to where people live”

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1. Getting to know the Auriga Academy Trust

Our Mission - The Auriga Academy Trust (AAT) aims to provide outstanding special needs provision for the local community. The Trust works in a supportive partnership with local special schools with each school maintaining its unique identity and ethos. Through the Trust the schools work collaboratively together to ensure maximum benefit for all students through shared best practice, resources, and economies of scale.

The Auriga Academy Trust was established on 1st October 2016. The trust comprises of three separate and distinct special academies:

- Capella House School
- Clarendon School
- Strathmore School

Capella House is a day, co-educational special school for pupils aged 4-16. The school specialises in children whose primary or main presenting needs relate to difficulties with speech, language, and communication

Clarendon is a community special school for 140 pupils aged four to 16 with moderate learning difficulties, many of whom have additional complex needs, including autism. The school manages an offsite centre: Gateway, which is for 20 pupils aged 11-16 co-located with Twickenham School.

Strathmore is a community special school for children and young people aged 4 -19 with severe and complex learning difficulties including those with an additional diagnosis of autism and/or physical/sensory disabilities.

The Auriga Academy Trust is founded on the vision that, through working together, we can provide outstanding learning experiences for the pupils and students in our communities, both now and in the future.

Academy trusts must comply with the requirements set out in their articles of association as a condition of their funding agreements with the Secretary of State. The articles of association provide a framework for academy trusts to govern in transparent and accountable ways that fulfil the trust's charitable purpose. The articles reflect elements of charity and company law and departmental governance policy.

Essential Reading

[Auriga Academy Trust Business Plan](#)

[Auriga Academy Trust Articles of Association](#)

[Auriga Academy Trust and Schools Funding Agreements](#)

[Auriga Academy Trust Acronyms](#)

Please refer to the websites of the Auriga Academy Trust and its schools for further information.

2. How the MAT operates

The effectiveness of a trust board/local governing board depends on the skills, commitment, and knowledge of its members and how they work together with trust and school leaders.

It is imperative that trustees and governors understand the governance framework of the trust and its processes.

Members

The members exercise oversight over the direction and running of the MAT. The members enter into the funding agreement with the Secretary of State and are legally responsible both to the Secretary of State and to parents and pupils for the running of the Academy Trust and the academies within the Trust. They are also responsible for holding the trustees to account for the running of the Trust.

Trustees

The Board of Trustees, fulfilling the role of both directors under company law and trustees under charity law, exercise the powers and carry out the duties of the Auriga Academy Trust. The Board of Trustees are responsible to the Members of the Trust as well as the parents, pupils, and staff at the academies.

Local Governing Bodies

As the Trust comprises of three separate and distinct special academies, each school has its own Local Governing Body to support the ethos of the school and ensure the needs of the pupils are being met.

The Local Governing Body is made up of representatives from the academy and its local community, including a minimum of two elected parent governors. The local governors support the trustees to deliver strategic management and operational oversight at each academy.

Some of the detailed work of the trust and local governing boards is undertaken through specialist committees and governors / trustees undertaking lead monitoring roles, always reporting findings back to the full board'

The Auriga Academy Trust's scheme of delegation sets out where responsibilities and accountabilities sit within the multi-academy trust's (MAT) structure.

Essential Reading

[AAT Scheme of Delegation](#)

3. Roles and Responsibilities of the Trustee/Governor

The board of trustees and the local governing boards are accountable for ensuring high standards of achievement for all children and young people in their educational setting.

Trustees are responsible for the three core governance functions:

- **Setting the strategic direction of the trust and the academies withing the trust**
Engaging with all stakeholders to set out and embed the vision and ethos in all areas of school life. Work effectively with senior leaders to set strategic objectives to help the schools reach their goals.
- **Hold school leaders to account for the educational and financial performance of the school**
Creating robust accountability for school leaders through rigorous analysis of performance data and financial information.
- **Ensure the school's financial success and probity**
Including compliance with charity and company law and the academy trust's funding agreement

Academy trusts must comply with the Academy Trust Handbook as a condition of their funding agreement. The Academy Trust Handbook sets out duties in relation to governance and financial oversight and is the framework for implementing effective financial management and control.

Further information on the role and responsibilities of a trustee can be found in the Essential Trustee document published by the Charity Commission.

Local governors, working with the Headteacher and senior staff are responsible for:

- Challenging and supporting the agreed vision of the Multi Academy Trust (MAT).
- Reporting to the trustees on the provision of education at the academy.
- Providing a strategic overview and a monitoring role in connection with the Academy.
- Monitoring and being accountable for budget setting and review.
- Acting as a critical friend to the Headteacher.
- Representing the views of the community.

Further Information about the responsibilities each structure and person hold in academy trust governance can be found in the Department of Education document – Academy Trust Governance – Structures and Role Descriptors.

The government has high expectations of those in governance and how trust boards discharge their duties is set out in the Department of Education (DfE) Governance Handbook which is updated annually. Trustees/governors should familiarise themselves with the elements of the handbook that apply to their trust.

Being an effective trustee/governor requires you to develop the knowledge, skills and behaviours required for good governance in the academy sector. These are explained in detail in the Department of Education (DfE) Competency framework for Governance. This is a useful model against which trustees/governors can benchmark their development and impact.

Essential Reading

[Auriga Academy Trust Trustee Role Description](#)

[Auriga Academy Trust Governor Role Description](#)

[The Essential Trustee \(Charity Commission\)](#)

[Academy Trust Handbook](#)

[DfE Governance Handbook & Competency Framework for Governance](#)

[DfE Academy Trust Governance: Structures & Roles](#)

4. Trust Board/Local Governing Board Procedures & Expectations

The principles and personal attributes that individuals bring to the board are as important as their skills and knowledge. These qualities enable board members to use their skills and knowledge to function well as part of a team and make an active contribution to effective governance.

The Auriga Academy Trust and its schools have a written code of conduct (see link below) so that all trustees/governors know what is expected of them. The code of conduct includes the following principles and says that all trustees/governors should:

- Have the well-being and success of the school or academy as their central concern.
- Act fairly and without prejudice at all times.
- Understand that all governors or trustees have equal status.
- Appreciate that in general no governor/trustee has individual power.
- Be actively involved in the work of the board and accept a fair share of responsibility.
- Make every effort to attend and participate in the meetings and prepare for them by reading papers and thinking about agenda items. They must accept decisions made by the majority.
- Work in partnership with the Headteacher and all the staff.
- Understand and balance their own strategic role with the Headteacher's responsibility for the implementation of policy and the day-to-day management of the school.
- Make the effort to get to know the schools in the trust and their staff, pupils, and parents. This includes supporting the school's activities.
- Ensure that matters discussed in meetings that are deemed confidential are not discussed outside the meeting.
- Know and comply with the procedures adopted by the board for dealing with criticisms and complaints.

Being an effective governor or trustee does mean promising to commit time to the role. As well as attending meetings you will need to develop your knowledge and understanding of the work of the schools within the trust; this will mean visiting the schools during the working day and attending relevant training courses.

The Auriga Academy Trust has set out its operational procedures for trust/school governance – please see the link below.

There are a set of key documents that need to be read annually by all trustees/governors of the trust and confirmation of this will need to be provided by the end of September each year. On becoming a trustee/governor, you should read these prior to becoming an active board member. They will help

you understand how the MAT operates, what is expected of you and the key aspects of providing services for children, especially your safeguarding duties. It is important to make sure you know and understand these documents, as they form the foundation for your role as a trustee/governor –

- Trust/School Code of Conduct
- Keeping Children Safe in Education Legislation
- Auriga Academy Trust Child Protection Policy

Every new trustee/governor will be asked to make a declaration of business and pecuniary interests to ensure that the trust is transparent and open – these will be recorded and published on the trust/school's website. Interests are anything that might sway the trustee/governor's decision making or affect their ability to act in an impartial way. Trustees/governors will also have the opportunity to declare interests before meetings so that they can withdraw from the discussion of relevant items of business.

Each new trustee/governor will be given access to Governorhub (a document sharing and information platform) where there is a wealth of information and documents available. New trustees/governors will be signposted to an induction folder on Governorhub which will include key documents and important links. Documents will include -

- Trust/School Governance procedures
- Board meeting minutes/papers
- Committee Meeting minutes/papers
- School Development Plan Documents
- School Self Review Documents
- Risk Register
- Trust/School Policies
- Financial Accounts & Information

Essential Reading

[AAT Operational Procedures](#)

[AAT Code of Conduct](#)

[Keeping Children Safe in Education Legislation](#)

[Auriga Academy Trust Child Protection Policy](#)

Further documents to be found in Induction folder on Governorhub

5. Meeting your fellow trustees/governors

As part of the induction process you will meet with the CEO/Chair of the trust board (trustees) and Chair of the Local Governing Board and Headteacher (governors). You will also be assigned a mentor. It is important to get to know all the trustees/governors on your board, because you are collectively responsible and accountable for the overall management of the Multi Academy Trust (MAT), including areas where you may not be directly involved. These relationships will be key to the MAT's success, particularly in times of challenge.

Essential Reading

[Auriga Academy Trust Governance Structure](#)

A short biography of each trustee/governor is available on the Trust and Schools websites

6. Visiting the Auriga Academy Trust Schools

Boards must get to know their schools in order to understand how they operate and are managed and to maintain robust accountability. Through pre-arranged visits that have a clear focus, trustees/governors will:

- Observe whether the school is properly implementing school policies, and actions from the school development plan
- Observe how those procedures are working in practice
- Have the opportunity to gather the views of pupils and staff

The trust schools welcome visits by trustees/governors. New trustees/governors should aim to visit the trust schools as soon as possible after their appointment. This can be done along with their mentor. Any visit should always be arranged in conjunction with the Board and the relevant Head Teacher. All visits should then be written up on the form provided in the visit protocol and circulated, via the respective headteacher, to the next board meeting to ensure that findings are shared with other board members.

Essential Reading

Visit Protocol – In Induction folder on Governorhub

7. Meetings and Decision Making

Meetings will be a necessary and consistent call on the time of a trustee/governor. For trustees, there will be a minimum of 6 board meetings per academic year and for governors, there will be a minimum for 4 governing body meetings per academic year. Both trustees and governors will also be expected to attend committee or lead meetings (minimum 3 per year). It is important to prepare for meetings and use them to contribute views and ideas. Meetings are important for making sure that the trust/school is on track and for monitoring performance against plans and for monitoring key risks. Trustees/governors should be prepared to ask questions, particularly on things that they are unclear about to increase their knowledge.

Decision making is an important part of the trustee/governor role. Some decisions will be straightforward, others more complex. Trustees/governors should use relevant guidance, research, and robust discussion with their fellow board members to help make sure their decisions are properly made, particularly when making more difficult strategic decisions, such as those affecting the provision of services by the schools, finances, or future direction. Trustees/governors should ensure that they have the information they need and that decisions are considered as a group.

Essential Reading

Trust Meeting Calendar – on Governorhub

[NGA - Questions to ask at Meetings](#)

8. Administration

New Trustee/Governor Form - New Trustees and Governors are required to complete a New Trustee/Governor information form (Appendix 1) where they will need to provide personal contact details, contact details of referees, a declaration of pecuniary interests and a short biography for the trust/school website.

Governorhub - Trustees/Governors will be given access to Governorhub. Governorhub is the leading governor collaboration tool in the country and provides over 70,000 school governors, trustees, and clerks with the tools to communicate, share documents and access the information that they need to support schools. On Governorhub, trustees/governors will find the trust meeting schedule, key governance documents, meeting minutes and other useful sources of information.

Email Address - for reasons of privacy, safeguarding and General Data Protection Legislation (GDPR) it is best practice to communicate with each other via trust/school email addresses. Trustees/Governors will be provided with a trust/school email account.

DBS – Trustees/Governors are required to undergo a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check to ensure that they are entitled to work with children. This will be arranged by the trust Human Resources (HR) team.

AfC (Local authority) Governor Support – All new trustees/governors will be sent a welcome pack from the AfC Governor Support Team.

Training and Development – Trustees/governors will be registered with various parties that will support them in their training/development requirements – further details under below under training & development.

9. Training & Development

Training and development are key elements of the role of a trustee/governor - not only when they are new to the role but also when they are established and want to increase their knowledge and understanding.

There are various sources of training and development opportunities available to trustees/governors:

Achieving for Children (AfC) Governor Support – they offer a comprehensive Continual Professional Development (CPD) Schedule of training across the academic year. All new Trustees/Governors of subscribing schools are sent a login by Governor Support to enable them to register and book training.

The CPD schedule details a series of course recommendations, based on the stage a trustee/governor is at with their own professional development however key courses are detailed below -

- Introducing New Governors - Understanding your role
- Safeguarding Basic Awareness eLearning
- The Role of the Parent Governor / or Staff Governor (as applicable)
- Education Inspection Framework (EIF) - An Introduction for Governors

In addition to the above, new trustees/governors should familiarise themselves with Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) legislation.

The CPD schedule also gives details of various E Learning Opportunities.

National Governance Association (NGA) - Trustees/Governors will receive National Governance Association (NGA) membership. The NGA is an organisation that aims to improve the educational standards and wellbeing of young people by increasing the effectiveness of governing boards and promoting high standards. The NGA provides online information and publications to support trustees/governors in their governance role as well as many training opportunities. Induction training includes a suite of 8 online core modules that covers key governance areas.

The Key for School Governors - Having registered with Governorhub, trustees/governors will have access to The Key (this can be found on the menu bar of the Governorhub home page). The Key for school governance is an essential on-demand training and knowledge bank that provides support when trustees /governors need it - giving them confidence in their actions and the knowledge to be truly effective. The Key provides online induction training for both academy trustees and governors which can be completed in one go or in bitesize chunks –

- Induction for Academy Trustees
- Induction for Academy Governors on Local Governing Bodies

It is important that each trustee/governor takes individual ownership of their training needs and that they maintain a comprehensive log of all training attended to ensure local records are robust and can be evidenced (this can be done on Governorhub).

Training should be refreshed every three years to keep abreast of any legislative procedures or guidance in line with best practice.

Essential Reading

[Achieving for Children \(AfC\) Continual Professional Development \(CPD\) Schedule of training](#)

[National Governance Association \(NGA\)](#)

The Key for School Governors can be accessed through Governorhub

10. Statutory Duties (Trustees Only)

As an academy trustee, you have legal duties as a charity trustee and a company director. As outlined in the DfE Governance Handbook, a trustee must comply with the following duties under charity law:

- Ensure the charity is carrying out its purposes for the public benefit

- Comply with the charity's governing document and the law
- Act in the charity's best interests
- Manage the charity's resources responsibly
- Act with reasonable care and skill
- Ensure the charity is accountable

The Charity Commission has published guidance on your responsibilities as a trustee under these duties (The Essential Trustee).

As an academy trustee you're also a company director. Also outlined in the DfE Governance Handbook are your duties under the Companies Act 2006 to:

- Act within your powers
- Promote the success of the company
- Exercise independent judgment
- Exercise reasonable care, skill, and diligence
- Avoid conflicts of interest
- Not to accept benefits from third parties
- Declare any interest in proposed transactions or arrangements

Academy trusts must comply with the Academy Trust Handbook as a condition of their funding agreement. It provides an overarching framework for implementation of effective financial management and other controls, consistent with their obligations as publicly funded bodies.

Essential Reading

[DfE Governance Handbook](#)

[The Essential Trustee \(Charity Commission\)](#)

[Academy Trust Handbook](#)

11. Induction Checklist

Trustees/governors will receive an induction checklist (Appendix B) which is to be used in conjunction with this welcome pack to help them understand and track all the elements of their induction process.

12. Contacts/Useful sources of Information

[Department of Education \(DfE\)](#) - Contains a range of information and resources, e.g., teaching and learning; pupil support; leadership & governance

[Ofsted](#) - Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted) inspection reports for all types of providers.

[National Governance Association \(NGA\)](#) - represents school's governors from all state funded schools, including those from LA maintained schools and academies in England.

[Charity Commission of England & Wales](#) – the regulator of charities in England & Wales.

13. Appendices

Appendix 1 – New Trustee/Governor Form



New Governor .
Trustee

Appendix 2 – Induction Checklist



Induction
Checklist.docx