

Parent & Community Advisory Board Charter

September 2017

Good governance is a sign of a good school, and a critical component of good academy governance is the effective representation and contribution from all stakeholders in the academy. The term 'stakeholder' includes parents and the wider local community: businesses, employers and not-for-profit organizations such as charities, sports and leisure clubs, and faith institutions.

The purpose of the PCAB

The Parent and Community Advisory Board (PCAB) has three key objectives:

1. **Community** – a school does not exist independently of its community of local residents. The PCAB will act as a link between the two, ensuring that children benefit from local opportunities for learning, development and employment.
2. **Concerns** – No school gets everything right, all the time, and a good school thrives on clear channels of feedback. The PCAB is an independent point of contact for stakeholders to express their concerns and will help people find the appropriate processes and channels to communicate their concerns or complaints. Where trends emerge, the PCAB will help the Principal and the Governing Board to find solutions. PCAB members may also support panel hearings where appropriate.
3. **Celebration** - championing the strengths and achievements of the academy, recognising that success breeds success, and that it is in everyone's interests to promote the reputation of the academy and its students.

All three of these objectives depend on excellent communications, and PCAB members will be good inclusive communicators who make all stakeholders feel that their voice is important and that they have access to information and activities. Creativity, problem-solving initiative, and a positive outlook are also desirable attributes for PCAB members.

Activities

The types of activities and projects the PCAB might lead or promote could include:

- An alumni network to maintain connection with previous students – celebrating their achievements and exploring opportunities for current students to learn from their experience and success.
- Community funding for awards

- Awareness campaigns, linking with charity or government initiatives, relating to specific issues: mental and physical health, gangs, e-safety, bullying, parenting skills...
- student-led news and social media (print and digital)
- Constructive articulation of common concerns and complaints, working with the Academy to find solutions. Communicating those solutions in a 'you said, we did' type of format to demonstrate the responsiveness of the academy and the effectiveness of the PCAB.
- Establishing work experience opportunities with local organisations
- Finding local leaders and role models to give talks or to mentor students
- Linking students to local volunteering opportunities and programmes, including fund-raising events

Formal role and status

Consistent with the Department of Education's guidance on governance, the PCAB is an advisory body which is a full and formal part of the Trust's governance structure.

As well as acting as a sounding board to capture the opinions and ideas of parents and community representatives, the individual members of the PCAB will be invited to participate on panels relating to complaints, exclusions, or staff disciplinary or grievance matters. At the discretion of the Chair of the local Governing Body, PCAB members may be invited to attend panel hearings for other AET academies, as appropriate.

Where members have professional expertise in areas of relevance to the academy, they may be invited to attend meetings of the Governing Board for particular topics or to serve on admissions, disciplinary or complaints panels. As a sub-committee of the Governing board, this qualifies PCAB members to serve on these panels.

Membership

The membership of the PCAB is expected to be flexible to accommodate the particular needs of each academy. Although membership is primarily targeted at parents and members of community-based organisations, it could be open to staff, especially where no separate staff representative body exists. It might also be appropriate to invite students to participate for some activities or parts of meetings.

There is no limit on the number of members, though consideration should be given to efficiency of administration, and 10 is a suggested maximum. As a minimum, each PCAB must have **three** members:

- At least two parents (from unconnected families, and who are not also members of staff). Parents of students at the academy must be given the opportunity each academic year to make nominations (whether nominating themselves or other parents). The academy and the PCAB may determine how they seek nominations, but this must involve communications to all parents, at least annually.

- A nominated Chair, who may not be a member of academy staff. The PCAB Chair will be recommended by the Principal and a majority of fellow PCAB members and subject to approval by the Chair of the local AET Governing Body. This ensures the important link between the PCAB and the AET Board of Trustees.

In order to become a PCAB member, an applicant must complete and return the [AET Volunteer Application form](#), and a DBS application. They may also be subject to other good governance processes which AET may have for volunteers. PCAB members are required to sign AET's Code of Conduct and Acceptable Use Policy for IT.

There is no fixed constraint on the length of time someone may serve as a member of the PCAB, though it is recommended that re-nomination is sought after three years.

A PCAB member may be removed by majority agreement of the PCAB members plus the Chair of the local AET Governing Body and the academy Principal. In a deadlock, the local Governing Board Chair will have a casting vote. Any PCAB member may be removed instantly by the Chair of the local Governing Body where child welfare or the reputation of the academy is at risk.

Meetings and communications

The PCAB will ideally meet every half-term, but as a minimum once per term.

There must be a record of the meeting which includes time, date, attendees, key discussion points, and actions agreed. PCAB members should nominate one of the PCAB to take a record of the meeting, which must be sent to the academy Principal and to the clerk of the local Governing Body.

The Chair of the PCAB may invite the Principal and other academy staff members, as appropriate to the topics for discussion, to the PCAB meetings. The Principal must attend at least part of one PCAB meeting per term.

The record of the PCAB meeting, and any related reports or correspondence from the PCAB, should be considered as a standing agenda item at the local Governing Body meeting at least once per term. The Chair of the PCAB is invited to attend the Governing Body meeting. The Chair of the local Governing Body will determine how much of the meeting the PCAB Chair may attend.

Beyond these formal meetings, the academy Principal and the Chair of the local Governing Body are expected to foster the relationship with PCAB members. In particular, Principals must champion the PCAB and ensure that:

- staff at the Academy are aware of the PCAB and engaged with its work
- PCAB members receive an Academy induction
- PCAB members are included in appropriate Academy communications. In order to be included in such communications, PCAB members must have an AET email account. In any event, the PCAB Chair must have an AET email account.

As part of the annual appraisal of AET academy Principals, the effectiveness of the PCAB as part of a thriving relationship with parents and community will be taken into account.

Priorities and planning

It is for each PCAB to decide where and how it can be of most benefit to the academy and its students, and priorities should be established in collaboration with the academy Principal. An annual PCAB Plan should be prepared which would, as a minimum, typically include:

- A meeting date for each term
- Relevant training dates to ensure that enough PCAB members are able to participate on hearings panels where appropriate
- Appropriate assignment of responsibilities and resources to develop initiatives as anticipated under the **Purpose** and **Activities** sections in this PCAB Charter. This should include concrete actions and deliverables.

Budget

PCAB administration expenses, such as DBS checks, will come from the Academy budget. The governance budget will fund any costs incurred as part of undertaking centrally managed programmes such as training activities which are part of the main CPD programme.

From 2018, the governance team will also make a pot of project funding available which PCABs may bid for, with innovative and potentially replicable initiatives being the most likely successful candidates for funding.
