Welcome to Nexus Multi Academy Trust...

Whether you are a Member, a Director or a Governor, your commitment to undertake a voluntary role in governance at Nexus Multi Academy Trust is something truly special.

Schools make the difference in every child’s life: a great school can be the facilitator of something exceptional. The role of a governor is to ensure that every school is the best it can be—a big yet noble ask of a volunteer.

The schools in Nexus Multi Academy Trust share core values that our schools are: Inclusive; Child Centred; Family Focused; Caring; Passionate; Nurturing; Encouraging; Enriching; and Empowering.

We believe that when you commit to governance within the Trust you do so because you share these values, as you are the guardians of the schools’ morals and principles.

In whatever tier of Governance you have joined us, the Trust makes a cast iron-commitment to do as much as possible to support you to be the very best you can be.

That is our vision for our Trust and for all our schools. We are committed to “Learning together; to be the best we can be”.

To enable this, we will do all we can to provide the policy, procedural and developmental infrastructure to support you be the very best governor you can be.

Thank you for joining the Nexus Multi Academy Trust family—your contribution will make a positive difference to lives of many children and young people.

Andy Child MBE  
Chair of Nexus MAT Board

Warren Carratt  
Nexus MAT Chief Executive Officer

“Our mission statement:

- Our learners and their families are at the centre of what we do; empowered to learn and achieve; valued within our and their communities as visible, resilient, active and responsible citizens.

- Our employees and partners are passionate about being the best that they can be; providing opportunities for enriched learning and pathways to employment and independence.

- Our Trust is relentlessly focused on improvement; it values and celebrates success and builds partnerships to develop personalised provision with and for those we serve.

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What is a Multi Academy Trust?

Schools which convert to Academies under the Academies Act are run by companies limited by guarantee called ‘Academy Trusts’. Where more than one school is part of an Academy chain, this is termed a “Multi Academy Trust” or MAT for short. Like any other company, a MAT is registered with Companies House. The MAT is also an exempt charity, which means that is not registered with the Charity Commission but must abide by charitable law.

When a school joins a MAT, all employees transfer over to the employment of the Trust (not the individual school), with every constituent school in a Trust being its own legal “department”. In the same way that local authorities have responsibility for state schools, the MAT is the “parent” employer for all employees in any schools which are part of a MAT, and is ultimately accountable for the performance of each school.

Like all companies, the MAT has ‘Articles of Association’ (‘Articles’) which are the rules that govern the running of the company. The Articles set out the Objects (or purpose) of the company. All MATs have at least one Object, which is:

**To advance for the public benefit education in the United Kingdom by establishing, maintaining, carrying on, managing and developing a school(s) which shall offer a broad and balanced curriculum.**

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### Nexus MAT Governance Structure

- **MAT Members**: Up to 5
- **Trust Board of Directors**: Up to 11
- **Local Governing Bodies (1 per school/academy)**: At least 7 x Governors, including a minimum of 2 parent governors. The Chair of an LGB is appointed by the Trust Board.

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Our schools...

We currently have 4 schools in our MAT:

**Abbey School**—01709 740074

Abbey is a school for pupils with moderate learning difficulties, based in Kimberworth. It has a pupil roll of 90. Abbey was graded as “Good” in its last Ofsted inspection in 2016. Mrs. Luci Windle is the school Headteacher.

**Hilltop School**—01709 813386

Hilltop is a school for pupils with severe learning difficulties, based in Maltby. It has a pupil roll of 102. Hilltop was graded as “Good” in its last Ofsted inspection in 2013. Mr. David Burdett is the school Headteacher.

**Kelford School**—01709 512088

Kelford is a school for pupils with severe learning difficulties, based in Kimberworth. It has a pupil roll of 102. Kelford was graded as “Good” in its last Ofsted inspection in 2015. Mrs. Jacky Tattershall is the school Headteacher.

**Pennine View School**—01709 864978

Pennine View is a school for pupils with moderate learning difficulties, based in Conisbrough. It has a pupil roll of 120. Pennine View was graded as “inadequate” in its last Ofsted inspection in 2016, and has been sponsored by Nexus. Ms. Sarah Mulhall is the school Headteacher.
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What are the different roles?

Members are the equivalent of shareholders in a company limited by shares. They are the ‘guarantors’ of the company and promise to pay £10 towards the debts of the company in the event that the MAT is wound up.

The members of the MAT have a different status from the directors. The members are the subscribers to the trust’s memorandum of association, as are any other individuals permitted to become members under its Articles of Association. Members have an overview of the governance arrangements of the Trust and have the power to appoint directors (who are also trustees) and remove them.

However, Members should not interfere with the day to day operation of the Trust or approach Directors or the Headteacher on an individual basis in their role as a Member outside of formal meeting settings.

The Chair and Vice Chair of the Trust Board of Directors must also both be Members.

Trust Board of Directors (TBoD): In all Academy Trusts, the individuals appointed to challenge and scrutinise the strategic direction and day to day running of the company led by the Chief Executive Officer have three functions:

• They are Directors - because the MAT is a company, and;
• They are Trustees - because the MAT is a charity, and;
• They are Governors - because the MAT is responsible for running the schools.

This can be very confusing as the documentation used to set up the Academy Trust and the Department for Education guidance for Academies uses these three titles interchangeably, depending on the context. In Nexus, this role is simply called ‘Director’. Directors are made up of a diverse range of individuals. The Members will always appoint Directors.

Within the MAT, each Academy has its own Local Governing Board which we refer to as a ‘Local Governing Body’ (LGB). These have a similar status to committees of a maintained Governing Body and the only powers they have are those that are delegated to them by the Board. This is formalised in the Nexus Scheme of Delegation.

The ability to delegate additional responsibilities or remove responsibilities is not static and the level of delegation can be reviewed to meet changing circumstances. For example, if a school was judged by Ofsted to be ‘Good’ after previously being judged ‘Inadequate’, it might be appropriate for the LGB to be given more delegated powers by the Board.

All LGBs must have a minimum of 2 parent governors at any one time.
Members
Members meet, on average, 3 times per year, with one of these meetings being the Trust’s Annual General Meeting (AGM).

Trust Board of Directors
The Trust Board of Directors meet at least 6 times per year, usually 17:00—19:30 hrs. The Trust Board has a Chair and Vice Chair, and also has an Audit, Finance and Remuneration Committee and a Standards Committee.

Local Governing Body
Each school has a Local Governing Body which meets 3 times per term. LGBs have delegated responsibilities from the Trust Board, and are the eyes and ears of governance of a school. Local Governing Bodies have a Chair, Vice Chair and link governors.

Persons unable to serve in governance
In accordance with the Charities Act 2011 and the MAT’s articles of association, an individual is unable to serve as a Member, Director or LGB Governor if:

- you are under the age of 18;
- you are appointed to the role of clerk;
- you have an unspent conviction involving dishonesty or deception;
- you have been discharged bankrupt or have a composition or arrangement with, or granted a trust deed for your creditors that has not been discharged;
- you have been disqualified by an Order made under section 429 (b) of the Insolvency Act 1986;
- You have been removed from the office of Governor by an Order made by the Charity Commissioners or the High Court on the grounds of any misconduct or mismanagement, or section 7 of the Law Reforms (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Act 1990
- You meet the criteria for barring individuals from working with children and vulnerable adults as defined in s3 and Schedule 3 parts 1 and 3 of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006.

Anyone involved in a governance role for the MAT will be subject to Disclosure and Barring Scheme (DBS) check.

Leadership Structures...
The Trust has a Board of Directors, and each school has its own Local Governing Body. This tier of school leadership is called “governance”. The Trust Board have overall responsibility for the Trust and its constituent schools. However, some of these accountabilities are delegated to Local Governing Bodies, as per the Nexus Scheme of Delegation.

The central Trust employs a Chief Executive Officer, Chief Finance Officer, ICT Lead, Head of School Improvement and governance clerks. Each school employs a Headteacher who is line managed by the Chief Executive and held to account by their Local Governing Body.

The Chief Executive Officer, Chief Finance Officer, Head of School Improvement and school Headteachers are collectively referred to as the Executive Leadership Team.

Each school has its own “Senior Leadership Team” which includes Deputy and Assistant Heads as well as the School Business Manager.

The School Business Manager is responsible for the management of each school’s finances. They are matrix managed by their Headteacher and the Trust’s Chief Finance Officer.
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What can I expect from being in governance?

**In the first month you will:**

- Receive a copy of this welcome booklet along with the Governor Competency Framework;

- Receive an invitation to meet the Headteacher and/or the CEO for a chat and a guided tour of the school;

- Be asked by the clerk to complete the necessary paperwork to enable you to be DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) checked and be compliant with other safeguarding procedures;

- Be ‘buddied up’ with an experienced governor who will show you the ropes;

- Be introduced via email to the other governors;

- Start receiving emails from the governors, school and Multi Academy Trust;

- Receive some key documents about the governing body – such as the minutes of previous governing body and committee meetings and the School Improvement & Plan (SIP);

- Complete a Training Needs Analysis

- Have your photograph taken for the photo board and be asked to provide some information about yourself for the website.

**In the first 3 months you will:**

- Receive information about the governor induction training offered by the Trust, which you should sign up to if possible;

- Meet with the clerk and/or the Chair to prepare you for your first meeting;

- Be expected to attend a governance meeting where you will be introduced to everyone. At this first meeting you may just want to listen and that’s fine. It will take time for new governors to understand and feel able to join in;

- Discuss with the Chair of Governors which work area would be most appropriate for you to align with;

**In the first year you will:**

- Be able to go on governor training courses offered by the Trust and be able to take part in some training for the whole governing body.
The Government published a Governance Competency Framework in January 2017, which outlines the expectations for anyone in an education governance position as well as the additional duties of a Chair.

The Governance competency framework includes the “7 Cs”, which detail that individual governors should be:

**Committed:** Devoting the required time and energy to the role and ambitious to achieve best possible outcomes for young people. Prepared to give time, skills and knowledge to developing themselves and others in order to create highly effective governance.

**Confident:** Of an independent mind, able to lead and contribute to courageous conversations, to express their opinion and to play an active role on the board.

**Curious:** Possessing an enquiring mind and an analytical approach and understanding the value of meaningful questioning.

**Challenging:** Providing appropriate challenge to the status quo, not taking information or data at face value and always driving for improvement.

**Collaborative:** Prepared to listen to and work in partnership with others and understanding the importance of building strong working relationships within the board and with executive leaders, staff, parents and carers, pupils/students, the local community and employers.

**Critical:** Understanding the value of critical friendship which enables both challenge and support, and self-reflective, pursing learning and development opportunities to improve their own and whole board effectiveness.

**Creative:** Able to challenge conventional wisdom and be open-minded about new approaches to problem-solving; recognising the value of innovation and creative thinking to organisational development and success.

There are also 6 domains of the competency framework, with more detailed descriptors included or each one. The six domains are:

1. **Strategic Leadership**
2. **Accountability**
3. **People**
4. **Structures**
5. **Compliance**
6. **Evaluation**

The 7 Principles of Public Life

Anyone involved in Governance should feel they have the right level of knowledge and skills to undertake the role, though it is natural that few if any will have all the necessary skills when they start.

Indeed, as the education landscape shifts over time, all governors will be required to constantly reflect on their own development needs and seek support from the Trust in accessing learning opportunities and training events.

Throughout the academic year, Nexus will provide Governors with the offer of a range of workshops to either introduce or refresh their knowledge and skills in a range of areas.

Nexus also buys into the Learners First offer of learning and development.

The programmes and events offered by Learners First are advertised on a termly basis. Further opportunities continue to be added and developed in response to feedback, demand and local and national priorities.

Details of each event and the associated booking details can be found on the Learners First website: www.learnersfirst.net.

The Clerk of the Trust Board can also offer advice and support.
What expectations does governance put on you?

There are three main aspects to the role of a governing body:

- To provide a strategic view.
- To act as a critical friend.
- To ensure accountability.

Providing a strategic view

You have strategic responsibility for the school and/or the Trust. The Headteacher and senior leadership team (SLT) have operational (i.e. day to day) responsibility for the school, and the CEO, CFO and the Executive Leadership Team have the same operational responsibilities for the Trust.

This means that, in your governance role, you should work with leadership to:

- Decide where the school/Trust is heading in the future.
- Decide how it is going to get there.
- Ensure it actually reaches that destination.

Every school and the Trust itself has certain priorities. Examples include ensuring higher attainment of more able pupils in writing and making better use of outdoor provision. Governors will work with leaders to ensure that these priorities are met.

It is not your role to manage the school or the Trust on a day to day basis, but rather to ensure we achieve the medium and long term goals we have set.

Acting as a ‘critical friend’

You will hear this phrase used a lot when talking about your relationship with the school and the Trust.

To be a friend, you firstly have to get to know your school and/or the wider Trust. There are many ways you can do this – by getting to know the staff, by observing lessons and activities at the school and by reading documents that tell us important information about the school does. Read the latest Ofsted report as it contains information from the most recent school inspection.
All governors (and staff) should promptly declare any business interest and these declarations should be included in the Register of Business and Pecuniary Interests. This register should be referred to prior to the commencement of contracting procedures for all contracts and/or tenders. All potential conflicts of interests should be identified and any governor or staff with any potential conflict should distance themselves from any decisions. The award of any contract that may benefit staff, governors, or their immediate family should be formally minuted by governors to ensure transparency.

**Declaration of interests**

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**Ensuring accountability**

In governance you are responsible for making sure our schools provide the best possible education with the funds they have got.

You are directly accountable on this to different groups of people:
- The Chief Executive Officer of the Trust;
- The Trust Board;
- The Education & Skills Funding Agency;
- The Department for Education (the government);
- OFSTED (who inspect schools and report to the government).

Most importantly, you are accountable to the children, parents and staff of a school, as well as the local community. To help with this you should try and communicate and consult with these groups of people whenever possible. This can be through newsletters, surveys, being available at school events and of course face to face conversations where all part of agreed governance business.

**How much will being involved in governance affect your life?**

This depends a lot on how involved you are prepared to be.

Obviously there are meetings to attend. The papers will be sent to you at least a week before the meeting and it’s expected that you will read them beforehand so you can ask any questions at the meeting itself.

You may also attend training courses specifically for governors or staff training sessions on INSET days. These usually last for two to three hours each.

You may also wish to make yourself available to talk to parents and staff – particularly if you are a parent or staff governor. This could take many forms – from talking in the staff room or playground, to being available at school open days or other events.

“To be a critical friend means you should never be afraid to ask questions. You have a duty to hold the leadership to account. You can do this by ensuring you read the papers for meetings beforehand and then ask questions at the meeting itself. The head teacher’s/CEO’s report is a particularly important document because it provides a lot of key information and updates about the school or the Trust as a whole.

You should always try to offer a combination of challenge and support. You should rightly be proud of the school(s) but never afraid to ask the questions that could help make it/them even better!
The Nexus MAT website contains a wide range of information about the Trust and its schools.

There also key documents on there which will help you understand your role and the work of the Trust, with key documents being:

- Scheme of Delegation (which includes Terms of Reference for the Trust Board and also Local Governing Bodies);
- Governance Handbook (which provides more detailed information of governors, the governor code of conduct and role profiles);
- Financial Delegation Handbook (which outlines the delegated authorizing powers for Trust employees and governors).

More information can be found at www.NexusMAT.org.

The Department for Education have also published the Governance Handbook which is a further source of information for all governors in the education system.

Useful information and further reading....