



Why become a member of the Local Academy Council?

An effective Academy Council is vital to an academy's success. Members of the Council have three roles to fulfil:

- To advise and act as a critical friend to the Principal of the Academy and to advise Trust Board about local issues they need to consider that affect the Academy.
- To represent the interests of the community in the running of the Academy and to represent the academy in its community.
- To provide support to the Principal in undertaking some procedures such as complaints and exclusion procedures.

Who can be a member of the Academy Council?

Anybody over the age of 18, with the following exceptions:

- are bankrupt
- are subject to a disqualification order or disqualification undertaking under companies' legislation or an order concerning insolvency
- have been removed from the office of trustee for a charity on grounds of misconduct or mismanagement or from being concerned in the management or control of any body
- are included in the list of those considered by the Secretary of State as unsuitable to work with children
- are subject to a direction of the Secretary of State under section 142 of Education Act 2002
- are subject to a direction of the Secretary of State under section 128 of the Education and Skills Act 2008
- are disqualified from working with children or from registration for child minding or providing day care
- have received a sentence of imprisonment (whether suspended or not) for a period of not less than three months (without the option of a fine) in the five years before becoming a governor or since becoming a governor
- have received a prison sentence of 2.5 years or more in the 20 years before becoming a governor
- have at any time received a prison sentence of five years or more
- have been fined for causing a nuisance or disturbance on school premises during the five years prior to or since appointment or election as a governor
- refuse to make an application for a criminal records certificate

Do I need qualifications to be a member of the Academy Council?

No. Schools need volunteers with experience of life, but some members of the Council may have qualifications or professional skills.

I work full-time. Will I still have time to be a member of the Academy Council?

- Many members of the Academy Council are in full-time work. But Academy Council meetings can take place during the working day and, very often, during the evenings.
- Check carefully the number of meetings you would be expected to attend and when they usually take place. Also bear in mind that you might want to spend time getting to know the academy in other ways and joining its activities.

What will I get out of being a member of the Academy Council?

- The knowledge that you have played a part in improving children's education and supported the academy's staff.
- A chance to develop new skills and to practise existing ones, such as chairing meetings, speaking in groups, asking questions, making suggestions.

- A chance to help other members of the team, perhaps because they are new, are not used to committee work or need help in learning about the academy and about the Trust's governance.

What makes a good member of the Academy Council?

- You care about improving children's educational attainment.
- You want to contribute to the local community.
- You can work corporately and value the contributions of other people who may hold alternative views to your own. You also understand the concept of corporate decision making.
- You accept you might need training.
- You are willing to ask questions.
- You are open to ideas and willing to learn.

What can I offer?

- Enthusiasm and commitment.
- If you are a parent, your own understanding of other parents' concerns, but you don't need to be a parent to be a member of the Academy Council, apart from when the vacancy is for a parent governor.
- Whether you are a parent or not, as a member of the school's community your local knowledge will be valuable: you will have a feel for what is important to people.
- If you have business or other skills, schools might find these particularly helpful.

What do members of the Academy Council do?

Members of the Academy Council:

- Promote high standards of educational attainment.
- Take general responsibility for the conduct of the school.
- Make sure the curriculum is balanced and broadly based.

Who sits on an Academy Council?

Academy Councils are made up of:

- Parents elected by other parents with children at the school.
- The Principal, if the Principal chooses to be.
- Staff elected by other staff.
- People appointed by the Trustees.

How much time does it take?

Members of the Academy Council act as a team and, as such, the amount of time that each of them can give to the role can vary. Some people will be able and willing to give a lot throughout their time as a member. Others will find that the amount of time they can give increases or reduces during that period. But if you are serious about helping the academy to help children, then you need to:

- Be willing to prepare for meetings: there can be a lot of papers to read.
- Attend meetings; the Academy Council must meet at least once a term.
- Be able to get to meetings which, quite often, will be during the evening but which may be early or during the day.
- Participate. If you cannot prepare for, and attend, meetings you will not be able to help the academy effectively.