



Cabot
Learning
Federation
Governance



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Federation

Governance Framework & Scheme of Delegation

Introduction

The Cabot Learning Federation (CLF) is a Multi Academy Trust (MAT) sponsored by Rolls Royce PLC and The University of the West of England (UWE). Within the CLF are 36 Primary, Secondary and all-through Academies, Special Schools, a Studio School, Post-16, the CLF Institute which includes School Centred Initial Teacher Training and the CLF Central team. These are located in Bristol, Gloucestershire, South Gloucestershire, Weston super Mare and Somerset. This means that we are responsible and accountable for the education of over 18,000 students between the ages of 2 and 19, for the employment and support of over 3000 staff and supported by over 250 people in volunteer governance roles. The co-sponsors of the Cabot Learning Federation are Rolls-Royce PLC and the University of the West of England (UWE).

This document is intended to provide an overview of the governance structure and systems of the Cabot Learning Federation. The document is not intended to be exhaustive and in the event of any query, or an issue arising which is not covered, please contact our Head of Governance.

This document is a useful reference tool for our stakeholders, external agencies such as DfE and Ofsted and can be used to support the induction of new Academy Councillors and Trustees.

Cabot Learning Federation's Vision

The core purpose of the CLF is at the HEART of all we do. Our vision is simple: we believe that by **working together** rather than in isolation we can **accelerate school improvement** and embed excellence in our academies. In doing so, together we can create more opportunities for the **lifelong success** for our students as they become young adults.

The fundamental mission of the CLF is that its work will bear the hallmarks of **excellence** in all that it does. Aspiring to the highest standards in all aspects of its work means the CLF is best placed to respond to the needs of its stakeholders.



There are elements of the Cabot Learning Federation that make it unique. The combination of the tight geographical concentration of its constituent parts, the diversity of the communities it serves and the range of provision it offers to pupils, staff and governors. It is one of the largest and most mature Multi Academy Trusts (MATs) in the South West, and though it is not one of the larger MATs in the country, it commands a reputation as a **leading MAT** on the national stage.

For those most closely associated with the CLF, the key binding agent is its **deep-rooted moral purpose**. The **collaborative culture**, which is the fundamental agent of accelerated improvement in the CLF, is able to exist because of the **shared commitment** of all involved in the federation to all of the pupils attending our schools. The federation exists in order to promote their life chances and to deliver excellent educational experiences for those pupils in our academies now and in the future.

Governance in the CLF

Strong governance plays an important part in our organisation. Our trustees and governors have a key role in leading, supporting and improving our academies and the CLF as a whole. We have over 200 volunteers who share our values and support our efforts to make our ambitious goals a reality.

We have two sponsors: Rolls-Royce PLC and the University of the West of England (UWE). We are delighted to be able to work closely with these two internationally recognised organisations who have both been a part of the CLF from the start. Rolls-Royce PLC's has a global reputation and practices within the world of engineering in Bristol, the UK and across the world. UWE is one of the most successful higher education institutions in the country; providing progression for our students once they have completed their education with us.

The Structure of Governance at the Cabot Learning Federation

Members

The members of the CLF are the equivalent of the shareholders in a commercial company (except that they do not receive dividends). They have a number of statutory rights including the right to remove a Director (following specified circumstances), the right to amend the constitution and the right to receive the annual accounts. Within CLF, the Members are responsible for appointing Directors to the CLF Board and appointing/re-appointing the external auditors each year.

Trustees

As an exempt charity and company limited by guarantee, the CLF is governed by a board of Trustees who are responsible for, and oversee, the management and administration of the trust and the academies run by the trust.

Our Board is made up of 12 Trustees (appointed by the members of our trust) and these directors are accountable to the Department for Education (DfE) and external government agencies, including the Charity Commission, for the quality of the education that CLF provides and the effective use of the associated academy funding.

Executive Team

The role of the Executive Team is to provide information to support the Trustees to take strategic decisions and oversee performance across the Trust.

Our leadership team brings together both the educational and business-related activities of the Federation. At both the Senior Leadership Forum, and other networking events, there is a continuous focus towards delivering outstanding student and business related outcomes in line with the overall strategy. A key strength of the CLF is the breadth of competence and experience of leaders within the organisation who can positively challenge and collaborate with colleagues.

Principal

The principal will uphold public trust in school leadership and maintain high standards of ethics, behaviour and professional conduct and build positive and respectful relationships across the school community.

They will create a culture where pupils experience a positive and enriching school life and uphold ambitious educational standards in order to prepare pupils from all backgrounds for their next phase of education and life.

Local Academy Council

At a local level, each academy has an Academy Council comprising of up to 9 Academy Councillors. Academy Councils are responsible for holding Principals and their leadership teams to account for the quality and effectiveness of the academic experience of the students under their care with the aim of securing effective school improvement. They do this through monitoring performance against an annual academy improvement plan, through monitoring risks and responses to risks, and by overseeing systems and processes for the safeguarding of children and the health, safety and wellbeing of academy staff.

Constitutional Structure

The constitution of the Trust is set out in our Articles of Association

Members

The Articles of Association allow for the following members:

- Two members appointed by UWE (as sponsor of CLF);
- Two members appointed by Rolls Royce (as sponsor of CLF);
- Further members appointed by unanimous agreement of the members above;
- Further members appointed by the Secretary of State.

The DfE recommends that Each Multi Academy Trust has 5 members (and no fewer than 3) and that there is some separation between members and Directors. The CLF currently has 5 members.

Trustees

We consider governance to be an incredibly important part of our organisation. Trustees play a critical role in the safe running of our Trust and seek to hold us to account and to raise standards. The board of trustees are both charity trustees and company directors. Their remit includes:

- ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the
- performance management of staff
- overseeing and ensuring effective financial performance

The trustees must ensure regularity and propriety in use of the trust's funds, and achieve economy, efficiency and effectiveness - The three elements of value for money. It is important the 7 principles of public life are upheld and enacted by our Trustees when performing their duties and holding leaders to account.

Delegated Authority Framework

The Delegated Authority Framework (DAF) defines the powers which are delegated from the CLF Board to other sub-committees or executive officers in order to facilitate the day to day running of the organisation ensuring

compliance with the Academy Trust Handbook and the CLF Financial Regulations. While the DAF seeks to offer clarity on decision making powers, and does include specific authorities it cannot provide a definitive and exhaustive guide to decision making across every area of Federation business. To that end the CLF and its officers should seek to operate within the spirit of the framework holding to the culture of governance as defined by high transparency and high trust.

The Delegated Authority Framework sets out key activities of the Trust and the roles of key roles and groups.

While specific responsibilities and decision-making powers are delegated throughout the organisation, the Board of Trustees retains ultimate accountability for all actions and decisions taken under this framework. This means that, even where authority is delegated to individuals or committees, Trustees remain collectively responsible for ensuring that all delegated tasks are carried out appropriately and in line with statutory and regulatory requirements. As a result, some areas of responsibility may involve more than one person or group being accountable for different aspects of a task, but the Trustees’ overarching accountability remains unchanged.

R	Means Responsible . The individual(s) with delegated responsibility to ensure an activity is undertaken within defined and agreed time, cost and quality constraints; reporting progress as required. In the case of the CEO, this reporting will be at board level. In the case of the Principal, this will be at Academy Council level.
A	Means Accountable . The individual(s) with accountability for ensuring completion of a task.
C	Means Contribute . The individual or group may be invited to offer input, expertise, or support to enhance the quality or effectiveness of a task or decision. Their involvement is encouraged where relevant, but is not required in every instance and does not imply decision-making authority.
I	Means Informed . The individual/group who need to be kept “in the picture.” They need updates on progress or decision, but they do not need to be formally consulted, nor do they contribute directly to the task or decision.
P2*	Authority exercised on behalf of the Board by 2 trustees (incidental, where one is the chair or their nominee)
P1*	Board Authority delegated to 1 trustee (incidental)
P2+	Board authority delegated to 2 trustees (identified at the first Board Meeting of the annual cycle, where one is the chair or their nominee)

All relevant parties must be kept informed of matters dealt with under the Delegated Authority Framework.

Our Delegated Authority Framework is structured in accordance with the following functions:

- Strategy
- Governance
- Education/Curriculum
- Finance
- Human Resources
- Health & Safety
- Safeguarding

Approval and Renewal

The Delegation Authority Framework is reviewed and approved by the Board annually.

Date of last review: October 2025

Date of next review: September 2026

Strategy

Task/ Function	Members	Trustees	CEO	COO/Exec Team	Head of Governance	Chairs of Academy Council (COAC)	Academy Council	Principal	Notes
Setting the Trust's vision and strategic plans		A	R	C					
Approves overall strategy of CLF		A	R	C		C		C	
Admission of new academies to CLF		A	R	C					

Governance

Task/ Function	Members	Trustees	CEO	COO/Exec Team	Head of Governance	Chairs of Academy Council (COAC)	Academy Council	Principal	Notes
Appointment of Trustees	A		C		R				
Removal of Trustees	A		C		R				
Approval of terms of reference for sub-committees and Executive Working Groups		A	C	C	R				
Appoint a Clerk		A			C				
Appoint Chair of Academy Council		A			R		C	C	
Remove Chair of Academy Council		A	C		I				
Appointment and removal of Board appointed Academy Councillors (other than the chair)		A			R		C	C	
Removal of non-board appointed Academy Councillors		A	*C			C	C	C	*May in exceptional circumstances suspend or remove an Academy Councillor)
Appoint Academy Councillors into mandatory link roles as defined in the Terms of Reference		A			C	C	R	C	
Authorised to approve/amend organisational scheme of delegation		A	C	C	C				
Acquisition and disposal of legal entities		A	C	R	R				
Maintenance of register of interests		A		C	R				
Maintenance of Risk Management processes		A	R	R	C	C	C	*R	*Responsible for ensuring the Academy RR is maintained
Approval of adoption of board approved CLF template policies in accordance with the CLF Master Policies list		A	C	C	C		R	R	
Approval of Academy policies in accordance with the CLF Master Policies list		A	C	C	C				
Ensuring that CLF fulfils their duties in accordance with the Equalities Act 2010		A	R		R				
Ensuring that academies fulfil their duties in accordance with the SEND Code of Practice		A	R						

Education/Curriculum

Task/ Function	Members	Trustees	CEO	DCEO/Edu Exec Team	Head of Governance	Chairs of Academy Council (COAC)	Academy Council	Principal	Notes
Approval and monitoring of CLF and academy targets including for student achievement, progress and attendance		A	R	R		C	R	R	
Approval of academy improvement plans based on Self Evaluation Framework (SEF) or other assessment		A	R	R		R	R	R	
Curriculum and assessment: Planning, implementation and review		A	R	R			R	R	
Set term dates		A	R	R			C	C	
Set Length/ organisation of Academy day		A	R				C	C	
Issues suspensions or permanent exclusions		A	I				I	R	
Holds exclusion review meetings		A					R	C	
Independent Review of permanent exclusion decision by an independent Review Panel (IRP)		A					R	C	
Admissions policy approval where no change is proposed		A	C		R		R	C	
Admissions policy approval where change is proposed		A	R		R		C	C	
Admissions (in year)		A			I		R	C	
Admissions appeals (in year)		A			I		C	R	
Admissions appeals (new year groups)		A					I	R	
Admissions delegation		A			R		C	C	The academy trust retains legal responsibility for admissions but has formally delegated admissions decision to cluster admission committees and Local Authority (Somerset, North Somerset, Bristol, Gloucester and South Gloucester) admission services. The decision to buy into Local Authority admissions service to provide specific operational tasks within the admissions process and/or admission decisions is confirmed on a school by school basis and through a signed agreement between the school and Local Authority.

Finance

Task/ Function	Members	Trustees	CEO	COO/CFO	Professional Services Exec	Audit & Risk Committee	Finance Committee	Principal	Notes
Statutory Reporting									
Approval of annual accounts and reports to funding and regulatory bodies		A	C	R		*C			*Receive external auditors report
Completion and submission of other accounting returns including HMRC and ESFA returns as required		A		R					
Appointment of External Auditors	R	A		C		C			
Systems of Internal Financial Control									
Assurance over adequacy of internal financial control		A	R	R	C	C			
Approval of financial regulations		A		R			C		
Appointment of internal auditors		A		R	C	C			
Budget & Management Reporting									
Approval of annual budget(s) including central budget and academy contributions		A	R	R			C	R	
Receipt and review of management accounts		A		R			C	*A	*Accountable for local academy position
Authority to make budget virements		A		R					
Reserves Requests									
Authority to approve reserves requests: where value is >£600k		A						C	
		R							
Authority to approve reserves requests: where value is £350k-£600k		R P2+	R Jointly authorised £200k-£350K	R authorised up to £200k and jointly with CEO up to £350k				C	
Authority to approve reserves requests: where value is <£350k		A	R	R				C	
Purchasing & Procurement									
Placing orders for goods and services, entering into contracts where value is >£600K		A							
		R							
Placing orders for goods and services, entering into contracts where value is £350-£600k		A P2+	R Jointly authorised £200k-£350K	R authorised up to £200k and jointly with CEO up to £350k					
Placing orders for goods and services, entering into contracts where value is <£350k		A	R	R					
Waiver of CLF financial regulations in respect of purchasing		A		R		C			
Ensuring compliance with tendering processes		A		R			C		
Banking Authority & Cash Management									

Approval to borrow money		A		C				
Cashflow Management, Treasury & Investment practices		A		R			R	
Open a bank account and approve signatories		A	R	R	R			
Transaction Processing								
Payroll – Starters, leavers and amendments		A		R	C			R
Write-off bad debts where value is >£45k		A		R up to £45k				
Write-off bad debts where value is <£45k		A		A				
				R				
Fixed Assets								
Management of capital funding		A		R	C			*R
Asset Register		A		R				*R for local security arrangements
Security of Assets		A		R	C			
Disposal of Assets where value is >£50k		A		R				
Disposal of Assets where value is <£50k		A		A				
				R				
Loan of Assets		A		A				
				R				
Insurances								
Annual Risk Review and Premium Renewal		A		A				
				R				

Human Resources

Task/Function	Members	Trustees	CEO	COO/CFO	Remuneration Committee	HRD	Academy Council	Principal	Notes
Staff Structure									
Authorised to Increase Academy/Organisational Headcount (Establishment) within existing staffing budget		A	R can, with CFO, authorise changes beyond overall budget	R can authorise changes within overall budget				R can authorise replacement posts within existing staffing budget	
Grade of Staff posts									
Overall job evaluation policy & procedures		A	P2+			C			
Authorised to evaluate jobs and grades		A				R		C	
Recruitment									
Recruitment and appointment of CEO + CFO		A		C		C	C	C	
Recruitment and appointment of Permanent Executive		A	R			C	C		
		P1							

Health and Safety Policy	A	R	R					
Ensuring the adequacy of health and safety practice throughout CLF including FRA and asbestos	A	R	C	C			C	
Critical incident planning	A	R	C	R			C	
Health and Safety RIDDOR reporting	A	R	C					
Academy health and safety arrangements including committee and use of risk assessments	A	R		R				
General monitoring and action plans in relation to safety of sites including buildings conditions	A	R	R		C	R		

Safeguarding

Task/Function	Trustees	Designated Trustee for Safeguarding	Strategic Safeguarding Lead	Chairs of Academy Council (COAC)	Academy Council	Academy Council Safeguarding Rep	Principal	Federation Designated Safeguarding Officer (DSO)	Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)	HRD
Policies and Procedures										
Ensure suitable Safeguarding Policy and associated procedures are in place across the federation	A	C	R	C	C	C	R	R		
Monitor the effectiveness of the CLF Safeguarding Policy	A	C	R	C	C	C	R	R	C	
Receive an annual report on the Federation's Safeguarding policy and procedures	A	R	R					C	C	
Receive a termly report on the Academy Safeguarding policy and procedures	A		C		R	R	R	C	R	
Audits										
Ensure Annual Safeguarding audits take place and are appropriately reported to the board	A	R	R			R	R		R	
Training										
Ensure all Designated Safeguarding Leads and their deputies receive appropriate training	A		R			R	R	R	R	C
Ensure all central and academy staff receive required training (including Councillors and Directors)	A		R		C	C	R	R		
Other										
Ensures each Academy Council appoints a Safeguarding Councillor representative	A			R	R					
Ensure Safer Recruitment procedures are implemented and adhered to	A		R		C	C	R			R
Ensure Prevent agenda is implemented and adhered to	A	C	C			R	R	C	C	
Confidential Safeguarding issues reported to LADO where appropriate	A	R	C			I	R	I	C	C
Operation of Safeguarding investigations	A	R	C				R	C		R