



Frequently Asked Questions

To whom will Hub Councils be responsible?

Hub Councils are directly accountable to the Aspire Board. Hub Councils comprise 2 representatives from each academy within the Hub, the School Leader from each academy plus the Executive Headteacher for that Hub.

What representation do we have at full Board level?

Two Hub Council Chairs from the group of all Hub Council Chairs, are elected to sit on the Aspire Board. They will communicate and co-ordinate meetings with all Hub Council members through the year, when they can share intelligence, assess and assimilate information to take to the full Board if required. Each Hub Council will be required to prepare a brief, standardised formal report for each Board meeting and the Hub Chair will be responsible both for ensuring the report is completed and forwarded by the deadline and for answering to that report in the Board meeting.

Do Hub Councils replace Local Governing Boards?

Yes, they do.

Does this mean that those from the parent body and the wider community who have volunteered to be Governors in the past can still have a significant role in their local academy?

Absolutely. There are an infinite number of ways they can, and must, stay as an active part of the life of the academy. This can be achieved through accepting roles on local level community liaison/friends of/focus groups undertaking tasks that best suit their skills, knowledge and enthusiasms. Never has there been a better opportunity to do this. Having Hub Councils allows many other volunteers to spend more time with children and staff and less at meetings, writing reports, and accepting legal responsibility for things they frequently have no real interest in or knowledge of.

How will the views of the parents, community liaison groups be represented at Hub and full Board level?

It is the responsibility of the academy's leadership team and the two Hub Councilors to make sure that the views, ideas, and opinions that are expressed through these new groups are represented fully at the termly Hub Council meetings. It is also a part of the two elected Chair Board members' responsibilities to be alert and sensitive to the needs and health of the academy/community relationships. The Aspire CEO and Chair will also provide opportunities for parents to share their ideas and concerns directly to them during the year (see below).

What about finance and running the budgets? Who monitors and oversees the monthly finance reports, and sets the annual budget?

The Councils have specific financial responsibilities as delegated by the Aspire Finance Committee. These include ensuring that the budget for their agreed Academy Improvement Plan for all academies within the Hub, is approved firstly by the Academy Leader and both Hub members for that academy.



The Aspire Business and Finance Manager is held to account by the Finance Committee for the successful implementation of these budget plans. The Hub Council members will also receive and scrutinise their Hub's monthly finance reports. They will flag up any problems firstly with the academy's senior leader, but also to the Business and Finance Manager, or straight to the CEO or Chair if necessity demands.

What about capability, training, performance management, staffing and recruitment? How will that be managed? Who oversees this?

The Hub Councils can shortlist, interview and appoint staff guided by the Hubs' Academy Leader. Leadership positions in any of the academies will always be appointed by the Board, however Hub Councils will take the lead role within the process. They will follow Aspire Recruitment Policy/Leadership Strategy and guidance during this process. The Trust will always be there for Hub Councils if asked to help with the recruitment, training, disciplining, and the capability assessment of any staff (see below for performance management).

Who runs the performance management of staff?

The Trust's HR team is undertaking the task of reshaping and restructuring how we run PM. A paper to outline this work will be circulated on completion.

Do our two Council members for our academy have to know about the other two academies in as great detail as their own?

No, absolutely not but they do need to be fully involved in the Hub Council and the information regarding all members of that Council in order to provide support and challenge. A Hub Councillor's role is to understand fully and appropriately how well their own academy is doing; to know about its key performance indicators as well as having a good insight into teacher performance, share in the development and monitoring of the academy's Annual Improvement Plan, its targets, and to be at the school for at 3-6 days of the year to take part in the Hub monitoring process, target and improvement planning/approval. The Hub Councillor then brings this knowledge and experience to the table at Hub Council meetings.

What is the level of commitment expected for these new Hub Council members?

They will be asked to attend at least one full monitoring day, preferably two. They will also meet with the full Council to agree annual: SAT targets, Academy Improvement Plan, Hub Improvement Plan, and to ensure that their Hub is getting the level of support it needs from the Aspire Academy Improvement Group, and, as required, to make up the panel for complaints or appeals from staff or parents.

This should take no more than 3-6 meetings a year. It is for each member to work in partnership with their academy's senior leadership team to see what other monitoring roles are needed to ensure standards are high and getting higher. Safeguarding is one additional key area.

Induction and on-going training will be provided by the Trust as laid down by the Department for Education's 'Handbook for Governors'.



What about safeguarding? Who oversees the safety and well being of staff and children?

One of Aspire's academy leaders (Sally Olford, solford@summercourtschool.co.uk), in partnership with the IT Manager (Peter Bradburn, peter.bradburn@aspireacademytrust.org) monitor all our safeguarding procedures, training, and policies across the Trust. Hub Councils share that responsibility within their own Hubs. One member is asked to make contact with Sally at least once per term, with a formal meeting of all members charged with this responsibility once per year, to ensure that all their academy's safety systems are in place, monitored, and up to date.

Buildings and maintenance. Who makes sure that we are fully compliant, and that the right decisions about our academy building and infrastructure are taken properly, in due order and using due process? Who maintains health, safety, and risk assessments?

Rhian Roberts and the Premises Team, in partnership with each academy's leadership team are responsible for this. They are held to account by the CEO, Business Manager, and full Board.

Does having Hub Councils take away our autonomy?

No, it clarifies where actual legal responsibilities and accountabilities lie within a multi academy trust. Academies within a MAT have already asked, by volunteering to join, for the Trust to accept full responsibility, and for it in turn, to delegate sensitively back to academies and their councils, those responsibilities that they can realistically deliver for the sole benefit of the children, standards, and pupil outcome.

What role does the Chair of a Hub Council have?

The Hub Chair is elected by and from the Hub Council members. In the case of a draw a compromise position will be found. This might involve cycling the Chair role on an annual basis. The Chair runs Council meetings in partnership with the Clerk and the senior leaders. The meetings will always follow and serve the improvement programme and the Aspire Board timetable e.g. Autumn term meeting to follow up after first monitoring visits have been completed, and will agree targets and improvement planning at that meeting in readiness for presentation to the full Board. The Chair is the essential, key, link role. S/he may well be asked to meet inspectors during an inspection alongside the academy's own Council members. S/he will also be asked to run appeal and other panels should the need arise. S/he will also communicate regularly and work very closely with the other Hub Chairs.

What representation will parents and families have at local level and Board level?

There will inevitably be some parents across the Trust who will become Council Members, take up the position of Chair, and therefore possibly be elected to the full Board. We will ensure that the parent voice has a number of channels to make itself heard. The Chair and CEO will run a number of open meetings, around the Trust, to meet parents, three times a year. Online parent forums will be designed, managed, and open to all parents to comment on.

Who will ensure that all compliance policies are in place, followed, and maintained?

The Trust through the Company Secretary.