

Ascend Learning Trust

Scheme of Delegation 2026/2027

This document details delegation of governance functions to the trust board, its committees, the CEO, the CFO, the Trust Executive Leadership Team (TELT), the headteachers and to the Local Governing Bodies (LGBs). The document will be reviewed annually and immediately where there is a change in trust management or organisational structure.

Date approved by Trustees:	September 2026
Date adopted by LGB:	September 2026
Date of next review (annually):	September 2027

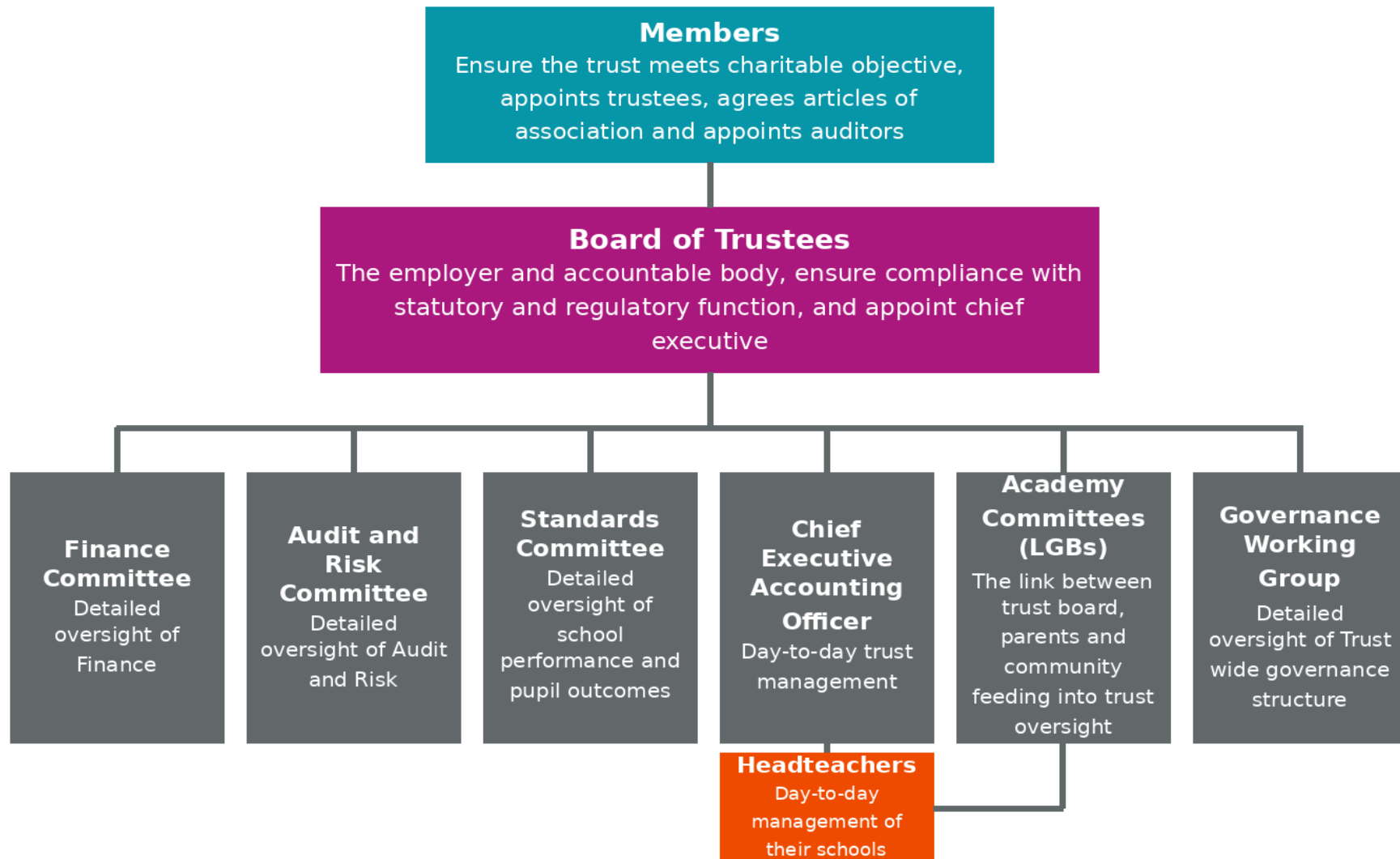
Version Control

Version	Date	Owner	Approval Forum
1.0	September 2024	Head of Governance and Compliance	Trustee Board
2.0	17th September 2025	Head of Governance and Compliance	Trustee Board
3.0	May 2026	Head of Governance and Compliance	Trustee Board
4.0	September 2026	Head of Governance and Compliance	Trustee Board

Document Change History

Version	Date	Reason for Change	Owner
2.0	September 2025	Changes made to Policy Management section regarding maintenance and adoption of trust wide policies.	Head of Governance and Compliance
3.0	May 2026	Changes to clarify responsibilities and align with ATH	Head of Governance and Compliance
4.0	September 2026	Change from COO to CFO, Change of committee structures – finance and Audit and Risk.	Head of Governance and Compliance

Governance at Ascend Learning Trust (ALT) is structured as below:



Principles of Governance and Delegation

The Board of Trustees is ultimately responsible for the governance, strategic direction and performance of Ascend Learning Trust and all of its schools.

Trustees retain overall accountability for:

- educational outcomes and pupil progress
- financial sustainability and value for money
- safeguarding and pupil welfare
- statutory and regulatory compliance
- the effective leadership and governance of the Trust.

To enable effective leadership and oversight across the Trust, the Board delegates certain functions and responsibilities to its committees, the Chief Executive Officer, executive leaders, Headteachers and Local Governing Bodies.

All delegated authority must be exercised in accordance with:

- the Trust's Articles of Association
- the Academy Trust Handbook
- relevant statutory and regulatory guidance
- Trust policies and procedures
- this Scheme of Delegation.

Delegated powers may be amended or withdrawn by the Board of Trustees at any time where the Board considers it necessary to do so.

The Board retains responsibility for decisions that are strategic, statutory or that present significant financial, educational, safeguarding or reputational risk to the Trust.

Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Description and Duties
Members	Members are the guardians of the Trust's charitable purpose and ensure that the Trust operates in accordance with its Articles of Association. Members have a limited but important role in the governance of the Trust and are responsible for safeguarding the integrity of the governance structure. Members are responsible for: • appointing and removing Trustees (Member appointed) • approving changes to the Articles of Association • appointing the Trust's external auditors • receiving the Trust's annual report and accounts • holding Trustees to account for the effective governance of the Trust. Members exercise only those powers reserved to them in the Articles of Association and do not participate in the operational governance or day-to-day management of the Trust.
Trustees	The Board of Trustees is the Trust's accountable body and is legally responsible for the governance and strategic leadership of the Trust. Trustees are collectively responsible for ensuring that the Trust fulfils its charitable objectives and delivers high standards of education across all schools. The Board of Trustees is responsible for: • setting the strategic direction, vision and values of the Trust • ensuring strong educational outcomes and school improvement • ensuring effective financial management and sustainability • overseeing safeguarding, compliance and risk management • holding the executive leadership of the Trust to account • ensuring the Trust complies with statutory and regulatory requirements. Trustees provide strategic oversight and assurance, ensuring that appropriate systems and controls are in place across the Trust.

Trust board committees (Finance Committee, Audit and Risk Committee, Standards Committee and Governance Working Group)	The Board of Trustees delegates detailed scrutiny and oversight of specific areas to Board Committees. These committees support the Board by examining issues in greater detail and providing assurance that appropriate governance, financial and risk management arrangements are in place. Committees operate in accordance with their terms of reference, which are approved and reviewed annually by the Board of Trustees. Key committees include: <u>Finance Committee</u> Responsible for oversight of financial management. The Finance Committee shall operate in accordance with the Academy Trust Handbook and shall: • be chaired by a Trustee who is not the Chair of the Board • have a majority of Trustees as members • not include employees as voting members • meet at least three times each financial year. <u>Audit and Risk Committee</u> Responsible for oversight of risk management, internal control systems, and internal scrutiny. • be chaired by a Trustee who is not the Chair of the Board • have a majority of Trustees as members • not include employees as voting members • meet at least three times each financial year. <u>Standards and Governance Committees</u> Responsible for oversight of educational performance, school improvement, governance effectiveness and Trust policies. Committees report regularly to the Board of Trustees and make recommendations to inform Board decisions. Internal scrutiny shall operate independently of executive management and shall report directly to the Audit and Risk Committee. Individuals undertaking internal scrutiny must not be involved in the day-to-day financial administration of the Trust.
---	---

Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is responsible for the overall leadership and management of the Trust and the delivery of the Trust's strategic priorities. The CEO leads the executive leadership team and works with Headteachers to ensure the effective operation and improvement of all Trust schools. The CEO is responsible for: • implementing the Trust's strategic plan • leading the Trust's executive leadership team • ensuring high standards of teaching, learning and leadership across schools • overseeing operational, financial and organisational performance • supporting and challenging Headteachers to secure school improvement. The CEO acts as the Trust's Accounting Officer and is personally responsible for ensuring the Trust operates with regularity, propriety and value for money in accordance with the Academy Trust Handbook and the principles of Managing Public Money. Where the Accounting Officer considers that a proposed action of the Board or a committee may breach the requirements of regularity; propriety; or Managing Public Money; the Accounting Officer must raise the concern formally with the Board. If the concern remains unresolved; the Accounting Officer must notify the Education and Skills Funding Agency without delay. The CEO reports to the Board of Trustees and its committees and is held accountable by Trustees for the effective delivery of the Trust's strategy.
Chief Financial Officer (CFO)	The Chief Financial Officer is responsible for the Trust's financial leadership, management and control. The CFO supports the Accounting Officer and the Board of Trustees in maintaining the Trust's financial sustainability and ensuring that public funds are managed with regularity, propriety and value for money. The CFO is responsible for: • leading the Trust's financial strategy and financial planning; • preparing budgets, management accounts and statutory financial returns; • ensuring that effective financial controls and systems are maintained; • supporting the management of financial, estates and operational risks within the responsibilities assigned to the role; • advising the CEO, Finance, Audit and Risk Committee and Board on financial performance and sustainability; • ensuring compliance with the Academy Trust Handbook, the Trust's financial regulations and relevant statutory requirements.

	The CFO reports to the CEO and provides professional financial advice directly to the Board and its committees as required.
Trust Executive Leadership Team (TELT)	The Trust Executive Leadership Team supports the Chief Executive Officer in the operational leadership and management of the Trust. Members of the executive team provide strategic leadership across key areas including education, finance, operations, safeguarding and organisational development. The executive team supports schools through: • strategic leadership and operational oversight • quality assurance and school improvement support • development and implementation of Trust-wide policies • monitoring educational and organisational performance. The Trust Executive Leadership Team is not a governance body and does not hold independent governance authority unless specific responsibilities are formally delegated by the Board of Trustees.
Headteachers	Headteachers are responsible for the leadership and day-to-day management of their schools. They are accountable for ensuring that their schools operate effectively, deliver high standards of education and comply with Trust policies and statutory requirements. Headteachers are responsible for: • leading teaching and learning within their schools • implementing the Trust's vision, values and policies • delivering school improvement priorities • managing staff and resources effectively • ensuring safeguarding, behaviour and attendance expectations are met • ensuring compliance with statutory duties and Trust policies. Headteachers work closely with the Trust executive team and Local Governing Bodies to ensure their schools continue to improve and deliver high-quality education.

Local Governing Bodies	Local Governing Bodies (LGBs) operate as committees of the Board of Trustees and form an important part of the Trust's governance structure. They provide local oversight, challenge and support to school leaders and help ensure that the Trust's strategic priorities are effectively implemented at school level. Local Governing Bodies support the Trust by: • monitoring school performance and improvement priorities • supporting and challenging school leadership • maintaining engagement with parents and the wider community • ensuring that Trust policies are implemented effectively at school level. Local Governing Bodies do not have separate legal authority from the Trust and operate only within the powers delegated through this Scheme of Delegation. The Board of Trustees retains the authority to remove any governor serving on a Local Governing Body where it is satisfied that the individual has acted inappropriately, breached the Trust's Code of Conduct, breached confidentiality, brought the Trust into disrepute or otherwise failed to meet the standards expected of those undertaking governance roles. Local Governing Bodies may not: • enter into contracts on behalf of the Trust • employ staff • approve Trust budgets • amend Trust-wide policies unless expressly authorised within this Scheme of Delegation or by resolution of the Board of Trustees.
------------------------	--

Governance Framework

KEY:

A = Accountable (Answerable for the task being delivered. Delegates the task to those responsible).

R = Responsible (Responsible for delivery and does the work to achieve the task).

C = Consulted (Needs to be involved before the decision is made. Communication is two-way – these are important stakeholders or have relevant specialist knowledge).

I = Informed

Scheme of Delegation KEY: A = Accountable R = Responsible C = Consulted I = Informed									
	Members	Trustees	CEO	CFO	Finance/Audit and Risk	Standards Committee	TELT	Headteachers	LGB
Board Business									
1. Appoint/remove members	A/R								
2. Appoint/remove trustees	A/R	A/R							
3. Elect Chair and Vice Chair of Trustees	I	A/R							
4. Appoint or remove Chair for sub-committees of the Board of Trustees		A/R	I		C	C			
5. Approve appointment or removal of Chair of LGBs	I	A/R							
6. Approve membership and composition of sub-committees of the Board of Trustees		A/R							
7. Establish and review Trust governance structure		A/R	C						
8. Agree named safeguarding trustee		A/R	C				I		
9. Agree named SEND trustee lead		A/R	C						
10. Appoint external auditors	A/R	C		C	I				
11. Appoint trust governance professional	I	A	R						
12. Approve the annual schedule for internal audit		A	C	C	R				
13. Approve the Trust Strategic Plan		A	C				C		I
14. Approve and review Governance Policy and Code of Conduct		A/R	C						

15. Ensure an effective programme of stakeholder and community engagement is delivered		A					R		C
16. Agree committee clerking arrangements		A/R	C		I	I			
17. Articles of association: review		A/R	C		C	C			I
18. Articles of association: ratify	A/R								
19. Agree committee terms of reference		A/R	C		C	C		C	
20. Complete annual review of scheme of delegation		A	R	C					
21. Complete annual trust board self-review		A/R							
22. Complete review of local governance	C	A	R		C	C		C	I
23. Publish governance arrangements on trust and schools' websites		A	R						
24. Ensure trust website is compliant and effective		A	R						
25. Ensure school websites are compliant and effective		A	A					R	I
26. Submit annual report on the performance of the trust to members and publish		A	R						
27. Commission external review of board effectiveness every three years	C	A/R	C						
28. Report work of academy committees: submit to trust and publish		A	C		R	R		C	
29. Receive annual internal scrutiny summary report	I	A/I	C		R		C		
30. Ensure compliance with regularity, propriety and value for money	I	A	R	R	C		C		
31. Receive annual safeguarding assurance report		A	R			R/C	R/C		

Scheme of Delegation KEY: A = Accountable R = Responsible C = Consulted I = Informed									
	Members	Trustees	CEO	CFO	Finance/Audit and Risk	Standards Committee	TELT	Headteachers	LGB
Vision and Strategy									
1. Determine trust's vision, strategy, and key priorities		A/R	R	C	C	C	C	C	I
2. Ensure effective engagement with stakeholders regarding the Trust's vision; values; and strategic priorities.		A	R			R			
3. Apply trust vision and strategy to individual schools		A	R		C	C	C	R	R
4. Determine trust-wide policies which reflect the trust's ethos and values (Tier 1)		A	R				R		I
5. Determine school level policies (Tier 2- local adaptations only)		A	R		C	C		R	R
6. Establish risk register and conduct regular review		A	R	R	R				I

Scheme of Delegation KEY: A = Accountable R = Responsible C = Consulted I = Informed									
	Members	Trustees	CEO	CFO	Finance/Audit and Risk	Standards Committee	TELT	Headteachers	LGB
Financial Management Inc Trust Growth, Premises, Estates, Risk Management									
1. Set vision and targets for Trust growth		A	R	R	R				
2. Undertake due diligence review process on potential schools joining Trust		A	R	R	C				
3. Approve new schools joining Trust		A/R	C	C					
4. Prepare, scrutinise and approve the annual budget and three-year financial plan/forecast		A	C	R	C				
5. Produce monthly management accounts in line with Academy Trust Handbook requirements		A	C	R	C				
6. Manage cash position inc. reporting on cashflow & internal 'loans'		A	C	R	C				
7. Manage procurement exercises in line with compliance requirements		A	C	R	R				
8. Prepare, review and approve the Trust's Reserves Policy		A	C	R	R/C				
9. Approve the Trust's Investment Strategy		A	C	R	R/C				
10. Appoint and remove external auditors	A/R	C	C	C					
11. Appoint and performance manage Chief Financial Officer		A/R							
12. Produce trust's scheme of financial delegation		A	C	R					
13. Receive external auditors report	I	A	I/C	C	R				
14. Coordinate, implement and monitor recommendations made by external auditors		A	R	R	C/R				
15. Prepare and approve the Trust's annual report and accounts in line with the Charity Commission's Statement of Recommended Practice		A	R	R					
16. Submit ESFA required reports and returns			A	R					
17. Agree budget plan to support delivery of trust strategic priorities		A	R	R					
18. Agree budget plan to support delivery of school strategic priorities		A	C	R	R			R	I
19. Monitor trust budget		A	R/C	R	C				
20. Carry out benchmarking and trust-wide value for money evaluation		C	A/R	R	C				

Scheme of Delegation - Financial Management Inc Trust Growth, Premises, Estates, Risk Management (cont) KEY: A = Accountable R = Responsible C = Consulted I = Informed									
	Members	Trustees	CEO	CFO	Finance/Audit and Risk	Standards Committee	TELT	Headteachers	LGB
21. Agree reporting and monitoring arrangements for trust and school budgets		A/R	C	R				I	
22. Approve trust-wide estate vision, strategy, and asset management plan		A/R	R						
23. Monitor school estate to ensure it is safe and well maintained		A	R		R		R	R	I
24. Develop the trust estates strategy		A	R						
25. Procure new buildings in line with procedures and regulations		A	R						
26. Maintain buildings, inc. properly funded maintenance programme		A	R						
27. Set Health and Safety Policy		A	R				R	R	
28. Respond to Health and Safety incidents in schools		A						R	
29. Appoint person in charge of first aid in schools		A						R	
30. Review risk assessments		A					R	R	
31. Approve the trust Risk Management Framework		A	R	R			C		
32. Approve and review the Trust risk appetite		A	R	R			C		
33. Approve the Data and Cyber Security Breach Prevention and Management Plan		A	R	C			C		
34. Ensure compliance with data protection legislation	I	A	R	C	C		C	R	I
35. Monitor and review the management of strategic risk		A	R	R			C		
36. Approve related party transactions (where required)	I	A	C	R	C				

Scheme of Delegation KEY: A = Accountable R = Responsible C = Consulted I = Informed									
	Members	Trustees	CEO	CFO	Finance/Audit and Risk	Standards Committee	TELT	Headteachers	LGB
Education Framework									
1. Approval of Curriculum Policy and plan		A					R	C	C
2. Approval of school targets		A				R	C		I
3. Monitoring of school targets		A				C		R	I
4. Approval and monitoring of the approach and level of challenge for individual student targets		A				C		R	I
5. Approval of school improvement and quality improvement framework		A				R	R	C	I
6. Exclude a pupil for more than 15 days or permanently		I	C					A/R	I
7. Implementing and following guidance of suspensions and exclusion framework.		A						R	R
8. Provide independent challenge and support in relation to the execution of the School Improvement Plan		A	C			I	C		R

Scheme of Delegation KEY: A = Accountable R = Responsible C = Consulted I = Informed									
	Members	Trustees	CEO	CFO	Finance/Audit and Risk	Standards Committee	TELT	Headteachers	LGB
HR – Appointments/Dismissals - Performance Monitoring									
1. Appoint/dismiss/suspend the Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	C	A/R							
2. Appoint/dismiss/suspend a member of the Senior Leadership Team		C	A/R						
3. Appoint/dismiss/suspend a Headteacher, Assistant Headteacher, or Deputy Headteacher			A				R		C
4. Appoint/dismiss/suspend school staff below Assistant Headteacher			C					R	
5. Undertake performance management of the Chief Executive Officer		A/R							
6. Undertake performance management of the Senior Leadership Team		C	A/R						
7. Undertake Performance management of Headteachers			A/R				R		
8. To determine the pay progression / award for the Chief Executive Officer		A/R							
9. To determine the pay progression / award for the Executive Leadership Team		C	A/R						
10. To determine the pay progression for the Central Team			A/R				R		
11. To determine pay progression for Headteachers			A/R				R		
12. To determine pay progression for school-based employees							C	R	
13. Provide independent challenge and support in relation to school leadership		A	C			I	C		R

Scheme of Delegation KEY: A = Accountable R = Responsible C = Consulted I = Informed									
	Members	Trustees	CEO	CFO	Finance/Audit and Risk	Standards Committee	TELT	Headteachers	LGB
Policy Management									
1. Approving the Articles of Association and any amendments thereof	A	R	R						
2. Approving the Scheme of Delegation		A	R		R	R		I	I
3. Approving the Financial Regulations and Scheme of Financial Delegation		A	R	R	R				I
4. Approving statutory policies		A	R		R	R	R		
5. Agree Child protection and Safeguarding Policy		A/R							
6. Agree Attendance Policy		A/R							
7. Approving any policy not specified elsewhere within this scheme of delegation		A	R				R		
8. Ensure there is a clear approach to trust-wide policies and the maintenance and adoption of these across the trust		A	R				R		

Scheme of Delegation 9. KEY: A = Accountable R = Responsible C = Consulted I = Informed									
	Members	Trustees	CEO	CFO	Finance/Audit and Risk	Standards Committee	TELT	Headteachers	LGB
Pupils and Learning									
1. Approve Trust Wide curriculum		A	R				R	C	I
2. Ensure high standards of teaching and learning		A	R				R	R	
3. Determine and monitor use of pupil premium and sports premium		A	R					C	C
4. Set the dates of school terms and holidays		A	R					C	I
5. Set the times of school sessions		A	R					C	I
6. Implement admissions appeal process		A	R			C		C	
7. Determine Complaints procedure		A/R	R					R	
8. Implement Complaints procedure		A	R					R	R

Scheme of Delegation KEY: A = Accountable R = Responsible C = Consulted I = Informed									
	Members	Trustees	CEO	CFO	Finance/Audit and Risk	Standards Committee	TELT	Headteachers	LGB
Community									
1. Develop Stakeholder partnerships across the trust		A	R		C	C		C	C
2. Develop Stakeholder partnership at school level		A	C					R	R