

Recruitment Pack

Non-Executive Director/Trustee



- Are you passionate about ensuring young people in the North East get the best education experience possible?
- Can you bring a fresh perspective to the challenges faced by young people in a dynamic, ever-changing world?
- Do you have knowledge or passion to tackle poverty and break down barriers to social mobility?
- Are you committed to work with a range of passionate people to create a better future for young people?

If this excites you, we're looking for people just like you!

In Summary: What do you need to know?

Who are we?

NEAT Academy Trust is a vibrant and collaborative partnership of eight primary and secondary schools across the North East of England. Together, we're dedicated to providing a first class education for all our learners. As a multi-academy trust, we have the opportunity to make a real difference, empowering our students to enhance their life opportunities with the support of their families.

At NEAT, we focus on nurturing resilient, aspirational, respectful, resourceful, creative, and effective communicators. Our commitment extends beyond the classroom—we know our children and communities intimately, allowing us to identify and overcome any obstacles that might hinder excellent outcomes for our learners.

We strive to prepare our students for a dynamic, ever-changing world. We recognize and celebrate their uniqueness, fostering an environment where they can achieve their potential. Through instilling a love of learning, we encourage and support them to achieve their dreams.

Who are we looking for?

We're seeking passionate people to become a non-executive director/trustee as part of our dynamic team leading the trust:

1. **Community Connection:** Do you have insight into the communities served by our schools?
2. **Educational Outcomes:** Do you have experience of school improvement and improving educational outcomes for pupils?
3. **Social Impact:** Do you have knowledge or experience in tackling poverty and breaking down barriers to social mobility?
4. **Youthful Perspective:** Can you bring a fresh perspective to the challenges faced by our young people?

Think this sounds interesting and exciting? We'd love to hear from you.

What's the commitment?

Period of office	Initially 4 years (renewable)
Typical time commitment	About 1-2 days per month , in meetings and visits to schools
Meetings / Locations	Usually early evenings ; 8-12 meetings per year (split between Board and Committee meetings); In person (NEAT Office, North Shields) with hybrid/online available.
Training/Induction	We provide full training and development to all our volunteers.
Expenses	You are entitled to claim reasonable expenses, for example travel and childcare costs.

What's the appointment timetable?

We have vacancies on our Board each year, and would like to have a conversation with anyone who may be interested in finding out more to discuss our current opportunities and appointment timetable.

Where do I find out more?

Further detail about NEAT Academy Trust, the role of non-executive director/trustee, and the process for appointment is contained in this pack. We're also available to answer any questions you may have about the role and the application process.

If it would be helpful, we can arrange for you to have a conversation with one of our current non-executive directors and organise a visit to one of our schools. There is also the opportunity to observe part of a meeting, or meet school or trust officers.

There are some useful links below.

Welcome to NEAT video	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jd8aeTt8_pU
NEAT Vision and Values	https://www.neat.org.uk/vision-values/
Videos from our governance volunteers	https://tinyurl.com/NEATGovernance-pl
NEAT members and directors/trustees	https://www.neat.org.uk/governance/
NEAT Annual Report and Accounts	https://www.neat.org.uk/statutory-information/
NEAT Director and Local Governor Expenses Policy	https://www.neat.org.uk/policies-documents/#governance

Matthew Prevett, our Head of Governance and Clerk to the Directors, is your main point of contact throughout this recruitment process. You can contact Matthew by phone on 0191 2284090 or by e-mailing m.prevett@neatat.org.uk

If you have any access requirements or need any adjustments to be made to carry out this role (including during the application stage) please let us know how we can best meet your access needs.

What can I find in this pack?

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Welcome from Anne McNall, NEAT Academy Trust Board Chair

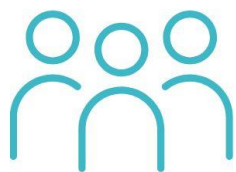
Thank you for your interest in the opportunity to join NEAT Academy Trust as a non-executive director/trustee. We appreciate that you will want to discover more about what is involved before deciding if this is the right opportunity for you. This pack provides information about the trust, the role and the skills, experience and personal attributes we are seeking.

NEAT Academy Trust is a thriving and collaborative partnership of eight primary and secondary schools across the north east of England, working together to provide a first-class education for all our learners. Each school has its own distinctive ethos and the trust protects both Church of England and non-Church schools to retain their particular designation. We are firmly rooted in our local communities, which enables us to develop and share effective strategies to enable our pupils to improve their life chances with the support of their families.



Being a director/trustee at NEAT Academy Trust is a hugely rewarding experience as we contribute to ensuring a better future for young people in the north east. As well as a range of skills and experience, we look for people who are passionate about our communities and enthusiastic to shape and inform the educational experience and outcomes of our learners.





3,440+ pupils



£35 million budget



550+ employees



8 schools

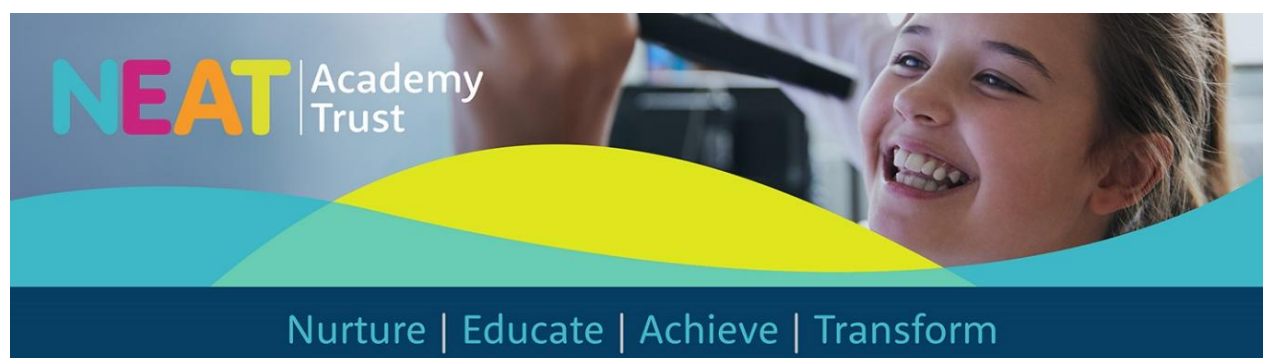
Each school has its own distinctive ethos and the trust protects both Church of England and non-Church schools to retain their particular designation. We are firmly rooted in our local communities, which enables us to develop and share effective strategies to enable our pupils to improve their life chances with the support of their families.

Newcastle Research School within our trust is one of only 30 schools across the country that has been awarded this designation by the Education Endowment Foundation, which enables us to engage with schools across the north east region.

Our shared purpose as a trust is to nurture, educate, achieve and transform.

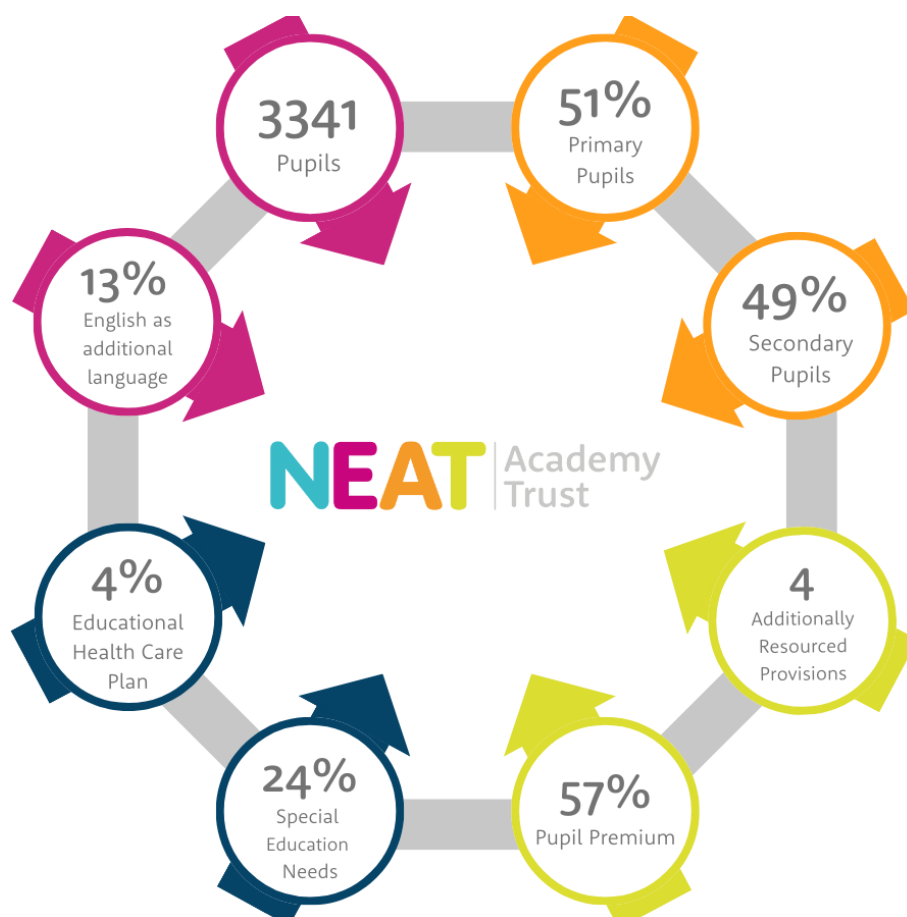
Our mantra which underpins the culture and climate within our organisation is:

**'Know our pupils well,
know our families and communities well,
know each other well'**



Our values are the behaviours that will enable us to achieve our common purpose and deliver our vision and strategic aims:

- **Aspirational** – We aim high for ourselves and others.
- **Collaborative** – We are best when we work together as one trust.
- **Inclusive** – We welcome and value every individual and foster a sense of belonging.
- **Innovative** – We are creative and forward thinking in our work.
- **Responsible** – We act professionally and ethically in the best interests of the trust community.



“Having been a young person growing up in the local community, I find the genuine level of care the trust provides to their families and community overwhelming and very inspiring to witness. NEAT nurtures children and young people throughout their education to ensure they have different opportunities and empowers them to have high aspirations, whilst always thinking about what more can be done to support their families.”

Nadia Iftkhar, NEAT Academy Trust Non-Executive Director/Trustee



Within NEAT schools we aim to develop resilient, respectful, resourceful, aspirational, creative young learners who are able to communicate effectively. We achieve this through providing experiences that develop and nurture these characteristics.

The NEAT curriculum is rooted with the child, influenced by their passions, needs and skills but has an eye to the future. Real life, relevant experiences and opportunities to develop life skills are embedded throughout the school journey and every opportunity is taken to broaden horizons.

At the heart of the curriculum is our belief that we need to open our children's eyes and minds to the world of possibilities therefore it goes way beyond the National Curriculum. Learning always aims to hook the learner and engage with their learning and is designed to ensure seamless transition from cradle to career.

Quality First Teaching

The NEAT Principles of Quality First Teaching are in place to ensure that we are evidence informed in our approach to develop teaching and have consistent shared language and meaning across the trust.

Quality First Teaching is focused on getting learners to:

- Deepen thinking
- Role model learning
- Impact on Learning
- Challenge expectations
- Engaging in learning

We have an agreed NEAT curriculum intent which then informs and shapes each school's individual curriculum vision. We have developed a character and collaborated across NEAT to develop our characteristics of an effective learner.

Our purpose is to instil these characteristics into our learners

Across NEAT we have collaborated and developed subject progression documents from Early Years (EYS) to year 9 which ensures that we have a well mapped out and sequenced curriculum. Each document identifies key knowledge, skills and key vocabulary to be taught. We have recently revised all EYS documents to integrate more research evidence into the progression documents as well as identifying key commitments across the EYS to ensure consistency of offer.

Evidence informed practice

We have a research school in our trust which is one of 29 accredited research schools across the country. We have strongly developed research evidence to support leaders, teachers and practitioners. Each of our schools has an identified Evidence Leader of Education (ELE) who is the driver of change within school. They have implemented our evidence informed principles of quality first teaching as well as Pupil Book Study, an approach to monitor and evaluate the impact of our curriculum ensuring that it is evolving and developing.



As a trust we have developed our assessment systems so we have consistency in approach across all primaries and secondaries. This support moderation and being able to work more closely across the trust as systems are aligned. As a trust we also lead on statutory assessment for Newcastle Local Authority and have five Key Stage 2 moderators which supports accuracy and robustness around assessment.

We have a range of accredited expertise within our trust from NLEs, RSL, SLEs and our ELEs this ensures that the professional development that we offer and the school improvement support that we offer is of the highest quality. As a trust we have developed excellent relationships across the region with curriculum hubs, teaching schools and local authorities and work in collaboration which brings in further expertise into our trust.

Pushing up attainment by improving attendance

To ensure the benefits of quality first teaching can be achieved, learners have to be in school, ready to learn and able to learn. The trust continues to support school leaders in addressing absence and increase time spent in school. These strategies have been very successful in improving attendance across the schools, with a 2.8% increase on the same time last year.

Across the trust, NEAT supports a high percentage of learners with Pupil Premium and Free School Meals. NEAT schools provide an inclusive support for all learners, ensuring the best possible outcomes and opportunities to succeed.





At NEAT Academy Trust, we believe in nurturing potential and fostering success through innovative and inclusive educational practices. Our commitment to excellence is reflected in the diverse programs and initiatives that align with our core values and strategic ambitions. As a director, you can be a part of this transformative journey.

Relational Practice: *Building Strong Connections*

Our relational practice is at the heart of NEAT Academy Trust. We prioritise meaningful interactions between staff and pupils, creating an environment where everyone feels supported and understood. By fostering a supportive and understanding environment, we enhance not only academic outcomes but also the well-being and personal development of our students and staff. Central to this practice is a deep familiarity with each individual. We facilitate this through regular weekly check-ins and problem-solving circles, ensuring everyone feels valued and heard.

The NEAT Celebration Event:

Celebrating the Talents and Achievements of our pupils

A standout event in our academic calendar, the NEAT Celebration Event unites all schools within the trust to highlight our pupils' diverse talents and achievements. This event serves as a vital opportunity to foster community spirit both within the trust and the broader community, celebrating success and inspiring our students to excel and take pride in their accomplishments.



NEAT Elite Sports Events: *Fostering Sporting Excellence*

The NEAT Elite Sports Events highlight the athletic skills of our pupils. Qualifying rounds are held at our primary schools, leading to the finals at Benfield School. On the day, the finals are skillfully coordinated by Young Leaders from Benfield and St Hild's, under the guidance of the PE department, allowing students to represent their schools across the trust proudly. Additionally, this experience is invaluable for our Young Leaders, who receive comprehensive training before the event, equipping them with hands-on experience in event management and leadership.

NEAT ITT Programme: *Shaping the Future of Teaching*

Our own School-Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) programme plays a crucial role in developing the next generation of exceptional teachers. Focused on hands-on training and ongoing professional development, we are dedicated to raising teaching and learning standards within our trust. In partnership with Teach First, this year-long immersion programme offers our trainees comprehensive, in-depth training.

We aim to nurture our own teachers who deeply understand our pupils, their families, their communities, and their unique challenges. From day one, trainees are integrated into the trust's culture and supported by a network of experienced, highly skilled mentors. These mentors provide support and ensure that our trainees meet the high teaching standards we uphold.



The NEAT Experience

The NEAT Experience, uniquely crafted by NEAT Academy Trust, complements the traditional curriculum by preparing students with essential life skills for their future endeavours. Over four years, we've collaboratively developed this innovative curriculum and digital platform, leveraging the insights of educators across all levels. Inspired by the National Record of Achievement, we've modernised and expanded this concept into a 21st-century digital portfolio. Every student in our trust builds this portfolio throughout their education, capturing their skills and experiences, making it an invaluable resource for future employment, further education, and personal growth.



This digital portfolio travels with the students beyond school and grows with them, allowing continual updates and additions. It is a dynamic testament to their learning journey, showcasing their abilities to potential employers or educational institutions. Importantly, it equips our learners to confidently articulate their achievements and understanding, ensuring they are prepared to thrive in the digital age and achieve their life aspirations.

Cradle to Career Strategy:

Fostering Aspirations Through Career Education

The NEAT Academy Trust places a high value on delivering a robust, progressive, and aspirational career education that opens numerous opportunities for our students. Our Cradle to Career Strategy is central to this vision, integrating the NEAT Experience with a strong emphasis on careers throughout the curriculum. This "golden thread" of career-focused education ensures that every step of our student's educational journey is strategically aligned with preparing them for a successful future, enabling them to understand and harness the opportunities that await in the world of work.



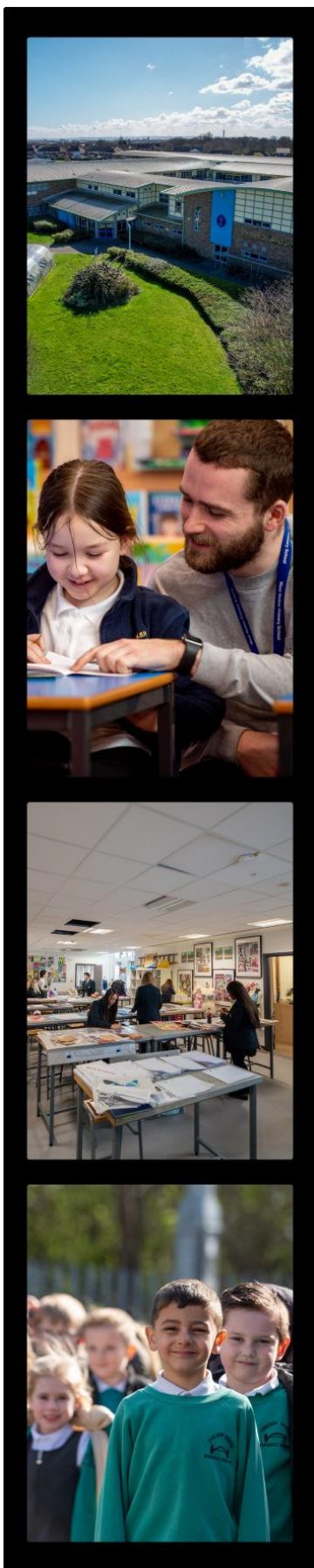
NEAT 2024-2025 Strategic Priorities

The NEAT Vision is: **One trust, working with partners to grow potential.**

To meet this vision, our strategic priorities for 2024-25 are:

1. The trust operates more effectively through improved systems, processes, partnerships and communications.
2. School performance is improving and capacity to continue to improve is growing.
3. Key stakeholder representation better reflects the pupils and communities that we serve.
4. Effective opportunities develop our students' readiness for the world of work.
5. Improved performance and reputation leads to further growth opportunities.

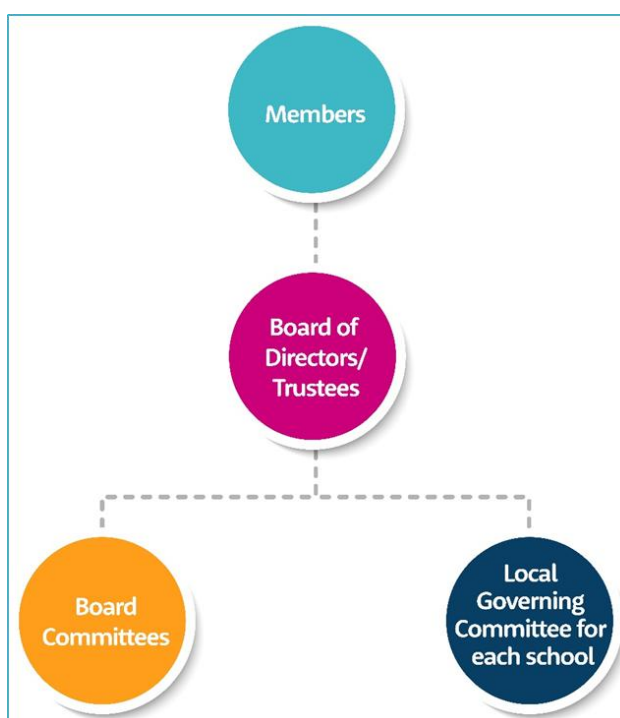




The role of the board within NEAT Academy Trust

As a multi-academy trust NEAT is a charitable organisation and people appointed to the board are both company directors and charity trustees. We rely on the goodwill of our volunteers to govern the trust at all levels.

Every multi-academy trust has a group of members and a board of non-executive directors/trustees. The trust's Members' Agreement and Articles of Association set out the rules for how the members and the board operates, which includes ensuring that schools have a local governing committee. However, the trust board decides the role and responsibilities of those local governing committees and of any board committees that it decides to establish, which are set out in our Scheme of Delegation.



Broadly the roles and responsibilities of each level of the governance structure are:

- **Members:** have a “hands off” role and ensure the board of directors/trustees are carrying out their role effectively
- **Board of Non-Executive Directors/Trustees:** has oversight of the trust as a whole and is accountable to the Department for Education for the performance of all schools and how well the trust spends public money
- **Board Committees:** have a role in deeper scrutiny of the trust's activities on behalf of the Board, including finance, audit and risk, people and organisational development, and achievement

and climate for learning. It is expected that each non-executive director/trustee is a member of one of the trust-wide committees

- **Local Governing Committees:** are made up of local governors and are the “eyes and ears” of the Board – they get to know their school well and understand its strengths and areas for development.

The focus of each level of the governance structure is to be strategic and neither non-executive directors/trustees nor the local governing committee are involved in the day-to-day running of the trust or its schools. This is the responsibility of the trust’s executive team and each school’s senior leadership team.

Governance volunteers provide independent evaluation of the effective operation of the trust, as well as offering support, challenge and robust scrutiny to our leaders. An effective working relationship between the board and the trust’s CEO in particular is crucial to the success of this role.

Although each level of the governance structure has a different role, collectively they work together to contribute to the three core purposes of governance:



Non-Executive Director/Trustee Role Description

Overview:

Non-Executive Directors are members of the trust's Board of Directors, which is responsible for carrying out three core governance purposes, and as charity trustees ensure our charitable objects to "advance education for the benefit of the public" and to provide "facilities for recreation or other leisure occupation" for the local community are met. The Board recognises and supports the individual ethos of each of our schools including the religious character of our Church of England schools. NEAT Academy Trust is also the sole shareholder of its trading subsidiary company, NEAT Active Limited, and therefore Non-Executive Directors act as the Members of that company.

Role:

1. To contribute to the three core governance purposes:
 - a) **Strategic leadership:** To work with the CEO to develop and realise the vision, values and strategic direction of the trust in line with our charitable objects.
 - b) **Accountability and assurance:** To hold the CEO to account for the operations and performance of the trust.
 - c) **Engagement:** To provide strategic oversight of relationships with the trust's stakeholders: pupils, parents, workforce, partners and the wider community. To act as an ambassador for the trust and its schools.
2. To serve on one or more of the board's committees.

As required:

3. To chair one or more of the board's committees (supplementary role description is provided).
4. To act as a link director for a specific theme e.g. careers, health and safety, safeguarding, SEND (supplementary role descriptions are provided).
5. To serve on/chair an ad hoc panel e.g. to hear an appeal, complaint or appoint a school's headteacher.
6. To participate in any working groups.



What to expect as a non-executive director/trustee

All non-executive directors/trustees are expected to:

- get to know the trust, including visiting schools occasionally during school hours to talk to leaders, staff and pupils, and gain a good understanding of its strengths and areas for development
- take part in induction/regular training events and an annual 1:1 conversation with the Board Chair/Vice Chair
- attend meetings and contribute to discussions, having read the papers before the meeting
- be responsive to contact from other members of the board and the clerk between meetings
- behave in a professional manner in accordance with the trust's Code of Conduct and complete annual declarations/confirmations
- carry out their role in accordance with the trust's values:
 - **Aspirational** - We aim high for ourselves and others
 - **Collaborative** - We are best when we work together as one trust
 - **Inclusive** - We welcome and value every individual and foster a sense of belonging
 - **Innovative** - We are creative and forward thinking in our work
 - **Responsible** - We act professionally and ethically in the best interests of the trust community.

“The board works well together as a team because we bring a range of perspectives together from our extensive range of skills, knowledge and experience due to our work and personal lives. We have a good knowledge and understanding of the challenges faced and a clear view of the goals we would like to achieve. We use our collective knowledge in a non-judgmental, supportive and professional way.”

Sue Ormerod, NEAT Academy Trust Non-Executive Director/Trustee



Non-Executive Director/Trustee Person Description

The members of the trust's Board of Directors work together as a team and between them contribute a range of skills, experience and personal attributes.

There are core skills, experience and personal attributes that all non-executive directors/trustees should have, or be able to develop quickly through our induction programme:

Core skills and personal attributes	
Commitment to education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal commitment to creating a better future for young people and ensuring our pupils get the best education experience possible. • Willingness to protect and maintain the individuality of each member school including, where it is a Church of England school, its designated religious character.
Aligned to trust's values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aspirational: supports and challenges others so they can do their best. • Collaborative: works well together with others. • Inclusive: values everyone's contribution. • Innovative: seeks insight and opportunities to learn and embraces new ideas. • Responsible: takes responsibility to carry out the role of NED/charity trustee.
Personal attributes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to see the big picture and think strategically. • Has independent judgment. • Operates with openness and integrity solely in the public interest. • Drives for continuous improvement. • Understands the importance of building strong working relationships within the board and with the CEO and senior leaders, staff, parents/carers, pupils, local governing committee members, the local community and employers.
Insight	Experience of living in, working in/with or connection with the communities that the trust's schools serve, or a strong interest in developing this insight.
Availability	<p>Able to attend board/committee meetings and relevant training which are typically held late afternoon/early evening on weekdays during term-time (these are usually face-to-face but attending virtually is possible on some occasions – equipment and training can be made available).</p> <p>Able to visit the trust's schools occasionally during school hours. The trust's annual Governance Away Day is usually held on a Saturday.</p>

Equality, diversity and inclusion

Diversity and Inclusion Matter to us.

Are you passionate about equity and representation?

We're actively seeking individuals who can bring fresh perspectives and ensure we are representative of our communities we serve.

Specifically,

- If you're early in your career starting on your journey as a leader and have a drive to make a difference, we want to hear from you!
- If you consider yourself to be from an under-represented group your unique experiences and insights are invaluable to us.
- If you've faced any form of discrimination, your voice matters here.

We guarantee that any applicant from under-represented groups who meet the essential criteria will have a chance to engage in a thoughtful panel discussion.

Join us in shaping a more inclusive future!

Find out more

You can find out more about the trust from our website at: www.neat.org.uk

Welcome to NEAT video	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jd8aeTt8_pU
NEAT Vision and Values	https://www.neat.org.uk/vision-values/
Videos from our governance volunteers	https://tinyurl.com/NEATGovernance-pl
NEAT members and directors/trustees	https://www.neat.org.uk/governance/
NEAT Annual Report and Accounts	https://www.neat.org.uk/statutory-information/
Meet the Senior Leadership Team: Debi Bailey, NEAT CEO; Charles Turvill, COFO	https://www.neat.org.uk/central-team/

X/Twitter: [@NEATschools](https://twitter.com/NEATschools) / LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/66183266/>

Next steps

We have vacancies on our Board each year, and would like to have a conversation with anyone who may be interested in finding out more to discuss our current opportunities and appointment timetable.

When you get in touch, we can tell you more about the role and answer any initial questions you may have. We can arrange for you to have a conversation with a current non-executive director, visit the trust and/or observe part of a meeting if you would find this helpful. We can also provide you with information on the application process and timeline.

We want to make the process as accessible as possible. If you have any access requirements or need any adjustments to be made to carry out this role (including during the application stage) please let us know how we can best meet your access needs throughout the process.

If you haven't done so already, please contact Matthew Prevett, Head of Governance on 0191 2284090 or by e-mailing m.prevett@neatat.org.uk to **express your interest** and find out more.



