

Chair of Trust Board of Directors Role Description

FINAL 4.0 (March 2025)

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 also act as the Members of that company.

Role purpose:

To provide clear leadership to the trust's Board of Directors to ensure its effectiveness and, with support from the Vice Chair and the governance professional, to ensure that non-executive directors/trustees fulfil the functions for the professional governance of the trust as a charitable company including oversight of its schools.

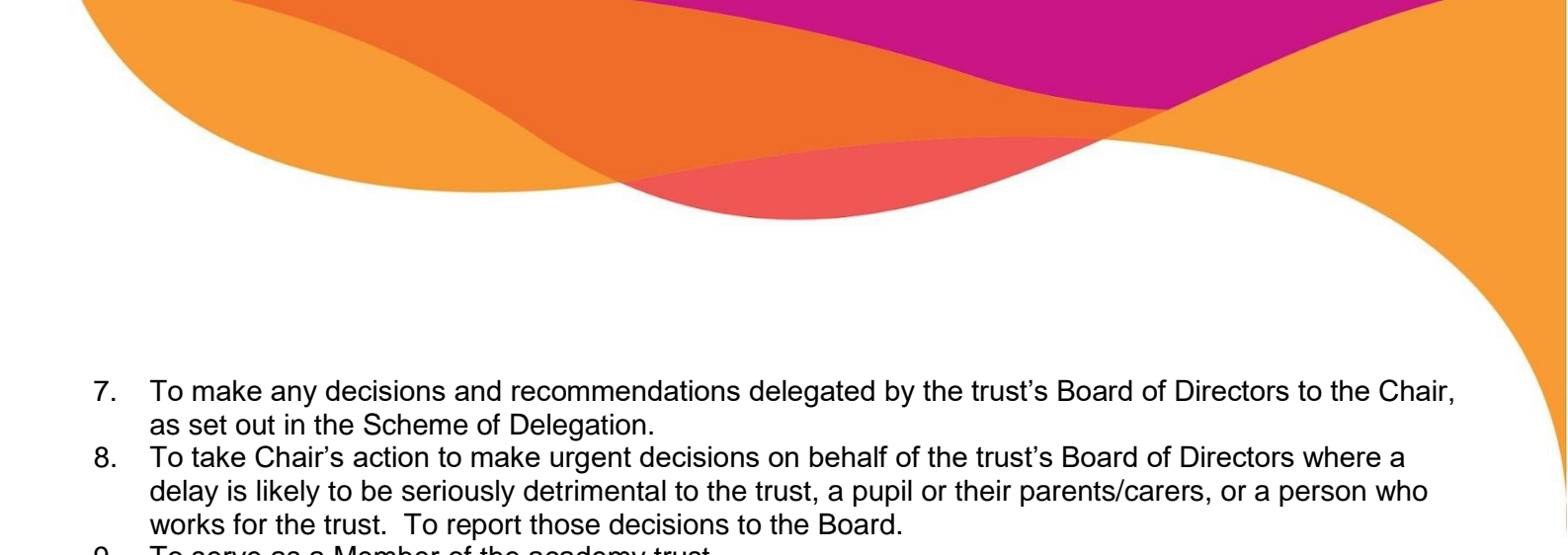
As the line manager and a sounding board for the CEO, provide strategic direction for the future of the Trust, ensuring high standards of governance and understanding of accountability are maintained.

Together with the CEO, engage with the Regional Director, the Department for Education/Education and Skills Funding Agency and the relevant Diocesan Boards of Education on behalf of the trust.

Role:

In addition to the general role of all Non-Executive Directors/Trustees, the role of the Chair is:

1. **Strategic leadership:** To ensure the board and the CEO have an effective shared purpose, vision, values and strategic priorities.
2. **Leading the governance team:** To ensure the board has the right people with the right skills, attributes, motivations and behaviours to work effectively as a team and hold annual 1:1 conversations with non-executive directors and Local Governing Committee Chairs.
3. **Working with leaders:** To ensure professional relationships with the CEO and the Chairs of the schools' Local Governing Committees. To lead the Chairs and Vice Chairs Forum.
4. **Influencing improvement and outcomes:** To ensure the Board is focused on the trust's strategic priorities and the ongoing improvement of all of its schools and outcomes for pupils.
5. **Leading governance business:** To work with the CEO and the Clerk to the Directors to ensure the business of the Board and its Committees is planned, managed and actioned effectively.
6. To review the trust's management accounts on a monthly basis, taking any appropriate action to maintain financial viability.

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7. To make any decisions and recommendations delegated by the trust's Board of Directors to the Chair, as set out in the Scheme of Delegation.
 8. To take Chair's action to make urgent decisions on behalf of the trust's Board of Directors where a delay is likely to be seriously detrimental to the trust, a pupil or their parents/carers, or a person who works for the trust. To report those decisions to the Board.
 9. To serve as a Member of the academy trust.

The Chair will be supported by the Vice Chair in undertaking 1-5 and, once elected, the Chair and Vice Chair will agree an appropriate allocation of responsibilities, which will be shared with the Board of Directors and CEO. The Vice Chair may only undertake the responsibilities set out in 6-9 in the absence of the Chair or if the office of Chair is vacant.

Expectations:

In order to perform this role well, 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 and regular training events
- 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 Chair is expected to engage with board members, the CEO, COFO and clerk on a regular basis, responding to queries and providing leadership to the trust. Much of this takes place outside board and committee meetings. Although this fluctuates through the year based on a variety of factors, this may typically require a day a week, with some of this time required during the day, and sometimes in-person at one of the trust sites. The trust uses technology to support meeting and board administration and has a flexible approach to establish efficient and appropriate ways of hybrid working with its leaders.

Chair and Vice Chair of NEAT Board of Directors Role Requirements

Candidates for the role of chair and vice chair should be able to demonstrate a good number of the following skills and attributes:

- Commitment to the trust and all of its schools
- Personal integrity
- Good understanding of the environment in which the trust is operating and wider educational policy
- Good understanding of the role and legal responsibilities of the Board and its Committees
- Strong communication skills
- Negotiation and diplomacy skills
- Good organisational skills and the ability to prioritise
- Ability to think strategically
- Ability to chair meetings well
- Ability to have courageous conversations and make courageous decisions
- Ability to build and get the best out of a team
- Capacity to process information quickly and understand relevant data, drawing valid conclusions
- Ability and willingness to delegate
- Sufficient quality time to carry out the role effectively (the NGA estimates that Chairs spend an average of half a day each week)