

Becoming a STEP Governor (Parents/Carers)

STEP Academy Trust
STEP Governance Structure
Job Purpose
Job Description
Person Specification

The STEP Academy Trust

Established in May 2011, STEP Academy Trust currently is a family of STEP Academies located in South London and East Sussex.

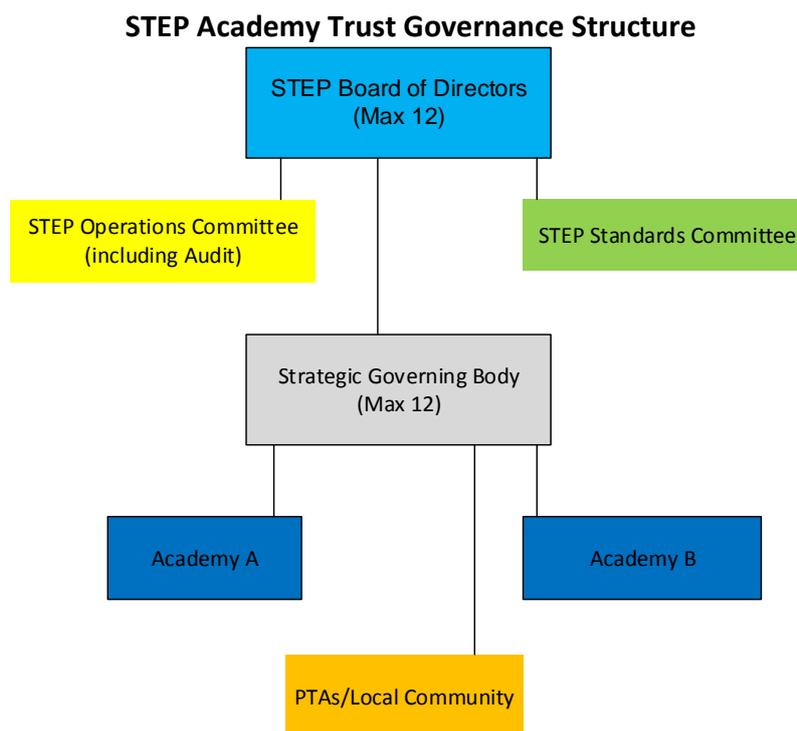
The name STEP, an acronym, reflects the aspirational nature of the organisation – **Striving Together for Excellence in Partnership. Inspired by the commitment to improve children’s life chances, STEP Academies work together to provide high quality learning experiences for all their pupils.**

STEP Governors

“STEP First” is the notion that, first and foremost, everyone is committed to being part of The STEP Academy Trust. All governors must be fully aligned to the Trust’s Mission and Vision. Although serving one or more particular Academies, governors are members of the wider STEP team. We are all one team, in one organisation, working towards the same goal: to be outstanding in all we do – STEP First!

STEP Governance Structure

The Department for Education (DfE) allow academy trusts to establish a local governing body that is responsible for two or more academies. As a result, from September 2017, STEP Academy Trust has a structure as illustrated below:



Composition of the Strategic Governing Bodies (SGB)

Strategic Governing Bodies will have a maximum of 12 Governors and, in most cases, will be responsible for the governance of two Academies.

SGB Composition

Each SGB will be composed as follows:

Parent x2 (elected, ideally one from each Academy)

Staff x2 (Head Teachers)
Staff x2 (elected, ideally one from each Academy)
Co-opted Governors x 6
Temporary Associate Members
(A representative of the STEP EMT will work with each SGB and attend its meetings)

If a Strategic Governing Body oversees a single Academy, the total number of appointed governors may be fewer than 12. However, there will be a minimum of:

Parent x1 (elected)
Staff x1 (Head Teacher)
Staff x1 (elected)
STEP Governor x6
Temporary Co-opted Governors (according to need)
(Plus EMT Representative)

Strategic Governing Bodies will elect a Chair and Vice-Chair at the first meeting in the autumn term. (The Chair and Vice-Chair appointments are subject to ratification by the STEP Board of Trustees).

Strategic Governing Bodies have three core strategic functions:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- Holding the Head Teacher to account for the educational performance of the Academy and its pupils, and the performance management of staff; and
- Overseeing the financial performance of the Academy and making sure its money is well spent.

A Scheme of Delegation will set out the powers and responsibilities delegated by the Board to each SGB. The Scheme of Delegation is designed to ensure that SGBs are empowered to focus on achieving their three core functions. To undertake this successfully, it is essential that governors appreciate that the day to day functioning of the Academy is within the remit of the Head Teacher.

The role of a governor is a demanding one; however, it is not necessary for every governor to understand, in depth, every function of the SGB. SGBs distribute responsibilities through designated Lead Governors. To achieve the outcomes expected it is important to emphasise that the SGBs need to have in place individuals with a range of relevant skills and qualities.

Role Description for a STEP Governor (Parent)

Parents and carers of the Academies governed by the Strategic Governing Body will elect Parent Governors as and when vacancies arise.

It is crucial that those considering standing for election understand that, if elected, they must seek to promote the best interests of all children, not just their own.

Responsible to: The Strategic Governing Body as a whole. Ultimate accountability is to STEP Academy Trust Board of Trustees.

Responsible for:

- playing an active part in promoting improvement at each Academy overseen by the SGB and being well briefed on the issues under discussion;
- attending training relevant to the general role and to any specific delegated responsibilities;
- contributing to the effective governance of the academies by attending SGB meetings and contributing positively and constructively to the business in hand;
- undertaking monitoring visits on behalf of the SGB to see the Academies in action and to gather evidence to enhance the SGB's capacity to evaluate the performance of the Academies;
- promoting positive working relationships within the SGB;
- building effective working relationships with the Head Teacher and staff;
- leading on any aspects of the SGB's work for which you have delegated responsibility, for example being the link for an area of work such as safeguarding;
- where agreed with the SGB, communicating with key stakeholders, to raise the profile of the SGB, for example by attendance at Academy events such as parents' evenings;
- ensuring that the values of STEP Academy Trust are reflected within personal conduct

Communication

STEP Academy Trusts asks its governors to commit to using a STEP email address for all governor related correspondence and to using the Trust Governor online platform for accessing SGB documentation

The Election Process

Eligibility

STEP Governors (Parent) must have a child of school age between Reception and Year 6 in attendance at one of the STEP Academies at the time of election. Candidates who are members of political parties are not eligible due to potential conflicts of interest.

The elections for STEP Governors (Parents) will take place as the need arises, for example when a Parent Governor completes their four-year term of office, resigns, is no longer eligible or the composition of the SGB changes.

The process will be conducted over a three-week period and will be overseen by the Head Teacher of each Academy, and administered by each Academy's Office Team.

Week One

An advertisement for STEP Parent Governors will be placed on the relevant Academy's website. In addition, a letter will be sent to all parents/carers at the Academy where their child is registered, advertising for STEP Governors. Interested parents and carers will be encouraged to collect an application pack from their Academy office to review the Job Description and Person Specification, and to make an appointment to discuss the role with the Head Teacher.

Week Two

Parents and carers submit application for review. The brief statements covering why the parent/carer feels they should be elected will be collated and sent to all parents along with a numbered ballot slip. Ballot slips are returned to each Academy office by the Friday of that week.

Week Three

The ballot slips are counted and verified, with the candidate having the highest number of ballots being appointed (subject to Enhanced Disclosure and Barring check).

Considerations

If an Academy does not have a nomination, it is possible that a candidate from the pairing Academy will be appointed.

In the event of a tie, the SGB will review the application and skills audits of the candidates and appoint on the basis of need.

The ballot will be considered valid if more than two ballot papers are received at each pairing Academy.

The STEP Academy Trust is keen to ensure that all governors are committed to the role and are clear about the contribution they can make. When standing for election parents and carers are asked to complete a skills and knowledge audit and read the Person Specification before setting out why they want to be a STEP Governor and what skills and knowledge they can bring to the role.

STEP Governor Person Specification

When completing your application please give examples that illustrate how you meet each criterion.

Knowledge and Skills	Essential/ Desirable
Has appropriate levels of literacy in English and at least basic ICT skills.	E
Has sufficient numeracy skills to understand basic data	E
Able to analyse data and information, to ask questions and to challenge in a constructive not a confrontational manner.	E
Attitude & Values	
A strong commitment to securing the best education for every child.	E
Understands the relevance of the Seven Principles of Public Life and commits to following them.	E
Wants to make a positive difference to the local community	E
Willing to share their knowledge, experience and skills for the benefit of the SGB and the Academy(ies) as a whole	E
Values and respects the views and contributions that different people can make.	E
Willing and able to promote constructive working relationships within a team either as team leader or as a member of the team. (Give an example of where you have contributed to effective team working)	E
Willing to learn and develop new skills	E
Commitment	
Prepared to participate in substantial training on the role of the governor.	E
Willing and able to commit time to training, attending meetings and making focused visits to the Academy(ies)	E
Committed to making constructive contributions in and beyond SGB and committee meetings.	E
Experience and Examples – In this section, please include brief examples	
Prior successful experience as a governor (Example, less than 50 words)	D
Can describe how knowledge and skills acquired in training has enhanced their practice. (Example, less than 50 words)	E
Able to cite one or more expectations the DfE and Ofsted have of governing bodies. (give an example and say how you might support the SGB in meeting that expectation)	D
Successful experience of leading a team (Example, less than 50 words)	D

Annex A

The Seven Principles of Public Life

Selflessness

Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.

Integrity

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

Objectivity

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

Openness

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands this.

Honesty

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any public interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

Source: 'Second Report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life', The Nolan Committee, 1996