

St Joseph's College Edmund Rice Academy Trust Audit Committee Terms of Reference

Purpose Statement

Information taken from 2016 Academies Financial Handbook (pg 19/20)

Academy Trusts must establish a committee, appointed by the board of trustees, to provide assurance over the suitability of, and compliance with, its financial systems and operational controls. Taking into account the differing risks and complexity of their operations.

Trusts with an annual income under £50 million have the flexibility to establish either a dedicated audit committee, or to include the functions of an audit committee within another committee. Audit Committee functions should be established in such a way as to achieve internal scrutiny which delivers objective and independent assurance.

Membership

The Chair and members of the Audit Committee shall be 'non-executive' Governor members and shall be appointed by the full Governing Body. The Secretary may be a non-executive Governor member or an executive non-member to be decided by the committee. The Chair shall be a non-executive member of the Board other than its Chair.

Staff employed by the Trust should not be members of an Audit committee, but may attend to provide information and participate in discussions. Governors who are not members of the Audit Committee have the right of attendance. The Chair of the Committee will present a summary of the minutes at the Full Governing Body meeting for agreement.

The Headteacher in his or her role as accounting officer will normally attend meetings of the Committee but is not a member of the committee. In the absence of the Headteacher, the Head of Finance should attend the Audit Committee meetings.

Membership of the Audit Committee will be agreed at the Full Governing Body Meeting in line with all other sub-committees. Membership of the Committee will be a minimum of 3 Governors, of which one would be asked to take on the role of the Responsible Officer assuming that he/she has the required skill set.

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Role of the Chair

- The Chair will be appointed by the Committee annually at the first meeting of the new School year.
- The Chair will direct and control the meetings
- To cast a further vote if necessary to resolve any tied decision(s).
- To represent the committee at other meetings as necessary. To provide a report of the committee's actions to the Governing Body as required.
- To ensure accurate minutes are taken at each meeting.

Meetings

The Audit Committee will meet 6 times per year (once in every half term). It will ensure that its meeting dates are coordinated to ensure that it is able to align its recommendations with the requirements for the submissions on budgets and accounts. The external auditor may request a meeting if he considers one necessary.

Quorum

The Audit Committee will be viewed as quorate with 3 voting Governors in attendance.

Review

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually at the first committee meeting of the new school year and agreed by the Full Governing Body.

Terms of Reference

The Audit Committee is an advisory body with no executive powers. However, it is authorised by the Governing Body to investigate any activity within its terms of reference, and to seek any information it requires from staff, who are requested to co-operate with the Committee in the conduct of its inquiries.

The Audit Committee is authorised to obtain independent professional advice if it considers this necessary

The specific duties of the Committee shall be to:

- review the Academy's internal and external financial statements and reports to ensure that they reflect best practice;
- receive a written statement from the Chair of Finance regarding the review of the financial statements by the external auditor;
- consider all relevant reports by the Headteacher, the Finance Manager, Chairs of other Sub Committees or the appointed external auditor, including reports on the body's accounts, achievement of value for money and the response to any management letters;
- review the effectiveness of the Academy's internal control system established to ensure that the aims, objectives and key performance targets of the organisation are achieved in the most economic, effective and environmentally preferable manner;
- ensure that the Academy's internal audit service, provided mainly but not solely by the Responsible Officer, meets the standards, or exceeds the standards specified in the Government Internal Audit Manual, complies in all other respects with these guidelines and meets agreed levels of service etc.
- consider and advise the Governing Body on the Academy's annual and long-term audit programme;
- consider internal audit reports, including value-for-money reports and the arrangements for their implementation;
- review the operation of the Governing Body's code of practice for Governors and code of conduct for staff;
- review the corporate risk register, ensuring that each sub-committee is responsible for updating, assessing, mitigating and eradicating these risks and reporting on the risk register as required;
- consider and advise the Governing Body on both internal and external assessments of performance that the Academy might be subject to;
- consider any other matters where requested to do so by the Governing Body; and
- report at least once a year to the Governing Body on the discharge of the above duties.
- review the minutes and reports of the committees set up by the Governing Body.
- will oversee those policies identified in the Governors' Annual Plan and ensure they are reviewed in a timely manner.

Reviewed: September 2016

Signed by Chair of Audit Committee:Date.....

Signed by Chair of Governors:Date.....