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# **Terms of Reference: Parent and Community Advisory Forum (PCAF)**

Approved by: Board of Directors

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# Contents

Aims of the Parent and Community Advisory Forum .....	2
Membership .....	2
Term of office .....	3
Disqualification, resignation and removal .....	3
Code of Conduct.....	3
Chair/Lead .....	3
Meetings .....	3
Panel pool .....	4
Evaluation of the PCAF .....	4
Publishing information .....	4

## Aims of the Parent and Community Advisory Forum

- To learn about the school community and parental perspectives, context and history
- Raise awareness of the views of our parent and local community
- Be a voice to inform the School/Trust of the needs of children and families
- Consult on changes, such as projects, policy proposals and local issues in the school community
- Explore views on specific concerns or issues
- Triangulate parent, community, staff & Directors' viewpoints
- Gain support for school/Trust projects or goals
- Monitor the School's reputation within the local community and alert the Directors of any potential concerns
- **Church schools only:** ensure the Trust protects the Christian distinctiveness of the School

NB the Trust does not propose to delegate any of their decision-making powers to the PCAF. The role of the group is to be a voice to inform the Headteacher/Head of School and the Directors of the parental viewpoint, and whilst the group may influence the decisions of leaders, they will not themselves have any delegated authority.

## Membership

### 1. Core group [to be registered on Get Information About Schools]:

- **Headteacher/Head of School**
- **Minimum 2 parents/carers\*** elected from within the school parent/carer community, with an invitation to discuss the role with the Headteacher and the School Advocate
- **Up to 6 members Appointed by the Trust;** these may be from the local community or could be Appointed based on their particular skills or experience. Appointments made via:
  - Via full Directors' meetings; or
  - Via a panel consisting of minimum 3 Trust representatives e.g. Directors/ Advocates\*\*/ Headteachers
- **Church schools only: up to 25% of members of the PCAF Appointed by the Diocese;** to be termed "Foundation" Representatives

\*The DfE definition of a "parent" is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dealing-with-issues-relating-to-parental-responsibility/understanding-and-dealing-with-issues-relating-to-parental-responsibility#whoisaparent>

\*\*Further details of School Advocates can be found in a separate document entitled "**Role Descriptor – School Advocate**" – available on the MAT website.

Directors will decide whether or not to fill vacancies, depending on the needs and priorities of the School. Every effort will be made to fill elected parent vacancies.

### 2. Additional [not registered on GIAS]:

- **No minimum/maximum number of additional temporary members** who may join meetings as/when required – for example, to fulfil a particular skills gap and/or advise on key priorities for a specified period of time. Invited by any of the following:
  - The Headteacher/Head of School
  - The CEO or Deputy CEO
  - The School Advocate
  - The Directors of the Trust

## Term of office

Core PCAF representatives' terms of office **except Diocesan representatives** will be **2 years**. Diocesan representatives' terms of office will be **4 years**.

Other invitees will join/leave the PCAF on a case-by-case basis, usually determined by the HT.

A person elected as a parent representative will cease to hold office in that position once their child(ren) have left the school. This is in order to ensure that at least two current parents of children in school form part of the overall membership. However, former parent representatives can remain on the PCAF, either as representatives Appointed by the Trust or as other people invited to PCAF meetings by the HT.

## Disqualification, resignation and removal

A person is disqualified from being a representative on the PCAF if they meet any of the criteria detailed in the Trust's Articles 68-80.

## Code of Conduct

PCAF representatives will:

- Act as the local ambassadors for our Trust
- Champion the voices of our school community and stakeholders
- Establish effective working relationships with Directors
- Show respect to all members of this forum, by listening to and respecting a diverse range of opinions
- Stick to agreed timescales for discussion of topics
- Maintain confidentiality by not mentioning the names of individual members of the community
- Avoid discussing individual circumstances or grievances. These issues will be directed via the Trust's complaint's procedure instead
- Not discuss an issue affecting an individual child; such issues should be discussed directly with the School outside this Forum
- Ensure phones are switched to Silent during the meeting
- Ensure contributions are delivered in a positive and constructive manner, even when challenging or difficult issues are being discussed

## Chair/Lead

The PCAF meeting will usually be led by the Headteacher.

The person reflected as "Chair of Governors" on the DfE's Get Information About Schools (GIAS) database will be the Chair of the Trust. The Board of Directors remain accountable for the overall governance of the Trust and its schools.

## Meetings

Meetings will be held once a term at a time to suit the majority of PCAF representatives. Anyone unable to attend should contact the HT (via the school) or the Governance Professional ([lprosser@manormat.co.uk](mailto:lprosser@manormat.co.uk)) at least 48 hours in advance of the meeting.

The Trust will set the agenda for each meeting based on identified priorities and local context, some of which may be obtained via online surveys to the full parent community. Feedback from meetings may also inform future agendas.

Meetings should be concluded within 1.5 hours.

A brief record of key points and decisions during meetings will be recorded by the Trust, in a format which can be easily shared with the school community. The record is intended to be accessible to a wide range of audiences and will be less formal than – for example – Directors' minutes.

## Panel pool

Non-staff representatives on the PCAF will have the opportunity to join the Trust's pool of volunteers willing to sit on relevant panel meetings for any school in the Trust, for example:

- Complaints
- Pupil discipline
- Staff absence hearings

In order to join the pool, representatives **must** have undertaken relevant training and/or experience in panel work (to be provided by the Trust at no cost to the individual).

Panel pool representatives are required to declare any conflicts of interest to the Trust Governance Professional and must **not** sit on a panel if they have a conflict. *If in doubt, declare it.*

## Evaluation of the PCAF

It is important to ensure that the Forum is working for the benefit of parents/carers and the School/Trust. In order to do this, from time to time the Forum will evaluate to what extent it is meeting its aims, what benefits and impacts it is having and what might need to be improved or made more effective. The Directors may wish to review the structure or remit of the Forum or general local governance arrangements depending on the outcome of the evaluation.

## Publishing information

**Core** PCAF representatives agree that the following information will be published on the school website without unnecessary delay:

- Name
- Category (e.g. Parent/Appointed/Foundation Rep)
- Term of office
- Appointment date
- Attendance record for the last 12 months

In addition, all representatives will be required to declare any conflicts of interest (or confirm they have nothing to declare) on an annual basis (at minimum). All representatives will be asked to regularly review their declarations of interest and update if circumstances change. This will be monitored centrally by the Trust.