

Introduction

Like most multi-academy trusts, we have decided that governance at a school level adds value. In support of this, the MAT board delegates decision-making powers to the MAT central team, to the Headteacher, and to the Local Governing Body.

Delegation does not change the overarching responsibility of the MAT board, which is the lowest level of decision-making that is recognised by the government.

One of our tasks is to ensure that the powers that are delegated are appropriate. If a poor decision is made at any level of governance, the MAT board is accountable from a statutory point of view.

Overarching aims

The Scheme of Delegation was developed with some aims in mind:

- To enable the best decisions to be made, by people with the relevant knowledge.
- To ensure that the schools, in the roles of Headteachers and Local Governing Bodies (LGBs), have the autonomy and authority to do their job.
- To ensure that no surprises can occur, such as the Scheme of Delegation directing a route which would bypass someone who could reasonably expect to be involved in a decision.

Roles

It may help if you have the Scheme of Delegation available as you review this article. You can find it on the Trust website, on the polices page.

The Scheme of Delegation is presented as a table, with each row being an item, such as “Setting the budget”, and the columns describing what each part of our trust does in support of that item.

These are the categories of decision makers:

Business and Finance Function

This describes the role of the MAT central business function. This is a team of people, and where a specific person must act, this is stated.

Division Lead

This is the Headteacher of a school in the Trust, or the head of the MAT central business function.

By including both leaders under one heading, we save having two columns with the same information in each for most of the time. Where a line applies to a specific Division Lead, this will be listed.

Local Governing Body

This refers to the school LGB, and where there is a specific role involved, such as the chair of governors, this is listed.

The MAT central business function does not have an LGB, and the MAT board will perform this function for that division.

CEO

This refers to the chief executive officer of the trust.

There are various functions embedded in this role, such as Executive Headteacher, and Accounting Officer for the Trust.

MAT board

This may be the full board of the trust, or it may be delegated to a subcommittee.

The structure of the Scheme of Delegation

There are three main areas where delegation is in place, and these are some of the drivers which we use to decide the delegation.

Finance

Due thought and attention to ensure a workable situation.

- See F1, where the approval of the budget is at a school level.
- The MAT board want each school to commit to their budget, so that they can be held accountable to comply with the revenue and expenses it contains.

It is necessary that a decision is made with the full visibility of those it will affect.

- F7 is an example where initially we had the LGB column blank, and the Headteacher went direct to the CEO.
- This was amended on the first occasion that the Scheme of Delegation was used for this item, as it is clearly relevant for the LGB to know what is happening.

It is important that the impact of decisions can be predicted and assessed.

- F9 is an example where it had been decided that the MAT central business function will review all contracts, regardless of who is approving the contract.

Employment

The Trust is the employer, so some elements must be approved or ratified by the MAT board.

- E8 shows the MAT board's accountability for employment terms and conditions.

Employment law must be complied with, and this is usually managed by stating that a particular policy must be used. The policy will have delegation embedded within it, such as where decisions may be made.

- Many items refer to policy, such as E11.

Operations

The MAT board want autonomy for our schools, where the Headteacher and the LGB can make decisions relating to their schools.

Delays will be avoided by having decisions made locally, without layers of approval.

We also want compliance to the overarching aims of the Trust, and while this will be incorporated in the school's vision and ethos, some decisions will also reflect MAT board involvement.

- O2 is a good example of these aims, where the development and approval of the school improvement plan is at a school level.
- The Scheme of Delegation also ensures that the CEO and MAT board will have the opportunity to advise.

Seeking remediation or clarity

Please escalate to the CEO or the Chair of Trustees if you need urgent support.

Mismatch to a policy

Our intention is that there is no conflict between authorities embedded in the Trust policies and those stated in the Scheme of Delegation.

There has been cross-checking undertaken, however there may be mismatches remaining.

Should you find a conflict, please report the discrepancy so that it can be addressed in either the policy or in the Scheme of Delegation.

Lacking clarity

If there is an entry in the Scheme of Delegation that is unclear to you, please report it.

Any suggestions about how to improve the clarity are welcome, so that we can amend the Scheme of Delegation for the benefit of everyone.

Missing items

If you seek support for a decision, and cannot locate it in the Scheme of Delegation, please notify us so that a policy or the Scheme of Delegation can be amended.

For any comments or suggestions, please send an email to

governance@southportlearningtrust.org

Website links

[Scheme of Delegation](#)

www.southportlearningtrust.org



Enhancing Governance

Scheme of Delegation

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