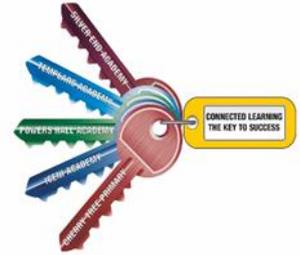


CONNECTED LEARNING



PARENT/CARER TRUSTEE VACANCIES

November 2021

As you are aware, your child's school is part of Connected Learning, a multi-academy trust (MAT), with five schools in Witham, Colchester and Silver End. This Trust is governed by a Board of Trustees who, on a voluntary basis, meet regularly to maintain, manage and ensure the effective operation of the MAT schools; they are also accountable for the performance of these schools and work tirelessly to achieve our aim of developing a group of exceptional primary schools which deliver an excellent education for all our children.

The Board currently has nine Trustees, led by our Chair, JoAnn Williams, and two vacancies have now arisen for Parent Trustees. We are, therefore, inviting you to either nominate yourself or someone with parental responsibilities for a child currently registered at one of our MAT schools. If there are more nominations than vacancies, we will have to hold an election.

We acknowledge that being a trustee can be a challenging role but it is also hugely rewarding; it is an opportunity to make a real difference to young people, give something back to the local community and to use and develop skills in a board-level environment.

We are not necessarily looking for individuals with formal qualifications but we do want trustees with a genuine interest in, and a commitment to, the education and welfare of our children and with the time and willingness to become involved.

Some of the soft skills we are looking for are:

- To be able to work as part of a team
- To be able to ask challenging questions and to think strategically
- To be aware of when it is necessary to be discreet and not speak about confidential matters
- To be open-minded and fair
- To be able to read different types of information including budget reports and data on school standards

If you, or your nominee, also have experience or skills in any of the following areas, this could enhance your application:

- Education
- Human Resources
- Marketing and/or Public Relations
- Property and Estate Management
- Legal
- Organisational Change

As far as commitment is concerned, a trustee serves a term of office of four years; at the end of this term, a parent trustee has to stand for election again – there is no right of immediate re-appointment.

The Board meets on average five times a year but all trustees are also committed to at least one trust committee which could be another four meetings. We also expect trustees to undertake training sessions and to make occasional visits to MAT schools. Support and induction are given to all new trustees.

Nomination forms are available on the Trust website www.connectedlearningmat.co.uk or from your child's School Office. If you are nominating someone else, please ensure that they agree to this nomination by sending the form. The deadline for applications is **4pm on Monday, 13 December 2021**. All applications will be subject to an interview and candidates will also be invited to submit a statement in support of their nomination, which should be no longer than 250 words.

On the other hand, if you think you might like more information, please contact the Trust Clerk tinaweavers@connectedlearningmat.co.uk to arrange an appointment for an informal chat.

CONNECTED LEARNING

Parent Trustee Nomination and Election Procedure



The definition of “parent” for this purpose includes:

- (1) all natural parents of a pupil currently registered at a school within Connected Learning, whether they are married or not;
- (2) any person who, although not a natural parent, that has parental responsibility for a pupil currently registered at a school within Connected Learning;
- (3) any person who, although not a natural parent, has legal responsibility of a pupil currently registered at a school within Connected Learning:
 - A person may be appointed as Parent Trustee if they are a parent (as defined above) of a currently registered pupil at a school within Connected Learning
 - Parent Trustees must be aged 18 or over.
 - All parents (as defined above), regardless of their age, are entitled to vote in a parent trustee election.

NEW PARENT TRUSTEE ELECTIONS

1. The CEO will arrange for all parents/carers to be notified via parent newsletters that an election for a parent trustee is required and invite nominations via a nomination form (Appendix 1). This will also set out the circumstances in which someone is not allowed to serve as a trustee (see Appendix 2). The form will be available to download digitally from the Trust website and emailed to the Clerk or paper versions will be made available to collect from the receptions at all Trust school sites.
3. The nomination form will indicate the closing date for nominations which will be no less than 10 school days from the date of issue. Candidates will also be invited to submit a statement in support of their nomination, which should be no longer than 250 words. Nomination forms will be returned to the Clerk by the deadline indicated.
4. The Board of Trustees will carry out a regular skills audit of trustees and, on occasion, may ask for parents/carers with particular skills/experience to put their name forward for election. This does not preclude any other member of the parent body from submitting a nomination.
5. Parents/carers may self-nominate but if a parent wishes to nominate another parent/carer, they should seek their approval in advance and ensure they have completed and signed the nomination form.
6. Where the number of candidates nominated is equal to, or fewer than, the number of vacancies, then all those nominated will be elected unopposed. If too few parents

stand for election to fill all the vacancies, the Board of Trustees may appoint a parent trustee to the vacancy or vacancies in accordance with the Articles of Association¹.

7. If there are more nominations than vacancies, then the Board of Trustees will review each of the nominee's personal statements and shortlist at least two candidates that best meet the criteria of skills and experience that the Board requires.
8. The shortlisted candidates will then go forward to a ballot. This will be conducted via a voting system open to all the parental body and details of how to vote will be sent to all parents. This will confirm that:
 - All parents/carers of current registered students at the academy trust are entitled to vote;
 - Each parent/carer can only submit one ballot paper, regardless of the number of children they have attending the school;
 - The candidates' personal statements will be included and will also be available to view on the Trust website.
 - The closing date and time for receipt of votes / ballot papers will be no less than 10 school days from the date the voting opened.
9. If a parent/carer would prefer to vote using a paper ballot then these will be available in the reception area at all school sites. The form must be sealed in an envelope and, on the outside of the envelope, the parent/carer must include their name, signature, the date and the name of the pupil attending the school.

A ballot box will be provided to place the envelope in. Returned envelopes must be locked away unopened until the closing date. No arrangements will be made for proxy voting.
10. At the closing date of the ballot, the Clerk is responsible for counting the votes. Candidates and trustees will be invited to witness this but there is no requirement for either to attend. The Clerk is responsible for determining whether a "spoiled" ballot should be included.
11. The outcome of the vote will be decided by the simple majority vote system. In the event of a tie, there should be a recount. If this does not produce a clear result, the Clerk should, in the presence of the witnesses, draw lots.
12. The Clerk will inform all the candidates individually about the result of the ballot. The Clerk will also notify, within 14 days, Companies House and GIAS (Get Information About Schools) of the names of successful candidate(s); whether they were elected or

¹ CI Articles of Association: Article 56. ... "or where the Trustees are exercising their power to appoint a parent trustees and it is not reasonably practical to appoint a parent, or an individual exercising parental responsibility, as described in Articles 54 and 54AA, the Trustees may appoint a person who is the parent, or an individual exercising parental responsibility, of a child within the age range of at least one of the academies ...".

appointed; and the name of the trustee they are replacing, as set out in the Trust Funding Agreement.

13. Other parents/carers will be notified of the result via the school newsletters and the website.
14. The ballot papers and online voting records will be retained securely for six months in case the election result is challenged.
15. The elected Parent Trustee(s) will serve a term of office of four years which will start from the date of the election.
16. At least three months before a serving parent trustee is reaching the end of his/her term of office, the Clerk will inform the Board of Trustees. A timetable for an election will be agreed by the Chair of Trustees, CEO and the Clerk that minimises delay and avoids school holidays.

CONNECTED LEARNING

Chief Executive Officer: Mrs J M Bass
Chair of Board of Trustees: Mrs J Williams
Chief Operations Officer: Mrs C E Brazier
Clerk to Board of Trustees: Mrs T R Weavers



ELECTION OF PARENT TRUSTEE - APPENDIX 1

PLEASE COMPLETE ALL SECTIONS OF THIS FORM

Before completing this form, please check that you are not disqualified from becoming a Parent Trustee for any of the reasons stated on grounds for disqualification – Appendix 2

I confirm that as a Nominee:

- (a) I am willing to stand as a candidate for election as a Parent Trustee for Connected Learning
- (b) I am not disqualified from holding office for the any of the reasons set out in Appendix 2
- (c) By signing this I agree that, if I am successful, I am prepared to be subject to clearance through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

Signature

Date

Name

Where appropriate, name and signature of Proposer

Signature

Date

Name

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM BY 4pm ON 13 DECEMBER 2021 in either an envelope marked: CONFIDENTIAL PARENT TRUSTEE NOMINATION For the attention of the TRUST BOARD CLERK via your child's Reception OR email to tinaweavers@connectedlearningmat.co.uk

See over for Parent Trustee Nomination Form for completion

PARENT TRUSTEE NOMINATION FORM

Please outline on the form below:

- The skills and experience you could bring to the Trust Board
- Your commitment to undertaking training to acquire or to develop the skills needed to be an effective Trustee
- How you plan to contribute to the future work of the Trust Board

CANDIDATE'S NAME	
CANDIDATE'S ADDRESS & CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBER	
CANDIDATE'S EMAIL ADDRESS	
WHICH TRUST SCHOOL DOES THE CANDIDATE'S CHILD ATTEND?	
CANDIDATE'S STATEMENT (maximum 250 words)	

CONNECTED LEARNING

Appendix 2 - Eligibility to stand as (and vote for) a Parent/Carer Trustee

The definition of “parent” for this purpose includes:

- (1) all natural parents of a pupil currently registered at a school within Connected Learning, whether they are married or not;
- (2) any person who, although not a natural parent, that has parental responsibility for a pupil currently registered at a school within Connected Learning;
- (3) any person who, although not a natural parent, has legal responsibility of a pupil currently registered at a school within Connected Learning:

- A person may be appointed as Parent Trustee if they are a parent (as defined above) of a currently registered pupil at a school within Connected Learning
- Parent Trustees must be aged 18 or over.
- All parents (as defined above), regardless of their age, are entitled to vote in a parent trustee election.

A person shall be disqualified from holding office or continuing to hold office as trustee if:

- they become incapable by reason of illness or injury of managing or administering their own affairs;
- they are absent without the permission of the trustees from all their meetings held within a period of six months, and the trustees resolve that his office be vacated;
- they have been declared bankrupt and/or their estate has been seized from his possession for the benefit of their creditors and the declaration or seizure has not been discharged, annulled or reduced; or
- they are the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or an interim order;
- they are subject to a disqualification order or a disqualification undertaking under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986; or
- they are subject to an order made under section 429(2)(b) of the Insolvency Act 1986 (failure to pay under county court administration order);
- they cease to be a trustee by virtue of any provision in the Companies Act 2006;
- they are disqualified from acting as a trustee by virtue of section 178 of the Charities Act 2011 (or any statutory re-enactment or modification of that provision); or
- they are otherwise found to be unsuitable by the Secretary of State;
- they have been removed from the office of charity trustee or trustee for a charity by an order made by the Charity Commission or the High Court on the grounds of any misconduct or mismanagement in the administration of the charity for which he was

responsible; or to which he was privy; or which he, by his conduct, contributed to or facilitated;

- they have, at any time, been convicted of any criminal offence, excluding any that have been spent under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 as amended, and excluding any offence for which the maximum sentence is a fine or a lesser sentence except where a person has been convicted of any offence which falls under section 178 of the Charities Act 2011;
- they have not provided to the chair of the trustees a criminal records certificate at an enhanced disclosure level under section 113B of the Police Act 1997.

