



The Rivers

C.of E. Academy Trust

Terms of Reference for Advocates

2025-2026

Date approved by trustees:	September 2023
Next review due:	October 2026

Terms of Reference

Advocate Roles

1.0 In this document

1.1 Glossary:

Academy	a school within the trust
Articles	the Articles of Association of the trust
Chief Executive	the person appointed by the trustees as an employee to oversee and coordinate all trust activities
Christian Distinctiveness Advocate	the person(s) appointed by the head to seek assurance that the Christian vision and values are at the heart of everything that the school does
Community Advocate	the person(s) appointed by the head to seek assurance that the school engages positively with its key stakeholders and local community
Company Secretary	the company secretary of the trust or any other person appointed to perform the duties of secretary to the trust
Director of Education	the person appointed by the trustees as an employee, under the overall direction of the chief executive, to oversee the educational objectives of the trust
Director of Finance	the person appointed by the trustees as an employee, under the overall direction of the chief executive, to oversee the financial aspects of the trust
Director of Operations	the person appointed by the trustees as an employee, under the overall direction of the chief executive, to oversee the operational objectives of the trust
Executive Head	a headteacher role with lead managerial responsibility for more than one school
Head	the member of staff of the academy who has been appointed by trustees to have overall day-to-day control of and responsibility of the academy
Headteacher Advocate	the person appointed by the head to seek assurance that the head is listened to, supported and challenged

Members	responsible for ensuring the trust achieves its charitable objectives
Pupil Experience Advocate	the person(s) appointed by the head to seek assurance that pupils are listened to, feel safe in school and are successful learners.
The Trust	the Rivers CofE Academy Trust, a company limited by guarantee with the registered number 09199371
Trustees	those persons appointed as directors and trustees of the trust. The trustees deliver and are responsible for the core governance functions and ensure trust business is conducted in compliance with company and charity law.

2.0 Role of Advocates

2.1 The Rivers CofE Academy Trust has an approved scheme of delegation defining the powers and functions that are reserved for these roles. The scheme of delegation is attached as **Annex A**.

2.2 The advocate roles are responsible to the trustees for their actions and follow the expectations of trust board members as laid down in the terms of reference and scheme of delegation.

2.3 The advocate roles are as follows: headteacher advocate; pupil experience advocate; community advocate; Christian distinctiveness advocate. See **Annex B** for role descriptions and **Annex C** for person specifications for the advocate roles.

3.0 Administration

3.1 Roles shall comprise:

- i. one headteacher advocate per school - this may not be a close relative of a pupil at the school or a member of staff;
- ii. two pupil experience advocates per school - this may not be a member of staff;
- iii. two community advocates per school - this may not be a member of staff;
- iv. two Christian distinctiveness advocates per school - this may not be a member of staff.

3.2 Length of term of office for all advocate roles is four years with a maximum of eight years in a specific role. At the end of their term of office, an advocate must be re-elected or reappointed under the same rules that applied when they first took up their role. This process will be managed by the head.

3.3 At least two advocates per school must be elected representatives of the parents/carers of pupils currently attending the relevant school (this excludes the headteacher advocate, who may not be a close relative of a pupil at the school).

4.0 Resignation and Removal

4.1 An advocate may resign from office at any time by giving notice in writing to the head.

4.2 The trustees may terminate the appointment of any advocate whose presence or conduct is deemed by the trustees not to be in the interests of the trust or the school. See **Annex D** for the code of conduct for advocates.

5.0 Persons Ineligible to be Advocates

5.1 No person shall be qualified to be an advocate unless he/she is aged eighteen or over at the date of his/her appointment.

5.2 An advocate shall cease to hold office if he/she is absent from three consecutive meetings and/or visits without the permission of heads. The head can then recommend termination of office to the board of trustees for approval.

5.3 An advocate shall cease to hold office if he/she is disqualified from acting as an advocate by virtue of section 178 of the Charities Act 2011 (or any statutory re-enactment or modification of that provision).

5.4 A person shall be disqualified from holding or continuing to hold office as an advocate:

5.4.1 If

- i. his/her estate has been sequestrated and the sequestration has not been discharged, annulled or reduced;
- ii. he/she is the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or an interim order.

5.4.2 At any time when he/she is subject to a disqualification order or a disqualification undertaking under the Company Trustees Disqualification Act 1986 or to an order made under section 429(2)(b) of the Insolvency Act 1986 (failure to pay under county court administration order).

5.4.3 If he/she has 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/she was responsible or to which he/she was privy or which he/she by his/her conduct contributed or facilitated.

5.4.4 At any time when he/she is

- i. included in the list of teachers and workers with children or young persons whose employment is prohibited or restricted under section 1 of the Protection of Children Act 1999 or
- ii. disqualified from working with children under section 28, 29, 29A and 29B of the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000.

5.4.5 If he/she is a person in respect of whom a direction has been made under section 142 of the Education Act 2002.

5.4.6 Where he/she has, at any time, been convicted of any criminal offence, excluding any that have been spent under the Rehabilitation of Offender 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.

5.4.7 If he/she has not provided to the chair of the trustees a criminal record certificate at an enhanced disclosure level under section 113B of the Police Act 1997. In the event that the certificate discloses any information which would, in the opinion of the chair of the trustees, confirm their unsuitability to work with children, that person shall be disqualified. If a dispute arises as to whether a person shall be disqualified, a referral shall be made to the Secretary of State to determine the matter. The determination of the Secretary of State shall be final.

5.5 Where a person becomes disqualified from holding or continuing to hold office as an advocate and is, or is proposed to become, an advocate, they shall upon becoming so disqualified give written notice of that fact to the head.

6.0 Conflicts of Interest

6.1 All advocates will act in accordance with the Seven Principles of Public Life (also known as the Nolan Principles) [Seven Principles of Public Life](#)

6.2 Any advocate who has any duty or personal interest (including but not limited to any Personal Financial Interest) which conflicts or may conflict with his/her duties as an advocate shall disclose that fact to the head as soon as he/she becomes aware of it. An advocate must absent him/herself from any discussions of the advocate groups in which it is possible that a conflict will arise between his/her duty to act solely in the interests of the academy and any duty or personal interest (including but not limited to any Personal Financial Interest).

7.0 Meetings of Advocates

7.1 All advocates will attend a governance half day to be held in the summer term of each academic year.

7.2 All advocates will meet the link trustee once a term.

7.3 All advocates will meet as a school group with the head once a term.

8.0 Proceedings of meetings

8.1 To be arranged by the head.

9.0 Conduct of Advocates

9.1 A copy of the code of conduct for advocates is attached in **Annex D**.

10.0 These Terms of Reference

10.1 This document shall be adopted on the annual governance day to be held in the summer term before the start of the next academic year.

10.2 This document will be reviewed by the trustees annually.

10.3 A copy of this document shall be given to every advocate and shall be available for inspection upon request by members of staff during normal office hours at the offices of the school and the trust.

11.1 Effective Date

11.2 These terms of reference shall come into effect on 1st September 2022.

Annexes to be included:

Annex A: Scheme of Delegation

Annex B: Role descriptions for Advocate Roles

Annex C: Person specification for Advocate Roles

Annex D: Code of Conduct for Advocate Roles