

Finance and Operations Committee

Terms of Reference

1. In this document

1.1 Glossary

Term	Definition
The trust	Rivers C of E Academy Trust, a company limited by guarantee having registered number [09199371]
Articles	Articles of Association of Rivers C of E Academy Trust
Members	responsible for ensuring the trust achieves its charitable objectives
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
Company secretary	the company secretary of the trust or any other person appointed to perform the duties of secretary to the trust
Academy	a school within the trust
Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	the person appointed by the trustees as an employee to oversee and coordinate all trust activities
Chief Financial Officer (CFO)	the person appointed by the trustees as an employee, under the overall direction of the CEO, to oversee the financial aspects of the trust (Director of Finance)
Accounting Officer	the chief executive appointed by the trustees to be responsible for the financial and administrative compliance of the trust
Board member	a member of the Finance and Operations Committee
Personal financial interest	any interest in the employment or remuneration of, or the provision of any other benefit to, a board member as further detailed within clauses 5.5 to 5.9 of the memorandum

2. Authority

The Finance and Operations Committee is a committee of the board of trustees and is authorised to investigate any activity within its terms of reference or specifically delegated to it by the board. It is authorised to request any information it requires from any employee, external audit, internal audit or other assurance provider.

The Finance and Operations Committee is authorised to obtain outside legal or independent professional advice it considers necessary, normally in consultation with the accounting officer and/or chair of trustees. However, the Finance and Operations Committee may not incur expenditure in excess of £10,000 in doing so without the prior approval of the board of trustees.

3. Role

The role of the Finance and Operations Committee is to maintain an oversight of the academy trust's financial governance and financial arrangements. It will oversee allocation of academy and central budgets, monitor performance and budgetary control and advise on priorities for investment. The committee will report its findings annually to the board of trustees and the accounting officer as a critical element of the academy trust's annual reporting requirements. The Finance and Operations Committee will support financial management of the trust by promoting a climate of financial discipline and control which will help to reduce the opportunity for financial mismanagement. The Finance and Operations Committee has no executive powers or operational responsibilities/duties.

4. Duties

The duties of the Finance and Operations Committee are as follows:

4.1 To advise the board of trustees and accounting officer on the adequacy and effectiveness of the trust's financial governance and budgetary control.

4.2 To advise the board of trustees and accounting officer on the allocation of grant funding and charges for central services (top slice). To consider the impact of changes in funding levels and support the academy trust to develop financial plans for the short, medium and long term.

4.3 To determine key performance indicators and management information required to review management accounts across the academy trust.

4.4 To support and evaluate actions arising from review of financial reporting and budgetary control (including consideration of school improvement board comments).

4.5 To advise the board of trustees and accounting officer on priorities for capital investment and systems change/development, including organisation structure.

4.6 To oversee the academy trust's cash flow management, lease agreements and loan arrangements.

4.7 To receive reports (annual reports, management letters, etc.) from the external auditor and other bodies, for example the Education and Skills Funding Agency and the National Audit Office, and consider any issues raised, the associated management response and action plans. Where appropriate, reports should be referred to the board or other committee for information and action.

5. Administration

5.1 The Finance and Operations Committee will meet at least once per term.

5.2 The Finance and Operations Committee will consist of at least three members of the board of trustees. Additionally, up to two external co-opted members may also be appointed.

5.3 The chair of the Finance and Operations Committee shall be appointed by the board of trustees. The chair of the Finance and Operations Committee cannot hold the position of the chair of the board of trustees.

5.4 The chair of the Finance and Operations Committee cannot hold the position of the chair of the Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee.

5.5 If the chair is absent from any meeting of the Finance and Operations Committee, those board members present shall appoint one of their number to chair the meeting.

5.6 The Finance and Operations Committee will be quorate if two members are present and 50% of members are academy trust board members.

5.7 The trust's chief financial officer (CFO) and other members of the academy trust staff maybe invited to attend, but will have no voting rights.

5.8 Administrative support will be provided by the CFO.

5.9 Agendas will be agreed in advance by the chair of the Finance and Operations Committee (based on, but not limited to, a pre-agreed annual schedule of activity) and papers will be circulated to members and attendees at least 5 working days in advance of the meeting.

5.10 Minutes of meetings will be taken and, once approved in draft by the chair of the Finance and Operations Committee, will be submitted to the next scheduled meeting of the board of trustees.

5.11 The Finance and Operations Committee will review these terms of reference and self-assess its performance against these terms of reference on an annual basis.