

North Star Academy Trust

North Star Trust is a new academy trust due to open in Spring 2021 to oversee two special schools currently in the Woodway Federation, and the opening of a brand-new Free School in 2022. This presents an exciting opportunity for two trustees with branding / marketing, growth / change management or legal / compliance expertise to join the trust board at the point of opening. Board meetings will be held virtually or in Henbury, Bristol BS10 7AH.

About the trust

North Star Trust is due to open in Spring 2021. Until then, the Woodway Federation will continue to operate Woodstock School, a primary special school in Henbury with capacity to support 62 pupils and Bristol Gateway School, a secondary special school in Lawrence Weston with capacity to support 80 pupils. Both schools were rated by Ofsted as 'Good' in 2019. The two existing special schools support pupils with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) and/or other difficulties or disabilities. 53 – 66% of pupils are Free School Meal recipients (FSM). The federation has a combined budget of 3.8 million pounds and a new school is due to open in September 2022.

Plans for the future

1. **Education** – in the short term, the federation's leadership team is overseeing the implementation of a recovery curriculum to manage the disruption to pupil progress caused by Covid-19 absences from school. in the medium to long term, the trust aspires to operate at full capacity and re-develop the space available in the schools to support a large number of new children through diversification and recruitment of additional specialist staff.
2. **Financial Sustainability** – the three-year budget forecasts for the schools look positive. The trust board chair designate is a finance director and the finance, audit and resources committee chair designate is an experienced finance governor.
3. **Governance** – in the short term, the federation board and North Star Trust's shadow board are working with key delivery partners and stakeholders to manage the completion of legal processes and strategic planning processes required to transition the two existing schools and their employees from Local Authority control to academy status via the incorporation and opening of a new charitable company. The trust board chair designate is committed to ensuring that all trustees engage in training to understand the roles and responsibilities and statutory duties for trustees of a charitable company regulated by the Department for Education.

Trust ethos & values

Vision: To develop confident, ambitious people who are emotionally and intellectually equipped for a brighter future.

Values: respect, safety, learning, diversity and high standards.

<https://www.woodwayfederation.co.uk/Our-Schools/Vision-Values/>

Role summary

Number of positions advertised: 2

Roles 1-2 – Trustee/Non-Executive Director

The non-executive directors set the strategic direction of PAT, support and challenge the Executive Principals, ensure the trust's financial stability and safeguarding of children, promote the wellbeing of staff and pupils and support the achievement of educational excellence.

Trustees – or non-executive directors - are both charity trustees and company directors of the academy trust. The core functions of their role are: ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction; holding executive leaders to account for the educational and financial performance of a charitable company funded by the public purse. More information about the roles and responsibilities of multi-academy trustees can be found in:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/924673/Academies_governance_role_descriptors.pdf

In the interests of safeguarding and in accordance with DfE requirements, all trustee appointments will be subject to an enhanced disclosure and barring service check.

Person specification

Every trustee is expected to abide by the seven principles of public life set out by Lord Nolan: selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

The Competency Framework for Governance (DfE) 2017 details the knowledge, skills and behaviours required for effective governance:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/583733/Competency_framework_for_governance.pdf

The strategic expertise required for this role includes:

Essential (*due to multiple roles, candidates may be accepted who possess one or more of the skills below*)

- Branding/ Marketing or
- Growth Management or
- Legal/ Compliance

Desirable

- Audit or
- Branding/ Marketing or
- Non-executive/ Trustee or
- Risk

Time commitment

1 day per month. There will be six formal board and committee meetings per academic year plus ongoing professional development and the need to visit schools to understand their context and improvement priorities.

Location of board meetings and trust website

Board meetings will be held virtually or in Henbury, Bristol BS10 7AH.

<https://www.woodwayfederation.co.uk/Our-Schools/Vision-Values/>

Governance structure

The trust board aims to delegate powers to a single trust committee called the finance, audit and resources

committee plus a shared local governing body committee to oversee the performance of the two existing schools.

Background on academy trusts

Academy trusts are charitable groups of academy schools, run independent of local authority control.

Over 50% of children in England attend an academy, and there are over 900 academy trusts with three or more schools. For these schools to fulfil their potential, academy trusts need non-executives (known in charity law as trustees) to bring a wide range of skills and experience to help guide strategy, ensure their ambitions can be soundly financed, and keep their schools up to the mark delivering for their pupils.

Trusteeship is a voluntary, unpaid role for people who have the energy and skills to make a real contribution to shaping the future of our schools. You do not need to have any specialist knowledge of education.

Applications

Academy Ambassadors is a non-profit programme which recruits senior business leaders and professionals as volunteer non-executive directors onto the boards of multi-academy trusts.

If you are interested in applying for the role please click on the register now button.

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Please note: candidates should live within reasonable travelling distance of the trust and/or have a link with the region. For more information, please visit www.academyambassadors.org.