

Edith Stein Catholic Academy Trust

Director Recruitment

“As a volunteer you will bring capacity to the Trust and improve the outcomes for young people”



Thank you for your interest in joining the ESCAT Board as a Voluntary Director

Who are we?

Edith Stein Catholic Academy Trust (ESCAT) currently comprises two schools within the Roman Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth; along with our other partners, we are working together to provide the best opportunities for every child. The Trust was initially formed in 2011 by Oaklands Catholic School under the banner of the Catholic Academy Trust in Havant. Oaklands was one of the first Catholic schools in the country to convert to an academy. The Trust changed its name to Edith Stein Catholic Academy Trust in 2017. Corpus Christi Catholic Primary School joined the Trust in April 2021.

As a Catholic Academy Trust, our first duty is to maintain and develop our schools as living faith communities inspired by the Gospels. Whilst all Catholic schools hold to the values of the Gospels of Jesus Christ, we believe that every school is unique, serving a distinct community. Therefore, each school in ESCAT is encouraged to maintain and develop its own identity and ethos, serving its own community.

A Time for Growth

The Directors of ESCAT would like to ensure that there is sufficient capacity within the Trust, firstly to support the existing schools and those schools we are currently speaking with, and secondly to fulfil the Diocesan Trustees' vision for the future.

We would like our Board leadership team to reflect the community we are here to serve. Improving Board diversity is crucial for us in terms of our values as an organisation. It means we are more effective and make better decisions which is key to the effective delivery of our mission. We are actively encouraging applications from candidates from a variety of backgrounds and geographical areas.

Directors fall into two categories:

- **Non-Foundation** - this can be anyone with the right skill set from the community
- **Foundation** - in addition to having the skills required, they must be practicing Catholics

We are interested in hearing from candidates with a background or advanced knowledge in any of the following:

- **Strategic leadership in the public sector, charities, or impact-driven organisations**
- **Experience in policy, governance, or social innovation**
- **Financial management with a track record of monitoring and accountability**
- **Expertise in the education or social care sector**
- **Business development and project management**
- **Legal, HR or advocacy**

You need to have a passion and belief in education and the empowering effect it can have on young people, as well as a willingness and openness to understand the complexity of the educational environment. You can read more about the work of ESCAT and that of the schools we serve on our website. As a volunteer you will bring capacity to the Trust and improve the outcomes for young people.

Directors set the tone of the Trust, this then influences the Local Governing Bodies and school improvement. The professional and technical skills, alongside the values and behaviours that mirror those of the Trust are of paramount importance.

As a Director you have a significant opportunity to help shape the strategic direction of a growing Multi Academy Trust. Working in collaboration with governors, teachers and support staff your work will have a lasting impact on Trust schools.

ESCAT is a truly unique charity, with people who care deeply about what they do, be that as volunteers or paid members of staff. If you believe you have the experience and qualities we are looking for, then we would love to hear from you.

Gaynor Rennicks
Chair of the Trust

Our Mission

ESCAT is committed to providing the highest quality Catholic education; embracing all within our community and bringing them closer to, and living their lives like, Jesus Christ, while enabling everyone to fulfil their potential.

Our Vision

Inspired by the example of Edith Stein, we are a family of Catholic schools loving, learning and living together for the common good of our children, families and communities. Our schools embody the mission of the Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth and have the wellbeing of our children and staff at the heart of all we do.

We are equal partners with a shared calling to ensure our children grow through a Christ-centred education in a safe and nurturing environment, providing them with the knowledge, skills and spiritual development to fulfil their potential and become disciples who make a positive contribution to their world.

Our Strategy

THEME A - CATHOLIC LIFE AND MISSION

Aim: Through our faith, promote academic, spiritual, emotional and social growth.

THEME B - ACHIEVING POTENTIAL

Aim: Ensure the very best teaching and highest quality learning, demonstrating the highest possible standards, to prepare our pupils for the future and deliver the very best possible outcomes for each individual.

THEME C - OUTWARD LOOKING SERVANTS

Aim: Ensure that all involved in the life of the school can become 21st Century Christians who can make a positive contribution to their community, wider society, and the Church and are able to articulate the core principles of Catholic Social Teaching.

THEME D - STEWARDSHIP OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Aim: In the spirit of Laudato Si', all of our staff and pupils to become responsible stewards of God's creation.

THEME E - SECURING THE FUTURE OF OUR SCHOOLS

Aim: Ensure the Trust employs high calibre people; manages finances through effective and efficient stewardship and maintains the infrastructure to enhance the learning environment and reputation of our schools.



Across ESCAT



312 Primary Children



1,149 Secondary Students



222 Sixth Form Students



84 Support Staff



108 Teachers



105 Volunteers



980 Families



2 Sites

Our Board of Directors

The Board holds the responsibility for determining the strategic direction of the Trust, establishing the budgetary framework, and making decisions regarding significant initiatives. Ordinarily, the Academy Trust's daily affairs are managed by the Trust Leader (CEO) and other staff members. Directors' responsibilities are discharged through decision-taking in Directors' meetings.

Each school within the Trust is overseen by a Local Governing Body that is accountable for the approval and oversight of the school development plan. There exists a transparent connection between the strategic priorities set by the Board and the operational activities conducted within the schools. Directors are distinct from Governors of individual schools.

In addition to the main Board, Directors can put themselves forward to participate in Audit and Risk, Curriculum and Ethos sub committees

As a Board we must always:

- **Support the direction set by the Catholic Diocesan Trustees.**
- **Act in the best interests of the Trust, exercising the same standard of duty of care that a prudent person would apply if looking after the affairs of someone for whom they have responsibility.**
- **Act collectively as a group and not as individuals.**
- **Ensure that all of our decisions and actions are consistent with the Trust's values and how the charity is seen by the people and organisations who are involved in our work and by the wider public.**
- **Have regard to the proper use of our power and act in line with our Charity Articles and our own aims and values.**
- **See that the Trust follows the law. We must also follow regulatory guidance. For example, information set out in the Academy Trust Handbook.**

You are not expected to have a detailed knowledge of the legislation that governs the work of Directors, the CEO and CFO will support you.

You should be aware that legislation exists governing schools, trusts and charities. You should be satisfied that ESCAT has policies, procedures and reporting mechanisms in place to ensure compliance.

What's involved with being a voluntary Director

Time commitment

Directors will hold regular meetings and are expected to attend unless exceptional circumstances prevent this. We hold 5 full Board meetings a year, and the three sub committees meet 3 times a year each. Directors also try and meet regularly between full Board meetings to keep abreast of developing matters. Meetings range from 1.5– 2 hours. Many of our existing Directors work full time and can provide advice and guidance around managing and balancing your time commitments. Directors are accountable to the Academy Trust Members - including the Bishop, Chief Operating Officer & Diocesan Oeconomus and the Episcopal Vicar for Education.

Location

Our Board meetings are either held in person in Portsmouth or Waterlooville, or virtually via Teams.

The role is voluntary

Directors are volunteers and their role is unpaid; however, we reimburse reasonable out-of-pocket expenses. This does not form any type of employment contract and should not be interpreted as such.

The formal role

Directors have, and must accept, ultimate responsibility for directing the affairs of ESCAT, ensuring that it is well-run and delivers the charitable outcomes for the benefit of the public for which it was formed.

In particular:

- **Directors need to familiarise themselves with the Articles of Association of the Academy Trust and ensure that they act within their powers and only for the purposes for which they are conferred.**
- **Directors must comply with responsibilities imposed by charity law and its obligations under the Companies Act.**
- **Directors must Report to the Department for Education under the Funding Agreement.**
- **Prospective Directors should familiarise themselves fully on their powers and responsibilities prior to committing to the role.**

Other key responsibilities:

- **Vision and leadership:** Shape and deliver ESCAT's long-term strategy.
- **Governance and compliance:** Uphold best practices in Trust governance, safeguarding, and ethical leadership.
- **Financial oversight:** Support funding strategies, and financial resilience.
- **Partnership and Influence:** Build relationships with schools, the Diocese and other key stakeholders to expand ESCAT's reach.
- **Innovation and growth:** Identify opportunities for expansion in accordance with the Bishop's vision.

Essential skills and attributes

A blend of the following skills and experience would be beneficial:

- A commitment to the mission and values of ESCAT
- Strategic vision
- Good, independent judgement
- An ability to think creatively
- A willingness to challenge and support
- An understanding and acceptance of the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities
- An ability to work effectively as a member of a team and to take decisions for the good of ESCAT
- Have a personal commitment to the Nolan Principles of Public Life
- Be able to build positive, successful professional relationships and networks with individuals, organisations and agencies
- Find creative solutions to achieve outcomes
- Maintain confidentiality
- Manage risks effectively
- Represent ESCAT in the wider community
- A sound and well-developed appreciation of governance, and an ability to judge how to manage effectively the boundaries between strategic and non-strategic roles
- Understanding and respect for how a Board sets the right 'tone' for an organisation, through appropriate leadership, maturity, style of contribution and personal behaviour

In addition, if you wish to take up the position of a Foundation Director you need to be a practicing Catholic.

This is not a requirement for Non-Foundation Directors.

All volunteers are expected to display a commitment to the protection and safeguarding of children and young people and undertake a DBS check.

Our support for you

We recognise that if you are new to this type of role you may wish to take up our offer of a mentor who is also an existing Director – this person will support you in your new role.

You will also be able to have regular reviews and an annual one-to-one with the Chair, which provides you with an opportunity to identify any learning needs or areas for development.

Learning and development

One of the benefits of volunteering is being able to access learning and development opportunities relevant to the role. We ask you to undertake the following training within the first twelve months of your appointment:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- GDPR (Data Protection and Confidentiality)
- Health and Safety

If you need additional training, we aim to be as flexible as we can be when booking training dates. Most of our training is available as e-learning so you can access it from home, at your own pace.

Insurance

We provide insurance cover for Directors when they are doing approved and authorised voluntary work for ESCAT.

If you are interested in finding out more about the role and whether it would feel right for you, we would love to hear from you and answer any questions you may have.

Please contact: m.evans@escat.org.uk

Reasonable Adjustments

We are committed to providing an inclusive experience for all those who are interested in this position, and we are committed to removing any barriers in our recruitment processes.

Director Disqualification Check

Individuals are already automatically disqualified as charity Directors if they:

- Have unspent convictions for offences of dishonesty or deception.
- Are currently declared bankrupt or subject to bankruptcy restrictions or an interim order.
- Are subject to a debt relief order, a debt relief restrictions order or interim order.
- Have been disqualified from being a company Director.
- Have previously been removed as a Trustee, Director or as a charity officer, agent or employee, by the Commission or the High Court due to misconduct or mismanagement.

Enhanced DBS Check

This shows full details of a person's criminal record such as cautions, reprimands, warnings, spent and unspent convictions. Any information given will be treated in the strictest confidence. Suitable applicants will not be refused a role because of spent offences which are not relevant to, and do not place them at, or make them a risk in this role. All cases will be examined on an individual basis.

Edith Stein Catholic Academy Trust

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