The Core Responsibilities of the Chief Executive Officer

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Project Aims

To produce a definitive set of core responsibilities for School Trust Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) for current and aspiring CEOs, and the Trustees of School Trusts.
The position of Chief Executive Officer within education is still relatively new. Little consistency as to what the title means in terms of:

- Job description
- Operational standards
- Accountability measures
- Salary
Uses of Core Responsibilities

- Inform professional development and support programmes
- Support succession and growth planning within School Trusts
- Assist in the performance management review of School Trust CEOs
Research

• Existing standards-setting work (Headteachers’ Standards)
• Accounting Officer statutory & regulatory functions
• Current CEO Job descriptions
• International standards for similar roles
• CEO roles in the public sector and business
• The new NPQEL framework
Building in the ‘reality element’

‘What a good CEO knows, understands and does’

- Discussions individually with nine CEOs
- Discussion with them as a group on a draft
- Review and comments on the second draft
Job titles can be confusing!

These core responsibilities have been determined for the person who is the Accounting Officer for the Trust and has an overarching, strategic role, without being the substantive head of any of the schools in the Trust.

These core responsibilities can be used for leaders of smaller trusts, recognising that the major difference will not be in the responsibilities themselves but in the way they are enacted in practice.
The draft definition examines:

- what the School Trust CEO role exists to do; that is to specify the job purpose;
- the expected behaviours and professional conduct of those leading School Trusts; and,
- the core responsibilities of a School Trust Chief Executive Officer.
Job Purpose

A School Trust Chief Executive is responsible for leading the Executive Team of the Trust, enabling the Trust and all its schools to be sustainably successful over time. They will provide high level strategic leadership and management across all aspects of the Trust’s activities. They will ensure that the Trust provides high quality education for all its pupils through the effective and efficient use of resources and people. As a system leader, the Chief Executive will represent the Trust with a wide range of stakeholders and partners and enable the Trust to fulfil its civic responsibilities. They are the Accounting Officer for the Trust, responsible for ensuring the Trust meets its statutory and legal requirements.
Ethics and Professional Conduct

As leaders of educational charities, Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of School Trusts are expected to demonstrate consistently high standards of principled and professional conduct. School Trust CEOs should always uphold and demonstrate The Principles of Public Life (The Nolan Principles).

School Trust CEOs are responsible for upholding public trust in Trust leadership, civic leadership and system leadership roles, and should maintain high standards of ethics and behaviour. As leaders of School Trusts, their academy communities and the profession, School Trust CEOs should serve in the best interests of the Trust’s pupils, conducting themselves in a manner compatible with their influential position in society. The first line of accountability is to the Trust Board and CEOs draw their authority, legitimacy and decision-making powers from the Trust Board.
CEO Core Responsibilities

Academy Trusts are education charities and School Trust CEOs have specific responsibilities as executive leaders of the Trust. There are six interlinked areas of responsibility.

- Strategic leadership - Trust ethos, culture and strategy
- Finance, sustainability and compliance
- Quality of Education
- People strategy
- Governance and accountability
- System leadership and civic responsibility
Strategic Leadership - ethos, culture & strategy

• Establish and sustain the Trust’s mission, culture, values and strategic direction in partnership with the Trust Board
• Provide vision, direction and leadership that enables the Trust to achieve its strategic objectives and secure its future sustainability
• Create a positive and supportive culture across the Trust and its schools
• Develop operational objectives that are appropriate, deliverable and aligned to securing a sustainable future through the Trust’s strategic direction
• Provide strategic leadership to enable the Trust’s organisational design and operational systems meet its current and future requirements and manage change effectively
• Establish and regularly re-evaluate a comprehensive educational design model for the Trust that supports innovation and technological development
Finance, Sustainability and Compliance

• Ensure that sound financial and risk management systems are in place
• Ensure the long-term sustainability of the Trust and its schools through effective financial and estates management
• Direct the Trust’s activities to achieve the most efficient, effective and sustainable provision of education to the highest quality, making the most effective use of the resources available.
• Ensure the organisation complies with all statutory and legal requirements including safeguarding and health and safety
Quality of Education

• Uphold and secure ambitious educational and behavioural standards for all pupils, promoting further support for the most disadvantaged and those with additional and special educational needs and disabilities
• Enable the Trust to establish and sustain a broad, structured and coherent curriculum, supported by effective curricular leadership and delivered through high quality teaching in all its schools
• Ensure the Trust has effective and proportional evaluation processes to make a timely diagnosis of the complex and persistent problems and barriers that limit the effectiveness of the Trust’s schools
• Ensure that priority areas for improvement are identified and appropriate actions implemented
• Enable the Trust to have access to appropriate evidence-based strategies for improvement and ensure their effective implementation
People Strategy

- Lead and effectively manage the activities and performance of the Trust’s executive group
- Enable a people strategy that identifies talent, supports and develops all staff and sustains a culture of high staff professionalism
- Ensure the Trust has high quality employment practices that promote diversity and equality
- Enable systems that ensure staff have access to high quality professional development, aligned to balance organisational and individual needs
- Ensure the organisation’s staffing capability and capacity is analysed to meet current and future needs and actions are taken to appropriately staff the Trust with people with the right skills, experience and qualities to meet future demands
- Ensure the Trust has a strong talent management and succession planning programmes across all areas of the organisation’s work
- Promote and ensure ethical practices of recruitment and retention of staff
Governance and Accountability

- Understand and welcome the role of effective Trust governance, upholding their obligation to give account and accept responsibility
- Promote a culture of accountability that is recognised and accepted as an essential element of improvement at all levels and across all aspects of the Trust’s work
- Develop and maintain effective relationships with the Trust Board recognising their key role in holding the CEO and executive team to account
- Ensure the Trust Board receives quality information in the level of detail needed to make informed decisions and fulfil its functions and legal obligations
- Enable and support rigorous approaches to identifying, managing and mitigating risk
- Ensure positive communications that promote the Trust and its work, and present the Trust effectively when dealing with the media
- Promote and enable ways in which the Trust’s schools and their local boards actively connect with their communities
- Understand the role of relevant regulatory bodies and ensure the Trust and its schools respond to their requirements
System Leadership & Civic Responsibility

• Promote and enable a collaborative culture and spirit of professional generosity within the Trust
• Build and sustain strong, positive and effective relationships with key stakeholders and partners to ensure there are strong collaborations outside the Trust
• Understand and positively engage in their role as a civic leader recognising that they have a duty to engage with each other and other civic actors for the wider good
Consultation

- Sector-wide responses invited
- Input welcomed from organisations and individuals
- Runs until 1 November 2021
- [https://cstuk.org.uk/policy-research/research/cst-consultation](https://cstuk.org.uk/policy-research/research/cst-consultation)
“There is no trust more sacred than the one the world holds with children.”

Thank you

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