Scheme of Delegation

Introduction

The Trustees of the United Learning Group charities[1] are ultimately responsible for all decisions taken in relation to the management and operation of the charities and their schools. The charities' individual boards delegate their day-to-day powers and functions to the United Learning Group Board, which in turn delegates many of its functions, powers and discretions to Board Committees, the Chief Executive Officer, the Executive, Head Teachers and school Local Governing Bodies (see **Annex A** for a diagram showing the overall Group governance structure).

This scheme of delegation sets out the principles underpinning the delegation of powers and – where appropriate – details specific delegations. Further guidance regarding the exercise of delegated powers is set out in relevant Group policies and in the Local Governance Handbook.[2]

The scheme of delegation is subject to regular review. Specific delegations may be withdrawn by the Group Board or (where appropriate) the Executive.

[1] United Learning Ltd (company number 18582, charity number 313999); United Church Schools Trust (company number 02780748, charity number 1016538); United Learning Trust (company number 04439859, an exempt charity regulated by the Secretary of State for Education)

[2] In the event of any inconsistency between this Scheme of Delegation and Group policies, the Scheme of Delegation shall take precedence.

Roles, responsibilities and principles of delegation

Group Board

The Group Board is responsible for protecting the interests and assets of each charity and its schools; safeguarding the charitable objects; Group strategy, management and governance; financial and educational performance; compliance with relevant statutory and regulatory requirements; and ensuring the maintenance of United Learning's ethos and values. Trustees are ultimately accountable for the attainment and progress of all pupils, including vulnerable groups, across the Trust.

The Group Board monitors progress against the Group's strategy and delivery of strategic objectives, provides support and challenge to the Executive and otherwise holds the Executive to account for the effective delivery of its responsibilities.

The Group Board delegates its functions to:

- Board Committees (for details, see **Annex B**)
- The Executive Management of the charities – at the centre and in schools
- Local Governing Bodies

Executive

The Group Board delegates management of the Group to the Chief Executive and the management team. The Executive proposes the Group's strategy and is responsible for ensuring the Group's strategic aims and objectives are achieved in accordance with that strategy, the Board's vision for United Learning and the Group's ethos and values. It takes operational and financial decisions (within its delegated financial authority) to that end and monitors progress against delivery of strategic objectives and against agreed budgets, reporting on those matters to the Board.

The Executive also carries out important governance, management and leadership functions in respect of the individual schools in the Group, providing support and challenge to enable Head Teachers to lead and improve their schools.

To enable it to carry out this responsibility, the Executive appoints central office staff to form a 'team around the school'. These teams are led by Regional Directors (and, in the case of independent schools, a National Director of Independent Schools) to provide strategic leadership and management across a group of schools, including line management of the Head Teacher and (where in place) the Executive Business Manager. Individuals in these roles have delegated responsibility for ensuring effective leadership and management across all of their schools' functions. They provide support and challenge to the Head Teacher and school leadership team – including quality assurance of specific areas of practice – and coordinate other central improvement capacity in support of the school's improvement plan, aligned with the Group's strategy. They may attend Local Governing Body meetings (and have a responsibility to do so where a School Improvement Board is in place).

Principal/Head Teacher[3]

Head Teachers are members of the Group's wider senior management team, appointed by the Executive. They have delegated responsibility for all aspects of leading and managing their school in line with Group expectations and statutory/regulatory requirements.

They are responsible for developing the strategic direction, vision, culture, values and operational priorities of the school, in line with the ethos and values of United Learning and the Group's agreed strategy and strategic priorities. They ensure effective delivery of their school's strategy and priorities, making operational and financial decisions (within their delegated financial authority) and deploying the school's resources efficiently to that end in line with agreed budgets. They monitor progress against delivery of that strategy and priorities, reporting to the Executive (in the form of the National Director or Regional Director) and to Local Governing Bodies. They are responsible for the effective implementation of the Group's agreed policies, practices and procedures at a local level and for evaluating the local impact of those policies, practices and procedures.

Head Teachers have a responsibility to attend meetings of the Local Governing Body.

Local Governing Bodies[4]

Local Governing Bodies (LGBs) are a full and formal part of the governance structure of United Learning. They hold powers and responsibilities delegated from the Group Board and act as the representative of that Board at school level, forming a single governance community with the Board, with a shared sense of mission, vision, values and culture. LGB Chairs are appointed by the Group Board.

The LGB acts as a 'critical friend' of the school and its leadership, challenging and supporting leaders across all aspects of the school's functions and practice, in the interests of children and young people and in line with the Group's agreed strategy and priorities. The LGB has a responsibility to review school plans and policies, providing oversight to ensure that Group policies are implemented effectively at a local level and receiving reports from the Head Teacher on progress against the+ school's improvement priorities.

LGB members are the ambassadors of United Learning within the wider school community, including in respect of parents. They are responsible for bringing their local knowledge and understanding to support the delivery of school priorities and for championing the interests of children and young people (those currently attending the school and those who will do so in future).

[3] Includes Executive Principal/Executive Head Teacher and Head of School

[4] Includes School Improvement Boards, which may be put in place at the direction of the Education Director where a school is facing particular challenge and requires rapid improvement

Specific reserved powers and responsibilities and specific delegations

In general, the Board, the Executive (both at the centre and in schools) and Local Governing Bodies exercise their functions in accordance with the roles and responsibilities set out above and detailed in respect of the Group Board Committees. There are a small number of specific powers and responsibilities that the Board reserves to itself and that it delegates to the Executive or to the local governance function. These are set out below. For delegated limits, please see **Annex C**.

Trustees	Local Governing Bodies	Executive	Principals/Head Teachers
Education			
Trustees agree the Group education strategy and annual strategic priorities. They receive reports on educational performance and progress in delivering the strategy, holding the Executive to account.	LGBs provide support and challenge in relation to the school's setting and delivery of its education improvement strategy (including curriculum delivery). They listen to the views of children and young people in doing so. In addition, LGBs have the authority to: • review the decision of a Principal/Head Teacher to exclude or suspend a pupil in accordance with the Trust's exclusion policy. In addition, LGBs have a responsibility to: • Appoint a lead governor for SEND and Pupil Premium	The Executive proposes the Group education strategy and annual strategic priorities and is responsible for development and implementation of delivery plans to achieve the strategy. The Executive monitors and quality assures school performance and holds Principals/Head Teachers to account for that performance.	Principals/Head Teachers set the school's strategy for improvement and annual improvement priorities (in line with the Group strategy), determine the curriculum at school level, implement improvement plans and monitor those plans regularly. In doing so, they must act in accordance with the Group's education policies, which detail responsibilities for areas of statutory compliance, including admissions, exclusions and direction off site.
People			
Trustees agree the Group's people strategy. They receive reports on performance against HR indicators and progress in delivering the strategy, holding the Executive to account. Trustees reserve the power to:	LGBs provide support and challenge in relation to matters of recruitment, professional development and the experience of staff at the school. They listen to the views of school staff when doing so.	The Executive proposes the Group's people strategy and is responsible for development and implementation of delivery plans to achieve the strategy. The Executive monitors and quality assures school performance and holds	Principals/Head Teachers ensure local implementation of the Group's people strategy, taking account of their school's improvement priorities. In addition, Principals/Head Teachers have the authority to:

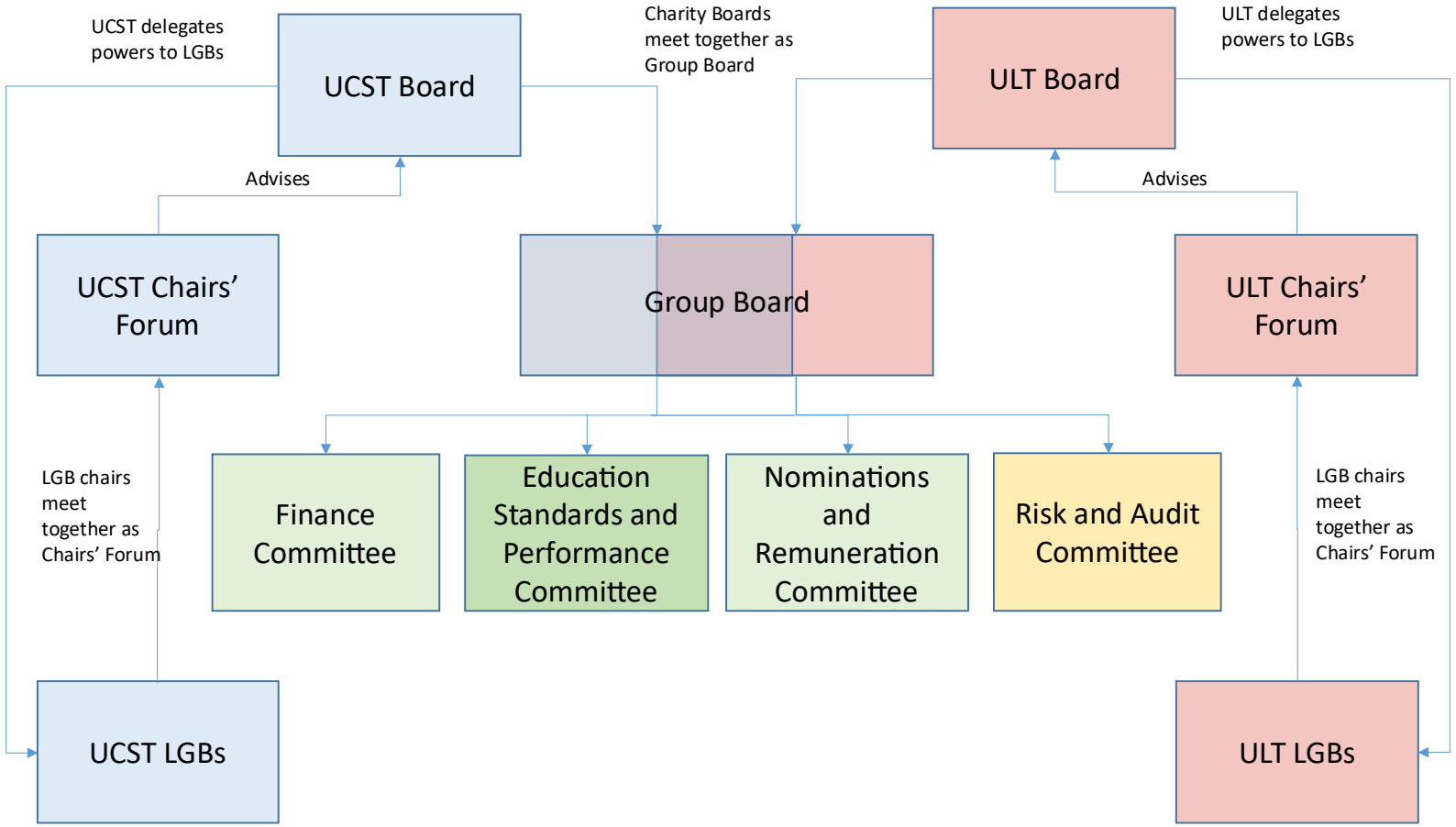
• Recruit and appoint the Chief Executive Officer and Chief Financial Officer • Agree performance related pay awards in respect of the Chief Executive Officer and members of the Executive Board • Carry out performance management of the Chief Executive Officer • Ensure the Chief Executive Officer has access to appropriate professional development • Appoint LGB Chairs	In addition, LGBs have the authority to: • Hear appeals as part of the capability or disciplinary process, in line with agreed Group policy • Recruit and appoint members of the LGB In addition, LGBs have a responsibility to: • Sit on Principal/Head Teacher appointment panels (LGB Chair) Members of the LGB may be invited to sit on recruitment panels for school staff other than the Principal/Head Teacher and on the school's pay moderation panel.	Principals/Head Teachers to account for that performance. In addition, the Executive has the authority to: • Recruit and appoint Principals/Head Teachers and central office staff and determine remuneration package in line with United Learning pay policy. • Agree general pay award for all staff (differentiated as appropriate between teachers/support staff and academies/independent schools) • Agree performance related pay awards in respect of Head Teachers and central office staff • Carry out performance management of Principals/Head Teachers and central office staff • Consult with Trade Unions In addition, the Executive has a responsibility to: • Ensure accuracy of central office Single Central Record and compliance with Safer Recruitment • Ensure Principals/Head Teachers and central office staff have access to appropriate professional development	• Recruit and appoint school staff other than Principals/Head Teachers and determine remuneration package in line with United Learning pay policy. • Agree performance related pay awards in respect of school staff • Carry out Performance management of school staff In addition, Principals/Head Teachers have a responsibility to: • Ensure accuracy of the school's Single Central Record and compliance with Safer Recruitment • Ensure school staff have access to appropriate professional development

		Members of the Executive (specifically, Education Directors/Regional Directors) may be invited to sit on recruitment panels for school staff other than the Principal/Head Teacher	
Money			
Trustees agree the Group's overall financial strategy and strategy for capital investment (estates and digital). They receive reports on financial performance and progress in delivering the strategy, holding the Executive to account. Trustees reserve the power to: • Approve school and central office budgets for submission to DfE/banks as appropriate • Scrutinise and approve Statutory Accounts • Set financial delegations for capital and operational expenditure • Approve capital and operational expenditure above delegated threshold	LGBs provide support and challenge in respect of the annual budget setting process. They receive reports on the school's financial performance and challenge where there are variances to budget.	The Executive proposes the Group's overall financial strategy and strategy for capital investment (estates and digital) and is responsible for development and implementation of delivery plans to achieve the strategy. The Executive works with schools to put in place local building development plans and digital strategies. The Executive monitors and quality assures school financial performance and holds Principals/Head Teachers to account for that performance. In addition, the Executive has the authority to: • Agree and recommend budgets to Trustees • Set Group budget assumptions and review and challenge locally set assumptions • Approve independent school fees • Prepare Statutory Accounts	Principals/Head Teachers set an annual and 5-year budget in accordance with Group budget assumptions and the overall Group finance strategy, implement plans to achieve the agreed budget and monitor those plans regularly. Principals/Head Teachers work with central teams to put in place a building development plan and a local digital strategy. In addition, Principals/Head Teachers have the authority to: • Approve capital and operational expenditure within delegated limits

		• Approve capital and operational expenditure within delegated limits In addition, the Executive has a responsibility to: • Ensure adequate insurance is in place	
Statutory, regulatory and policy compliance			
Trustees monitor progress against the overall Group strategy and seek assurances that statutory duties and regulatory requirements are complied with. They receive regular reports on audit outcomes, safeguarding, health and safety and data protection, and review the strategic risk register, holding the Executive to account. Trustees reserve the power to: • Approve Group policies in respect of finance, Health and Safety and Safeguarding • Ensure the appointment of an internal scrutiny function • Approve annual returns required by regulators	LGBs receive reports on matters of safeguarding, health and safety, data protection, complaints and incidents. They are notified of local audit actions and receive reports on progress in implementing these. They review the school risk register on a regular basis. In addition, LGBs have the authority to: • Approve Group policies applied locally and any school-specific policies as are deemed necessary • Consider stage 3 complaints in accordance with the Group complaints policy. In certain circumstances an LGB member may be appointed to consider a stage 2 complaint. • Approve the admissions policy and establish an admissions	The Executive sets the Group's compliance strategy and culture and ensures that appropriate policies are in place in all areas. The Executive monitors and quality assures school performance in all areas of compliance and holds Principals/Head Teachers to account for that performance. In addition, the Executive has the authority to: • Approve Group policies in respect of education, people and other areas as necessary • Appoint to central office roles as required to maintain an appropriate safeguarding, safety and compliance culture across the organisation, including to positions required by law • Consider stage 4 complaints in accordance with the Group complaints policy	Principals/Head Teachers ensure local implementation of Group policies, securing compliance in line with Group expectations. In addition, Principals/Head Teachers have the authority to: • Appoint to school roles as required to ensure an appropriate safeguarding, safety and compliance culture, including to positions required by law In addition, Principals/Head Teachers have a responsibility to: • Maintain a school risk register • Adopt Group policies (adjusted as necessary to fit local context) and develop school specific policies • Ensure audit actions are implemented to agreed timescales

	committee in accordance with the Trust's admissions guidance. In addition, LGBs have a responsibility to: • Appoint lead governors for Health and Safety and Safeguarding	In addition, the Executive has a responsibility to: • Maintain the strategic risk register	

Annex A – Governance Structure



Annex B – Committees of the Group Board

The Board has established four Committees, through which it exercises certain responsibilities. Terms of reference for each Committee can be found at the links below; the Board reviews these annually.

The **Education Standards and Performance Committee** ensures that the Trust discharges its responsibilities for educational improvement in providing excellent education so that all pupils are able to progress, achieve and to go on to succeed in life; advises the Group Board with respect to group strategic educational priorities and key performance indicators; holds the Executive Team to account against the approved group strategic priorities and key performance indicators relating to schools' educational performance; scrutinises the Groups approach to supporting pupils with SEND and reviews the performance of local/cluster governing bodies to ensure they are operating at maximum effectiveness.

Click here to read the Committee's terms of reference

The **Finance Committee** ensures that the Group properly plans the use of its finances and is adequately funded to undertake projected expenditure; reviews and recommends the annual budgets for approval by the Board; monitors financial performance against agreed budgets; ensures, with the Risk and Audit Committee, that the Group's financial statements are supported accurately by management accounts; and monitors and reviews the charitable company's arrangements in relation to investments and make recommendations to the board in relation to the appointment and removal of investment advisors.

Click here to read the Committee's terms of reference can be read

The **Risk and Audit Committee** maintains oversight of the Group's financial, governance, risk management and internal control systems; reports findings to the Group Board and the Accounting Officer as a critical element of the Group's annual reporting requirements; and seek assurance that:

- An effective risk management framework is in operation;
- Adequate risk management processes are in place;
- An adequate internal control environment is established;
- The Charities' annual financial statements are reconciled to the management accounts;
- Effective audit functions are in place (both external and internal).

Click here to read the Committee's terms of reference

The **Nominations and Remuneration Committee** oversees the appointments of the Charity Chairs and Trustees; reviews the terms of office, skills and attributes of the Trustees; approves Executive salaries and remuneration and plans Trustee succession in order to ensure that the Board has available to it the range of skills and experience required to discharge its responsibilities.

Click here to read the Committee's terms of reference

Annex C – Financial Delegations

Acquisition and Disposal of Land and buildings

Decisions to acquire and dispose of land and buildings are made by the Group Board.

Budgets

Academy, Independent School and Central Office budgets are approved by the Board of Trustees.

Capital Expenditure

Threshold (ex VAT)	School	Central Office
Below £5,000	Head or Business Manager (as per Focal Point approval matrix)	Executive department owner
£5,000 – £19,000	Finance Business Partner / Executive Business Partner	Executive department owner
£20,000 - £99,000	Director of Finance (Independent / Academies as appropriate) or Group Financial Controller	Executive department owner
£100,000 – £249,999	Chief Financial Officer	Chief Financial Officer
£250,000 – £499,999	Executive Board (including CFO and CEO)	Executive Board (including CFO and CEO)
From £500,000	Finance Committee (Trustees)	Finance Committee (Trustees)

Operational Expenditure and Income

For non-payroll operational purchasing and income contracts including lettings:

Threshold (ex VAT)	School	Central Office
Below £5,000	Head or Business Manager (as per Focal Point approval matrix)	Executive department owner
£5,000 – £19,000	Finance Business Partner / Executive Business Partner	Executive department owner
£20,000 - £199,000	Director of Finance (Independent / Academies as appropriate) or Group Financial Controller	Executive department owner
£200,000 – £499,999	Chief Financial Officer	Chief Financial Officer
£500,000 – £799,999	Executive Board (including CFO and CEO)	Executive Board (including CFO and CEO)
From £800,000	Finance Committee (Trustees)	Finance Committee (Trustees)

Investment decisions

Investment and reserves strategy are approved by the Board of Trustees.

Short-term investments with the principal banker (Barclays) are approved by the Group Financial Controller and Chief Financial Officer.

Long-term investment and fund manager decisions are made by the Board's Investment Committee.

Pay awards

The annual general pay award is decided by the Executive Board. Progression pay awards are decided as follows:

Employee	Decision maker
Chief Executive Officer	Nominations and Remuneration Committee
Members of the Executive	Nominations and Remuneration Committee
Regional Directors	Executive Board
Executive Principal	Executive Board
Principal	Executive Board
Head of School	Executive Board
Executive Business Managers	Executive Board
All other Central Office staff	Executive Board
All other school staff	Head Teacher

Severance agreements

The delegations below apply to any payments beyond contractual or statutory entitlements, i.e. discretionary payments, typically under a settlement agreement or COT3. *[It may also apply to redundancy payments or pension costs where these are made at school discretion, i.e. where alternative solutions may be available.]*

Value of non-contractual/non-statutory payment	Decision maker
None	Head and HRBP
Up to £10,000	Head, HRBP, Finance BP
£10,001 - £49,999	Regional Director, HR Director, Group Financial Controller
£50,000 and above (or total value over £100k; or employee salary over £150k)	Primary/Secondary Director, HR Director, CFO

Fundraising

Decisions to accept grants and donations relating to community hubs are made by the United Communities Board in accordance with the Fundraising policy.

Approved by the Group Board, July 2026

Published, July 2026