

CANDIDATE INFORMATION PACK

Member of the Trust

Guardians of our constitution

Board of Members | Voluntary role | Closing date: Monday 14th December 2026

WICKERSLEY PARTNERSHIP TRUST.

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Believe Together, Learn Together, Succeed Together

We aspire to ensure all students leave our care able and qualified to play their full part in an ever-changing world.

1. Welcome

A very warm welcome to Wickersley Partnership Trust, and thank you for your interest in becoming one of our Members.

Wickersley Partnership Trust (WPT) was founded in 2014 and I became CEO in 2018. Our Trust exists to further the interests of the young people we serve. Across 13 schools in Rotherham and Gainsborough, we aspire to ensure every student leaves our care able and qualified to play their full part in an ever-changing world. We are proud to be one school on many different sites.

Our Members are the guardians of the Trust's constitution. They appoint our Directors, make sure the Board has the skills it needs, and seek assurance that the Trust is well governed and true to its charitable purpose. They do this from a distance: Members keep their "eyes on" the Trust while keeping their "hands off" its day-to-day governance.

We are seeking new Members to join our Board of Members. We are looking for people with sound judgement, integrity and a genuine commitment to the young people of our communities. Experience in education, governance, law, finance, business, public service or community leadership would all be valuable.

You do not need to have been a Member before. The time commitment is modest, but the role matters: strong, independent Members are essential to good governance. We would particularly welcome applications from people who would help our Members better reflect the communities we serve.

This pack tells you about the Trust, the role of Members and how to apply. You can learn more about us at wickersleypt.org. I would be delighted to hear from you, and I hope you decide to apply.



Helen O'Brien
Chief Executive Officer, Wickersley Partnership Trust

Why this role, why now

The Department for Education's strong preference is for at least five Members, most of them independent of the Board. Adding new Members gives us that strength and independence at an important time: our Board is renewing its governance, recruiting five new Directors and setting a five-year plan for the Trust.

2. About Wickersley Partnership Trust

Wickersley Partnership Trust is a multi-academy trust and an exempt charity regulated by the Secretary of State for Education (company number 08833508). We serve around 7,500 young people, almost all in Rotherham, South Yorkshire, with one school in Gainsborough, Lincolnshire, and we plan to grow, predominantly at primary level.

2014	13	7,500	5	£62.5m
founded	schools	young people	specialist SEND centres	annual income

Our vision	We aspire to ensure all students leave our care able and qualified to play their full part in an ever-changing world.
Our mission	WPT exists to further the interests of the young people that we serve.
Our ethos	We are one school on many different sites, with embedded inclusivity and high expectations for every pupil.
How we improve	System Leadership: colleagues whose responsibilities are delivered Trust-wide share skills, expertise and resources, so our schools are more effective, efficient, engaging and equitable than they would be alone.

Working in partnership

We believe schools and trusts achieve more together. We anchor the **Learners First Partnership**, work alongside other regional trusts in the **Positive Change Alliance**, whose Operational Excellence work brings together estates, finance, IT and governance leaders, and are a Futures Partner of the **Foundation for Education Development**.

3. Our strategic priorities 2026/27

Our Board has set five strategic priorities, delivered through our Action Plan 2026–2031. The right-hand column shows where this role makes its biggest contribution.

	Priority	Strategic focus	Where this role contributes
1	**Developing Leadership Excellence**	Leaders and governors drive an ambitious vision with clear accountability and collaborative governance.	**Appointing Directors with the skills, independence and diversity the Board needs; assurance that governance is effective.**
2	**Investing in Our Workforce, Driving Excellence Together**	A diverse, highly skilled team with professional development, clear pathways and manageable workloads.	Assurance that the Board oversees the Trust's largest resource, its people, well.
3	**Ensuring Every Child Achieves and Is Ready for Their Next Step**	High expectations, excellent teaching and structural inclusivity, so every child thrives.	Keeping the Trust's charitable purpose, the education of its pupils, at the centre.
4	**Creating a Culture and Environment where Everyone can Flourish**	Wellbeing, safety and open communication at the centre, while adopting safe digital innovation.	Upholding the Seven Principles of Public Life and a culture of openness.
5	**Sustaining Excellence Through Strong Partnerships**	Long-term viability through strong financial management, estates, effective systems and partnerships.	Keeping the long-term sustainability of the Trust in view as it plans to grow.

4. Our schools

Thirteen schools, almost all in Rotherham, South Yorkshire, with The Gainsborough Academy in Lincolnshire.

Secondary	Primary
• Wickersley School and Sports College (with sixth form) • Rawmarsh Community School • Clifton Community School • Thrybergh Academy • The Gainsborough Academy	• Aston Hall Junior and Infant School • Aston Lodge Primary • Brinsworth Whitehill Primary • Foljambe Primary • Monkwood Primary • Rawmarsh Ashwood Primary • Rawmarsh Sandhill Primary • Thrybergh Primary

We also run five integrated resources and centres for pupils with special educational needs, disabilities and social, emotional and mental health needs, including the Arran Hill, Brunswick and Cranworth Road centres.

One school on many different sites

Colleagues share skills, expertise and resources across all our schools, so every pupil gets the same high-quality education and experiences wherever they learn.



5. Why Members matter, and why now

Wickersley Partnership Trust is a charitable company with three tiers of governance: Members, the Board of Directors and local governing bodies. The Members sit at the top. They are not the Board and they do not manage the Trust. Their job is to make sure the Board is effective and that the Trust stays true to its charitable objects.

There must be at least three Members, and the DfE's strong preference is for at least five, most of them independent of the Board. Trust employees cannot be Members, and a majority of the Members must not also be Directors.

5	6	1	13
Members the DfE prefers, most independent of the Board	Directors the Members can appoint	Annual General Meeting each year	schools in the Trust

Where we are now

Appointing Directors

Members appoint up to six Directors and can remove any Director.

The Board is now recruiting five new Directors to strengthen its skills, and Members will make those appointments.

Assurance

Members receive the Chair of the Board's annual report, the audited accounts and Trustees' report, the Board's effectiveness review and an external review of governance at least every three years.

The constitution

Only the Members can amend the Articles of Association, by special resolution, and they appoint the external auditors each year.

Renewed governance

In 2026 the Board agreed new strategic priorities, a five-year Action Plan, new committee Terms of Reference and a Directors' Handbook and Code of Conduct.

A Members' Handbook and Code of Conduct is being adopted at the January 2027 AGM.

Independence

Members bring independent judgement and continuity. They act as a sounding board for the Chair of the Board and help identify people with the skills the Board needs.

Eyes on, hands off

Members do not attend Board or committee meetings as of right or give instructions to Directors or staff.

They act together, by resolution, and step in only through their formal powers.

What success looks like

A strong, skilled and diverse Board. Directors appointed on merit. Accounts and governance the Members can trust. A Trust that stays true to its purpose for the long term.

6. About the role

Role	Member of Wickersley Partnership Trust, a charitable company limited by guarantee
What Members do	Appoint and remove Directors; seek assurance that the Board governs well; amend the Articles; receive the accounts and appoint the auditors
Working with	The other Members, the Chair of the Board and the Governance Professional
Appointed by	The existing Members, in line with the Articles of Association
Term	No fixed term. Members may step down by written notice, and each year at the AGM the Members review their own number, independence and skills.
Time commitment	Modest. The Annual General Meeting each January (the next is on Thursday 14 January 2027), occasional general meetings and written resolutions, for example to appoint Directors, plus induction and an annual safeguarding update. A few days a year in total.
Location	Meetings are held at our central office, Swanage Court, Rotherham, or online.
Remuneration	Voluntary and unpaid. Reasonable expenses are reimbursed.

Role purpose

Members are the guardians of the Trust's constitution. As a group, they hold the Board of Directors to account for the effective governance of the Trust, while having minimal involvement in running it. A Member's role is similar to that of a shareholder in a company limited by shares, and some critical decisions sit with the Members, especially if the Trust were not fulfilling its purpose.

Members are not company directors or charity trustees, so the directors' duties in company law do not apply to them as Members. They must nonetheless use their powers in good faith, in the way they believe will best further the Trust's charitable objects, within the Funding Agreement and the Academy Trust Handbook.

The role of the Members

What the Members do together, under the Articles of Association.

- **Appointing and removing Directors.** Appoint up to six Directors (Article 50) and the CEO as a Director (Article 57), and remove a Director where necessary (Article 66). This is the Members' most important power, used to make sure the Board has the skills, independence and diversity it needs.
- **Assurance that the Board is governing well.** Seek assurance through the Chair of the Board's annual report, the audited accounts and Trustees' report, published attendance, the Board's effectiveness review and the external review of governance.
- **The constitution.** Amend the Articles of Association by special resolution, subject to any consent the Secretary of State requires.
- **Accounts and audit.** Receive the audited annual accounts and Trustees' report, and appoint or re-appoint the external auditors.
- **Exceptional powers.** Where the Articles allow, direct the Directors to take, or not take, a specific action. This is a last resort, used only where the Board is failing.
- **Independent perspective.** Bring independent judgement and continuity, act as a sounding board for the Chair of the Board, and keep the Trust's long-term purpose in view.

What we ask of every Member

From our Members' Handbook and Code of Conduct.

- **Eyes on, hands off.** Do not take part in Board decisions or give instructions to Directors, local governors, leaders or staff. Members act collectively, by resolution; an individual Member has no authority to act for the Trust.
- **Preparation and attendance.** Attend every AGM, read papers in advance, and respond to written resolutions within the time given.
- **Conduct.** Uphold the Seven Principles of Public Life, keep confidential matters confidential, and support resolutions once passed.
- **Interests.** Declare business and personal interests on appointment and each year; take no part in decisions where you have a conflict. Members cannot be paid by, or buy from or sell to, the Trust except as the Articles allow.
- **Safeguarding.** Complete safeguarding awareness training at induction, read Part one of Keeping Children Safe in Education each year, and never investigate a concern yourself.
- **Openness.** Help create a culture in which the Board can tell the Members about challenges and risks early, without fear of blame.

Under our Articles (12–12B), there must be at least three Members, employees of the Trust cannot be Members, and a majority of the Members must not also be Directors.

7. Your first year: what success looks like

We will agree these with you during your induction.

By the end of your first year	How we will know
Induction completed within three months: the role of Members, the Articles, the Academy Trust Handbook, conflicts of interest and safeguarding	Induction signed off; Members' Handbook and Code of Conduct signed
Take part in appointing the Directors the Board is now recruiting	Appointments made on merit, against the Board's skills audit
Attend the AGM: receive the accounts and the Chair's annual report, and appoint the auditors	Informed questions asked; resolutions passed
Receive the findings of the Board's effectiveness review and external governance review	Members assured, or clear actions agreed with the Chair
Help the Members review their own number, independence and skills	A plan for any further vacancies
Optional: observe a Board meeting at the invitation of the Chair	A clear understanding of how the Board works

8. What you will gain from the role

Being a Member is a modest time commitment with a significant influence on the quality of governance, and it brings real rewards.

Make a real difference

Help make sure around 7,500 young people across 13 schools benefit from a well-governed, purposeful Trust.

Shape the Board through the Directors you appoint.

Constitutional governance experience

Experience at the highest level of an academy trust's governance, including appointing directors, approving changes to the constitution and receiving the accounts.

Learning and development

A full induction on the role of Members, the Articles and the Academy Trust Handbook, with support from our Governance Professional.

Insight into how the education sector is governed and regulated.

Networks and partnerships

Meet leaders from across the region and beyond through our work with the Learners First Partnership, the Positive Change Alliance and the Foundation for Education Development.

Use your experience

Bring your independent judgement and professional experience to the decisions that shape the Trust's future.

Act as a trusted sounding board for the Chair of the Board.

Flexible and supported

A few meetings a year, some of which can be joined online, with reasonable expenses reimbursed.

We are happy to write to your employer about time off for your governance role.

> Many employers value governance roles as professional development: they build strategic thinking, influence, scrutiny and teamwork, and show a commitment to the community.

9. Person specification

We will assess candidates against the criteria below. E = essential; D = desirable. A = application; I = interview; R = references.

Criteria	E / D	Assessed by
Essential for all Members		
Commitment to the Trust's vision and to improving the life chances of children and young people	E	A, I
Understanding of, or willingness to learn, the role of Members and how it differs from that of Directors	E	I
Independent judgement, integrity and commitment to the Seven Principles of Public Life	E	I, R
Ability to judge whether a board is effective, including its skills, independence and diversity	E	A, I
Senior experience in a relevant field, such as education, governance, law, finance, business, public service or community leadership	E	A, I, R
Ability to work collectively and to respect confidentiality	E	I, R
Commitment to safeguarding and to equality, diversity and inclusion	E	A, I
Availability for the AGM and occasional general meetings, sometimes at short notice	E	A, I
Desirable		
Previous board, trustee or governance experience	D	A
Experience of appointing senior leaders or board members	D	A, I
Knowledge of the education sector, academy trusts or the local community	D	A, I
Experience of company or charity law, or of a constitutional role in another organisation	D	A, I
Interest in sustainability and the Trust's role in its community	D	A, I

> First-time Members are welcome. You do not need to have worked in education: we will give you a full induction and the support of our Governance Professional.

10. How we are governed

Our Directors are both company directors and charity trustees. Governance has three tiers:

Members

Guardians of the Trust's constitution. Members appoint Directors and seek assurance that the Board governs well. **This role sits here.**

Board of Directors

Company directors and charity trustees. Sets the vision, ethos and strategy, holds executive leaders to account, and oversees money, risk and compliance.

Local governing bodies

Each school's local governing body supports and challenges its headteacher, with powers delegated by the Board.

The Board and its committees

The Board of Directors works through five committees. Each has Terms of Reference linked to our strategic priorities and reports to the Board after every meeting. Members do not sit on these committees, but they receive assurance about how well they work.

Committee	What it covers
Audit & Risk	Internal scrutiny, the Trust risk register, external audit, IT and cyber security, data protection and complaints
Finance	Budget and long-term financial planning, reserves, value for money, procurement and DfE financial returns
HR & Staffing	Pay, recruitment and retention, safer recruitment, wellbeing and workforce development
Education Standards	Outcomes, curriculum, SEND and inclusion, attendance, behaviour and safeguarding assurance
Estates & Compliance	Health and safety, statutory premises compliance, Martyn's Law, capital and condition, PFI, energy and carbon, lettings and educational visits

11. Our commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion

We want our Members, like our Board, to reflect the communities we serve. Applications from people from groups under-represented in governance, including women, people from ethnic minority backgrounds, disabled people and younger candidates, are particularly encouraged.

All appointments are made on merit through a fair and transparent process. Under the Equality Act 2010 the Trust may use positive action where candidates are equally suitable.

During the application process we commit to:

- paying for care and childcare while you attend an interview;
- paying your travel costs to interviews held in person;
- making any reasonable adjustments you need, for example arranging a sign language interpreter in advance;
- providing this pack in Word format;
- offering a first-stage interview to disabled applicants who meet the essential criteria for the role.

If there is anything else that would help you take part, please let us know.

12. Additional information

Conflicts of interest

All candidates will be asked to declare any interests, including any connection with Directors, staff, local governors or suppliers of the Trust. Members are related parties of the Trust: they cannot be employed or paid by it, or buy from or sell to it, except as the Articles allow. Members' names and interests are published on our website.

Eligibility and checks

Appointment is subject to an enhanced DBS certificate, a section 128 check, identity checks, and confirmation that you are not disqualified from acting as a charity trustee or company director. Trust employees cannot be Members.

Induction and development

You will complete the Trust induction for Members within your first three months, covering the role of Members, the Articles, the Academy Trust Handbook, conflicts of interest and safeguarding. Our Governance Professional supports every Member.

Our Code of Conduct

Members sign the Members' Handbook and Code of Conduct on appointment and each year at the AGM. It sets out how Members work, including our commitment to the Seven Principles of Public Life.

13. Selection process and how to apply

Applications are assessed against the person specification. Shortlisted candidates will be invited to:

- an informal conversation with the Chair of the Board and the CEO;
- an interview with existing Members and the Governance Professional.

New Members are appointed by the existing Members, in line with the Articles of Association. References are taken up before appointment.

How to apply

Please send the following to our Governance Professional, at boardrecruitment@wickersleypt.org by 4pm on Monday 14th November:

1. a CV setting out your career history, responsibilities and achievements;
2. a covering letter (no more than two sides of A4) explaining why you are interested and how you meet the essential criteria in the person specification, with examples;
3. the names of two referees and how they know you. We will not contact referees without your consent.

Timetable

Stage	Date
Advert opens	Tuesday 24th November 2026
Closing date	Monday 14th December 2026
Shortlisting	TBC
Informal conversations	TBC
Interviews	TBC
Appointment by the Members	January 2027

Informal conversations

For an informal conversation about the role, please contact the Governance team at boardrecruitment@wickersleypt.org, who will arrange a call with the Chair of the Board or the CEO.

Safeguarding

Wickersley Partnership Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, and expects all Members to share this commitment. This role is subject to an enhanced DBS check and our safer recruitment procedures, in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education.