



Independent School Advisory Panel Policy and Purpose

Melrose Education owns and operates independent special education needs and alternative education schools.

Our Purpose – to equip every learner with the foundations, education, qualifications, skills, and opportunities needed for lifelong success.

Our Mission – to provide inspirational and outstanding education in a truly positive, empathetic, and transformational environment.

Our Vision – to create a group of inclusive schools where individuality and achievement is celebrated so that every learner can exceed their potential through equity of care, education, and opportunity.

Our Values – this will be delivered through an uncompromising commitment to quality, integrity, empathy, equality, mutual respect, and trust.

We actively seek opportunities to obtain advice, guidance, and constructive, supportive challenge to aid each school's development and that of Melrose Education.

This ensures that the development of the school is supported, and valuable objective perspective is provided to establish an effective cycle of reporting, robust challenge and accountability.

To ensure delivery of aims and ethos, and to ensure that our core values and performance are underpinned throughout the organisation, the Board of Directors, and senior leadership team within each school, will work with an independent advisory panel which offers advice and challenge, when applicable.

The main function of the advisory panel is not to provide governance, financial advice, legal advice, or SLT performance management, but to advise on the education services the Company and each school provides and to ensure it complies with and meets or exceeds expectations and statutory requirements for such a service.

The advisory panel will endeavour to provide expertise in the following areas:

- Leadership and management
- Safeguarding and welfare
- Education and curriculum
- SEND and therapeutic provision

In addition, the Chair of the SAP will contribute to the strategic evaluation and plans for the organisation.

Suitability

To ensure each school advisory panel is adequate and able to meet the needs of the organisation, panel members are identified as having knowledge and experience in their area of specialism within the educational sector.

When appointing panel members, we seek to reflect the diversity of the school and community in which the panel serves. We know that this diversity promotes inclusive school environments and provides diverse role models for staff and young people.



The primary focus when assembling a schools advisory panel will be acquiring the skills, experience and diversity the panel needs to be effective. We know that panels who bring a diverse range of skills, experiences, qualifications, characteristics and perspectives and who are from different backgrounds will have a positive impact on the organisation.

All members of school advisory panels will receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online) training at induction. This training will equip them with the knowledge to provide challenge to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place in our schools is effective. Their training will be regularly updated.

Panel members will be expected to adhere to the code of conduct which sets out clear expectations for their role and behaviour and, whilst we are a private organisation, it is based on 'The 7 principles of public life', as set out by Lord Nolan (selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership).

Panel members are required to have an enhanced criminal records certificate from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). Further details on DBS checks and regulated activity in schools are within the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 (KCSIE).

Any necessary training required for the panel to undertake their role effectively will be provided at induction and regular reviews of both training needs and audits of the skills and competencies required by panel members will be undertaken to ensure any gaps are addressed. The overall balance of people and skills will also be subject to review to ensure all necessary areas of expertise are covered.

Implementation

Panel members will be provided with a termly summary report that is informed by the Principal's school half termly reviews, and any external audit, or visit reports that have been carried out in term, including Ofsted and ISS. The panel will be asked to evaluate performance in those areas (set out within the school improvement plan), together with providing any feedback on future targets and those set in previous reviews.

Within each academic year, panel members will be invited into the school to examine and review procedures and processes. This will ensure that independent perspective is maintained. Within the academic year, the Board of Directors and senior leadership team of each school, will promote an 'open door policy' where advisory panel members are able to visit the organisation to observe, support and develop in any area.

Information gathered will support the Board of Directors and senior leadership teams of each school to set further aims and targets for subsequent years.

Each term the Chair of the SAP will discuss the termly outcomes with the Schools Director and the CEO.

Role Requirements

All members of schools advisory panels are expected to adhere to the Melrose Education code of conduct.

They should also be mindful of their responsibilities under equality legislation, recognising and encouraging diversity and inclusion. They should understand the impact of effective support, advice, and guidance on the quality of education and on outcomes for all children and young people. In addition, all panel members should be:



- Committed - Devoting the required time and energy to the role and ambitious to achieve best possible outcomes for young people.
- Prepared - to give time, skills and knowledge to developing themselves and others.
- Confident - of an independent mind, able to lead and contribute to courageous conversations, to express their opinion and to play an active role on the panel.
- Curious - possessing an enquiring mind and an analytical approach and understanding the value of meaningful questioning.
- Challenging - providing appropriate challenge to the status quo, not taking information or data at face value and always driving for improvement.
- Collaborative - prepared to listen to and work in partnership with others and understanding the importance of building strong working relationships with other panel members and with executive leaders and staff, and the local community.
- Critical - understanding the value of critical friendship which enables both challenge and support, and self-reflective, pursuing learning and development opportunities to improve their own and the panel's effectiveness.
- Creative - able to challenge conventional wisdom and be open-minded about new approaches to problem-solving; recognising the value of innovation and creative thinking to organisational development and success.

Code of Conduct for SAP Members

The reputation of Melrose Education (and the special educational needs and alternative education schools which it owns and operates) and the upholding of its core values, is vital in enabling delivery of its mission and vision.

All persons involved in the work of Melrose Education and its schools, including employees, Directors, paid consultants, volunteers, members of School Advisory Panels, and external advisors have a duty to uphold exacting standards of professional conduct that maintain and enhance the reputation of Melrose Education.

By committing to the code of conduct in this way, stakeholders benefit one another by promoting Melrose Education as an organisation of good standing, enabling it to maximise the positive impact it has on its stakeholders.

It is essential, therefore, that the following principles and values which underpin the code of conduct are upheld.

This code of conduct has been developed by using the seven principles of public life developed by the Committee of Standards in Public Life (Nolan Principles) albeit we are a private organisation.

All persons involved in the work of Melrose Education and its schools, whether paid or unpaid, will:

- Support Melrose Education's aims and ethos, and will always act in the best interests of the Company and/or its schools.
- act with honesty and integrity in their work for Melrose Education and/or its schools.
- commit to being open and accountable to all stakeholders.
- enhance Melrose Education's and/or its schools' reputation.
- ensure personal, professional, and political interests do not conflict with their duty to Melrose Education and/or its school, unless these have been declared and authorised.
- uphold the values and policies of Melrose Education and/or its schools.
- maintain good relationships with all stakeholders.



- conduct themselves in a professional manner when representing Melrose Education and/or its schools.
- not make any detrimental public statements about Melrose Education and/or its schools, or its stakeholders.
- act with probity, due prudence and should take and consider professional advice on anything in which one does not have expertise themselves.
- act as ambassadors for and promote the interests of Melrose Education and/or its schools.
- seek advice from the Board of Directors and senior management team of the school if approached by the media.
- not make any comments regarding Melrose Education and/or its schools, and its activities in the media or on social media.
- act fairly and in accordance with good employment and equal opportunities principles.
- except where legally authorised, volunteers must not gain financial or other material benefit for themselves, their families, or their friends from their work with Melrose Education and/or its schools.
- there are clear written policies on the claiming of expenses by volunteers.
- volunteers must not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individual organisations that might influence them in the performance of their work with Melrose Education and/or its schools.
- volunteers should conduct themselves in a manner which does not damage or undermine the reputation of Melrose Education and/or its schools, or its staff (individually or collectively), and should not take part in any activity which conflicts with the values of the Company or its schools, or which might damage the reputation of the organisation.
- confidential information or material provided to or discussed, must remain strictly confidential and must not be discussed or circulated outside the Board of Directors and/or senior leadership team of the school.