

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs): Parent and Community Advisory Forums (PCAFs)

Contents

What are the benefits of being a member of the PCAF?.....	2
Do I need qualifications to be a member of the PCAF?.....	2
I work full-time. Will I still have time to be a member of the PCAF?	2
What makes a good member of the PCAF?.....	2
What can I offer?	3
How much time does it take?	3
How do I apply to be a member of the PCAF?.....	3
Does the PCAF have any decision-making powers?	3
How do I know that my views are listened to?	4
Questions	4

What are the benefits of being a member of the PCAF?

- The knowledge that you have played a part in improving children's education
- The opportunity to contribute your knowledge and skills to a school
- The privilege of giving something back to society

Do I need qualifications to be a member of the PCAF?

No; however, as part of your commitment to the role we require PCAF representatives to complete a small number of short online training courses which will ensure you have the knowledge required around safeguarding and cyber security – information will be provided upon appointment and you will be given a reasonable amount of time and support to complete these. Schools need people with a variety of life experiences. The following are important:

- A commitment to attend meetings of the Parent and Community Advisory Forum (one meeting per term, approximately an hour each)
- A desire to raise the standards of education within the school
- A willingness to share skills and expertise within the context of the Parent and Community Advisory Forum
- Additional training will be given for those attending Panel meetings for the Trust (e.g. pupil discipline/complaints/staff absence) - this is optional

I work full-time. Will I still have time to be a member of the PCAF?

Parent and Community Advisory Forum meetings take place at a time to suit the majority of members and we may consider rotating timings to capture as many members as possible.

You may wish to speak to your employer to ask if they would be willing to give you time off to attend the Forum, as many employers are supportive of governance roles in this regard.

What makes a good member of the PCAF?

- You want to make sure the school is an outstanding centre of education
- You care about improving children's education
- You have the confidence to speak up in meetings in a positive and constructive manner
- You are willing to listen to the views of others

What can I offer?

Enthusiasm and commitment. As a member of the school's community your local or specialist knowledge will be valuable – you will have a feel for what is important to people in the area (or on a given topic) and offer your opinion and/or expertise.

Parent and Community Advisory Forums:

- Increase parent and community engagement between the School and Directors
- Consider parent and community engagement within the school
- Report through the Headteacher to the Directors highlighting issues and successes with any recommendations
- Can potentially represent the Directors on panels (e.g. pupil discipline/complaints/staff absence) subject to training
- Enables parents and community members to contribute to school improvement
- Provide advice to Directors
- Get to know the school
- Meet at least once a term

How much time does it take?

The amount of time that members of the Parent and Community Advisory Forum can give to the role will vary but if you are serious about helping the school then you do need to:

- Attend meetings, ideally ensuring you let us know in advance if you are unable to attend an individual meeting.
- Participate – You should find time to prepare for the meetings and contribute as much as you are able to offer. Prior to each meeting, we will share a brief summary of information from the latest parent survey around an identified priority; the group will then discuss the findings in the next meeting.

How do I apply to be a member of the PCAF?

The school will communicate to parents confirming this information e.g. through the school newsletter.

For non-parent (community) vacancies, we will also seek to approach people who live/work/volunteer in our local community. We welcome expressions of interest and any questions – please email governanceprofessional@manormat.com

Does the PCAF have any decision-making powers?

No. In line with the Manor MAT Scheme of Delegation and Committee Structure, the PCAF is a discussion forum that considers parental feedback to surveys and can make recommendations. Those recommendations are subject to review by the termly MAT Heads Briefing and Directors' meetings.

Should you choose to volunteer on a specific panel (e.g. complaints), that particular panel is likely to have specific decision-making powers which will be made clear via training.

How do I know that my views are listened to?

After each PCAF meeting, a summary of discussions is produced and circulated via the Headteacher. Once the summaries have been considered by the termly MAT Heads' Briefing and Directors, a newsletter will be circulated confirming the agreed actions taken (or to be taken) as a result of the recommendations made during the meeting. This will include a "You said, we did" report, enabling you to see how the work of the PCAF has directly impacted on the work of the school.

PCAF meetings will be welcoming, informal and inclusive. All representatives and attendees will be encouraged to participate, and we embrace feedback.

Questions

If you have any questions, please email governanceprofessional@manormat.com

