

# SOLIHULL SCHOOLS FORUM

## FORMAL CONSTITUTION

### Role

The constitution of the Solihull Schools Forum and its statutory functions are contained in the Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012 and set out in Schools Forums: Powers and Responsibilities 2014-15 and Schools Forum Structure, as attached.

In general terms, the Forum makes recommendations to Solihull MBC on financial matters affecting schools and is empowered to make local decisions on specified matters.

### Composition

1. Forum shall comprise 34 members. The split between maintained schools and academies is based on pupil numbers and is subject to change as more schools convert to academies. At September 2022 membership is as follows:

Maintained School Members:	4 Head Teachers of Primary Schools 4 Governors of Primary Schools 1 Representative of Maintained Special Schools 1 Representative of Pupil Referral Units
Academy Members:	2 Head Teacher or HT Representatives of Primary Academies 2 Governors of Primary Academies 5 Head Teacher or HT Representatives of Secondary Academies 5 Governors of Secondary Academies 1 Representative of Specialist Academy Provision
Non-School Members:	3 Elected Members of the Council 2 Representatives of Trade Unions 2 Representatives of Non-school 16+ Education Providers 2 Representatives of the Early Years Private, Voluntary and Independent Providers

2. The following persons may speak at meetings of the Forum, although they are not members of the Forum:

- (a) the Director of Children's Services & Skills or their representative
- (b) the Chief Finance Officer or their representative
- (c) any Elected Member of the Authority who has primary responsibility for Children's Services or education in the Authority
- (d) any Elected Member of the Authority who has primary responsibility for the resources of the Authority
- (e) any person who is invited by Forum to attend to provide financial or technical advice to Forum
- (f) an observer appointed by the Secretary of State; and
- (g) any person presenting a paper or other item to Forum that is on the meeting's agenda, but that person's right to speak shall be limited to matters related to the item that the person is presenting.

3. The Forum shall invite Observers as follows:

The Church of England Diocese of Birmingham  
The Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Birmingham  
Representative of the Education Funding Agency

4. The structure of the Forum comprises:

- (a) Schools Forum
- (b) Executive Group
- (c) Finance Work Group
- (d) Capital Work Group
- (e) Task and Finish Groups when required
- (f) Forum maintains working links with the Solihull Schools Strategic Accountability Board and the Education SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) Group

5. The Executive Group is comprised of Forum members as set out below. Substitutes are permitted, should a principal member of the Executive be unavailable:

Forum Chairperson  
Forum Vice-Chairperson  
Work Group Chairpersons  
Solihull Schools Strategic Accountability Board Chairperson  
1 x Primary School Member  
1 x Secondary Academy Member  
1 x Primary Academy Member  
1 x Special School Member

In attendance:

Task and Finish Group Chairpersons by prior agreement  
Local Authority Officers

### **Appointment and Election of Members**

6. Primary maintained head teacher members will be sought through the Solihull Schools Strategic Accountability Board. Maintained school governors will be sought through direct invitation to nominate themselves. For governors, this will be done by email through school clerks. The LA (Local Authority) will facilitate an election if required and appoint member(s) if there is a tie or the election does not take place by a date set by the LA. It is desirable, but not essential, that at least one governor representative shall be a parent governor.
7. Academies' members must be elected to Schools Forum by the proprietors of the academies.
8. Councillors shall be appointed by the Local Authority.
9. Trade Union representatives shall be appointed by the teaching and non-teaching Trade Unions.

10. Representatives of non-school 16+ education providers shall be elected by the providers.
11. Representatives of the Early Years PVI providers shall be elected by the providers.
12. The appointment of all members will end when they cease to hold the office that provided their eligibility for membership. Individuals automatically cease to be members of the Forum if they fail to attend two consecutive meetings with or without apologies being given.
13. The Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson of Forum are to be Schools' Members or Academies' Members and shall be elected annually on a simple majority basis by all members.
14. Arrangements will be made for the induction of new Forum Members.
15. All Forum and Work Group members will be asked to sign the Solihull Schools Forum Code of Conduct.

## **Meetings**

16. Forum meetings are public meetings and must be held at least 4 times each year. Forum is only quorate if 40% of members are present at the meeting (excluding observers and any vacancies). Voting restrictions apply (see items 26-31).
17. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, the DfE (Department for Education) has directed Schools Forums to meet virtually, approving a variety of methods. By September 2022, the DfE has not stipulated a date at which this arrangement should end.
18. There are no formal substitute members, however Forum expects that members will make their own substitute arrangements on rare occasions when they are unable to attend.
19. Specified elected members and principal LA officers who are not members of Forum and Observers appointed by the Secretary of State may attend and speak at meetings of Forum. Forum may invite other persons to provide financial or technical advice, as necessary.
20. Executive Group shall meet on a schedule to be determined by the Chairperson. Members, observers, and others may attend Executive Group meetings by invitation of the Chairperson.
21. Should an urgent business need arise, and the LA requires a formal view or decision from Forum before the next scheduled meeting, the following procedure will apply:
  - a. A special meeting of Forum will be called but if this is not possible then;
  - b. Seek views of Forum by circulating an appropriate report and seeking views. Alternatively,
  - c. a special meeting of Forum Executive will be called but if this is not possible then;
  - d. the Chairperson is authorised to express a view to the LA on behalf of Forum having first sought the views of other members where possible.
22. Forum may appoint groups of members as it deems necessary for the consideration of specific matters and shall determine the terms of reference for such groups as appropriate.
23. Forum Work Groups may also appoint sub-groups and determine the terms of reference for such groups. Forum is to be notified of the terms of reference for all such groups.
24. Forum may invite Forum members and other persons to contribute to its work.

25. Schools Forum is a public body. Its meetings are public meetings and much of its business will not be of a confidential nature. The presumption underpinning members' work will be one of openness. However, Forum and other formally constituted groups of members may decide that some matters should be dealt with on a confidential basis and treat them accordingly. Confidential matters will normally be placed at the end of meetings and members of the press and public will be invited to leave the room during the discussion of those items. Papers containing confidential matters will not be made public and Forum members will be expected to be diligent in the appropriate care of related materials and in any reporting of such matters. Minutes of Forum meetings and all papers considered by Forum are to be published on the Solihull Schools Forum website.

### **Voting**

26. Only maintained primary representatives can vote on primary school de-delegation (not academies or non-school members).
27. Only maintained schools' representatives (primary/secondary/special) can vote on the Scheme for Financing Schools (not academies or non-school members)
28. Maintained schools' representatives, academies' representatives and PVI representatives can vote on consultation on the funding formula (but not other non-school members).
29. All members can vote on any other Schools Forum business.
30. When matters are put to a vote at Forum meetings, the result shall be determined on a simple majority, based on the votes of those present and eligible to vote. The numbers of votes cast for and against motions are to be recorded. All motions require a proposer and a seconder.

### **Consultation on Contracts**

31. Forum must inform the governing bodies of schools maintained by the LA of any consultation carried out by the LA with Forum relating to contracts paid from the schools' budget and any consultations on other financial issues as set out in regulations.

### **Forum Administrators**

32. Administrators will be appointed by the local authority to support the work of the Forum. Minutes are to be taken of meetings of the Forum, Executive, Work Groups and Task and Finish groups. Following approval by the relevant group chairperson, minutes will be circulated to the group members and formally approved at their next meeting. Schools Forum agenda and papers will be made available on the Solihull Schools Forum website 7 days prior to the meeting, with minutes published following the meeting. Confidential minutes will not be circulated or published.
33. Administrators will record the names of those present at any meeting of Forum and its Work Groups, all apologies, and all absences.

34. Notices of appointments, nominations, substitutes, resignations, and similar membership information relating to membership of Forum must be given to the Administrators in writing.
35. Provision of administrative support to other groups, committees and agencies will require prior approval of Forum.

### **Members' Interests**

36. If members have a pecuniary or other interest in a matter to be discussed by Forum, then this must be declared at the beginning of each meeting and the member should withdraw from the meeting for the duration of that item. If members are uncertain if they are eligible to discuss an item, they should raise the matter and withdraw on the advice of the other members present, as necessary.

### **Members' Expenses**

37. The LA will reimburse expenses of members in connection with attendance at Forum meetings and meetings of its associated groups, as set out in the Solihull Schools Forum Expenses Scheme. Expenses will be charged to the Forum budget. Administrators will manage the expenses process as approved by Forum. Expenses will not be paid for meetings held virtually.

**This document to be read in conjunction with the ESFA's documents:**

Schools Forum powers and responsibilities (March 2020)  
Schools Forum's Structure (September 2018)  
Schools Forum Operational and good practice guide March 2021