



Directors as Accountable Leaders in The Education Fellowship

Being part of The Education Fellowship means belonging to a unique organisation in education. We all seek to fulfil its vision and purpose - which are hugely ambitious. For Directors of The Education Fellowship there is no escaping the enormity of this challenge as they face it every day.

Executive board directors' role on the Fellowship Council

It is our role, as an executive board, to consult with the Fellowship Council on major decisions which will impact on our co-owners.

Every member of staff in the Fellowship has a shared responsibility to work together to achieve the very best for our children and young people, for ourselves and for each other - as well as the next generation of co-owners. This is what we all sign up to as co-owners in a democratic organisation.

Our staff, pupils and students have the right to question, challenge and influence in the best interests of the Fellowship. They have a responsibility to do so. Their questions should drive, not inhibit, us. They should be enabling, not deflecting.

Most questions seek to find out more about the Fellowship, and to understand what difference it can make to our academies and all who learn and work in them. Telling the Council representatives what we have already done is fine, but keep that brief – and as a preface of what is to come.

What this means in practice

Each director should maximise the value the Fellowship Council brings to The Education Fellowship. On school visits please give support and opportunity to Council members to contribute ideas and suggestions.

When you communicate your decisions you should reflect the input made by the Council, not in order to delegate responsibility – that sits firmly with you – but to acknowledge that this is a different way of working and learning.

The executive board, as accountable leaders, must listen, think and take on board opinions from those who have a right to express them on matters affecting the Fellowship. But decisions, and the responsibility for making them, still sits with the executive directors - and head teachers.

Holding leaders to account

The Fellowship Council provides a clear opportunity for representatives to address accountable leaders on issues affecting their school, pupils/students or staff. They have the right to question, probe and enter into follow up discussions.

What will success look like?

- Staff, pupils and students will have a better understanding of The Education Fellowship so their participation will be collaborative rather than conflicting or confrontational.
- Through working together representatives will recognise that individual/personal needs should be dealt with separately through other routes. This helps them to focus on what is important to the Fellowship as a whole, and to learning and working.
- It is The Education Fellowship's aim that every member of staff, pupil and student will have the confidence to express their honest views without worrying about a negative reaction. An accountable, strong leader will never be personally defensive when questioned - they will see every question as an opportunity.
- Staff, pupils and students will be confident that speaking up can change things - their voices will be heard!
- All members of the Fellowship Council take responsibility, and demonstrate enthusiasm, for the way the Fellowship is run and the results it achieves.
- Co-owners should be positive about change because they will be consulted about the change process.
- A strong Fellowship Council will strengthen The Education Fellowship and the happiness of those who learn and work in our schools and offices. Strong leaders will recognise this and wholeheartedly embrace democratic engagement throughout the Fellowship.