



## [Stone Soup Academy](#)

### What we are looking for in a Trustee

Essentially we are looking for individuals who care as much as we do about making a difference to the young people of Nottingham to become part of our Stone Soup family. We are looking for trailblazers who will support our innovative and creative Principal to push our academy forward through the impact that they will have. Trustees who can open doors for the academy and get the message out there that education can be different, that it can be exciting and that it can change the lives of both our young people and their families for the better.

### Stone Soup Academy Trustee Job Description

**Academy trustees are volunteers. The Charity Commission defines trustees as the people responsible for governing a charity and directing how it is managed and run.**

The purpose of the board of trustees is to provide:

- > Strategic leadership of the academy trust
- Your role is to help set and embed your trust's vision and strategy, and use these to monitor how the trust and its schools are progressing towards your strategic goals
- > Accountability and assurance, meaning the board has robust oversight of the operations and performance of the trust, including education, pupil welfare and finance
- You'll monitor these areas and hold trust leaders to account for performance and compliance in them
- > Engagement
- This means your board has strategic oversight of relationships with the trust's stakeholders: parents, pupils, staff, local communities
- You'll make sure your schools and your trust are communicating with and involving these groups, so that decision-making is supported by meaningful engagement

### Responsibilities

- > Develop the trust's vision and strategy
- > Establish a culture of high educational standards, which promotes staff and pupil wellbeing
- > Set the trust's strategic aims and objectives
- > Make sure all pupils have access to a broad and balanced curriculum
- > Monitor provision for pupils with SEND
- > Monitor educational performance of the trust's academies, using a range of data sources
- > Ensure stakeholders (parents, pupils, staff and the local community) are informed and consulted as appropriate
- > Approve the budget for the academy trust and, where relevant, for academies within the trust
- > Monitor and evaluate the trust's financial performance
- > Approve and review trust policies, and hold staff to account for their implementation

- > Ensure the trust is compliant with legal requirements, including that all statutory policies and documents are in place
- > Make sure the trust complies with laws that apply to charities and companies, and with its funding agreement >

Carry out the appointment and performance management of the principal/chief executive

- > Be a source of challenge and support to the principal/chief executive
- > Monitor and evaluate the trust's staffing structure(s)
- > Monitor health and safety in the academy/across the trust
- > In a multi-academy trust, work with those involved in local academy governance, supporting and holding them to account

## Skills and experience

Essential:

- > Critical listening and ability to ask effective questions
- > Strategic thinking
- > Excellent communication
- > Problem-solving and analysis

Desirable:

- > Understanding of data
- > Finance and/or accounting knowledge
- > HR experience
- > Knowledge of education
- > Leadership and management skills
- > Risk management skills
- > Legal expertise, particularly knowledge of charity law
- > Marketing and communications skills

If you're using this role description as part of your recruitment, adapt the 'Desirable' list above to focus on the skills your board needs.

## Benefits to you

New skills you'll gain:

- > Strategic planning
- > Experience on a board
- > Holding senior leaders to account and ability to provide challenge
- > Finance, and maintaining oversight of potentially multi-million pound budgets
- > Analysing data
- > Human resources and performance management
- > Project management
- > Marketing
- > Communication and teamwork
- > Decision making
- > Problem solving

## Time commitment

The time commitment for the trustee role will vary. However, all trustees must attend at least 3 meetings of the full board per year. The term of office is 4 years.

Usually trustees sit on a committee focused on an area they have knowledge of, or are particularly interested in – for example, the

finance committee. Committees generally meet up to 3 times a year.

Preparation for meetings includes reading papers and preparing questions for senior leaders.

You will also be expected to undertake any training required to enable you to discharge your role effectively. Trustees are also expected to visit the academy at least 3 times per year.

## Additional information

Academies are both charities and companies limited by guarantee. Academy trustees are therefore both charity trustees and company directors, and must comply with company and charity law.

If you have any questions about this, or would like to know more about becoming an academy trustee, you can get in touch with the chair of trustees: Tina Byrom to arrange an informal chat.

Email: [Tbyrom@stonesoupacademy.org.uk](mailto:Tbyrom@stonesoupacademy.org.uk)

## A bit about us...

Located in the heart of inner-city Nottingham, Stone Soup Academy stands as an outstanding alternative provision. With nearly 100 students in our care, each of them has faced exclusion from mainstream education for a diverse array of reasons. Our students arrive at our doors with their confidence bruised, feeling rejected, lacking self-esteem, and harbouring mistrust for the adults there to help them. Our mission is clear. At Stone Soup, we are resolute in our commitment to rewriting this negative narrative, serving as a beacon of support to help our learners rediscover their self-belief and become part of our family.

## Our Purpose...

Our purpose extends beyond the realm of education. We firmly believe that the support we offer our students not only equips them with qualifications (97% achieved 7+ qualifications including GCSE English and Maths) but also imparts crucial life skills and the self-belief necessary to get back on track. Our ultimate aim is to support our students to create unimagined futures.

All of our learners, when they start with us, are allocated a Personal Coach. The personal coach starts their day by calling each of their key students to ensure they are up and on their way to school. These morning calls allow us to not only ensure attendance, but allow us to be aware of and deal with any issues before the students walk through the door. Personal Coaches track the attendance, punctuality and behaviour scores of all their key students, celebrate their students' achievements, offering praise where deserved, and swiftly implementing interventions when necessary. These interventions span from personal discussions to parent meetings, with a continuous cycle of goal setting in between to closely track and support each student's development.

Our Personal Coaches work in close collaboration with our teaching staff to gain insights into their students' classroom engagement, identifying strengths, areas that require assistance, and the most effective strategies to provide support. Since Personal Coaches often share the strongest connections with their students, they serve as a valuable conduit for information sharing among all staff members, ensuring a cohesive approach to student engagement and facilitating their learning journey. As a result, our entire team works together to create a bespoke learning environment tailored to each student's unique needs.

Our Personal Coaches do not just build strong relationships with their students but also extend their outreach to parents, caregivers, and the referring schools. We maintain weekly communication with students' homes, providing updates that allow us to collaborate in the best interests of the child. We recognize the vital role parents play in ensuring a positive educational experience, and we offer weekly 'Stone Soup hugs,' a self-care package delivered by mail to any parents who may benefit from a little 'pick-me-up'.

We understand that our learners may not have always had the best educational experiences, and often, the same holds true for their parents and caregivers. This is one of the driving reasons behind our 'Celebration Evening,' our unique take on the traditional parents evening. As our Personal Coaches maintain weekly contact with students' homes, they are always up to date with knowledge about their child. During Celebration Evenings, we provide parents and caregivers with an evening dedicated to celebrating the positive aspects of their child's school experience. After perhaps having had previous negative encounters, it is a heartwarming sight to witness parents leaving with their arms around their smiling child and a tear of joy in their eyes.

Every morning at 9 am, our students are warmly welcomed at the school's entrance by our Senior Leadership Team, with smiles and handshakes to ensure a positive start to their day. From the moment they step through the black door, the support they receive within the school building is truly exceptional.

### Rewards...

We employ a behaviour points system known as 'Class Dojo,' but at Stone Soup, we've added an exciting twist: points translate to prizes. Students who arrive on time, accumulate positive points in a day which can equate to £5 in their 'Stone Soup bank'. If they leave at the end of Year 11 with 90% attendance, 90% punctuality, an average behaviour score above 7, and 95% positive Class Dojo points, they will leave with the sum they've accumulated during their time with us. This serves as a valuable lesson, setting them up for success in the world of work and emphasising the importance of attendance, punctuality, and proper conduct. Many students use these funds to support their next steps in employment or college, and we've even witnessed some saving it for driving lessons.

### Cultural Capital...

At Stone Soup, we are dedicated to providing our students with a range of enriching opportunities that extend beyond their regular lessons. One day per week, our students have the opportunity to attend a college course, affording them valuable exposure to a college environment. Additionally, we facilitate work experiences and organise trips to local universities, helping them envision the opportunities that lie beyond our academy's walls. We have one student who not long ago graduated with a first class honours degree and have students who are currently studying at University now. We firmly believe that this success is a testament to the support and guidance they received at Stone Soup, which broadened their horizons and reminded them that they can achieve anything with determination.

At Stone Soup, we embrace a culture of offering students unique and memorable experiences that they might not otherwise encounter. We've organised residential programs, theatre trips to London, theme park visits, reward meals out, and, more recently, this year we had the pleasure of sponsoring an all-expenses-paid trip to Barcelona for 8 of our students, in 2023 it was New York!

While these grand experiences are undeniably significant, we also recognise the importance of the little things. When students are concerned about walking through town, we ensure their safety by accompanying them to the bus stop or arranging taxis for those with safeguarding needs. We conduct home visits for students who are facing attendance challenges, send birthday cards to every student on their special day, and foster positive relationships through events such as staff versus students' football matches. We post home Stone Soup handshakes, a little box of treats to students who have stood out during the week and many receive well done postcards home. We conclude each week by recording video messages from staff, acknowledging and thanking those students who have really stood out that week. These videos are edited and shared with everyone during our Monday form gatherings and it is great to see how much they appreciate this every week.

As a school, we celebrate cultural diversity and meaningful occasions such as the 4th of July and Black History Month. We also organise themed days, like our recent French Day, where students have the opportunity to savour cuisines from around the world. Each year, we host an Enterprise Week, providing students with an immersive experience in the business world and allowing them to explore potential career paths. Even during the challenging times of the COVID-19 pandemic, when the school had to close its doors, we recognised that our students missed us as much as we missed them. So, we conducted home visits and maintained a meaningful connection with them from a distance, even singing happy birthday to them from outside their homes, ensuring they felt the much-needed support and camaraderie that they all missed so much.

### Support & Care...

At Stone Soup, we understand that some of our students require extraordinary support and care. In certain instances, our commitment goes above and beyond the ordinary. One poignant example involves a student who was entangled in a court process, with a mother struggling to support him. A member of our staff attended every solicitor and court meeting, serving as his appropriate adult, and stood by him when he received a sentence of six months in a young offenders' prison. This same staff member was there on the morning of his release, taking him out for a hot chocolate before bringing him back to school. This student not only completed his education with us but also left with a range of qualifications and secured a place at college. Sadly there are many occasions outside of a normal school day that we have been there supporting our young people and their families during times of grief, social challenges and mental health crisis.

There have been occasions when a student's situation has required exceptional intervention, such as one of our staff members collecting a student from the police cells when their family was unable to do so. In another instance, a student struggled to come to school due to self-consciousness about their hair, as their mother couldn't afford a haircut. We worked closely with the student and their mother to arrange and provide a haircut, ensuring they felt comfortable and ready to attend school.

As our students near the end of Year 11, they engage in meaningful discussions with our Head of Careers to determine their next steps and apply for opportunities in the workplace, college, or apprenticeships. This support extends beyond the office, as our staff often accompany students to college interviews, offering support and reassurance throughout the process. This year 97% of our students went onto education, work and training.

### Suits day...

At the end of year 11, to celebrate the students' achievements and help prepare them for the future, we host a 'Suits Day' On this day we take our students shopping to purchase suits/formal wear, which they get to keep for any interviews or events they may attend.

To commemorate their journey with us, we hire out a local venue. Students and their parents watch a heartfelt video montage on the big screen, featuring photos and videos from the students' time with us and emotional tributes from all the staff who have had the privilege of working with them. We give each student a silver salver for completing their Stone Soup journey with us. Awards are exchanged, celebrating both the students' accomplishments and their contributions to our school community. To cherish their time at Stone Soup, we create a personalised yearbook for each student, with a page dedicated to each student where staff have left personal messages for each and every one.

At Stone Soup, the working day is not confined to the traditional 9-to-3 schedule, Monday to Friday. We

keep in contact over the holidays and call our most vulnerable students to check that they are okay. Safeguarding is always our priority.

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Our commitment to our students transcends time and place. We take pride in cheering on our students, even in our personal time. When our students achieve awards, partake in performances or enter competitions, our staff step up to support them during evenings and weekends. Most recently, two of our staff members travelled to London on a weekend to support a student who had earned a place in the top ten young songwriters in the UK competition.

### **Pastoral Sixth Form...**

Our dedication to our students doesn't end when they leave us. We maintain an open door policy for every student who has ever attended Stone Soup. Our pastoral sixth form invites any former student, regardless of when they attended, to return for ongoing support. Whether they need assistance with interview techniques, job applications, UCAS applications, CVs, or simply someone to talk to, our staff are here to lend an ear to listen or a shoulder to lean on.

Annually, we provide our alumni students with the opportunity to apply for a £500 grant to assist them in their journey towards work or college. We have supported students with various resources, including bus passes to help them get to college or work, work uniforms, tools, and CSCS cards. The support we offer begins the moment a student walks through our door and continues long after they've left our academy. We never turn away a former student who needs our help.

At Stone Soup, we firmly believe that the unwavering support we extend to our students plays a pivotal role in realising our vision of 'creating unimagined futures' for each and every one of our Stone Soup family.

