



EBOR ACADEMY TRUST

Policy Number

26

Risk Management Policy

Approved By: Ebor Academy Trust Board of Trustees

Approval Date: January 2026

Review Period: 3 Years

Review Date: January 2029

Author: Richard Swain

Date Created/updated: January 2026

Version Number: V3

Contents:

Section Number	Title	Page
1	Purpose of this policy	2
2	Underlying approach to Risk Management	2
3	Role of the Board of Trustees	2
4	Role of the Audit & Risk Committee	3
5	Role of Scrutiny Committees	3
6	Role of the Executive Team	3
7	Risk Management as part of the system of internal control	4
8	Business planning and budgeting	4
9	Risk framework	4
10	Risk Appetite	5
11	Internal Audit	5
12	External Audit	5
13	Annual Review of effectiveness	5

Appendix 2 – Risk Control Strategy

Appendix 3 – Risk Scoring Guide

1. Purpose of this policy

This Risk Management Policy (the policy) forms part of the Trust's internal control and corporate governance arrangements. The policy defines the trust's approach to risk management, sets out the framework the trust has adopted for risk management and includes the trust's risk appetite, the processes for identifying, categorising, measuring risks and its strategy for treating risks. The policy documents the roles and responsibilities, monitoring, reporting and review procedures as well as training arrangements to ensure effective risk management is embedded throughout the trust.

2. Underlying approach to Risk Management

The trust board is accountable for risk management and for maintaining a sound system of internal control that supports the achievement of trust policies, aims and objectives, whilst safeguarding public funds. The Board is advised in this role by the Audit and Risk Scrutiny Committee and both are informed by the Executive Team and Scrutiny Committees. The following key principles outline the Trust's approach to risk management and internal control:

- a) the Board of Trustees has responsibility for overseeing risk management within the Trust as a whole and agreeing the level of risk appetite.
- b) an open and receptive approach to solving risk problems is adopted by the Board of Trustees.
- c) day to day identification and management of risk is owned by every employee.
- d) trusts make conservative and prudent recognition and disclosure of the financial and non-financial implications of risks. Papers for Trustee approval are required to include a section on any key risks in relation to the proposal.
- e) risk register owners are responsible for encouraging good risk management practice within their areas of responsibility, monitoring and managing risk proactively.
- f) key risk indicators will be identified and closely monitored each half term by the Central Support Team and reported in the Audit & Risk Committee.
- g) The management of risks to the trust is undertaken in accordance with the Funding Agreement, the Academy Trust Handbook and Academy Trust Financial Management Good Practice guide.

3. Role of the Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees has a fundamental role to play in the management of risk. Its role is to:

- a) Set the tone and influence the culture of risk management within the Trust. This includes:
 - I. determining and reviewing strategic risks
 - II. determining the risk appetite of the trust, see appendix 1;
 - III. determining what types of risk are acceptable and which are not
 - IV. determining the risk capacity of the trust.
 - setting the standards and expectations of staff with respect to conduct and probity

- V. approving major decisions affecting the Trust's risk profile or exposure
- VI. developing a risk control strategy, see appendix 2

b) Monitor risks:

- I. Addressing risks identified as significant (based on the post-mitigation score)
- II. Satisfying itself that the less significant risks are being actively managed, with the appropriate controls in place and working effectively
- III. Annually reviewing the Trust's approach to risk management and approve changes or improvements to key elements of its processes and procedures
- IV. Delegating the Audit & Risk Committee to review the Trust's Risk Register

4. Role of the Audit & Risk Committee:

The key role of the Audit & Risk Committee is to act on behalf of the Board of Trustees to:

- b) Review and evaluate the key risks identified by the Executive team on a termly basis:
- c) Review the Trust's Risk Register and satisfy itself that risks are identified and being managed and mitigated.
- d) Ensuring the risks at constituent academies are being assessed and addressed appropriately. (Gov.uk Academy Trust Risk Management).
- e) Report annually to the Board of Trustees on the Trust's systems of internal control and Risk Register.
- f) Monitor the work of internal and external audit. Considering the advice from the Auditors and determining the internal scrutiny programme after reviewing the Risk Register.
- g) Report to the Board of Trustees

The committee is well-placed to provide advice to the Board of Trustees on the effectiveness of the internal control system, including the Trust's system for the management of risk.

5. Role of Scrutiny Committees

The scrutiny Committees will review risk extracts for their area of control and ensure all appropriate risks are being identified, monitored and managed appropriately.

6. Role of the Executive team is to:

- a) Develop and implement policies on risk management and internal control
- b) Review the Trust's Risk Register on a 1/2 termly basis
- c) Monitor risk trends
- d) Identify and evaluate the significant risks faced by the Trust for consideration by the Audit Committee.

- e) Provide adequate information in a timely manner
- f) Undertake an annual review of effectiveness of the system of internal control and provide a report to the Audit Committee and from that committee to the Board of Trustees.
- g) Work to embed risk management and risk-based internal control in all aspects of Trust management
- h) Monitor risks at constituent academies

7. Risk Management as part of the system of internal control

The trust risk tolerance and capacity will help to inform the development of a risk control strategy. Selecting the most appropriate risk treatment option(s) will involve balancing the potential benefits from the achievement of objectives against the costs, efforts, or disadvantages of proposed actions.

The risk control strategy will facilitate an effective and efficient operation, enabling the Trust to respond to a variety of educational, operational, financial, and business risks. These elements include:

- a) A series of policies that underpin the internal control process which are set by the Executive and implemented and communicated to staff.
- b) Written procedures support the policies where appropriate.
- c) Half termly reporting to monitor key risks and their controls. Decisions to rectify problems are made at regular meetings of the Executive and the Audit & Risk Committee.

8. Business planning and budgeting

The business planning and budgeting process is used to set objectives, agree action plans, and allocate resources. Progress towards meeting business plan objectives is monitored regularly. Financial risk is monitored regularly and considered with every financial decision.

9. Risk framework

This framework helps to facilitate the identification, assessment and ongoing monitoring of risks significant to the Trust, aligning strategic and operational risk. Risk register owners develop and use this framework to ensure that significant risks in their area of responsibility are identified, assessed and monitored.

Cyber risk (e.g., data breach, system failure, cybercrime) is recognised as a primary threat and the Trust will not pay any cyber ransomware demands, aligning with the latest guidance in the *Academy Trust Handbook*.

The Trust recognises and is working towards meeting the DfE's core Digital and Technology Standards by 2030 (e.g., for Broadband internet, Cyber security, Filtering and monitoring) as a key risk mitigation objective.

The document is formally appraised annually by the Board of Trustees but emerging risks are added as required, and improvement actions and risk indicators are monitored by the Executive on a termly basis and reported to the Audit & Risk Committee.

The Trust Board receives a risk report which shows the impact of operational risk on strategic risk as well as the risk profile.

10. Risk Appetite

The trust implements strong internal controls to mitigate risk. Trustees acknowledge and recognise the importance of the HMC Orange Book advice; that public sector organisations cannot be risk averse and be successful. Risk is inherent in our operations and everything we do to deliver high quality services.

Ebor's risk appetite levels vary, in some areas our risk tolerance will be cautious, in others, we are open for risk and are willing to carry risk in the pursuit of strategic objectives. We will aim to operate organisational activities at the levels defined below. Where activities are projected to exceed the defined levels, this must be highlighted through appropriate scrutiny committees.

The amount of risk the academy trust is willing to accept in the pursuit of its objectives is detailed in Appendix 1.

11. Internal audit

Internal audit is an important element of the internal control process. Apart from its normal programme of work, internal audit is responsible for aspects of the annual review of the effectiveness of the internal control system within the Trust.

12. External audit

External audit provides feedback to the Audit Committee on the operation of the internal financial controls reviewed as part of the annual audit. Third party reports from time to time, the use of external consultants will be necessary in areas such as health and safety, and human resources.

The use of specialist third parties for consulting and reporting can increase the reliability of the internal control system. Occasionally the Trust will be subject to audit from third parties and these may provide some review of the Trust's risk arrangements.

13. Annual Review of effectiveness

The Board of Trustees is responsible for reviewing the effectiveness of internal control of the Trust, based on information provided by the Audit and Risk committee. Its approach is outlined below.

For each significant risk identified, the Board of Trustees will oversee the effectiveness of the risk management framework in managing those risks.

The board will examine the Trust's track record on risk management and internal control.

It will consider the internal and external risk profile of the coming year and consider if current internal control arrangements are likely to be effective.

In making its decision, the Board of Trustees will consider the following aspects:

- a) Control environment: the Trust's objectives and its financial and non-financial targets; organisational structure and calibre of the Executive; culture, approach, and resources with respect to the management of risk; delegation of authority.**
- b) On-going identification and evaluation of significant risks: Timely identification and assessment of significant risks; prioritisation of risks and the allocation of resources to address areas of high exposure.**
- c) Information and communication: quality and timeliness of information on significant risks; time it takes for control breakdowns to be recognised or new risks to be identified.**
- d) Monitoring and corrective action: Ability of the Trust to learn from its problems; commitment and speed with which corrective actions are implemented.**

Appendix 2: Risk Control Strategy

The trust uses the 4 'T's' approach to risk control strategy. Selecting the most appropriate risk treatment option(s) involves balancing the potential benefits from the achievement of objectives against the costs, efforts, or disadvantages of proposed actions.

Tolerate	Treat	Transfer	Terminate
Accept or retain	to control or reduce	insure	avoid or eliminate
Tolerating risk is where no action is taken. This may be because the cost of instituting controls is not cost-effective or the risk or impact is so low that they are considered acceptable. For instance, the Trust may decide to tolerate the risk of contracting with a supplier with a poor credit rating provided the goods/services could be obtained relatively easily from someone else.	Treating risk involves controlling it with actions to minimise the likelihood of occurrence or impact. There may also be contingency measures to reduce impact if it does occur. For instance, the Trust may decide to train more than the statutory minimum of staff as paediatric first aiders and to put in place a rota for first aid cover during lunchtimes.	Transferring risk may involve the use of insurance or payment to third parties willing to take on the risk themselves (for instance, through outsourcing). For instance, the Trust may decide to take out insurance to mitigate the risk of the excessive costs of supply staff in the event of extended staff absences.	Terminating risk can be done by altering an inherently risky process to remove the risk. If this can be done without materially affecting operations, then removal should be considered, rather than attempting to treat, tolerate or transfer. Alternatively, if a risk is ranked highly and the other potential control measures are too expensive or otherwise impractical, the rational decision may well be that this is a process the Trust should not be performing at all.

Appendix 3: Risk Scoring Guide

Guidance for assessing impact and likelihood of risks

Assessment of Impact / Severity						
		Financial	Reputation	Media Attitude	Stakeholders	Health & Safety
1	Negligible/insignificant	£0 – 5,000	Contained within one school.	No adverse media or press reporting.	Affects only 1 group of stakeholders	Minimal impact, no or very minor injury to a small number of individuals
2	Minor	£5,000 – £30,000	Affects significant number of people within one school but with transient small impact	Negative article of which academy is mentioned / social media comments.	Affects more than 1 group of stakeholders	Minor injury with no lasting effect to a small number of individuals or more significant but not life changing injury such as broken arm affecting a single individual
3	Moderate	£30,000 - £250,000	Receives significant attention from within the organisation with potential cause disruption to a small number of stakeholders	Critical article on press or TV. Public criticism from industry body.	Affects 2- 3 groups of stakeholders	Significant but not life changing injury such as broken arm affecting a number of individuals.
4	Major	£250,000 - £750,000	Receives local press attention with immediate significant disruption but not sustained impact	Story in multiple social media platforms and / or national TV.	Affects 4-5 groups of stakeholders	Significant injury with life changing effect H&S notification could result in an investigation

5	Catastrophic/critical	Over £750,000	Receives national / international attention with potential for persisting impact to stakeholders/third parties	Governmental or comparable political repercussions. Loss of confidence by the public. Mass social media coverage.	Affects more than 5 groups of stakeholders	Potential to cause fatality. H&S breach causing serious fine, investigation and legal fees
---	------------------------------	---------------	--	---	--	--