



SEAX Trust School Development & Improvement (SDI) Board

Terms of Reference (ToR)

Removing barriers. Widening opportunity. Creating futures

1. Purpose

The School Development & Improvement (SDI) Board is the Trust's principal strategic forum for educational standards, quality, risk and improvement across all schools.

The SDI Board exists to ensure that:

- the quality of education, safeguarding, behaviour, inclusion and personal development across the Trust is known accurately
- schools are supported and challenged through disciplined professional dialogue
- improvement priorities are clear, focused and evidence-informed
- Trust capacity is deployed proportionately and strategically
- risks are identified early and acted upon decisively
- Trustees are provided with robust assurance on standards and capacity

The SDI Board answers the question: *How good are our schools – really – and what needs to happen next to build capacity in the school and improve outcomes for young people?*

2. Guiding Principles

The SDI Board operates in line with the Trust's vision and rules of engagement.

In particular, the SDI Board will:

- **Start with possibility** – improvement is developmental, not deficit-driven
- **Be clear about intent** – all challenge and support is purpose-led
- **Take responsibility first** – focus on system improvement, not blame
- **Act, not excuse** – risks are addressed, not rationalised
- **Work together to make a difference** – improvement is collective

3. Relationship to the TAS Board

The SDI Board works in direct partnership with the Team Around the School (TAS) Board, with a clear and intentional division of responsibility.

Complementary roles



SDI Board	TAS Board
Educational quality and improvement	Operational enablement and accountability
Evaluation, standards and risk	Systems, resources and support
Sets improvement priorities	Aligns operational response
Oversight of teaching, learning, behaviour, safeguarding and leadership	Oversight of finance, estates, people, digital and governance

Information flow

- The SDI Board identifies priorities, risk and tier-based need
- These priorities inform TAS Board focus and decision-making
- TAS Board feedback informs SDI understanding of feasibility, constraint and system impact

Together, they ensure strategy, improvement and operations remain aligned.

4. Scope of the SDI Board

The SDI Board has strategic oversight of:

4.1 Educational Quality and Standards

- Curriculum quality and coherence
- Teaching and learning
- Achievement and progress from starting points
- Personal development and preparation for adulthood

4.2 Safeguarding and Pupil Safety

- Safeguarding effectiveness (threshold judgement)
- Culture, systems and assurance
- Serious incidents and emerging risk patterns

4.3 Behaviour, Attendance and Inclusion

- Behaviour culture and consistency
- Attendance, persistent absence and engagement
- Inclusion and SEND practice
- Use of external and internal support

4.4 Leadership, Capacity and Workforce Development

- Leadership effectiveness at all levels
- Accuracy of self-evaluation
- Capacity to improve and sustain improvement
- Use and impact of coaching, professional learning and system leadership



5. Evaluation and Tiering – managing risk and identifying opportunity

The SDI Board oversees a **two-layer evaluation model**:

5.1 Area-Level Evaluation

Schools are reviewed across Ofsted-aligned areas, including:

- Safeguarding
- Inclusion
- Curriculum and teaching
- Achievement
- Behaviour and attendance
- Personal development
- Leadership and governance

These evaluations work alongside school self-evaluation to develop and inform:

- self-evaluation
- SDP priorities
- targeted Trust support

5.2 Whole-School Tiering

Schools are placed within a dynamic tiering model:

- Tier 1 – Secure and improving
- Tier 2 – Stable with targeted priorities
- Tier 3 – Vulnerable or causing concern

Tiering informs:

- level of Trust oversight
- intensity of support
- escalation and intervention decisions

Safeguarding concerns **override tier status** and trigger immediate escalation.

6. Role in School Development & Improvement

The SDI Board:

- reviews and validates Live Evaluation Summaries
- quality assures School Development Plans (SDPs)
- ensures SDP priorities arise directly from evaluation
- monitors progress, not just activity
- reviews the impact of Trust support and intervention



- identifies when de-escalation or escalation is required

7. Membership

Core Membership

- CEO (Chair)
- School Improvement Lead – Teaching, Learning & Professional Development
- School Improvement Lead – Strategy, Projects & System Learning
- Executive Headteacher – Trust Safeguarding Lead
- Headteacher – Trust Behaviour & Attendance Lead

Flexible Attendance

- Headteachers (by agenda / termly representation)
- Other Trust leaders invited as required

Membership reflects the need for strategic expertise, credibility and collective responsibility.

8. Frequency and Scheduling

- The SDI Board meets half-termly, with additional meetings convened where risk or urgency demands.
- Scheduling aligns to the Trust SDI cycle and Trustee reporting timetable.

9. Conduct of Meetings

The SDI Board operates through:

- structured agendas
- evidence-informed discussion
- professional challenge and support
- clear decisions and next steps

Meetings will:

- avoid anecdotal discussion
- focus on patterns and trajectory
- prioritise schools with the greatest need
- ensure clarity of accountability and ownership



10. Reporting and Assurance

The SDI Board:

- prepares clear assurance narratives for Trustees
- identifies strategic risks and mitigations
- informs annual Trust standards reporting
- provides confidence in the Trust's understanding of its schools

11. Authority

The SDI Board operates under delegated authority from the CEO, within the Trust's Scheme of Delegation. It makes recommendations and decisions within its remit and escalates matters beyond its authority appropriately.

12. Review of Effectiveness

The SDI Board's operation and impact will be reviewed:

- annually
- alongside TAS Board and governance reviews
- to ensure continued clarity, coherence and effectiveness

The SDI Board ensures that decisions about school improvement are rooted in accurate evaluation, professional judgement and moral responsibility for every learner's entitlement to high-quality education.

Together with the TAS Board, it provides a disciplined, values-led structure for leading improvement across SEAX Trust.

