



Co-Headship Policy

Date prepared	October 2025
Author	Kerry Jordan-Daus
Checked by (Trustee)	Jen Shearman
Date ratified	9 December 2025
Review date	November 2028

Purpose

To outline the structure, obligations, responsibilities and operational requirements for a co-headship model where two members of staff share the Headteacher role in one school, to ensure the effective leadership and management of the school to which they are appointed co-headteachers.

Veritas Multi Academy Trust (the **Trust**) is committed to considering flexible ways of working which furthers the Trust's aims for educational delivery and the co-headship role is integral to this. The co-headship arrangement will be reviewed at least annually, and at any other reasonable interval as determined by the Trust, to assess its overall compliance, effectiveness and efficiency. Adjustments may be made to improve the co-headship model, for example in relation to clarity, efficiency, or collaboration, particularly where the co-headship arrangements impact the efficient delivery of education and/or the effective leadership and management of the school which is recognised as the Trust's top priority.

Vision and Ethos

The co-headship model aims to leverage the combined qualifications, experience, skills, professional and personal qualities and perspectives of two leaders to enhance the educational outcomes and well-being of pupils, staff, and the wider school community.

Roles and Responsibilities

- **Joint and Several Accountability:** The co-headteachers are jointly and severally accountable and liable to the Trust for the proper performance of the obligations and responsibilities of the headteacher in line with their contracts of employment, the Trust/school's policies and any other statutory requirements, guidance or advice.
- **Shared Leadership:** Both co-headteachers will jointly oversee all aspects of school leadership, including strategic planning, school finances, curriculum development, staff management, and community engagement. Co-headteachers are expected to lead collaboratively, demonstrating mutual respect, transparency, and a commitment to shared goals.
- **Division of Duties:** Specific responsibilities and/or duties may be divided based on individual strengths and interests. For example, one co-headteacher's responsibilities and duties may focus on curriculum and learning environments, while the other co-headteacher's responsibilities and duties may focus on staff performance management, and professional development. Within these domains, each co-headteacher is expected to collaborate with the other but may make decisions independently, while keeping the other informed. For cross-domain or strategic decisions, consensus between co-headteachers is required. The division of responsibilities and duties is agreed and reviewed regularly, by the Trust CEO.
- **Decision-Making:** Decisions will be made collaboratively where required and wherever possible, with open communication and consideration of diverse perspectives, with both co-headteachers consulting each other on key issues. All decision-making, whether made by one co-headteacher or otherwise, will be deemed to be made on a joint and several basis.

- **Decision-Making and Disagreement Protocol:** In the event that the co-heads are unable to reach agreement on a matter that requires both co-headteachers consent, the following procedure will be adopted:

Step 1: Dialogue and Reflection: Co-headteachers will engage in a structured conversation, using a coaching GROW model, to explore the disagreement, aiming to understand each other's rationale and find common ground to support a joint decision.

Step 2: Time-Bound Resolution: If co-headteachers cannot reach agreement within a reasonable time following the dialogue and reflection meeting at step 1 above, the matter will be escalated to step 3. The Trust expects that a reasonable time to resolve the disagreement is 5 working days from the dialogue and reflection meeting.

- **Step 3: Escalation:** The decision in dispute will be referred to the CEO (who line manages the co-headteachers) who will:
 - Facilitate a resolution discussion between the co-headteachers and the CEO within 5 working days of the matter being escalated.
 - Where consensus cannot be reached between the co-headteachers, make a final decision on the matter under discussion, if necessary.
- **Step 4: Record keeping:** All escalated disagreements and their outcomes will be documented to support transparency and future learning.

Communication and Collaboration

- **Shared Email Account:** Co-headteachers will have access to, and use, a shared email account to ensure transparency and effective communication. Co-headteachers should expect that their emails will be accessible to their co-headteacher. Emails will be triaged to allocate tasks and responsibilities.
- **Regular Meetings:** Co-headteachers are expected to prepare and attend briefings and regular meetings to discuss new matters, ongoing issues, plan strategies, and review progress.
- **Visibility:** Both co-headteachers will be equally visible to the school community, attending events, meetings and assemblies together whenever possible and where required.

Accountability

- **Mutual Accountability:** Each co-headteacher is jointly and severally accountable to the other, the Local Academy Committee, and the Trust board. This model aims to increase accountability and reduce potential stress and isolation.
- **Performance Reviews:** Regular performance reviews will be conducted in line with the Trust's People Development Policy to assess the effectiveness of the co-

headship model and ensure sustained performance and/or continuous improvement, as well as individual performance.

Obligation to provide assistance

During employment and at any time after its termination (howsoever this occurs), co-headteachers will, at the Trust's request, provide all reasonable assistance and co-operation to the Trust and/or any of its schools, in connection with any internal investigation and/or any threatened or actual administrative, judicial, regulatory or quasi-judicial proceedings (the "**Proceedings**") and the following provisions shall apply:

- **Designated Representative:**
The Trust shall, in its absolute discretion, appoint one Co-Headteacher as the official representative of the school for the purpose of reporting to the Trust board any matter pertaining to the Proceedings and providing any information and updates as may be required (the "**Designated Representative**"). This appointment shall be reviewed at reasonable intervals and at least annually and recorded in the school's leadership responsibilities document. The Designated Representative shall, at all material times, liaise with the Trust to ensure that all actions taken by them and/or the school, are approved as far as may be required.
- **Assistance:**
Where the proceedings actually or potentially relate to actions and/or omissions made solely or jointly by the Co-Headteachers, both may be required to provide all reasonable assistance including but not limited to providing a statement and/or attending Proceedings, as may be advised by the Trust's legal advisers.
- **Notification and Reporting:**
Both Co-Headteachers must, without unreasonable delay, notify the Trust Governance Professional of any legal notices, claims, or proceedings involving the school, the Trust and/or any of its trustees, governors, staff, pupils or any other connected third party (e.g, volunteers etc) and provide all reasonable assistance and documentation relating to the notice, claim or proceedings. Both co-headteachers are responsible for keeping the Trust fully updated with any relevant developments throughout the duration of the proceedings and thereafter.
- **Safeguarding and Confidentiality:**
Both co-headteachers must ensure that all information, documentation and data relating to any Proceedings shall be handled in accordance with the Trust and/or school's policies including, but not limited to, its or their safeguarding, child protection and data protection policies, the duties of confidentiality contained in any contract of employment and/or staff code of conduct, as well as any duties to safeguard data and maintain confidentiality as required by law, set out in any statutory or non-statutory guidance and/or advice.

Grievance

It is expected that the parties will try to resolve any concern or grievance informally in the first instance in line with the Trust's/school's informal resolution procedure in its Fairness at Work Policy. Any grievance matters will then be transferred to the Fairness at Work Policy.

- **Special Considerations where a grievance is raised in a in Co-Headship arrangement**
- **Impact on School Leadership:** The grievance may affect the working relationship and leadership dynamics and may also impact other staff and teams/departments. As

a result of this, the Trust may need to consider organisational change, change to the roles and responsibilities of the co-headteachers, removal of the co-headteacher arrangement and/or any other support mechanisms. The Trust would seek legal advice where required.

- **Confidentiality and Professionalism:** Given the visibility of headteachers, maintaining confidentiality and professionalism throughout is essential to protect the Trust and school's reputation, staff morale and educational outcomes for the pupils.

Benefit

- **Enhanced Leadership Capacity:** The co-headship model combines the strengths and capacity of two leaders, bringing new ideas and providing a richer and safer leadership environment
- **Succession Planning:** This model supports succession planning and provides stability during transitions as well as periods of leave, whether planned or unplanned
- **Work-Life Balance:** Co-headteachers can achieve a better work-life balance, reduce burnout, increase retention and improve overall well-being leading to better outcomes for the Trust, its schools, themselves, their staff and pupils.

Implementation

- **Contract of Employment:** Each co-head will be issued with a headteacher contract of employment. Whilst each co-headteacher is jointly and severally liable under their contract of employment, the breakdown of the overall headteacher role into distributed leadership and management responsibilities will aim to be agreed with the Co-Headteachers (ensuring that the Trust and school's priorities and educational outcomes for pupils remain the overriding objective of the arrangement). The arrangements will be reviewed at reasonable intervals and at least annually.
- **Induction:** A thorough induction process will be provided with the aim of ensuring both co-headteachers understand their roles, including their specific areas of responsibility, and the expectations of the Trust board including in relation to how the co-headship model is expected to be conducted and its objectives.
- **Support:** Ongoing support and professional development opportunities will be available to both co-headteachers to support them to ensure they have the skills and experience to effectively lead the school.

Links with other policies

This policy links to our policies on:

- Recruitment Policy
- Fairness at Work Policy
- People Development Policy

- Equality Diversity and Inclusion Objectives
- Pay Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Scheme of Delegation
- Data Protection Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
-

Personal Data

In implementing and operating this policy, the Trust may handle and/or process employees personal data, including any special category data, in line with the Trust/school's Data Protection Policies and privacy notice.