



Role description

For clerk to a governing body or trust board

Reviewed April 2024

Role purpose

To provide advice and guidance to the governing or trust board on governance, constitutional and procedural matters.

A professional clerk will contribute towards the efficient and effective functioning of a governing board and its committees by providing:

- administrative and organisational support
- guidance to ensure that the board works in compliance with the appropriate legal and regulatory framework and understands the potential consequences for non-compliance
- advice on procedural matters relating to the operation of the board

Key duties

Organising meetings, hearings and appeals

The clerk prepares for and administrates meetings, allowing the board to make effective use of their time and focus on strategic matters. The clerk supports the effective running of meetings by:

- working with others to prepare agendas and liaising with those preparing papers to make sure they are available on time
- convening meetings and distributing papers as required by legislation
- ensuring meetings are quorate, inclusive and well structured
- overseeing election of officers
- recording attendance/apologies and taking appropriate action in relation to absences
- taking minutes indicating who is responsible for any agreed actions with timescales
- circulating draft and approved minutes to all governors/trustees/members of the committee, the headteacher and other relevant bodies within the timescale agreed with the board
- following up on action points with those responsible and informing the chair of progress

Providing advice and guidance

- advising on legal duties and governing practice
- advising on constitutional requirements
- advising on board procedures
- advising on statutory guidance and policies

- advising on annual tasks and decisions
- advising on governor/trustee CPD
- accessing external advice as appropriate
- supporting issue resolution

Administration and record keeping

The clerk supports the board in maintaining records of policies and procedural documents and ensures these are accessible. This includes:

- maintaining membership records including contact details of board members, terms of office and informing any relevant authorities of changes to membership details
- advising governors/trustees and appointing bodies in advance of the expiry of a term of office and the impact of this on the board's capacity, diversity and skills mix
- establishing, in discussion with the board, open and transparent vacancy filling processes and efficient procedures for election and appointment
- giving procedural advice and assisting with the management of governor/trustee elections
- advising the board on succession planning for all board roles
- maintaining governing documents such as terms of reference and signed minutes
- collating, maintaining and ensuring correct publication of information about governors/trustees such as any pecuniary interests
- maintaining a record of board CPD
- ensuring Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) and other relevant checks are carried out on any members of the board where it is appropriate to do so
- maintaining records of board correspondence
- maintaining governance communication portal
- drafting correspondence on behalf of the board

Maintaining relationships and communication

Good relationships between the clerk and members of the board are essential for open communication. Clerks also have a role to play in supporting and advising the governing or trust board on their self-review and development.

The clerk should fulfil these responsibilities, whilst maintaining independence, by:

- maintaining professional working relationships with the chair, the board and school leaders
- communicating on board matters outside of meetings.
- where appropriate, liaising on behalf of the board (such as for external reviews of governance)
- contributing to the coordination of learning and development opportunities for those involved in governance, including induction and continuing professional development
- participating in regular performance management with the chair

Ensuring compliance

- ensuring meetings are quorate
- overseeing the review of required policies
- publication of governance information on school websites
- advising on data protection requirements
- overseeing board recruitment processes
- co-ordinating safeguarding checks on board members
- monitoring eligibility of board members to serve, including on committees
- notifying disqualifications, expiry of office etc
- statutory registers and filing returns
- keeping up to date with current educational developments and legislation affecting school governance



Person specification

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Knowledge

- the schools system: structures, accountability and funding
- governance legislation, procedures and regulations relevant to the organisation
- the core functions of a school governing/trust board as they apply to the organisation
- elements of effective governance and board practice as they apply to the organisation

Skills

- literacy, numeracy and IT
- written and verbal communication
- minute taking
- planning and organisational
- people and relationship building
- advisory skills (recommending a course of action)
- risk aware/able to articulate risk in the context
- problem solving
- time management to meet deadlines and competing demands

Attributes

- personal integrity and commitment to [the principles of public life](#)
- respect for confidentiality
- confidence and resilience (to challenge when necessary)
- commitment to professional development to maintain knowledge and improve practice