



Role of a school governor at The Tiffin Girls' School

Introduction

1. The purpose of governance is to provide confident and strong strategic leadership which leads to robust accountability, oversight and assurance for educational and financial performance.
2. Effective governance is based on six key features:
 - **Strategic leadership** that sets and champions vision, ethos and strategy
 - **Accountability** that drives up educational standards and financial performance
 - **People** with the right skills, experience, qualities and capacity
 - **Structures** that reinforce clearly defined roles and responsibilities
 - **Compliance** with statutory and contractual requirements
 - **Evaluation** to monitor and improve the quality and impact of governance
3. The role of a school governor at The Tiffin Girls' School (the School) is to contribute to the work of the Governing Board (GB) so as to secure high standards of achievement for all members of the school community by providing:
 - **Strategic leadership:** the GB defines the School vision for high quality and inclusive education in line the charitable objects. It establishes and fosters the School's culture and sets and champions the overall strategy.
The School seeks to provide an outstanding all round education provision with high academic achievement at its heart. The vision of the School is '*Our community is vibrant, curious, creative and inspires positive change. We dare to be wise*'. Working with senior leaders, the GB sets strategic objectives to help the School reach its goals.
 - **Accountability and assurance:** the GB has robust effective oversight of the operations and performance of the School, including the provision of education, student welfare, overseeing and ensuring appropriate use of funding and effective financial performance and keeping the School's estate safe and well-maintained.
 - **Engagement:** the GB has strategic oversight of relationships with stakeholders. The GB involves parents, schools and communities so that decision-making is supported by meaningful engagement.
4. The GB's function is strategic, rather than operational. Governors should not be involved in the day to day running of the school or operational tasks such as writing school policies, auditing of accounts or health and safety procedures or undertaking classroom observations to make judgments on quality of teaching.

Activities

As part of the GB team, a governor is expected to:

5. Contribute to all strategic discussions at GB meetings, the functions of which are to:
 - Determine and shape the vision and ethos of the school, setting clear and ambitious strategic priorities and targets within the context of enhancing social mobility and diversity
 - Oversee the school's financial performance by approving the annual budget and the medium term financial plan, agreeing resource allocation and monitoring expenditure
 - Ensure that all students have access to a broad, balanced, rich and ambitious curriculum, ensuring that resources (including the pupil premium) are used to overcome any barriers to learning
 - Oversee staffing and personnel matters including the staff structure and key staff policies
 - Provide support and challenge to the Headteacher and senior leadership team
 - Ensure that safeguarding and PREVENT requirements are fully met
 - Ensure the Academy Trust is compliant with legal requirements, including that all statutory policies and documents are in place
 - Approve and revise school policies, and hold staff to account for their implementation
 - Carry out the appointment and performance management of the Headteacher
 - Monitor health and safety in the school
6. Hold the senior leaders to account by monitoring the school's performance. This includes:
 - Agreeing the outcomes from the school's self-evaluation form and ensuring they are used to inform the priorities in the school development plan
 - Considering all relevant data and feedback provided on request by school leaders and external sources on all aspects of school performance
 - Asking challenging questions of the Headteacher and senior leadership team
 - Ensuring that senior leaders have arranged for any required audits to be carried out and receiving the results of those audits
7. Ensure that staff have the resources and support they require to do their jobs well, including the necessary expertise on business management, external advice where necessary, effective appraisal and continuing professional development, and suitable premises, and that the way in which those resources are used has impact.
8. Listen to and reporting to the school's stakeholders: students, parents/carers, staff and the wider community.
9. Contribute to the GB's evaluation of its own functions and performance, including annual completion of a skills audit.

Governance structure

- 10.** The size and composition of the GB is set out in the Articles of Association. Governors are Directors of the Academy Trust for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006 and Trustees for the purposes of charity legislation. The school's governor liability insurance policy provides the necessary cover for governors acting in good faith.
- 11.** Governors are required to sign the governor code of conduct and declaration of interests at the first GB meeting of each academic year. Governors are required to respect the confidentiality of items of business which are deemed confidential and support a decision under collective responsibility.
- 12.** New governors are required to complete an online induction certificate following provision of training and mentorship. All governors are required to complete safeguarding and PREVENT training and other training as appropriate to any specific GB responsibilities. All training is evaluated and reported to the GB.
- 13.** The GB meets three times per term (nine times a year). The finance and contracts, audit and risk, and pay and personnel committees meet three times a year and the admissions and Headteacher performance review committees meet twice a year.
- 14.** Governors may be asked to contribute to the work of one or more of these committees.
- 15.** Governors may also be asked to take on the role of link governor on a specific issue of importance, reporting to the GB on progress in relation to that issue. Current designated roles include careers, health and safety, safeguarding, special educational needs or disabilities, sustainability and sixth form bursary.
- 16.** Governors are invited to attend up to three governor visits a year during school hours; each one having a strategic focus. The lead governor for each visit will write a report for the following GB meeting.
- 17.** Governors may be asked to be members of the appeals committee, governor recruitment panel or of a working group set up to look in depth at an issue of strategic importance and report back to the GB.
- 18.** Detailed information on the role of Academy Trust governors can be found in the following documents:

Department for Education – Academy Trust Governance Guide:

www.gov.uk/guidance/-governance-in-academy-trusts

Education and Skills Funding Agency - Academy Trust Handbook:

www.gov.uk/guidance/academy-trust-handbook

Charity Commission guidance on the role of charity trustees:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-essential-trustee-what-you-need-to-know-cc3>