

Head of Governance & Compliance



Candidate Information Pack

JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title: Head of Governance & Compliance

Reports to: Board of Trustees

Accountable to: The Board of Trustees and the Members

Main Purpose

The Head of Governance & Compliance is the Trust's principal governance adviser, responsible for leading and assuring the effective operation of governance across Esher Sixth Form College Academy Trust.

This is a strategic, part-time governance, company secretarial and compliance role. The postholder will provide independent advice to Trustees, Members, Committee Chairs and senior leaders on governance, constitutional, statutory and procedural matters.

The role focuses on governance compliance, statutory records, company secretarial responsibilities, board assurance and governance effectiveness. It is not intended to hold operational responsibility for all College compliance activity.

The postholder will ensure that governance arrangements operate in accordance with the Trust's Articles of Association, funding agreement, Academy Trust Handbook, Companies Act requirements, charity law obligations, DfE/ESFA requirements and relevant education legislation.

Whilst the Head of Governance & Compliance retains overall responsibility and accountability for governance operations, appropriate administrative support will be available to support the effective delivery of governance activity

- The College will provide agreed administrative and logistical support for governance activity, including meeting scheduling, room bookings, hospitality, diary coordination, document collation and trustee visit arrangements.
- HR will provide agreed support for recruitment administration, DBS checks, onboarding and safer recruitment processes.

The Head of Governance & Compliance is responsible for the administration and coordination of governance processes, including monitoring actions and deadlines, overseeing the preparation and circulation of documentation, maintaining accurate records, and ensuring governance activity is completed to the required standard and timescales. The postholder will work collaboratively with relevant colleagues to ensure effective administrative support arrangements and delivery of governance operations.

Key responsibilities

Strategic Governance Advice and Board Assurance

- Act as principal governance adviser to the Chair, Board of Trustees, Members, Committee Chairs and senior leaders.
- Provide advice on governance procedure, constitutional matters, delegated authority, conflicts of interest, trustee conduct, accountability and governance compliance.
- Support the effective operation of the Board, committees and Members in line with the Articles of Association, funding agreement, scheme of delegation and relevant legal and regulatory requirements.
- Work with the Chair and Principal in planning the annual governance cycle so that Board and committee business focuses on strategy, assurance, risk, educational performance, finance, safeguarding and statutory accountability.
- Provide guidance where proposed decisions may be outside the powers of the Trust, inconsistent with the Articles or scheme of delegation, or create legal, regulatory or reputational risk.
- Keep up to date with changes in academy trust governance, post-16 accountability, company and charity law, and DfE/ESFA requirements, highlighting any implications for the Trust's governance arrangements.

Governance Operations and Quality Assurance

- Provide guidance on the effective operation of the Board, Members and committees, overseeing appropriate administrative support for logistics, document collation and routine communications.
- Prepare and maintain the annual governance calendar, committee workplans, meeting schedules and forward agendas.
- Work with the Chair, Committee Chairs, Principal and senior leaders to ensure Board and committee papers are timely, relevant, high quality and aligned with statutory responsibilities and strategic priorities.
- Attend Board, Member and committee meetings as required, providing governance and procedural advice and retaining responsibility for the quality, accuracy and integrity of formal governance records.
- Prepare agendas, minutes, decision records and action logs, ensuring that challenge, scrutiny, approvals and delegated authority are properly evidenced.
- Establish clear administrative standards for governance support, including document management, board portal use, trustee communications, meeting administration and records retention.
- Ensure decisions, actions, approvals and delegated authorities are accurately recorded, tracked and escalated.

Company Secretarial and Statutory Governance Records

- Lead on all company secretarial matters for the Trust.
- Keep governance registers up to date, including details of Members, Trustees/directors, interests, terms of office, committee membership, attendance and appointments.
- Complete Companies House filings and other governance returns accurately and on time.
- Support the appointment, resignation, reappointment, retirement and election of trustees/directors and members in line with governance procedures.
- Keep governance documents up to date, including the Articles of Association, funding agreement, scheme of delegation, standing orders, terms of reference and code of conduct.
- Provide advice to the Board and Members on quorum, voting, delegated authority and constitutional requirements.

Governance Compliance, Risk and Assurance

- Maintain a governance compliance calendar covering statutory, regulatory and internal deadlines.
- Monitor compliance with the Academy Trust Handbook, DfE/ESFA requirements, Articles of Association, Companies Act obligations, charity law obligations and education legislation.
- Advise on governance-related risks and ensure significant governance compliance matters are escalated to the Chair, Principal or relevant committee.
- Support the Audit Committee by tracking governance actions and providing governance assurance where needed.
- Provide governance and compliance reports to the Board and committees.
- Ensure governance information on the Trust website is accurate, compliant and up to date.

Policy Governance and Transparency

- Oversee the policy review schedule and ensure policies are reviewed and approved in line with the scheme of delegation. Advise on the appropriate approval route for key policies, including Board, committee or executive approval.
- Keep records of governing policies and key governance documents. Support governance-aspects of public access, publication scheme, freedom of information, data protection and records management requirements.
- Work with operational leads, including the Data Protection Officer where needed, to provide assurance to the Board

Board Training, Development and Trustee Lifecycle

- Lead the annual governance self-evaluation process and support external governance reviews where required.
- Maintain the trustee skills audit and use it to inform recruitment, succession planning, induction and training priorities.
- Create, manage and oversee the induction and ongoing training and development programme for Members and Trustees.
- Oversee governance aspects of Trustee and Member recruitment, onboarding and offboarding working with HR on recruitment administration, including DBS checks and safer recruitment processes.
- Maintain accurate records of eligibility, terms of office, declarations of interest, training, attendance and committee membership.
- Advise Trustees and Members on responsibilities, conflicts of interest, confidentiality, collective responsibility and the Nolan Principles of Public Life.
- Support succession planning for key governance roles, including Chair, Vice Chair and Committee Chairs.

Professional Responsibilities

- Keep up to date with developments in governance, compliance and academy trust requirements through Continuous Professional Development (CPD).
- Participate in relevant professional networks, including sector-specific governance networks where appropriate.
- Maintain effective working relationships with Trustees, Members, senior leaders, PA to Principal and Deputy Principal, HR, auditors, advisers and relevant external bodies.
- Demonstrate commitment to equality, diversity, inclusion, safeguarding, health and safety and ethical governance practice.
- Manage priorities effectively within a 0.4 FTE working pattern, focusing on governance advice, compliance assurance and governance risk.
- Undertake other duties reasonably required by the Chair or Board, consistent with the scope and seniority of the role.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

The Trust is seeking a highly organised, credible and discreet governance professional with judgement, confidence and professional authority to advise Trustees, Members and senior leaders. Applications are welcomed from candidates with relevant governance, compliance, company secretarial, legal, audit, risk, board support or regulatory experience gained in education or other regulated sectors, including charities, further or higher education, local government, NHS, housing, professional services or corporate governance.

Qualifications and Professional Development

Essential	Desirable
Good standard of education, including English and Maths.	Relevant qualification in governance, company secretarial practice, law compliance, audit, risk or public-sector qualification.
Evidence of relevant continuing professional development.	Chartered Governance Institute qualification, Certificate in Academy Governance, NGA governance professional training, or willingness to work towards an appropriate qualification.
Relevant professional experience in governance, compliance, legal, company secretarial, audit, risk or senior administrative roles.	Membership of a relevant professional body, such as the Chartered Governance Institute, NGA, CIPFA, IRM or equivalent, where appropriate to the candidate's background.

Experience

Essential	Desirable
Experience supporting a board, committee or senior governance structure in a complex or regulated organisation.	Experience in academy trust, sixth form, FE, HE, school or wider education governance.
Experience providing governance, compliance, company secretarial, legal, regulatory, audit, risk or senior administrative support.	Experience working as a governance professional, clerk, company secretary, assistant company secretary, governance manager, compliance manager or board secretary.
Experience advising senior stakeholders on governance, procedure, compliance or regulatory requirements.	Experience supporting governance reviews, board self-evaluation, external reviews or governance improvement programmes.
Experience interpreting constitutional, procedural, statutory or regulatory documents.	Experience working with Articles of Association, schemes of delegation, terms of reference, standing orders, funding agreements or similar constitutional documents.
Experience maintaining formal governance records, statutory registers, action logs and compliance calendars.	Experience with Companies House filings, Get Information About Schools updates or charity governance records.
Experience coordinating formal governance or compliance processes involving multiple internal stakeholders.	Experience designing or improving administrative processes, controls or assurance checks for board, governance or compliance activity.
Experience working effectively through administrative colleagues, with the ability to distinguish between operational administration and governance accountability.	Experience working with PA, HR, secretarial or administrative colleagues to coordinate meeting logistics, recruitment administration, trustee onboarding, records management or compliance processes.
Experience producing high-quality minutes, reports, formal advice and governance documentation.	Experience coordinating trustee/governor recruitment, induction, training, succession planning or skills audits.
Experience handling confidential and sensitive information with sound judgement and discretion.	Experience working with auditors, regulators, inspection bodies, legal advisers or external governance reviewers.

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Knowledge

Essential	Desirable
Strong understanding of effective governance accountability, transparency and ethical decision-making.	Knowledge of academy trust governance frameworks, including the Academy Trust Handbook.
Understanding of the role, duties and responsibilities of trustees/directors, Members and committees.	Knowledge of Companies Act requirements relevant to academy trusts and companies limited by guarantee.
Understanding of conflicts of interest, delegated authority, confidentiality, collective responsibility and the Nolan Principles of Public Life.	Knowledge of charity governance and exempt charity obligations.
Understanding of compliance frameworks, risk-based assurance and statutory governance record keeping.	Awareness of DfE/ESFA accountability, post-16 education, Ofsted governance evidence and sixth form college context.
Knowledge of data protection, public access, publication and records management requirements relating to governance.	Awareness of safeguarding governance, public sector equality duties, freedom of information and website publication requirements in education settings.

Skills and Attributes

Essential	Desirable
Credibility and confidence to provide independent governance advice to Trustees, Members and senior leaders.	Ability to influence and contribute to governance improvement and development.
Ability to operate effectively in a 0.4 FTE strategic role, prioritising high-value governance, compliance and assurance activity.	Experience managing governance activity around fixed Board, committee and regulatory deadlines.
Ability to lead and quality-assure governance administration setting clear processes, standards and deadlines while retaining accountability for formal governance records.	Experience establishing governance processes that can be delivered consistently by others.
Excellent written communication skills, including accurate minutes, reports, briefings, policies and formal correspondence.	Ability to prepare board assurance reports and compliance summaries for senior audiences.
Strong verbal communication skills, with the ability to explain complex governance and regulatory issues clearly.	Ability to train, brief or induct Trustees and Members.
Excellent organisational skills, with the ability to manage annual cycles, deadlines, meetings, records and competing priorities.	Experience using governance portals, board management software or Microsoft 365 document management tools.
Sound judgement, independence, discretion and political awareness.	Confidence in handling situations requiring challenge, escalation or careful management of governance risk.
Strong analytical skills and attention to detail.	Ability to monitor and interpret regulatory developments and assess implications for the Trust.
Ability to build effective professional relationships with Trustees, Members, senior leaders, PA, HR, auditors, advisers and external stakeholders.	Existing professional networks in education governance, charity governance, company secretarial practice or compliance.
Commitment to equality, diversity, inclusion, safeguarding, health and safety and ethical governance practice.	Understanding of inclusive governance and the importance of diversity of thought, background and experience on boards.

FURTHER INFORMATION

About Esher Sixth Form College

Esher Sixth Form College is a high-performing single-academy trust, specialising in post-16 education. Located in Thames Ditton with excellent transport links, we serve over 2,100 students from 115+ schools across North Surrey and London. We operate an inclusive, open-access approach and are consistently oversubscribed. We are rated Outstanding in all areas by Ofsted

The Role

The Head of Governance & Compliance is the Trust's principal governance adviser and Company Secretary, reporting to the Chair of the Board of Trustees. The role is responsible for supporting the effective operation of governance across the Trust, providing independent advice on governance, constitutional, statutory and procedural matters, and ensuring compliance with legal and regulatory requirements.

Working closely with Trustees, Members and senior leaders, the postholder leads on governance assurance, company secretarial responsibilities, statutory records, Board and committee support, and the ongoing development and effectiveness of governance across the Trust.

Working Hours

0.4 FTE, The role requires attendance at key governance meetings throughout the year, including some evening Board, Committee and Member meetings, alongside a regular weekly term-time presence in college. Outside of these core commitments, working hours can be flexible and self-directed, structured around the annual governance calendar.

Further information regarding the schedule and frequency of Board, Committee and Member meetings can be provided upon request. Please do not hesitate to contact us should you require any additional details regarding the governance commitments associated with the role.

Salary

SFCA Support Staff Scale Points 35-37, £54,712-£57,264 FTE, pro rata. Actual salary at 0.4 FTE: £21,884.80-£22,905.60 per annum.

- Closing Date:** 9am Monday 1 June 2026
Interviews: Week Commencing 8 June 2026
Start Date: Week Commencing 17 August 2026

STAFF BENEFITS

- **Secure Your Future**
Enjoy one of the best pension schemes in the UK, the Local Government Pension Scheme, with generous employer contributions and long-term peace of mind.
- **Balance Your Work and Life**
Benefit from a flexible and self-directed working pattern that supports a positive work-life balance, with working arrangements structured around the governance calendar and key annual commitments.
- **Grow Your Career**
Develop your confidence and professional expertise through an induction programme aligned to your experience and background, alongside access to training and continuing professional development opportunities relevant to the role and wider sector.
- **Feel Your Best**
Stay healthy with free access to our on-site gym, weekly yoga classes, annual flu jabs, and discounted memberships at local fitness clubs.
- **Get Support When You Need It**
Access free, confidential support for mental health, finances, and personal challenge any time, any day via the Employee Assistance Programme.
- **Commute with Ease**
Save time and money with free on-site parking, great train connections just 5 minutes away, and a tax-free Cycle to Work scheme.