THE ISLAND FREE SCHOOL

Governance Policy

Introduction

The purpose of a governing body is to focus towards improving education for every child at The Island Free School and to provide confident, strategic leadership and to create robust accountability, oversight and assurance for educational and financial performance. This policy has been updated using the latest guidance from the **Academies Governance Handbook (2020) and Competency Framework**

All governors must actively contribute relevant skills and experience towards setting high expectations at the school and ensure that all decisions are accountable and transparent. Governors must be confident in using data on the performance and finances of The Island Free School and provide strong strategic leadership to hold our school leaders to account.

Governing bodies' core function

- To support the leadership and management of the school in promoting high standards of educational achievement.
- To support the leadership and management of the school in promoting clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction by ensuring the school has a long term strategic vision including strategic priorities, aims and objectives for the school and sign off the policies, plans and targets for how to achieve them.
- To support the leadership and management of the school in ensuring the educational performance of the school and its pupils. Governors should play a strategic role and leave the running of the school to the head teacher.
- Oversee the financial performance of the school and make sure money is well spent

Additional functions include:

- Acting as the admissions authority
- Support the Head teacher in dealing with any and all complaints and disciplinary matters

To deliver these functions well, school governors will:

- Understand their strategic role-build a productive and supportive relationship with the head teacher whilst holding them to account for school performance and taking clear strategic decisions in the light of objective data.
- Ensure that each governor has the necessary skills and commitment, including to challenge the school to bring about improvement and hold leaders to account for performance
- Appoint an effective chair and vice chair to lead and manage the governing body every two academic years.
- Appoint a high quality clerk to advise on the nature of the functions and duties of the governing body and ensure the body operates efficiently and effectively
- Evaluate their own performance regularly in the light of Ofsted expectations and other good practice and make changes as necessary.

The importance of data

It is essential that the governing body has at least one governor with the skills to understand and interpret the full detail of the financial and performance data available. It is this governor's role to make sure that the wider governing body has a correct understanding of the school's performance and finances. They will identify from the data the issues that need to be discussed.

It is the head teachers' job and legal duty to give the governing body all the information to do their job well. This might include data on:

- Pupil learning and progress
- Pupil applications, admissions, attendance and exclusions
- Staff absence, recruitment, retention, morale and performance
- The quality of teaching

In order for the governors to hold the head teacher to account properly, governors need to make sure that at least once a year they see objective data from other sources so that they can feel empowered to ask pertinent and searching questions. Sources may include:

- Ofsted's school performance dashboard (a two-page report on pupils' attainment and progress in core subjects, their attendance and how well the school is doing for its disadvantaged students)
- Analyse School Performance (ASP) provides more detailed information
- School and college performance tables published by the DFE
- Statistical performance data gather from other school at a local and national level

School visits

Governors will visit the school regularly as part of robust school accountability. Through pre-arranged visits, governors will check that the school is implementing the policies and improvement plans they have signed off and see how their vision and plans for the school are working in practice. It is also an opportunity to arrange meetings with pupils, staff and parents about what they think of the school and how it is performing. It is not the governor's role to assess the quality or method of teaching and they should not interfere in the day to day running of the school, as these jobs are the role of the head teacher. However it is essential that governors take a keen interest in teaching and learning. It is therefore expected that all governors will make opportunities to visit lessons and engage in the teaching and learning activities at the school.

Overseeing financial performance

At least one governor will have specific skills and experience of financial matters and check that the school:

- Is allocating resources in line with strategic priorities
- Is making full use of all our assets and efficient use of all our financial resources
- Is getting value for money from the budget.
- Is getting best value from potential energy-saving devices
- Is collaborating with local schools to share learning resources

Inspection

Ofsted will inspect and judge the effectiveness of a school's governance. The criteria that inspectors will use back up the core functions set out above and will look at the extent to which governing bodies:

- Ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- Engage with key stakeholders
- Operate in such a way that statutory duties are met and priorities are approved
- Provide challenge and hold the head-teacher and other senior leaders to account for improving the quality of teaching, pupils' achievement and pupils' behaviour and safety
- Contribute to the school's self-evaluation and understand its strengths and weaknesses
- Support and strengthen school leadership
- Use performance management systems, including the performance management of the head-teacher, to improve teaching, leadership and management
- Ensure solvency and probity and that the financial resources made available to the school are managed effectively
- Use the pupil premium and other resources to overcome barriers to learning, including reading, writing and mathematics.

To make sure governing bodies make good use of money, the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) will look at how our money is being spent and will hold governors to account.

Self-evaluation

Governors will regularly evaluate their own effectiveness. One way of doing this is to consult the publication '*Twenty key questions for a governing body to ask itself*' published by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on' Education Governance and Leadership.'

Frequency of Meetings

Governors will meet within their respective Committees/Groups at least once every term. At these meetings the senior leader responsible for the strategic strand should prepare and deliver a presentation outliner the schools current performance in this area with supporting evidence from Key Performance Indicators.

A meeting of the full Governing Body will be held every term.

Governing Remotely

Governors may, at their discretion, govern remotely, carrying out meetings using video and or teleconferencing. The Clerk will assume responsibility for facilitating these meetings and ensure fair access for all. In this way the Governing body can ensure they are able to continue to govern through challenging/changing circumstances.

Overview of School Governance

Key Activities	Typical Inputs
Understand school performance • Pupil attainment and progress • Pupil behaviour, attendance and safety • Teaching quality and staff development	Performance data Ofsted reports Self-evaluation School visits
Set the school's strategic direction • Champion our vision, values and ethos • Set priorities for school improvement	Local aspirations National floor standards Parent and pupil voice
Commission action • Agree improvement targets and strategies • Agree allocation of resources • Agree how to monitor and review progress	Improvement plans Budget data
Performance manage our school leaders • Appoint head teacher and support their leadership • Hold school leaders to account for progress • Ensure financial probity and efficiency	Performance data Financial data School visits Academy trust handbook
Check the school is fit for purpose • Clarify our role and purpose • Review constitution and ways of working • Make sure members have necessary skills	Policy context Ofsted criteria Self-evaluation

The Structure of the Governing Body

The full Governing body will have a minimum of 3 members, but will not be subject to any maximum, made up of foundation, community and parent members. Individual governors will sit on one or more of the four committees and be given clear responsibility for identified areas of school performance. The aim of this is to ensure the school vision, as laid out in the bid, is met and to further ensure that the delivery and quality assurance of this is effective and manageable.

Governors will encourage and promote a governing body that reflects (not represents) the community.

The Groups will be as follows: -

The Pupils Outcomes committee responsible for and the quality assurance of the following areas: -

- Setting and reviewing of aspirational academic targets
- Reviewing teaching and learning
- Reviewing and supporting the music specialism
- The performance of departments
- Reviewing the effectiveness of interventions and mentoring.
  (V3 V5)

The Teaching, Learning and Assessment Committee, responsible for supporting the development and assessing the quality of the following areas:-

- A broad and balanced academic curriculum
- An effective enrichment curriculum
- Robust community links
- Teaching profile
- Assessment co-ordination
- Lesson Observation Programme
- AWE
- Intervention
- Reading programme
  (V2 V4 V6)

The Leadership, Management and Finance Committee, responsible for and the quality assurance of the following areas:-

- Setting the school budget
- Review SEF and SDP
- Leading on site development and maintenance
- Assurance that appropriate Health and Safety measures are in place, risk assessments are carried out and appropriate protective measures are in place
- Compliance with the Academy trust handbook (Academies financial handbook)
- School resources
- Staff appointments

- Recruitment and retention of staff
- PM structure
- CPD
- Staff salaries
- Use of PP/SEN/LAC funding
  (V5 V7)

The Personal Development, Behaviour and Wellbeing Committee responsible for and the quality assurance of the following areas:-

- Student voice
- Staff voice
- Community voice
- Safeguarding
- Health and safety
- Child protection
- Attendance
- Anti Bullying
- Exclusion and Permanent Exclusion
- Relationships, sex and health education program -ACE
- Religious Education Programme
- Mentoring programme
  (V1 V5 V6)

The governing body will be made up including the following roles:

1. **Chair and Vice chair of governors** (2) previously known as Directors appointed by the schools Board of Members
2. **Parent governor** (2) selected by election of parents and carers at the school
3. **Community Governors (2)** appointed by the governing body to advise of community links
4. **Finance governor** (1) will sit on the overall governing body and will chair the Finance committee.
5. **Safeguarding Governor** (1) a suitably qualified person appointed to lead the wellbeing committee and will sit on the full governing body.
6. **Head teacher (1)** the head teacher is expected to sit on the governing body of the school.

7. One of the above will become the chair for their allocated committee

8. Associate members: All members of the Island Free School senior leadership team will be associate members and sit on one of the 4 committees in line with the most relevant to their job description. They will attend on invite from the chair to report on relevant areas but will not be invited to any meetings where a conflict of interest may be apparent e.g. in the reviewing of salaries etc. and could be asked to leave for sections of the meetings. The head teacher will sit on all groups but may second senior leaders to individual committees.

Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest is 'any situation in which a governor's personal interest or interests that they owe to another body, 'may (or may appear to) influence or affect their decision making.'

Conflicts of interest may include:

- Providing goods or services to the school (themselves or relatives)
- Personal or professional relationships that will or could compromise the ability to act solely in the interests of the Island Free School.

Governors have a legal obligation to act in the best interests of The Island Free School and in accordance with the Island Free School's governing document, and to avoid situations where there may be a potential conflict of interest.

Conflicts of interests may arise where an individual's personal or family interests and/or loyalties conflict with those of the Island Free School. Such conflicts may create problems; they can:

• inhibit free discussion;
• result in decisions or actions that are not in the interests of the Island Free School; and
• risk the impression that the Island Free School has acted improperly.

The aim of this policy is to protect both the organisation and the individuals involved from any appearance of impropriety. The application, request or recommendation of all candidates who express an interest in joining the governing body will be considered using the Nolan Principles of Public Life. Conflicts of interest, including non-financial conflicts, that will lead to an application, request or recommendation to join the governing body of The Island Free School being declined include, but are not limited to, situations where the person:

• has evidenced links to extremism
• is the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or an interim order
• is included in the list of teachers or workers considered by the Secretary of State as unsuitable to work with children or young people
• is unable or unwilling to complete an enhanced DBS check
• is disqualified or has been previously removed from a role as a charity trustee
• has, at any time, been convicted of a criminal offence
• is considered an unsuitable candidate due to personal or professional conflict(s) with existing members of staff, parents or pupils of the school that, in the opinion of the governing body, would undermine confidence in the governing body
• is considered incapable by reason of illness or injury of managing their own affairs

The Declaration of Interests

Accordingly, we are asking the Island Free School governors and governor applicants *to* declare their interests or any possible conflict of interest in connection with their role/potential role at the Island Free School.
A declaration of interests form is provided for this purpose, listing the types of interest that should be declared
To be effective, the declaration of interests needs to be updated at least annually, and also when any changes occur.

Data Protection

The information provided will be processed in accordance with data protection principles as set out in the Data Protection Act 2018 as amended to include the UK-GDPR. Data will be processed only to ensure that all governors act in the best interests of the Island Free School. The information provided will not be used for any other purpose.

What to do if you face a conflict of Interest

If you face a conflict of interest, you should not be involved in decisions that are directly connected with that interest. You should declare your interest at the earliest opportunity and withdraw from any subsequent discussion.
You may, however, participate in discussions from which you may indirectly benefit, for example where the benefits are universal to all, or where your benefit is minimal.
If you fail to declare an interest that is known to the head teacher, chair of governors or the clerk to governors or secretary, any one of those people will declare that interest.

Decisions taken where a Governor or potential Governors has an identified conflict

In the event of the board having to decide upon a question in which a trustee, governor or prospective governor has an identified conflict of interest, all decisions will be made by vote, with a simple majority required. A quorum must be present for the discussion and decision; the governor/prospective governor whose interests are in question will not be counted when deciding whether the meeting is quorate, and they may not vote on matters affecting their own interest.

All decisions under a conflict of interest will be recorded by the clerk to governors and reported in the minutes of the meeting. The report will record:

- The nature and extent of the conflict;
- An outline of the discussion;
- The actions taken to manage the conflict.

Where a governor benefits from the decision, this will be reported in the minutes and annual report.
Where a member of the Island Free School governors are connected to a party involved in the supply of a service or product to the school, this information will also be fully disclosed in the annual report and accounts.
All decisions by the governing body are considered final and not open to appeal.

Managing Contracts

If you have a conflict of interest, you must not be involved in managing or monitoring a contract in which you have an interest. Monitoring arrangements for such contracts will include provisions for an independent challenge of bills and invoices, and termination of the contract if the relationship is unsatisfactory.

Linked Policies

- Recruitment of Governors

Monitoring and Review

'The Island Free School Governing Body Policy' will be reviewed by the Governing Body every two years.

Version:	0.6
Date of version:	December 2025
Validity	From 01/12/2025
Confidentiality level:	Public

Signed Headmaster ……

Ratified by Chair of Governors (COG)

Signed …… Date ……

THE ISLAND FREE SCHOOL

Governor Expression of Interest Form

Personal Details	
Title:	Occupation:
Full Name:	Date of Birth:

Contact Details					
Address:	Home Telephone:				
	Work Telephone:				
Town:	Mobile:				
County:	Email:				
Postcode:	May we contact you via email?	Yes		No	

About You		
Do you class yourself as disabled under the terms of the Equality Act 2010? ***(The Act defines disability as a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on a persons ability to carry out normal day to day activities)***	Yes	
	No	
How would you describe your ethnic origin?		

Prospective Governor Declaration and Submission				
I confirm that I have read the governance policy attached to this form that I am not disqualified from serving as a Governor, and that this form can be recorded and used by The Island Free School in accordance with the Data Protection Act.				
Declaration Confirmation (please initial)	Yes		No	

I am interested in joining the governing body in the following role (tick one)	
Foundation Governor (appointed by the Trust)	
Community Governor (appointed by Governing Body)	
Parent governor	

Declaration of Interests	
To ensure the integrity of the governing body is maintained all prospective governors are asked to identify all potential conflicts of interest here.	
Personal / professional relationships	Yes / No - If yes please give details
Are you related to anyone employed at the school	
Do you have any children at the school	
Do you have any current or historic conflicts with existing staff at the school	
Do you have any historic or current conflicts with existing parents or pupils of the school	
Personal Situation	
Have you been the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or an interim order	
Are you willing to complete an enhanced DBS check	
Have you ever been removed from a role in a charity trust	
Have you ever been barred from working with children	
Do you have, or have you ever had, links to any extremist organisation	

Certification	
By signing below, you declare that the information contained in this form is true and accurate, that you have the health and physical capability to carry out the role and that you are not barred from working with children. Any false or misleading information will disqualify you from appointment and or may lead to formal dismissal from post if it is discovered following appointment. Falsification of this form will lead to your application being automatically declined	
Signed:	Date: