**Clerk To Governors Skills Audit**

* This skills audit for clerks was directly adapted from the DfE’s “Clerking Competency Framework” which applies to clerks in both maintained schools and academies. It is a complete list of the knowledge and skills required for clerks in that framework.
* Clerks can tick a box to evaluate their own skill level in each area.
* Once the skills audit is complete the chair can examine the results and arrange for targeted training or guidance.

|  | **Skill Level (5 is highest)** | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **5** |
| **1. UNDERSTANDING GOVERNANCE. The clerk has knowledge and understanding of…** |  |  |  |  |  |
| the key features of effective governance and the core functions of the board as set out in the Governance Handbook and the knowledge, skills and behaviours in the Competency Framework for Governance |  |  |  |  |  |
| the specific duties and functions of the clerk as set out in legislation or articles of association as appropriate |  |  |  |  |  |
| the key themes of national education policy and the local education context |  |  |  |  |  |
| the relevant duties on boards under education and employment legislation and any related guidance |  |  |  |  |  |
| in SATs or MATs, the requirements of charity and company law and the Academies Financial Handbook |  |  |  |  |  |
| the board’s responsibilities with regard to Equalities and Health and Safety legislation |  |  |  |  |  |
| the board’s duties, the organisation’s policy and internal procedures and any responsibilities of the board within it, relating, but not limited to:  i. whistleblowing  ii. safeguarding  iii. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks  iv. Companies House records and returns (where applicable)  v. Get Information About Schools (GIAS) entries relating to the governance of the organisation  vi. the publication of information about governance on the organisation’s website |  |  |  |  |  |
| the board’s responsibilities relating to record-keeping and the provision of data, including the Data Protection Act 1998 and the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and how these apply to the recording and retention of information relating to the operation of the board |  |  |  |  |  |
| the purpose of, and frameworks for, the board’s accountability to and relationship with others (including DfE/ESFA, Ofsted, and the LA/diocese where applicable) and the clerk’s role in ensuring evidence is available to support this |  |  |  |  |  |
| in SATs and MATs, the trust’s funding agreement(s) and articles of association; in maintained schools, the instrument of government for the organisation and in organisations where this is applicable, the trust deeds |  |  |  |  |  |
| the governance structure of the organisation including its legal structure and constitution and procedures relating to the conduct of governance; its scheme of delegation for governance arrangements; and what this means for how and where decisions are made and communicated |  |  |  |  |  |
| the board’s strategic priorities (and where applicable, the charitable objects) for their organisation |  |  |  |  |  |
| the culture, values and ethos of the organisation and, where appropriate, that of the foundation trust including in relation to any religious character |  |  |  |  |  |
| the code of conduct for the board |  |  |  |  |  |
| the pupil performance and financial management information which the board will use to hold leaders to account |  |  |  |  |  |
| **2. ADMINISTRATION. The clerk…** |  |  |  |  |  |
| uses excellent time and project management skills to deliver efficient  arrangements for board and/or committee meetings ensuring that agendas and papers are shared in a timely manner |  |  |  |  |  |
| uses technology effectively to streamline planning and administration activity for the board |  |  |  |  |  |
| promotes effective use of project management tools, including risk registers, to support the chair in planning ahead and preparing for future meetings |  |  |  |  |  |
| identifies priorities, anticipates issues which may arise and draws these matters to the chair’s attention and proposes recommendations |  |  |  |  |  |
| uses a range of methods for recording and presenting information, deciding which is appropriate for the type of information and the audience |  |  |  |  |  |
| pays attention to detail, particularly when reviewing or proof-reading the agenda and board papers for clarity and accuracy before they are circulated |  |  |  |  |  |
| is well prepared for meetings having read all relevant papers and followed up on actions and matters arising from previous meetings |  |  |  |  |  |
| checks that meetings will be quorate and if not advises accordingly |  |  |  |  |  |
| makes good judgements about which discussion points to capture in the minutes and is aware of the importance of recording dissenting voices or challenges from the board, and records all decisions to produce accurate minutes and actions from the meeting |  |  |  |  |  |
| has the confidence to challenge the board in the event that meetings are not conducted in a proper or orderly manner or the programme of work does not embody the principles of good governance |  |  |  |  |  |
| is aware of the importance of confidentiality and where and how this applies to discussions and documentation |  |  |  |  |  |
| maintains or assists in the maintenance of accurate registers (e.g. register of interests, gifts and hospitality) and is able to access these or provide relevant information from them when asked by the board |  |  |  |  |  |
| ensures systematic and organised filing procedures to manage documentation and puts in place clear processes for retention and retrieval of information in accordance with legal requirements for records management |  |  |  |  |  |
| maintains a high standard of work and calm demeanour, even when under pressure, ensuring information is complete and accurate |  |  |  |  |  |
| ensures the safe custody and proper use of any corporate seal(s) |  |  |  |  |  |
| **3. ADVICE AND GUIDANCE. The clerk…** |  |  |  |  |  |
| is aware of sources of information relevant to the context and circumstances of the board and can discern what level and type of information it is appropriate to provide to support board discussions |  |  |  |  |  |
| knows how to use the internet or other resources to find information and is aware of the importance of checking whether information is from a credible source |  |  |  |  |  |
| puts in place processes for systematically identifying, and sharing with their board, any changes to relevant legal, regulatory or compliance requirements |  |  |  |  |  |
| is systematic in their approach to informing the board about training and development opportunities |  |  |  |  |  |
| provides the board with impartial advice and guidance that is clear, well-organised and logical before, during and after meetings as necessary |  |  |  |  |  |
| can explain clearly, when required, the legal and contractual duties and responsibilities of the board |  |  |  |  |  |
| knows where and how to access specialist third party advice or guidance, including legal advice, as directed by and on behalf of the board |  |  |  |  |  |
| understands how and where conflicts of interest and loyalty (financial, non-financial, real and perceived) may arise and, where appropriate, provides advice to the board on how these can be addressed |  |  |  |  |  |
| is aware of the potential consequences of non-compliance and knows how to intervene and/or escalate where there are concerns about non-compliance which may not have been addressed by the board |  |  |  |  |  |
| has the confidence and credibility to speak out, or alert the chair, when the board is at risk of overstepping its strategic role or where board behaviour is not in line with the code of conduct |  |  |  |  |  |
| knows how and with whom outside of the organisation to share concerns where they suspect misconduct of the board or individuals on the board |  |  |  |  |  |
| **4. PEOPLE AND RELATIONSHIPS. The clerk…** |  |  |  |  |  |
| develops and maintains effective professional working relationships with the chair, the board and executive leaders |  |  |  |  |  |
| uses appropriate influencing skills to gain the board’s confidence |  |  |  |  |  |
| builds relationships with key contacts within, and external to, the organisation where required by the board |  |  |  |  |  |
| establishes clear channels of communication for sharing board information within the organisation and, where appropriate, with external contacts and partners |  |  |  |  |  |
| is aware of the importance of robust, constructive challenge both in meetings and in the wider organisation, and supports the board in developing a culture where challenge is welcomed |  |  |  |  |  |
| uses knowledge of governance to contribute to board discussions on design of governance and committee structures that are fit for purpose and appropriate to the scale and complexity of the organisation, ensuring that decisions on structure are recorded and shared across the organisation |  |  |  |  |  |
| understands the importance of succession planning and can advise the board on expiry of an individual’s term of office and the impact of this on the board’s capacity and skills mix |  |  |  |  |  |
| establishes, in discussion with the board, open and transparent vacancy filling processes and procedures for election and appointment, facilitates these where required and records the outcome |  |  |  |  |  |
| is aware of tools and methods for carrying out evaluation of board skills and coordinates the administration of regular board skills audits, collating responses and advising the chair and board on skills gaps and strategies for addressing these |  |  |  |  |  |
| contributes to the coordination of effective learning and development opportunities for those involved in governance, including induction and continuing professional development |  |  |  |  |  |
| understands the value of board self-evaluation and helps facilitate this through accurate record-keeping of attendance and non-attendance and knowledge of board members’ active participation in governance |  |  |  |  |  |
| demonstrates a commitment to developing and improving their own knowledge and skills including through self-review (against agreed objectives where appropriate); learning from others to improve their own practice; sharing their skills with others, including board members; and undertaking relevant training and development opportunities |  |  |  |  |  |