

## Governance Policy

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### 1. Introduction

This policy is one of a series of group policies that, taken together, are designed to form a comprehensive statement of the Cavendish Education group's aspiration to provide an outstanding education for each of its students and the mechanisms and procedures in place to achieve this.

All policies have been written, not simply to meet statutory and other requirements, but to enable and evidence the work that the whole group is undertaking to ensure the implementation of its core values.

While this current policy document may be referred to elsewhere in the Cavendish Education group documentation, including particulars of employment, it is non-contractual.

The Cavendish education group employs the services of third-party organisations to ensure regulatory compliance and implement best practices for<sup>1</sup>:

<sup>1</sup> To bring policy introduction section in line with Cavendish policy templates



- HR and Employment Law
- Health & Safety Guidance
- DBS Check processing
- Mandatory Safeguarding, Health & Safety, and other relevant training
- Data protection and GDPR guidance
- Specialist insurance cover

Where this policy refers to 'employees', the term refers to any individual classified as an employee or a worker working with and on behalf of the school (including volunteers and contractors).

The Cavendish Education Group is committed to safeguarding and promoting children's and young people's welfare and expects all staff, volunteers, pupils, and visitors to share this commitment.

All outcomes generated by this document must take account of and seek to contribute to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people at any School in the Cavendish Education group.

The policy documents of Cavendish Education are revised and published periodically in good faith. They are inevitably subject to revision. On occasions, a significant revision may have to take effect between the re-publication of a set of policy documents.

The governance of the Cavendish Education schools is in place to underpin and monitor the operation and day-to-day leadership and management of each of our schools.

Governance ensures that our schools fully comply with legislative and regulatory requirements. All of the Cavendish Education schools are registered as independent schools, all of which must fully comply with the Independent School Standards –The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations (2014):

- Part 1: The quality of the education provided;
- Part 2: The spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development of pupils;
- Part 3: The welfare, health and safety of pupils;
- Part 4: The suitability of staff, supply staff and Proprietors;
- Part 5: The premises and accommodation;
- Part 6: The provision of information; and
- Part 7: The manner in which complaints are handled.
- Part 8: The quality of Leadership and Management (inclusive of Governance)

## 2. Legislation and Guidance

The following legislation and guidance is applicable:



- [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) Regulations \(2014\)](#)
- [National Minimum Standards for boarding schools](#)
- [National Minimum Standards for Residential Special Schools](#)
- [Education Inspection Handbook – Ofsted August 2023](#)
- [Non-association independent school inspection handbook - Ofsted August 2023 \(updated October 2024\)](#)
- [Governance Handbook - DfE October 2020 \(non-statutory guidance for academies, multi-academy trusts and maintained schools\)](#)
- [ISI inspection handbook](#)

### 3. The Purpose of Governance

The purpose of governance is to provide confident, strategic leadership and to create robust accountability, oversight, and assurance for educational and financial performance.

All boards have three core functions:

1. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos, and strategic direction;
2. Holding the Head Teacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff; and
3. Overseeing the school's financial performance and ensuring its money is well spent.

(Governance Handbook – October 2020 DfE )

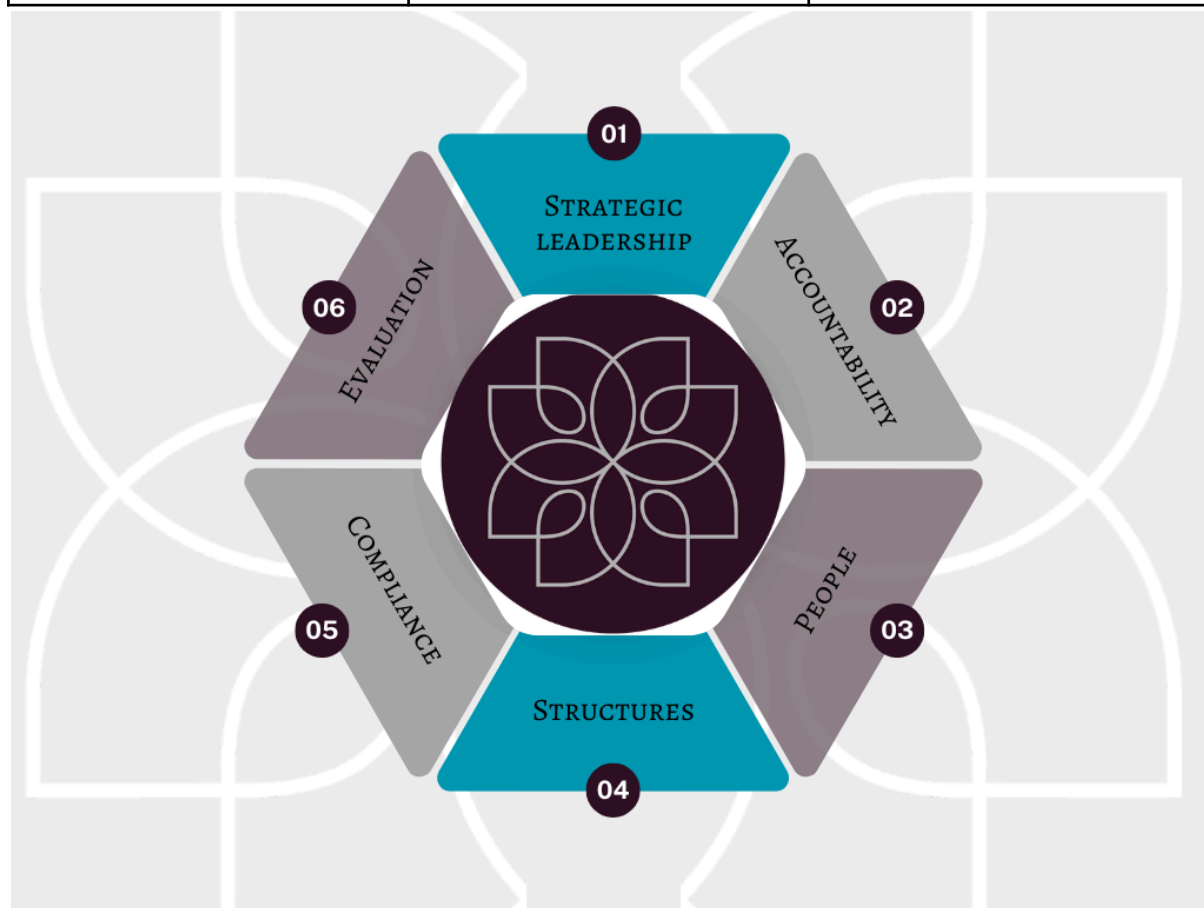
### 4. The Key Features of Effective Governance

Effective governance is based on six key features:

Core pillars of the board's role and purpose	<b>1. Strategic leadership</b>	That sets and champions vision, ethos, and strategy
	<b>2. Accountability</b>	That drives educational standards and financial performance
How governance is organised	<b>3. People</b>	With the right skills, experience and qualities
	<b>4. Structures</b>	That reinforces clearly defined roles and responsibilities



Ensuring and improving the quality of governance	<b>5. Compliance</b>	With statutory and contractual requirements
	<b>6. Evaluation</b>	To monitor and improve the quality and impact of governance



### 5. The Structure of Governance within Cavendish Education

Accountability is crucial for the effective and compliant operation of our schools. Our governance structure fosters a broad, collaborative understanding of each school, ensuring that accountability extends beyond school leadership to include a wider network of support. Through open and transparent discussions with committed professionals, we can closely monitor legal and regulatory compliance and uphold high-performance standards in every school. The insights contributed by each board member are vital for promoting excellence and ensuring that school compliance and progress are transparent and objective.

To this end, the governance of each school will be guided by our organisation through a peer governance model, chaired by the Managing Directors, who are accountable to the Cavendish Education Board. Good collaboration and communication are essential at all levels, with everyone aiming to ensure that each governance meeting is tailored to address the school's specific needs, regulatory



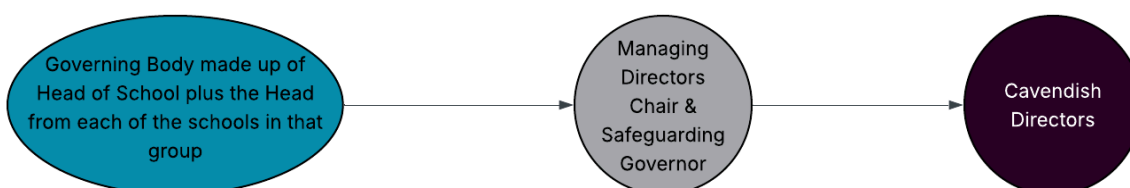
requirements, and risk levels and that trends are appropriately identified through good oversight and monitoring.

## Local Governance Structure

All local Governing Bodies/Clerks to use templates for agendas/minutes etc., set by the Board of Directors

Managing Directors present 3 reports per year To the Board of Directors, following the local Governor meetings.

One Clerk per managing Director to minute all local governors meetings.



The reports are a summary of the local Governance, Governance, looking at risks and actions. Full minutes of each local governance meeting are available for all Board Members

3 school governors' meetings per year per School (= 12 per managing director)

### Local Governing Body Structure

- Managing Director (Chair & Safeguarding Governor)
- Local Clerk
- Headteacher Governors x (how many schools in the local Group)

The Chair of Governors on each local governing body will also hold responsibility for Safeguarding (including the PREVENT duty) from a governance perspective (working closely with the Group Director for safeguarding), and ensuring that the local governance process is run effectively. While the wider governing board provides essential support and input to achieve the best possible outcomes and maintain compliance, certain governance responsibilities may be delegated to other governors, with clear documentation and recording of these delegations in the governance minutes.

Board members' values and personal attributes are equally vital as their skills and knowledge. These qualities empower governors to effectively apply their expertise and collaborate as a cohesive team, contributing actively to strong governance.

All governors serving on our schools' local governing bodies are expected to fulfil their responsibilities following the seven principles of public life ([the Nolan principles](#)). They should also be aware of their obligations under equality legislation, promoting diversity and inclusion. Additionally, they should understand



effective governance of educational quality and outcomes for all children and young people. Furthermore, everyone involved in governance should be:

**Committed** to investing the necessary time and effort into the role, with a strong ambition to achieve the best possible outcomes for young people. Willing to dedicate their time, skills, and knowledge to both personal development and the development of others, to build highly effective governance.

**Confident** in possessing an independent mindset, capable of leading and engaging in courageous discussions, confidently sharing their perspectives, and actively participating in the board's work.

Having a **curious** mindset and an analytical approach, with an appreciation for the importance of thoughtful questioning

**Challenging** by offering constructive challenges to the status quo, critically assessing information and data rather than accepting it at face value, and continuously striving for improvement.

**Collaborative** and willing to listen and collaborate with others, recognising the importance of building strong working relationships within the board and with executive leaders, staff, parents and carers, students, the local community, and employers.

**Critical** by appreciating the role of critical friendship that balances challenge with support, while being self-reflective and committed to learning and development opportunities to enhance personal and board-wide effectiveness.

**Creative** and capable of questioning conventional thinking and open to new problem-solving approaches, recognising the importance of innovation and creative thinking in driving organisational growth and success.

All governors will be offered appropriate training as available and trained in safeguarding, including Prevent.

Governors in all Cavendish Education Schools must attend 3 Governors meetings per year and conduct additional visits to other schools throughout the year (at least one per academic year to each school). The Chair of Governors will be expected to meet with relevant inspectors during inspections to give an account of how governance works, and they will attend the inspection feedback meeting at the end of any inspection.

Meeting/Report	Frequency
<b>Remote monitoring</b> using information from My Concern/individual schools MIS systems/Xero/individual schools spreadsheets/SchoolPro platforms	Weekly/Monthly



Head teacher's report to Governors (Appendix 1)	Termly (3 times/year)
Governors Meeting (Agenda Appendix 2)	Termly (3 times/year)
Each school will have a <b>Governance monitoring file</b> in a shared Google Drive, which reports for the current academic year only will be kept (archived annually)	Ongoing

## 6. The Governance Organisation

Each Cavendish School operates within a cluster alongside other schools, fostering a supportive governance structure. Head Teachers in the cluster take on the role of Peer Governors for their counterparts, nurturing a shared commitment to educational excellence.

Governance meetings for the schools within each cluster are scheduled to occur three times annually, coinciding with the academic terms. Each cluster of schools will aim to have its meetings held during the same week, creating a streamlined approach to governance. The Managing Director of the cluster chairs these meetings, ensuring that the agenda is effectively managed and focused on the needs of each school.

To facilitate meaningful discussions, Head Teachers must submit a comprehensive written report utilising a standardised template (as detailed in Appendix 1) at least two weeks before the scheduled meetings. This advance notice allows governors ample time to prepare and formulate constructive questions, promoting a culture of challenge and support during the meetings.

At the beginning of each meeting, actions from the previous governance cycle will be reviewed. Following this, governors will pose challenge and support questions to each Head Teacher. This systematic approach enables Cavendish Education to celebrate successes while identifying and addressing areas needing further development. By doing so, timely and relevant targets can be established for each school, promoting continuous improvement in educational practices. The meetings will adhere to a consistent agenda (referenced in Appendix 2), ensuring clarity and focus in discussions.

A designated clerk records and minutes the discussions, responses, targets, and commentaries from each governance meeting. The minutes are distributed to all members of the local governing bodies within five working days following the meeting. This ensures that all parties are informed and accountable for the outcomes discussed.



Subsequently, the highlights of the local governance meetings are presented to the Directors' Board meetings held each term in the form of the Managing Directors' report. These sessions are crucial for reviewing the governance processes and evaluating the discussions that took place. This structured format allows for close monitoring of agreed-upon targets and strategy and fosters conversations about how the Cavendish Education board can provide support as needed. This collaborative approach reinforces Cavendish Education's commitment to continuous improvement and effective governance.

See Appendix 3 Group Governance Scheme of Delegation<sup>2</sup>

## 7. Peer Governor Visits

The Peer Governor visit model represents a strategic initiative to enhance the quality of education across all schools within the Cavendish Education group. This model promotes innovation, collaboration, and the sharing of best practices to elevate educational standards throughout the network.

The primary objectives of these visits include:

- Establishing a unique approach to provider-to-provider support.
- Implementing an improvement strategy that offers all schools both external challenge and assistance.
- Cultivating a culture of high aspirations and achieving outstanding outcomes for every child and young person in the cluster.

All Governors will visit their clustered schools at least once per year, providing essential external support and challenge. This engagement allows governors to:

- Observe the implementation of policies and procedures in action.
- Assess the impact of these policies on the school's performance.
- Interact with students, staff, and parents to gather their insights and perspectives.

In addition to their visitations, each Peer Governor will participate in the Governance Meetings for the other schools in their cluster three times a year.

Whenever possible, it is also recommended that other governors complete the Cavendish Governor visit form following their visits (see Appendix 4) and share their findings with the Head Teacher and Chair of Governors. This collaborative approach ensures thorough oversight and continual improvement within the schools.

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<sup>2</sup> New governance document to detail delegation of tasks



## 8. The Role of Clerks and the Board of Directors

A clerk to a school governing body plays a vital role in ensuring the effective operation of governance processes. They provide administrative support, such as organising meetings, preparing agendas, and accurately recording minutes.

As a liaison between the governing body, school leadership, and external stakeholders, the clerk ensures compliance with legal and procedural requirements. They offer guidance on governance policies, statutory obligations, and best practices, enabling informed decision-making. By maintaining clear records and facilitating communication, the clerk supports the governing body in fulfilling its responsibilities for school oversight and strategic direction.

All local governing body clerks will be line-managed by the Chair of that group, trained, and overseen by the Governance Professional for the Cavendish Education Group.

The board of directors for the local governing bodies plays a critical role in providing strategic oversight, setting policy direction, and ensuring accountability in the organisation's operations. They are responsible for representing Cavendish Education's interests, approving budgets, and monitoring financial performance to ensure resources are managed effectively.

Additionally, the board ensures compliance with regulations and fosters transparency and ethical governance. By guiding decision-making and prioritising the group's needs, the board ensures the organisation fulfils its mission and long-term goals.

To ensure quality and consistency across the group, each school will have a member of the Board of Directors attend at least one local governance meeting per school per year.

## 9. Group Performance

The Cavendish Board of Directors is responsible for ensuring that all schools provide a safe environment for all pupils to receive high-quality education. Overall School performance will be reviewed at the Board Director's meetings, which will be held each term, following the local governance meetings, to review each school's progress, monitor targets, set strategy and discuss how the wider team can offer support.

These meetings are chaired by the Group CEO and attended by the rest of the board. Managing Directors will present a report on each of their schools to the board, which is then reviewed and discussed.



## 10. Governors Training Expectations

All governors must complete their designated training within one month of their appointment to ensure they are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to fulfil their responsibilities effectively.

This policy emphasises the importance of maintaining up-to-date and relevant training to support informed decision-making and good governance practices.

To facilitate compliance and accountability, the local clerk will maintain a centralised record of all completed training, which will be regularly reviewed to identify and address any gaps. Governors are encouraged to proactively engage in refresher courses or additional training as needed to remain informed about new developments and best practices.

[Appendix 1 Example Spring Headteachers' report academic year 2025-2026](#)

[Appendix 2 Agenda Template](#)

[Appendix 3 Scheme of Delegation](#)

[Appendix 4 Governor Visit Report Template](#)