

The Governance, Leadership and Management of Radnor House Sevenoaks as a Proprietorial School

Governance

Radnor House Sevenoaks, as a member of the Radnor House Group of Schools, recognises the value that independent governance can provide and has, therefore, sought to combine the best elements of the governance characteristics of charitable schools and the corporate world by establishing strong systems of governance. At the Group level, Non-Executive and Executive Directors meet monthly to discuss matters relating to strategy, finance, education, staffing and facilities across all schools.

In addition, Radnor House Sevenoaks has a Board of Governance, chaired by the Chairman of the Board of Directors and drawing members from across the stakeholder groups, including a parent from the junior section and a parent from the senior school, which meets on a termly basis. As a separate group with specific responsibility for oversight of educational quality at Radnor House Sevenoaks, the Board of Governance holds the Head and Senior Leadership Team to account in the delivery of the school's aims.

The Proprietor reports to a Board of Directors that includes independent members not involved in the day-to-day running of the schools. The Board includes members with many years of experience in the education sector as well as members with specialism in finance, business development and corporate governance. The Board of Directors has the final say in all matters of strategic importance to the school and ensures strict supervision of compliance with legislative and regulatory standards. The Board has the power to seek independent professional advice, as required, at the cost of the company.

The Board of Directors receives the minutes of the Board of Governance meetings and a verbal report each term from the Chairman. The Board meets parents socially at school events and ensures that, by being known and also through the reports at the termly Board of Governance meetings, any matters of concern can be addressed in a forum independent of the executive management of the school.

The focus of the Board of Directors is to ensure compliance with the Education (Independent School Standards) (England) Regulations 2018 (ISSR with reference to:)

- The quality of the education provided;
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils;
- The welfare, health and safety of pupils;
- The suitability of staff, supply staff and the Proprietor;
- The premises and accommodation;
- The provision of information; and
- The manner in which complaints are handled.

Leadership and Management

When evaluating the quality of leadership and management in our school, we consider how well we:

- know the school and understand its strengths and weaknesses through being fully involved in the school's self-evaluation;
- support and strengthen school leadership and contribute to shaping its strategic direction;
- provide challenge and, where relevant, hold the Head and other senior leaders to account for improving the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of performance management systems;
- work efficiently including through having a systematic approach to meeting statutory duties and approving and monitoring priorities, ensuring they are focused on improving teaching and learning;
- demonstrate an ambitious vision for our school with high expectations for what every pupil and teacher can achieve and set high standards for quality and performance;
- improve teaching and learning through rigorous performance management and professional development;
- provide the ethos and conditions for all pupils to achieve their full potential, learn and make progress;
- evaluate our school's strengths and weaknesses and use the findings to generate improvements;

- improve our school's capacity for sustaining improvement by developing high quality teaching, leadership capacity and high professional standards among all our staff;
- engage with parents and carers, and placing authorities, where relevant, in supporting pupils' achievement, behaviour and personal development and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development;
- ensure that all the required policies, routines and procedures are in place and are implemented effectively so that the independent schools standards' are met, pupils are safe, parents and carers have the information they require and the school operates as an efficient and orderly community;
- focus on how effectively as leaders and managers at all levels we enable pupils to overcome specific barriers to learning and promote improvements for all pupils and groups of pupils in the context of our school. These include how relentlessly as leaders, managers, the governing body, proprietors and trustees pursue a vision for excellence, for example through:
 - ensuring the rigorous implementation of well-focused improvement plans based on robust self-evaluation;
 - consistently implementing our policies and procedures;
 - monitoring and managing the extent to which staff, pupils, parents and carers and, where relevant, placing authorities, are engaged by and contribute to realising the vision and ambition of leaders, managers, governors, proprietors and trustees;
 - effectively monitoring and evaluating the quality of the curriculum and teaching, the performance of the school relative to other schools, and the satisfaction of pupils and their parents, carers and, where relevant, placing authorities;
- use effective strategies for improving teaching and care of pupils, including, where relevant, the teaching of reading and improving behaviour, for example through:
 - using systematic, accurate and robust performance management including using appropriate procedures for tackling underperformance;
 - monitoring the quality of teaching and learning, and acting on its findings;
 - providing a coherent and effective programmes of training and professional development based on the identified needs of the pupils and staff – where relevant, this should especially consider newly qualified teachers and teachers at an early stage of their career; ensuring that all staff training required for continued registration as an independent school has been completed and is up to date;
 - developing staff through dialogue, coaching, training, mentoring and support, and providing examples of best practice;
 - effectively leading curriculum development;
- ensure that the curriculum is suitable for the needs, aptitudes and interests of the pupils, is well planned and delivered by staff with the appropriate knowledge and skills to do so, and promotes pupils' progress and personal development;
- display a demonstrable capacity to bring about further improvement as shown by a combination of:
 - a track record of improving aspects of academic performance and/or maintaining high levels of academic performance;
 - improvements in the quality of teaching over time or the maintenance of good or better teaching;
 - robust self-evaluation which underpins actions and plans focused on the right areas to bring about improvement; noting that good intentions and an aspirational outlook, or a recent change of Head following a period of poor leadership, do not in themselves provide sufficient proof of the capacity to achieve improvement;
- use effective procedures for identifying and supporting disabled pupils, those with a special educational need and pupils with other significant disadvantages, so that they can maximise their potential and are enabled, wherever possible, to overcome their barriers to learning;
- use effective strategies and procedures for promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, including providing appropriate guidance to help pupils prepare for life in modern democratic Britain and a global society;
- manage safeguarding arrangements to ensure that there is safe recruitment and all pupils are safe, including for example the effective identification of children in need or at risk of significant harm, for instance:
 - maintain the single central register and appropriate arrangements for safeguarding and the safe recruitment of staff;
 - maintain the rigour with which absences of staff and pupils are followed up;
 - oversee how well safe-practices and a culture of safety are promoted through the curriculum;
 - provide school premises and accommodation which meet the requirements of the Independent Schools Standards and relevant national minimum standards and ensuring that good use is made of them;
 - promote the confidence and engagement of parents and carers, and where appropriate placing authorities, in their children's learning and the development of good behaviour, and providing them with the information about the school they require;
 - work in partnership with other schools, external agencies and the community, including business, to improve the school, extend the curriculum and increase the range and quality of learning opportunities for pupils; and
 - implement robust procedures for handling complaints.

Proprietor's Responsibilities

The Proprietor has responsibility for the ownership and oversight of the school on a daily basis. This includes:

- providing effective oversight of the school in line with its aims and full responsibility for educational standards, financial planning and investment in staff, accommodation and resources;
- having a good insight into the working of the school and engaging in its strategic development;
- exercising effectively a monitoring role and providing support, challenge and stimulus for growth and improvement;
- discharging effectively responsibility for safeguarding and for welfare and health and safety throughout the school;
- ensuring that the school has appropriate legal permissions from all relevant bodies (including lease, planning, copyright, examinations);
- fulfilling the statutory duties for pupils under 18 (where applicable) and those on roll post-18; and
- being a good employer with all that this involves.

The Proprietor also has responsibility for management structures and responsibilities ensuring that:

- at all levels of responsibility, the leadership and management of the school are effective, in accordance with the aims of the school and in the discharge of delegated responsibilities, particularly those involving policy implementation and the safeguarding of pupils;
- leadership and management provide clear educational direction, as reflected in the quality of the pupils' education;
- leadership and management are effective in self-evaluation, setting priorities and ensuring that objectives are achieved;
- management, at all levels, is successful in securing, supporting, developing and motivating sufficient high quality staff and ensuring that they are suitably trained for their roles in meeting the needs of all pupils and in safeguarding, welfare and health and safety.

The Board of Directors is appointed jointly by the Proprietor and the financial investors in the business. The Board of Governance is appointed by the Board of Directors in consultation with the Head.

The Board of Directors

The Board of Directors has the authority and power to commit the Proprietor to a particular line of action. The Board of Directors at Radnor House Sevenoaks is a decision making body as well as supporting the Proprietor with best advice. Implicit in this is the Board of Directors' unreserved support for the educational aims, objectives and ethos of Radnor House Sevenoaks.

Composition of the Board of Directors

1. The composition of a Board of Directors requires careful thought and planning. The Directors between them are able to speak with knowledge and experience on the whole range of matters that are likely to come before them. The Board carries out regular competency reviews to ensure that all relevant skills are represented or can be accessed as required.
2. Continuity is important, and Directors are normally expected to serve for at least five years. At the same time, the regular infusion of fresh blood is equally important and it is desirable to strike a balance in the range of Directors' experience.

Individual Directors

3. The strength of the Board of Directors lies in the talents of its members and in their ability to work together as a team. Each member has an equal right to participate, and to make up his or her own mind about the issues presented. But once decisions are taken, individual members are bound by them.
4. Breaches of confidentiality, however inadvertent, can cause embarrassment or damage to the school. In general, the business, discussions and minutes of the Board of Directors' meetings should be viewed as confidential to the Proprietor and Board of Directors, including what is discussed before a recommendation is made. But, once taken, the decision may, at the discretion of the Proprietor and Board of Directors, be open, as may the agreed reasons for arriving at it. It is for the Proprietor and Board of Directors to determine how best to meet the openness requirement and for individual members to adhere to it.
5. Many Directors bring to the school not only their professional or technical expertise but also some experience of comparable roles.

The Chairman of the Board of Directors

6. The Chairman of the Board of Directors is appointed by the Board. In addition to seeing that the business of the Board of Directors is conducted properly and the meetings are run efficiently, it is the Chairman's task to get all members to work together as a team.

7. The office requires that time be given to its discharge and, if special difficulties arise, a great deal of time. The Chairman makes it his or her business to be fully informed about the affairs of the school and to have a clear grasp of its financial position. His or her information should, so far as is possible, be at first hand and would normally come mainly from talks with the Head.

Meetings

8. The Board of Directors at Radnor House Sevenoaks meets monthly. Members of the Senior Leadership Team and Heads of Faculty are regularly invited to present to the Board on topics relevant to their responsibilities. This is followed by an interactive discussion between the Board and the staff member, challenging views and agreeing actions as required.
9. The agenda varies from meeting to meeting but retains standing items, including the Head's report, health and safety, child protection/safeguarding and finance report. The agenda balances educational and business items.

The Executive Assistant to the Board ("EA")

10. The EA organises the agendas for meetings of the Board of Directors, and the Board of Governance, with the approval of the Chairman and the Head. The EA's duties include convening the meetings and seeing that the dates of subsequent meetings are agreed. Notes of the meeting are taken by the EA, who then drafts the minutes for approval by the Board of Directors, or Board of Governance, as appropriate. The EA then distributes them accordingly, and ensures that the authorised version is filed, along with reports presented at the meeting.

Directors and the Head

11. The Board of Directors is concerned with aims, policies and plans. It supports the Head and Proprietor in formulating and implementing them. Acting within that framework, the Head and his/her team manage and administer the school with the support of the Board of Directors.
12. In supporting the Directors to deal with the exigencies of school life sensibly and consistently, the Head and the Board of Directors utilise policies. Some policies are required by law but, even when they are not, there is value in published policy statements that can be varied with changing circumstances: they reduce the risk or argument and people know where they stand. On a regularly agreed basis, the Directors review the list of policies to make sure there are no gaps that could leave open the possibility of litigation.
13. Where appropriate, development planning is an area where the Board of Directors and Head work closely together. The plan covers, inter alia, education, buildings and other relevant areas of the school.
14. The relationship between the Board of Directors and the Head should be one of complete trust, with unfettered frankness of discussion, support for the Head and clear accountability.

The Board of Governance

In addition to the monthly Directors' meetings, Board of Governance meetings are held on a termly basis and have greater focus on the quality of education provided at Radnor House Sevenoaks. Those included as part of the Board of Governance are considered "Members" of the Governance Board and take specific responsibility for the provision of education at the school.

Composition of the Board of Governance

15. Members are drawn from across the school community and typically include two parents and several senior staff representatives, in addition to full Board Directors. The current composition of the Board of Governance at Radnor House Sevenoaks is:

- Chairman of the Board
- Executive Principal
- Non-Executive Director with specific responsibility for Radnor House Sevenoaks
- Head
- Two Parent Members
- Senior Deputy Head
- Designated Safeguarding Lead

Meetings

16. These are held termly and will often follow the more regular Directors' meetings. The EA is Secretary to the Board of Governance and distributes agendas, board packs and takes the minutes.

17. The Board of Governance aims to provide greater scrutiny and advice for certain areas of the school and carries out the role more usually carried out by sub-committee in charitable trust schools. The specific areas covered as standing items at each meeting are:

- Education and Academic Policy
- Pastoral and Pupil Support
- Health & Safety
- Safeguarding

Going into school

18. Individual Directors are expected to visit the school, in their role as members of the Board of Directors, with the Head's encouragement. The Board of Directors plan visits to cover a wide range of school life and visits have a clear purpose. Visits by members can be useful and informative. They do not replace professional inspection or the monitoring and evaluation carried out by the Head.

Signed:

Date: December 2018



Dr Colin Diggory
Chairman of the Board of Directors