



Cumberland
School

Policy for Board Core Function and Operation of School Boards

Last Update: September 2020
Next Update: September 2021

Witherslack Group

Policy for the core function and operation of School and Integrated Home Boards

Core Function

The overall function of the Board is to set the strategic direction of the establishment giving it a focus in order to deliver the best possible outcomes for the young people whilst delivering Witherslack Group's compelling value proposition and narrative.

In essence, the Board has a strong focus on two core functions:

- a. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction which puts the CVP at the centre of planning, delivery and evaluation
- b. Holding Head Teacher/ Integrated Children's Homes Manager and Senior Leadership to account for the performance of the Establishment, celebrating success wherever possible and challenging underperformance.

The role of the Board (Schools and Integrated Sites)

The Board consists of the following members, according to the type of establishment:

Witherslack Group Director (Non-Exec Chair)

Regional Director (Schools and Children's Homes)

Regional Manager (Children's Homes)

Head Teacher/Children's Home Manager

Deputy Head Teacher/Children's Home Deputy Manager

Head of Pastoral Care (School)

Head of Residential Care (Residential Schools).

All individual Board members are expected to be well prepared, make a positive contribution, challenge where appropriate and express their views across all relevant areas. This will lead to informed discussions in areas in need of development and improvement that will have a positive impact on future outcomes.

Other key personnel within Witherslack Group, school and children's home may attend to discuss and present in their areas of expertise.

The Board oversees the setting and implementation of the key strategic goals for the establishment via the School Development Plan. This plan places the child at the centre of our work with the leadership team providing strong inspirational leadership that raises the aspirations and expectations of all staff, children and young people. The Board monitors the safeguarding procedures across the school and ensures that the appropriate controls and measures are in place and implemented. The Board also ensures that the establishments is providing an inspirational environment where children and young people thrive, develop skills, confidence and achieve the best possible outcomes. The Board insists on the professional development of staff leading to high levels of staff engagement, career progression and retention.

The Board provides a forum for the leadership team to discuss and monitor the self-evaluation processes and school development plan and to work collaboratively to find solutions to any emerging areas. There is an expectation that this process needs to be dynamic and clearly focussed with each Board member having key responsibilities and accountability within the Board. This also provides an opportunity to listen to and consider new ideas/initiatives from leaders that may support development across the Witherslack Group.

The Board needs to have confidence that the establishment is highly effective in implementing the current Group 'winning strategies'.

To achieve operational consistency in providing the highest standards of education and care, the Board is responsible for ensuring that the establishment has the correct resources necessary. The quality of teaching, learning and care is at the centre of this. There is also the need for the Board to track the implementation of the policies, procedures and development plans appertaining to improving overall children and young people's outcomes. Key performance data and reports from the Quality Assurance team and external evaluations are crucial to informing effective and timely decision making.

The Boards also acts as a link between the establishment and the Witherslack Group Senior Leadership team.

Additional processes which support Governance

Regional Directors have responsibility for the oversight of a maximum of four schools and meet with head teachers on a fortnightly basis to discuss and oversee key areas of school performance and operations.

Other Witherslack Group departments meet regularly with the schools senior leaders to discuss and oversee key areas of performance and outcomes. These departments are:

- Quality Assurance who undertake regular reviews in the following areas:
 - School Improvement
 - Safeguarding
 - Pastoral processes and procedures
 - Safety, Health and Environment
- Human Resources
- Commercial and Finance
- Buildings and Properties
- Clinical Services
- Information Technology

Operation of School Board Meetings

The School and Integrated Provisions Board hold half-termly meetings, September, November, January, March/April, May and June.

The board meeting will focus around the previous half-term data and any reports/reviews that have taken place. The board will also monitor the progress and impact of the School Development plan.

The agenda will follow the below format:

- Report on previous meeting actions
- Head teacher report (including school half-termly dashboard)
- Focus report
- QA report update
- School Development Plan
- Safeguarding and Health and Safety
- Staff Engagement
- AOB

A written record of the main areas of discussion, decision making and action plan undertaken by the Senior Administrative Personnel – Schools.

Chair

- To ensure the efficient functioning of the Board
- To give clear leadership focussing on its core functions
- To create the right board environment for high quality debate and decision-making
- To challenge and hold Board members to account as needed.

Regional Director – Schools/Children’s Homes

- To monitor educational, social, care and commercial performance of the establishment and report to the Board of successes and areas for improvement
- To support, approve and challenge the work of the Head teacher/Homes Manager(s) and Senior Leadership Team giving advice, guidance and direction when required
- To review Board Reports prior to the meeting and ensure the content is appropriate and of a detailed enough nature to allow relevant debate
- To agree with the Chair, in advance of the meeting, of any areas of special focus or key areas of concern in the upcoming meeting.

Head Teacher/Registered Manager

- To monitor and present educational, social, care and commercial performance of the establishment and report to the Board of successes and areas for improvement along with strategies to improve
- To provide and demonstrate leadership and direction for the overall performance of the establishment and support the work of Senior Leadership Team giving advice, guidance and direction when required
- To produce a comprehensive report for each board meeting with relevant data, interpretation of key findings and a recommended course of action.

Senior Leadership Team

- To monitor and act on key areas of responsibility concerning the performance of the establishment and report to the Board of successes and areas for improvement
- To contribute to the production of the report for each board meeting with relevant data, interpretation of key findings and a course of actions for specific areas of responsibility.

Senior Administrative Personnel

- To produce the record of the board meeting, action plan and present these to the Regional Director and Chair for approval prior to circulating within 5 working days of each board meeting.

Additional References

‘Governance Handbook’ January 2017 DFE

Ofsted: Non-association independent school inspection handbook June 2015 (updated August 2018)