

Service Area Name:

**Education Services
Governor Support to Schools**

**Services to Schools
and Academies
Account Manager:**

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Position: Director of Education
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Service Level Agreement Lead Officers Within Service Area

Kimberley Richardson – kimberley.richardson@togetherforchildren.org.uk 0191 561 1424
Education Services Manager
Zena Wilkinson – zena.wilkinson@togetherforchildren.org.uk – 0191 561 1423
Acting Governor Support to Schools Team Leader

Function of Team

The Governor Support to Schools Service, located within Education Services, provides a governance clerking service for Schools and Academies, together with associated advice, guidance and other support to Governing Boards, individual Governors and Principals, to ensure that the business of Governing Boards and Academy Trusts is carried out effectively and efficiently and in accordance with school governance regulations to ensure accountability and highly effective governance.

The team will arrange, monitor, support and accurately record the business of Governing Board meetings.

Delivery Sector

Maintained / Academy/ Voluntary Aided / Free school

Services Offered Under SLA

The Governor Support to Schools Service provides a comprehensive support service for Governors. It is offered to Governing Boards, Governing Board committees, Academy Trusts and Multi-Academy Trusts.

The Governor Support to School Service can advise on Governing Board constitution, Schools and Academies' governance procedures, Headteacher / Principal salary range, governance collaboration and related aspects of Education Law, comprising:

- Provision of a Governor Clerking Service and associated advice and support to Governing Boards and their committees, to ensure that the business of Governing Boards and their committees is carried out efficiently and in line with school governance regulations.
- A named Clerk, with not less than 2 years' experience of schools' governance clerking, to act as the school's primary contact with the service and to assist with general ad hoc advice and support on school governance issues.
- Disseminating information to schools through regular correspondence updates for Headteachers, Principals, Chairs and Governors.
- Convene meetings of the Governing Board and all committees (where appointed as Clerk to the Committee).
- Prepare and distribute agendas (with associated papers) for all 'clerked' meetings within statutory time limits (subject to schools' compliance with deadlines for submission of agenda items).
- Telephone support to ensure advice and guidance is available when needed.
- Advise and offer objective guidance on meeting procedures, Governing Board organisation and responsibilities.
- Produce timely, accurate, detailed minutes of meetings, outlining decisions, discussion and challenge from Governors (within a maximum completion time of 20 school days).
- Complete meeting following up action and correspondence on behalf of the Governing Board.
- Monitor the membership of the Governing Board and attendance at meetings.
- Undertake Governor skills audit to ensure effective governance for Schools and Academies, as and when required.
- Prepare material and advise on election for new Staff and Parent Governors. Organise Governor Elections, appointments and ballots where necessary.
- Provide an Induction Pack for new Governors.
- Process Disclosure and Barring service checks on school Governors.
- Liaise with other agency services to assist Governing Boards in the execution of their duties.
- Provide a termly update on SLA usage.

Academies Governance Support

In the case of an Academy requiring Company Secretary support in addition to the Clerking service, this can be provided at an additional cost, by separate agreement, between Together for Children Sunderland and the Academy.

The service will liaise with Companies House in respect of the filing of documents.

Cost of Services

- The Governor Support to Schools Service SLA is designed to provide schools and academies with a clear view of the cost of the core service, which can be supplemented with additional hours to provide a choice of service level.
- Governing Boards organise themselves in different ways and this arrangement is designed to directly meet the needs of individual schools, whilst providing budgetary certainty for schools/academies that do not require more than the core service.
- Usage is monitored throughout the year measured in 'clerking hours'. These include an allowance for preparation time, production costs of agenda, minutes, support and advice services and travelling to and from meetings. To ensure most effective use of Clerks' time, the cost of bulk printing will be charged as a disbursement. An annual statement of usage will be produced and shared with Schools / Academies prior to agreement of the following year's SLA and details of current usage can be provided at any time in the course of the year by request to the Clerk.
- The Clerk will also provide a termly usage statement to the Headteacher and Chair of Governors.

All Schools

For further information on costs please contact the SLA Lead Officers as detailed above.

Service Standards & How Good Performance Will be Measured

- The Governor Support to Schools Service will provide a Clerk for all meetings of the Governing Board in accordance with regulations, subject to Schools and Academies' compliance with deadlines.
- The service will provide a Clerk for all meetings of committees for the Governing Board (where engaged as Clerk to these committees).
- Where required the Service will provide a Clerk for parents' meetings and other meetings held in connection with School / Academy business.
- Minutes will be produced which are accurate and sufficiently detailed, setting out decisions taken, discussion and challenge from Governors. The minutes will be provided to the school within a maximum completion time of 20 school days.
- Changes to legislation relevant to schools' management of requests for information will be communicated to schools and support provided to update schools' arrangements to reflect new requirements as appropriate.
- Where appropriate, follow up actions required on behalf of the Governing Board will be undertaken within one week of the meeting taking place.
- The Governor Support to Schools Service will produce election materials for Parent and Staff Governor vacancies on request.
- Agendas and associated papers for meetings of the Governing Board and its committees will be distributed within satisfactory timescales, subject to Schools' / Academies' compliance with deadlines.
- Governing Board membership and committee information will be kept under review and regularly updated.
- The Service will provide the Governing Board with relevant information about local and national developments and requirements and liaise with other agency services on behalf of the Governing Board in support of the business requirements of the School / Academy.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Usage of the service will be closely monitored throughout the contract period.

An annual satisfaction survey will be distributed to schools/academies and the school asked to feedback on service delivery. Feedback received will be used in the development of the service.

All minutes of meetings will be quality assured prior to submission to Headteacher / Principal / Chair.

Schools and Academies Responsibilities

- It is a regulatory requirement that only the Clerk to the Governing Board can convene meetings of the Governing Board or its committees (not Headteachers or Governors). Where meetings are not convened by the Clerk the meeting cannot be deemed to have been properly convened.
- Schools / Academies / Governors must give their Clerk adequate notice of meetings of the Governing Board to enable the Clerk to the Governing Board to comply with statutory deadlines on notice of meetings and agendas. While the Clerk will endeavour to respond to short notice requests, the service cannot be responsible for non-compliance with regulations where this is due to failure to notify the Clerk of meeting requirements in accordance with deadlines.
- Schools / Academies / Governors must have clear arrangements for clerking of committees. Where engaged as Clerk to the committee the Governor Support to Schools Service must be given adequate notice of meetings and the business to be transacted at each meeting, to meet statutory deadlines.

- Where the Governor Support to Schools Service is not engaged as Clerk to any committees of the Governing Board, Governors must appoint another named Clerk to these committees who shall be responsible for producing agenda papers in respect of these meetings, advising on procedure and producing and circulating minutes to all Governors. The Governor Support to Schools Service cannot be responsible for any aspect of clerking a committee meeting except where engaged by the Governing Board as named Clerk to that committee. A decision on the clerking of committees shall be taken by each Governing Board annually. The Governor Support to Schools Service will assist where possible to respond to ad-hoc requests for individual meetings where not appointed as Clerk to a Committee.
- Termly reports and associated papers should be received by the Governor Support to Schools Service not less than 10 working days before each meeting, to enable the documentation to be distributed with the agenda.
- Schools / Academies should provide the Governor Support to Schools Service with a copy of minutes of any meetings not clerked by the service to inform advice to the Governing Board.
- Governor Election material is produced by the Governor Support to Schools Service for Schools / Academies to distribute to the electorate and collect. An alternative process may be agreed with the Service in advance should the School or Academy require.

Compliments/Complaints/Disputes

The Governor Support to Schools Service welcomes all feedback on the service it provides and takes the learning from both compliments and complaints to spread good practice and resolve issues. Schools are invited to let us know whenever they are particularly pleased with the service Clerks provide so we know what aspects of the service you valued most.

If a school is dissatisfied with any aspect of the service it has received, every effort will be made to resolve disputes quickly and effectively. In the first instance the school should ordinarily refer any concerns to the named Governor Clerk, who will endeavour to address the issues immediately. If immediate resolution cannot be achieved the school should refer concerns to Kimberley Richardson or Simon Marshall.