

GOVERNANCE POLICY 2023 - 2024



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Our Mission Statement

Aim to deliver an engaging, positive learning experience every time.

Our Values

Our values encompass the achievement of all of our learners. Our values are HONESTY, INTEGRITY, SUPPORT, ETHICAL BUSINESS AND EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY FOR ALL. We support PREVENT, SAFEGUARDING, BRITISH VALUES, EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION and this policy is at the heart of and supports these core values in aiming to safeguard staff and learners.

Our Vision

To be the provider of choice for apprentices and clients, creating bespoke education and training that maximizes opportunity and investment, both for now and in the future.

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1 - Introduction and Overview

Effective leadership and management help to support students and staff by ensuring that robust process and procedures are in place. The role of Governance within the organisation, is designed to ensure that the decisions made by the Senior Management Team (SMT) are in the best interests of the learners, staff and the organisation to support the development of the business and the progress and well-being of learners.

Effective Governance provides strategic accountability and supports company aspirations. This provides a support network for the SMT, whereby the Governors are given authority and information in order to challenge decisions made by the SMT and for the SMT to reflect and take stock of the decision-making process. Governors require confidence and the ability to challenge the findings of the SMT and processes and procedures, to ensure the best possible outcomes for learners, whilst balancing this with the needs of the organisation, whilst considering practicalities, logistics and the needs of staff within the organisation.

Our policies and procedures aim to support the best interests of students, the business and staff. This policy should be read in conjunction with our other policies, particularly, the following:

- E-safety Policy
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Physical Intervention Policy

2 - Rationale and Scope

This policy is primarily to cover the roles and responsibilities of the Governors to the organisation, and to outline the roles in conjunction with this of the SMT and how they should relate to and respond to the requests of Governors.

3 - Roles and responsibilities

Our SMT (Senior Management Team) take overall responsibility for the provision of all policies within the centre. The directors, Mark Webber and Peter Carey, take overall responsibility for this policy, its application and sharing of appropriate information.

4 - How this Policy will be Communicated

- Our SMT will review policies and update as required
- **This policy should be made available to all Governors within the organisation**
- Our policy will be made available on our website if applicable
- Our policy documents will form part of the induction for all staff to the centre
- When suitable, policies will be uploaded to OneFile resources for access by all appropriate users
- Acceptable use agreements to be held on learner files, or signed on OneFile as required
- We may email policy updates to staff as required or use OneFile system announcements
- Staff should review the employee handbook in relation to staff behavior, and The Staff Behavior Policy

5 - Complaints

Any complaints in relation to this policy, or relating to Governance should be made to the SMT or the Directors, who can be contacted via our Head Office on 08452235020 or email info@apprenticeship-centre.co.uk

6 - Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Our Governors should be aware of the Safeguarding procedures and processes within the organisation and have the confidence to:

- Report any safeguarding concerns, issues or irregularities to the DSL
- Know how to report concerns
- Challenge the findings of the SMT if required
- Ensure that they feel learners are safe and make suitable enquires if they feel justified to do so
- Ensure their focus is on learner development, safety and safeguarding
- Feel confident to report concerns relating to safeguarding to relevant agencies outside of the organisation if they feel that a learner is at risk and that centre processes have been violated or if they feel learners are at risk and that further action should be taken, which has not been taken by the centre staff to duly protect learners
- Governors can forward concerns to the police, healthcare workers or other suitable agencies, in line with GDPR and DPA laws where they feel that this action would benefit learners or staff and when internal protocol has been exhausted.

Our DSL is appointed at the direction of the company directors and SMT. Our DSL is Julie Gardner with our Deputy DSL Joanne Ross. Both can be contacted via our head office 08452235020 or email info@apprenticeship-centre.co.uk.

Both the DSL and the Deputy DSL are responsible for the management and accountability for child protection and safeguarding of learners whenever possible. They are responsible for coordinating all safeguarding and child protection activity. This includes staff training and maintenance of suitable records, including the centre safeguarding log, as required. When the centre has concerns about a learner the DSL will decide, in consultation with the deputy DSL, what steps should be taken. The DSL will complete all required compulsory training at the required level. This is reviewed over a three-year period.

The DSL will ensure that all records in relation to safeguarding are appropriately stored in a secure location, separate to academic records. Staff will be informed of relevant details only when the DSL feels that their having knowledge of a situation will aid their ability in dealing with a learner and/or their family. Where our records are stored electronically, on the centre safeguarding log, there is no reason, to maintain additional paper files. Our safeguarding log is password protected and only accessible by DSL and Deputy DSL, along with SMT and/or Ofsted nominee as required.

We will not disclose to a parent or carer, any information held on a child or young person, if this would put the child or young person at risk of significant harm.

Any issues or concerns should be reported immediately to the centre manager, SMT, director and/or DSL/deputy SGL.

7 - Senior Management Team (SMT)

Our SMT team comprises of

- The Directors
- Head of Quality Assurance
- The Head of Sales
- Funding and Compliance Manager
- Apprenticeship Channel Manager

The SMT are the body accountable for ensuring the centre procedures are in place to support students and staff. The Governors are appointed by the SMT. The Governors have the authority to question decisions made by the SMT where they feel these are not in the best interest of the learner, staff or centre, or may be in breach of laws, policies or procedures relevant to the organisation.

8 - Centre Procedures

Governors should work towards the following timescale, set out from the date of this document:

- Governance meeting to be held and documented at least QUARTERLY with a recommendation for this to be monthly where possible.
- Governance meetings minutes should be documented and retained on central files for audit and inspection purposes
- Governors should be given access to SMT meeting minutes and be welcomed to attend meetings if the SMT see fit.
- Governors should be informed of this policy and procedure.
- Governors are appointed by the SMT and a record of current Governors should be updated within this document whenever changes to the Governance team occur.
- Governors have the right to challenge and question decisions made by the SMT and such challenge should be documented in the meeting minutes.
- Governors should submit any complaints in writing to the Director, via email to info@apprenticeship-centre.co.uk who will respond, in writing, within 14 working days from receipt of the complaint.
- Governors should have an emphasis on the best interests of learners, whilst considering the needs, financial viability and stability of the organisation.
- Governors should have a good understanding of the process of training centres, with an understanding of the Apprenticeship Process and desired outcomes.
- Governors should understand the Ofsted process and requirements for their role in relation to outcomes for learners.
- The Governors should be given access to the SAR Self-Assessment Report and the QIP Quality Improvement Plan for the organisation.

9 - Structure of Governance Meetings

Governance meetings should cover the following:

- SMT meeting outcomes, decisions and strategic plans
- Success rate and other KPI (key performance indicators) data relating to the business
- Safeguarding procedures and outcomes
- SAR – Self assessment Report and QIP Quality Improvement Plan review
- New Key policies and procedures that may affect the running of the organisation
- Changes to staffing, particularly at senior level
- Health, safety and well-being concerns in relation to students and staff
- Integral changes to the organisation, its offering and procedures
- Review of local employer engagement to ensure that the centre is offering apprenticeships which meet the needs of local employers and industry
- Review of processes and procedures in relation to Safeguarding and Prevent, British Values, Equality and Diversity Inclusion and any other relevant legislation or topics affecting learners in the local community
- The Governors should have an insight into Safeguarding processes and be offered an anonymised overview of cases if required.

10 - Primary Responsibilities of Good Governance – 10 Primary Responsibilities

The Board and its Members have ten primary responsibilities.

These are to:

- 1 Formulate and agree the **mission and strategy** which defines the ethos of your organisation
- 2 Be **collectively accountable** for the business of the organisation
- 3 Ensure that there are effective policies and systems which enable and facilitate the **learners' voice**
- 4 Foster **exceptional teaching and learning**
- 5 Ensure the organisation is responsive to workforce trends by adopting a range of strategies for **engaging with employers** and other stakeholders
- 6 Adopt and monitor appropriate **financial strategies** and funding plans to ensure that the ITP is solvent and delivers value for money to its learners and to its funders
- 7 Ensure that **effective control and due diligence** takes place in relation to all matters including **mergers, acquisitions, contracting, sub-contracting and partnership activity**
- 8 Meet and aim to exceed the statutory obligations for **equality and diversity**
- 9 Ensure there are organised and clear **governance and management structures** with well understood delegation
- 10 Regularly **review governance performance** and effectiveness

11 - Recruiting Governors and Required Personal Attributes

Governors are recruited by the Directors of the organisation following the criteria outlined above. The Directors should consider the contents of the following document when planning Governance activity and in the recruitment of suitable Governors.

https://www.aoc.co.uk/sites/default/files/Effective%20Governance%20Guide%20for%20Independent%20Training%20Providers%20_0.pdf

Personal Attributes

The personal attributes of Board Members are as important as their skills and knowledge.

They are:

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Committed | Devoting the required time and energy to the role and ambitious to achieve best possible outcomes for learners Prepared to give time, skills and knowledge to developing themselves and others in order to create highly effective governance |
| Confident | Of an independent mind, able to lead and contribute to courageous conversations, to express their opinion and to play an active role on the Board |
| Curious | Possessing an enquiring mind and an analytical approach and understanding the value of meaningful questioning |
| Challenging | Providing appropriate challenge to the status quo, not taking information or data at face value and always driving for improvement |
| Collaborative | Prepared to listen to and work in partnership with others and understanding the importance of building strong working relationships within the Board and with executive leaders, staff, parents and carers, learners, the local community and employers |
| Critical | Understanding the value of critical friendship which enables both challenge and support, and self-reflective, pursuing learning and development opportunities to improve their own and whole Board effectiveness |
| Creative | Able to challenge conventional wisdom and be open-minded about new approaches to problem-solving Recognising the value of innovation and creative thinking to organisational development and success |

(Source Department for Education, 'A competency framework for governance', 2017)

12 - Effective Challenge

The governors have authority to question and decline any decisions made by senior management, to ensure that needs of learners are met and full performance of the organisation. Governors assess and identify any risks and ask SMT to provide a risk management plan, and if the actions are not deemed sufficient then governors will request a revised plan to suit the needs of learners, which will be followed up during the next governors meeting in which SMT will present the new plan. Governors agree with SMT any plans to move forward to ensure that the company has capability to deliver effectively.

We know that effective challenge is critical and can make a key difference in governance and we also know that the greater the level of scrutiny and challenge, the more impact the Board can have. Facilitation in meetings and coaching can play a key role in helping others to ask questions and to challenge effectively.

To support this, individual Members and the Board as a team should reflect on:

- ▶ Do Board Members and the wider Board provide an effective challenge to senior management?

- ▶ How effective is Board Members' critical friendship? Could it be improved?

- ▶ Are all Board Members fully briefed and informed as part of a robust induction process?

- ▶ How effectively does the chairing of meetings enable participation?

- ▶ Who asks the most questions? Who remains comparatively quiet? Why?

- ▶ In which areas of work would you and the team benefit from individual and/or joint training?

- ▶ What support is available?

13 - Collective Decision Making

Board Members should support collective decision making. Collective decision making is effective when the right conditions are established and the Board works in a collaborative way, involving all Board Members.

Board Members should consider how the following are demonstrated on your Board:

| | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| Common goal | Do all Board Members fully understand the questions in hand, the decisions that need to be made and their impact? |
| Clear process | Is there a shared understanding of the process that the group is using? |
| Commitment to reach consensus | Are alternative perspectives well-understood, fully explored and fairly considered? |
| Trust and openness | Do you build trust and manage expectations to facilitate decision making in difficult circumstances? |
| Recognise the limit | Do you use your leadership role deftly and under careful consideration? |
| Active participation | Is there strong and active participation from everyone in the group and is the Board keeping executive leaders aware of significant discussions in progress? |

14 - Our Expectations

Our expectations of Governance reflect the Ofsted requirements stated below. We aim to ensure that our Governance arrangements meet the criteria below:

What are inspectors looking for?

Ofsted assesses the capacity of all leaders, managers and Board Members to drive continued improvement. It requires organisations to demonstrate effective governance and consider if Board Members:

- ▶ Know the provider and understand its strengths and weaknesses
- ▶ Support and strengthen the provider's leadership and contribute to shaping its strategic direction
- ▶ Provide challenge and hold senior leaders and managers to account for improving the quality of learning and the effectiveness of performance management systems (PMS)

Governors should be made aware that they may be interviewed by Ofsted, should the centre be subject to Ofsted inspections. Governors should refer to pages 8 and 9, as well as the whole of the following document:

https://www.aoc.co.uk/sites/default/files/Effective%20Governance%20Guide%20for%20Independent%20Training%20Providers%20_0.pdf

15 – Our Governors

Kevin Pound - External Lead Governor - kpound@qts-global.co.uk

Sean Rafferty - External EPA SV – sean391@btinternet.com

Peter Carey - Finance Director – Peter@nvq-centre.co.uk

Susan Ryan - Compliance Administrator - Sue@nvq-centre.co.uk

Julie Gardner - DSL & SEND Coordinator – julie@nvq-centre.co.uk