

Salford City College Group  
Corporation

# Handbook for Governors

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## About the College Group

Across our colleges we offer a wide range of courses including A-levels, vocational courses, Higher Education and Apprenticeships. We have a dedicated university centre, and deliver adult learning, personalised community and development courses and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) provision.

Our students are at the centre of everything we do and every decision we take. The purpose of the managers at the college is always to support teaching and learning. We invest heavily in development activities and our leaders, at all levels, are required to inspire our learners.

Our staff focus their activities on those things which impact on student success.

## Location

The College Group has several colleges / premises situated in Salford (which is immediately adjacent to the City of Manchester) and around the Greater Manchester area including the following:

- City Skills - Frederick Road, Salford, M6 6QH
- Eccles Sixth Form College - Chatsworth Road, Eccles, M30 9FJ
- Frontier House – Merchants Quay, M50 3SR
- FutureSkills at MediaCityUK - Dakota Avenue, Salford, M50 2PU



- Pendleton Sixth Form College - Dronfield Road, Salford, M6 7FR
- Worsley College - Walkden Road, Worsley, M28 7QD

## Mission and Vision

### Our Vision is to be:

A beacon of educational excellence transforming the lives of the individuals and communities we serve.



### Our Objectives are:

- **External Presence** - To develop a clear eco system with productive links to schools, universities, employers, and other key partners, whilst raising the external profile of the College.
- **People** - To be an exceptional employer where staff and students are developed and thrive because they feel valued, engaged, and challenged.
- **Resource and Business Operations** - To manage the College's finances, estates, and resources effectively to provide an exceptional and sustainable learning environment.
- **Sustainability** - To lead by example on environmental sustainability, providing solutions through collaboration and engagement, underpinned by our commitment to the Green agenda.
- **Teaching and Learning** - To inspire people in our city and region through the provision of an outstanding, inclusive, and ambitious curriculum that provides an engine for social mobility.
- **Welfare** - To safeguard and promote the health, safety, and positive well-being of all who study and work at the College.

### Our Core Values are:

Our core values are at the heart of everything that we do, and we behave with:

- Respect
- Integrity
- Kindness

## The Composition of the Corporation and Appointment of Governors

The Corporation consists of seventeen members including:

- The Group Principal, who is a governor by virtue of their office.
- Two elected student governors, elected by all students.
- Two elected staff governors, elected by their colleagues. One from the Academic staff and one from the Professional Services staff.
- Twelve independent lay governors, appointed following an application process.

The Corporation can appoint Co-opted members who support a particular committee, relevant to their own experience. This is usually a time-limited appointment dependent on the needs of the committee in question.

## The Clerk to the Corporation \ Head of Governance

The Clerk's role (Head of Governance) is set out in the Instrument and Articles of Government. The Head of Governance is appointed by the Corporation and is responsible for ensuring that all the activities of the governing body are conducted in a professional manner, following the agreed procedures. The duties of the Head of Governance include providing impartial advice when advising the Corporation with regard to its powers and procedural matters. In addition to the duties outlined in the Instrument and Articles of Government, the role of the Head of Governance is to advise on good governance practice, have oversight of governor training and development records and to identify areas for development.

## The Role of a Governor

### Main Purpose of the Role

To be accountable for exercising the responsibilities of the Corporation of Salford City College Group in accordance with the Instrument and Articles of Government and Standing Orders.

The role of a College Governor is a high-profile one which supports the College Group to fulfil its mission and objectives. Collectively, the Governing Body is very influential and whilst these roles are not remunerated, there is an expectation that those appointed will adopt the same high standards in relation to behaviours and professional persona one would expect of a remunerated non-executive director. College Governors acknowledge, understand and respect the required boundaries between the leaders and managers of the College Group and the Governors.

All matters relating to the practical management and operation of the College are the responsibility of the Group Principal whilst Governors are responsible for matters relating to good governance.

## The Responsibilities of a Governor

The key elements of responsibility for Governors are to:

- Provide vision and strategic direction for the development of the College Group's work.
- Ensure the College Group's financial resources are being used prudently and effectively.
- Ensure the College Group complies with the relevant statutory and regulatory requirements.

- Ensure the Corporation delivers effective governance for the College Group in relation to the guidance provided by Ofsted, Association of Colleges (AoC), the Group Principal, Chair of Governors and the Head of Governance.
- Act impartially and in the best interests of the College at all times.
- Through the Group Principal and Chair of Corporation, provide advice, guidance and support to College Executive Officers to ensure the successful delivery of the College Group's mission.
- Monitor key decisions being implemented on a timely basis.
- Help the College Group liaise with key stakeholders, and ensure internal liaison between the Corporation and the staff and students of the College is effective.
- Enhance the profile and reputation of the College Group by forging appropriate links and utilising appropriate networks with outside organisations, which may contribute to the strategic direction of the College Group.
- Act as an advocate for the College.
- To observe protocols around confidentiality when dealing with Corporation and committee matters.

As a Governor you will need to know and understand the following:

1. The Nolan principles of public life – selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.
2. The role of the Chair in leading the work of the Corporation.
3. The role of the Head of Governance in supporting the Corporation and developing best practice in governance.
4. The role of the Group Principal in managing the day-to-day operations of the college.
5. The rules of procedure for meetings (for example, how often they are held, the minimum number of members, confidentiality, access to minutes and attendance of advisers).
6. The role of the committees and what business they carry out.
7. The Code of Conduct for Governors.

Governors need these behaviours to carry out their role effectively:

1. They identify and raise ethical issues, cope with ambiguity and confront difficult questions.
2. They are aware of their own personal interests and can separate these from their role. Governors are always expected to declare conflicts of interest.
3. They work co-operatively with other Governors to develop creative and appropriate solutions. They take account of the views of others, recognising the governing body needs to act corporately to exercise its authority.
4. They understand and are sympathetic to the wishes and ambitions of students.

**Note:** Governors should be aware that if they arrive late or need to leave for part of the meeting or leave early the times have to be noted in the minutes because of decision making powers.

## The Corporation Calendar

Meetings are scheduled throughout the year, with the Corporation meeting four times per year; sub-committees generally meet once per term with the exception of the Remuneration Committee which meets annually and the Search Committee which meets at least twice annually.

## The Role of the Corporation is to:

- **Determine and review the mission, values and strategic objectives of the College Group incorporating the views of the staff and students, and to ensure that the arrangements made to enable staff and students to input into this process are clear**

### **This is achieved by:**

- the Corporation being involved periodically in reviewing and agreeing the educational mission and character of the College Group and its supporting strategies;
- the Corporation working to a schedule of business for Corporation and committee meetings to undertake oversight of this activity.

- **Approve the quality strategy of the College Group**

### **This is achieved by:**

- the Corporation approving and monitoring the Quality Assurance measures through the Quality & Standards Committee and Corporation meetings;
- reviewing the Self-Assessment Report (SAR), including participation in SAR validation events and;
- being kept up-to-date on Ofsted changes through Governor training and briefing sessions.

- **Ensure the effective and efficient use of resources, the financial solvency of the College Group, and to safeguard its assets**

### **This is achieved by:**

- the Corporation reviewing and approving the Financial Regulations of the College, observing the guidance of the Post-16 Audit Code of Practice, being part of the review of the Annual Finance Statement Auditors' reports and the Annual Internal Auditors' Report, together with periodic management accounts and budgets through Audit and Strategy Finance & Resources Committees.

- **Approve annual estimates of income and expenditure**

### **This is achieved by:**

- the Strategy Finance & Resources Committee considering and then recommending to the Corporation, the annual College Group's budget; which is then tracked in the College Group management accounts.

- **Appoint, appraise, grade, determine pay and conditions (and suspend and dismiss where necessary) the posts that are classed as Senior Post Holder (SPHs) and the Clerk to the Corporation\ Head of Governance**

**This is achieved by:**

- the Chair of the Corporation reviewing annually the Group Principal and the Head of Governance's performance; the Group Principal appraising any other senior post holder's performance; and the Remuneration Committee on receipt of this information making appropriate recommendations to the Corporation for approval.

- **Set the framework for the pay and conditions of all College staff**

**This is achieved by:**

- the Corporation reviewing, annually, the terms and conditions of staff with the Group Principal through the Human Resources & Organisational Development Committee, which are then approved by the full Corporation.



## **The Role and Remit of the Committees**

Specific responsibility is devolved by the Corporation to a number of committees to consider and make recommendations on its behalf as follows:

The Corporation has two statutory committees:

### **Search Committee**

The Search Committee has responsibility for making recommendations on Governor appointments when recruiting new Governors, and for monitoring the induction, retention and development of Governors. The Committee also has oversight of Committee membership and an awareness of succession planning needs. The Committee also oversees the Corporation's compliance with the AoC Code of Good Governance, and has oversight of the Governance element of the College's Self-Assessment Report (SAR) and Annual Report on Governance. The College convention is that the Chair of Corporation should chair this committee.

### **Audit Committee**

The Audit Committee is designed to advise the Corporation on the adequacy and effectiveness of the College Group's systems of internal control and its arrangements for risk management, control and governance processes, and securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness of the College Group in relation to 'value for money'. It is guided by the requirements of the Post-16 Audit Code of Practice.

The Audit Committee is authorised to investigate any activity within its terms of reference, and this could involve legal or other independent professional advice and to secure the attendance of third parties with relevant experience and expertise if it considers this necessary.

The Audit Committee is a way of checking the College Group's activities and it can request special meetings if it considers it necessary to look at specific matters. Usually however, the Audit Committee has standing meetings which tend to focus on the audit of the College's financial statements, the work of the internal audit service (IAS) and reviewing/recommending key policies to the Corporation for approval.

The Corporation also has further committees which bring recommendations to Corporation and carry out much of the detailed work which would not be possible at Corporation meetings:

### **Strategy Finance & Resources Committee (SF&R)**

This committee looks at the overall strategy, purpose and ethos of the College Group and works with the Executive Team to shape strategic options, approve policies, provide financial probity, and sound governance of the College. It will make recommendations about all aspects of the College Group's finances, monitor the effectiveness of contracts for the supply of goods and services over £100,000 and monitor the management of the College estate and resources. The College convention is that the Chair of Corporation should chair this committee.

SF&R will also review the annual financial statements, before submission to Corporation, focusing on compliance with financial and legal regulations and will make any necessary recommendations for changes to the Corporation's Standing Orders.

## **Quality & Standards Committee (Q&S)**

The Quality & Standards Committee focuses on the academic performance of the College Group in respect of the results students receive when they undertake a qualification. The committee advises the Corporation on matters concerning the quality and effectiveness of the College Group as an educational institution, and considers proposals for improvements in performance.

It will focus heavily on any areas considered to be weak in performance, and contributes to the annual Self-Assessment cycle. In addition, it will consider the views of the learners and any formal complaints received, to ensure that these are all considered and mitigation is put in place to facilitate continuous improvement.

The types of reports that the Quality & Standards Committee receives include those that monitor: student achievement, student retention, student destinations and teaching and learning observations of teaching staff. In addition, the Safeguarding and Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) of learners are considered by this committee.

The committee is particularly keen to be kept apprised of students' views.

## **Human Resources & Organisational Development Committee (HR&OD)**

The HR&OD Committee advises the Corporation on all matters related to the College Group's workforce, including current and projected staffing needs, recruitment and working conditions. It also monitors health & safety matters on behalf of the Corporation, as well as the Safeguarding of staff on behalf of the Corporation.

It will approve and monitor the effectiveness of policies in relation to the College workforce, including all aspects of Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI), job evaluation, pay, staff appraisal and performance management.

## **Remuneration Committee**

The Remuneration Committee usually meets annually and advises the governing body on pay and conditions of service of the Group Principal, Head of Governance and senior postholders. The Chairs of all College Committees are members of the Remuneration Committee. The Vice Chair of Corporation is the Chair of the Remuneration Committee.

## **Task Groups**

On occasion the College uses the mechanism of Task and Finish Groups to oversee issues that have been identified by specific committees as needing more attention. Task Groups are normally time-limited.

## Note

The staff and student governors are not eligible to be members of certain committees. The current convention is that they are both members of the Quality & Standards Committee.

## The Duties of a Governor

Governors discharge their day-to-day responsibilities by carrying out the following primary duties:

### • Regularly attend and participate in Corporation and committee meetings

- Attend Corporation Meetings (minimum four times per academic year), and committee meetings, on which the Governor serves.
- Be a member of at least one committee of the Corporation, and not more than three committees.
- Read and absorb meeting papers in advance of the meetings, and be familiar with the particular area of operation so that they can discuss developments as appropriate.
- Contribute to the discussion at meetings by asking relevant and challenging questions to reassure the individual and those present that the strategy, mission and values of the College Group are being upheld.
- Attend, when required, special activities such as visits by external agencies, for example Ofsted, to contribute towards providing evidence of the College Group's good governance.
- Attend Governors' training sessions, including the annual College Group's strategy days and other ad-hoc sessions run by the College Group to enhance Governors' knowledge of the FE sector, and to enhance personal effectiveness as a member of the Corporation.

### • Approve strategy and policy

- Approve the mission and strategic vision of the College Group, long-term academic and business plans and key performance indicators through Corporation and committee meetings.
- Review and approve policies and strategy documents as part of the normal schedule of business, such as Health & Safety and HR policies.
- Be involved in strategic planning events.

### • Approve & Monitor budgets and financial health

- Review annually at Strategy, Finance & Resource Committee annual management accounts, the annual budget and on-going review of the College Group's finances at the Corporation meetings.

- **Monitor College quality and performance**

- Attend the College Group's Self-Assessment Report (SAR) validation meetings, to validate the College Group's performance.
- Understand, through Quality & Standards Committee papers, the College Group's performance when benchmarked against other institutions and national benchmarks in relation to qualification/course success rates.

- **Exercise responsibility in a corporate manner**

- Take decisions collectively, acting as a Corporation or 'body' by working with other members of the Corporation, especially the Chair and Vice-Chair, the Group Principal and the Head of Governance.
- Act within the Instrument and Articles, Standing Orders and Code of Conduct of the Corporation, including supporting majority decisions, retaining confidentiality and declaring potential conflicts of interest.
- Governors are not expected to act individually or meet to take decisions on Corporation business on an ad-hoc basis outside the constitutional framework of the Corporation and its committees.

- **Gain an understanding of Safeguarding, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) and Health & Safety issues**

- Undertake training where necessary in order to fully embrace and have knowledge of the College Group's approach to specific issues, e.g. Safeguarding, Prevent, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) and Health and Safety. (All governors have a responsibility in this area).

- **Support and champion the work of the Corporation, the College Group, its staff and students**

- The College Group values the contribution Governors make in terms of networking and their contacts. For example, it is very helpful for Governors to make external introductions to the College Group but thereafter, the Executive Officers will evaluate and take the opportunities and relationships forward as appropriate.

- **Attend College Group social events**

- Attend at least occasionally specific student events, such as the annual Student Awards Evenings, Student Graduation events and student performances.
- Attend occasional staff celebratory events, such as the Staff Graduation programmes by invitation of the College Group.

## Remuneration

The role of Governor is unremunerated but the Corporation has approved a Governor Expenses policy by which governors are able to claim travel and other expenses. Further details on how to make a claim are available from the Head of Governance.

## Time Commitment

- A minimum of four Corporation meetings and attendance at the relevant committee meetings.
- Corporation meetings are normally held in the afternoon and committee meetings typically take place the late afternoon and early evening.
- Members normally attend a strategic planning event each academic year, which takes place during the day.
- Members typically spend 50 hours per academic year on Corporation or committee business.
- Members normally serve for a four-year term of office and may, if appropriate, be offered a further four-year term.

## Induction, Development & Engagement

### Induction

All new members will have an induction session with the Head of Governance who will explain the procedures regarding attendance at meetings and the requirements for governors to provide the College with certain details, including a register of interests.

### Governor Development

The training requirements for the whole Corporation are regularly reviewed, and members are able to discuss their individual training needs at any time with the Head of Governance/Chair, and are also encouraged to use the training materials that are available and attend a range of courses and conferences to build up their skills progressively.

### Engagement Activities

The College Group appreciates governor engagement in the life of the College and its activities. All Governors are welcome to attend open events.

## Governor Engagement Policy

To minimise disruption, governor visits to the college are organised in advance by Executive Leads. Governors may participate in additional visits on occasions at the specific invitation of the Group Principal, Chair or College Heads. The Head of Governance will keep a record of governor visits.

There will be a number of governors designated to take a specific interest in particular areas.

## Lead Governors

### Health and Safety

The role of Lead Governor for Health and Safety is to be informed on Health & Safety matters on behalf of Corporation. The Lead Governor will meet with the Director of Business Operations twice per year to be informed on any relevant matters and receive timely updates and will then provide a report back to Corporation.

### Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

The role of the Lead Governor for EDI is to be informed about Equality, Diversity & Inclusion on behalf of the Corporation and to provide a report back. The Lead Governor will meet with the Head of HR regarding the College Group's Equality and Diversity strategy and will provide a report back to Corporation.

### Safeguarding (currently two governors)

The role of the Lead Governors for Safeguarding is to be informed over Safeguarding matters, including Prevent, on behalf of the Corporation and to provide a report back. One governor currently has a focus on Safeguarding with regard to staff and one governor currently has a focus on Safeguarding with regard to students. The governors will meet with the Designated Safeguarding Lead on a termly basis and will then provide a report back to Corporation.

### Welfare

The role of the Lead Governor for Welfare is to become informed over welfare matters on behalf of the Corporation and to provide a report back. The Lead Governor will meet with the Deputy Principal (People & Welfare) to discuss welfare initiatives and will then provide a report back to Corporation.

### Business

The role of the Lead Governor for Business is to become informed over the College's business links on behalf of Corporation and provide a report back. The Lead Governor will meet with the Director of Apprenticeships and Employer Engagement to discuss the College's business links and will then provide a report back to Corporation.

### SEND

The role of the Lead Governor for SEND is to be informed over matters concerning learners with Special Educational Needs & Disabilities. The Lead Governor will meet with the Deputy Principal regarding SEND matters and will then provide a report back to Corporation.

### Higher Education

The role of the Lead Governor for Higher Education is to be informed over the Higher Education provision at the College. The Lead Governor will meet with the College's Higher Education Lead to discuss Higher Education matters and will then provide a report back to Corporation.

## Link Governors

Individual Governors are nominated as Link Governors to a specific College. Over an academic year governors participate in up to two pre-arranged organised visits to the Colleges to become better informed and to triangulate information. This will help them to understand more fully how the College Group operates, enabling them to make a more informed contribution to the Corporation and the strategic planning process. At the end of each visit the Link Governors and Executive Leads will complete a report form.

## Committee Chairs

The role of the Committee Chair is to:

- agree meeting agendas through the Head of Governance and Group Principal.
- Chair the meeting in an efficient and effective manner
- check draft minutes produced by the Head of Governance, and signal up any areas which require clarification or amendment
- address any other appropriate matters pertaining to the work of the Committee raised by the Group Principal, Chair of Corporation and Head of Governance
- ensure all work undertaken will fall under the scope of the remit of the specific committee.

## Appendix 1

### **Governors are expected to operate in accordance with the seven Nolan Principles of Public Life**

- **Selflessness.** Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefit for themselves, their families or their friends.
- **Integrity.** Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.
- **Objectivity.** In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.
- **Accountability.** Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate for their office.
- **Openness.** Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions they may take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.
- **Honesty.** Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interests.
- **Leadership.** Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership by example.

### **Conflict of Interest**

In recognition of the above, Governors are required to have due regard for any issues of conflict of interest, and are required to declare their interest in any specific items on business agendas at the start of each meeting. At the interview stage Governors will be asked whether they might have any conflict of interest. Governors are also required to complete a Register of Business Interest form on an annual basis. It would be expected that Governors would disclose any close relationship with College staff, managers or other Governors.

In addition, the College Group has formulated guidance on how good principles in this respect should more generally be observed. Overall, the College Group expects that a common-sense approach should be taken to ensure that the College Group is not exposed to any reputational risk. Whilst it is appreciated that officers and Governors act in a professional manner in the best interests of the College Group, there is an awareness that in a publicly funded institution overall perception is very important.



## Appendix 2

### Extract from Instrument and Articles of Government

#### Persons who are ineligible to be Governors

- No one under the age of 18 years may be a governor, except in the role of a student governor.
- The Clerk may not be a governor.
- A person who is a member of staff of the institution may not be, or continue as, a governor, except as a staff governor or in the capacity of Group Principal.
- A person shall be disqualified from holding, or from continuing to hold, office as a member, if that person is disqualified from acting as a charity trustee under the Charities Act 2011.
- A person shall be disqualified from holding, or from continuing to hold, office as a governor, if that person has been adjudged bankrupt or is the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order, an interim bankruptcy restrictions order or a bankruptcy restrictions undertaking.

Where a person is disqualified by reason of having been adjudged bankrupt or by reason of being the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order, an interim bankruptcy restrictions order or a bankruptcy restrictions undertaking, that disqualification shall cease -

- on that person's discharge from bankruptcy, unless the bankruptcy order has before then been annulled; or
- if the bankruptcy order is annulled, at the date of that annulment; or
- if the bankruptcy restrictions order is rescinded as a result of an application under section 375 of the Insolvency Act 1986, on the date so ordered by the court; or
- if the interim bankruptcy restrictions order is discharged by the court, on the date of that discharge; or
- if the bankruptcy restrictions undertaking is annulled, at the date of that annulment.

Where a person is disqualified by reason of having made a composition or arrangement with creditors, including an individual voluntary arrangement, and then pays the debts in full, the disqualification shall cease on the date on which the payment is completed and in any other case it shall cease on the expiration of three years from the date on which the terms of the deed of composition, arrangement or individual voluntary arrangement are fulfilled.

A person shall be disqualified from holding, or from continuing to hold, office as a governor if:

- within the previous five years that person has been convicted, whether in the United Kingdom or elsewhere, of any offence and has received a sentence of imprisonment, whether suspended or not, for a period of three months or more, without the option of a fine; or
- within the previous twenty years that person has been convicted as set out in sub-paragraph (a) and has received a sentence of imprisonment, whether suspended or not, for a period of more than two and a half years; or
- that person has at any time been convicted as set out in sub-paragraph (a) and has received a sentence of imprisonment, whether suspended or not, of more than five years; or
- a person has previously been removed from trusteeship of a charity by the court or by the Charity Commission; or

- a person is subject to a disqualification order under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986.

For the purpose of this regulation there shall be disregarded any conviction by or before a court outside the United Kingdom for an offence in respect of conduct which, if it had taken place in the United Kingdom, would not have constituted an offence under the law then in force anywhere in the United Kingdom.

A person cannot become or remain as a member of the Corporation where it would be in breach of the Corporation's Conflict of Interest Policy.

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