

Clerk to Governors and Compliance Officer Permanent, Full-Time, Full Year Contract

Whitgift is a leading independent day and boarding school for boys, with approximately 1500 pupils including over one hundred boarding pupils and flexi boarding pupils. It is set in an attractive 48-acre parkland site in South Croydon enjoying excellent links to London, Surrey and the south coast.

We are seeking to appoint a highly organised and knowledgeable governance professional to serve as Clerk to Governors and Compliance Officer, ensuring the highest standards of governance and regulatory compliance across the School. The successful candidate will provide expert clerking support to the Governing Body, manage governance processes, and offer advice on statutory responsibilities and best practice. In addition, they will play a key role in supporting compliance with regulatory frameworks, inspections, policy management, and data protection requirements. The role requires close collaboration with senior leaders and governors to ensure effective oversight and continuous improvement. In their role as a Clerk to Governors, they will report to Chair of Governors (close liaison with Headmaster) and in their role as Compliance Officer report to Chief Operating Officer.

OUTLINE OF POST

Clerk to Governors reports to: Chair of Governors (close liaison with Headmaster)

Compliance Officer reports to: Chief Operating Officer

Location: Whitgift School

Hours: Full time (flexibility regarding working hours required)

As the governance professional, it is the responsibility of the Clerk to Governors to be the guide and guardian of the School's governance and to ensure the quality and efficiency of the School's governance is performed at the highest level.

In respect of the duties of Clerk to Governors, the position holder reports directly to the Chair of Governors and should communicate regularly about governance matters. The Clerk will also liaise very closely with the Headmaster and with members of the Executive Team and Senior Leadership Team as necessary.

The Clerk will provide professional clerking services to the Governing Body, ensuring compliance with statutory requirements, supporting effective governance, and ultimately enable the School and Governing Body to fulfil its strategic responsibilities.

As Compliance Officer, the individual will support regulatory and inspection compliance. They will advise Governors and senior leaders on actions required to maintain compliance and support leaders who are responsible for maintaining areas of compliance. They will support the oversight of compliance with the:

- Independent Schools Standards Regulations (ISSRs)
- National Minimum Standards for Boarding
- UKVI Sponsorship requirements
- DfE and ISI regulatory guidance

They will provide support to the Senior Deputy and PA before, during and after inspection visits, keep senior leaders and Governors informed of changes in legislation and regulatory requirements and conduct internal compliance audits as required. While responsibility for compliance remains with the relevant post holder, and the Compliance Officer plays an important supporting role in this regard; the position reports to the Chief Operating Officer.

Key Responsibilities – Clerk to Governors

Governance Administration

- Prepare and publish the annual schedule of Governors' meetings and prepare and distribute agendas and pre-meeting papers
- Attend all Governing Body and sub-committee meetings, taking accurate minutes and ensuring timely distribution
- Ensure all agreed actions are documented and completed
- Manage the size and membership of the governing body as well as coordinating the retirement and appointment of governors
- Maintain records of membership, attendance at meetings and visits to the School, terms of office, committee structures and training requirements
- Ensure statutory policies, documents and Terms of Reference are reviewed and approved as required
- Identify priorities, anticipate issues which may arise and draw these matters to the Chair's attention and propose recommendations
- Oversee payment of governors' expenses
- Perform such other duties as may be required/determined by the Governing Body from time to time

Onboarding New Governors, Succession Planning and Training

- Support the recruitment, induction, and training of governors.
- Maintain a skills matrix to inform recruitment and leadership transitions
- Oversee periodic governance audits, as instructed by the Chair

Compliance & Advice

- Advise the Governing Body on governance legislation, statutory duties, and procedural matters
- Ensure meetings are conducted in accordance with the John Whitgift Foundation's constitution
- Manage compliance with the Charity Commission and Companies House regulations
- Support the Governing Body in appraising the Headmaster and Chief Operating Officer

Information Management

- Maintain accurate, secure and comprehensive governance records
- Manage governor access to documents via agreed platforms (in our case, Governors Virtual Office)

Communication

- In conjunction with the Headmaster, act as a main point of contact for governors regarding meeting arrangements and documentation
- Liaise with the John Whitgift Foundation on matters relating to governance, ensuring effective communication and alignment with Foundation-wide requirements
- Maintain and update the governance section of the School website, including biographies
- Liaise with the Chair, Headmaster, Headmaster's PA and other stakeholders to ensure smooth governance operations

Key Responsibilities – Compliance Officer

General Compliance Oversight

- Support the Senior Deputy and other Policy owners to ensure policies are compliant with relevant legislation and approach
- Maintain the master spreadsheet of policies and documents, monitoring the regular updates of regulatory and internal policies and documents, and their uploading to the extranet
- Maintain a robust compliance control system to accurately record policy amendments, version control, policy approval, and scheduling of policy updates
- Ensure policies are consistent with house style and formatting
- Establish an annual compliance cycle that addresses all areas of compliance (ISSRs, UKVI, data protection, NMS, risk assessments)
- Support the Senior Deputy Head and other relevant managers with the preparation for ISI inspections
- Update relevant senior managers on material changes to areas of compliance
- Maintain a risk assessment register of all RAs in the School
- Conduct internal compliance audits in line with statutory regulations
- Support the EVC and Assistant Head Co-curricular with trip compliance
- Provide support to trip leaders in ensuring risk assessments are fit for purpose
- Provide summary reports for senior leader and governor oversight
- Oversight of Human Resources compliance and Health and Safety compliance do not form a part of this role

Data Protection (Data Protection Officer)

- Act as the School's Data Protection Officer.
- Ensure compliance with GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018.
- Coordinate Subject Access Requests.
- Be responsible for the provision of data protection training.
- Monitor implementation of information security policies.

PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

To carry out the duties and responsibilities of the post, in accordance with the School's Health and Safety Policy and relevant Health and Safety Legislation.

The John Whitgift Foundation is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young and elderly people in their care and expects all staff to share this commitment.

To comply with the Whitgift Equal Opportunities policy and to ensure positive relationships are upheld within the school community, through effective communication, in line with professional norms.

PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

To ensure that all services within the areas of responsibility are provided in accordance with the School's commitment to high quality service provision.

This job description will usually be reviewed annually and may be subject to amendment or modification at any time after consultation with the post holder. It is not a comprehensive statement of procedures and tasks but sets out the main expectations of the School in relation to the post holder's professional responsibilities and duties.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

- Trustworthy and discreet
- Strong administrative and organisational skills
- Demonstrates enthusiasm for ongoing professional development, including emerging technologies such as AI
- Excellent written and verbal communication
- Highly organised, accurate and with an eye for detail
- Ability to maintain confidentiality and impartiality
- Knowledge of governance and compliance procedures or willingness to undertake training
- Understanding of safeguarding responsibilities and commitment to promoting the welfare of children and young people
- Pro-active, positive, enthusiastic, with a 'can-do' approach
- Proficiency in IT (Word, email, online platforms)
- Due to the nature of the Clerk role, flexibility is essential and ability to manage time effectively due to the need to attend evening meetings
- Previous experience as a clerk or in school governance and/or compliance work
- Understanding of education legislation and statutory frameworks
- Have the confidence to challenge governors and other staff to protect the interests of the School

FURTHER INFORMATION

All our staff benefit from a competitive remuneration package, including:

- A Pension Scheme (with Life Assurance cover)
- Free access to an Employee discount Club
- Discounted school fees for the Foundation Schools (permanent posts only)

- Access to our onsite gym (available at select hours) and our swimming pool (when available, access is extended to staff)
- Membership with BUPA
- Onsite parking, when available
- Lunch is available onsite during term time

CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

This position is offered as a full-time, full year permanent contract.

The Clerk to Governors and Compliance Officer will work 40 hours weekly, with an unpaid lunch break of one hour.

All meetings are held during term time, with a start time of either 4pm or 5pm. Most meetings run for approximately 2 hours.

Attendance at the meetings listed below is a key requirement of the role. The postholder is expected to attend all scheduled meetings, subject to exceptional circumstances.

- Three meetings each year for the full governors committee meeting (inc. potential presenting of reports at this committee)
- Three meetings each year for the International and Partnerships Sub-Committee
- Three meetings each year for the Education Sub-Committee
- Three meetings each year for the Welfare and Safeguarding Sub-Committee
- Three meetings each year for the Finance and Estate Sub-Committee

The Clerk is also expected to attend all relevant training events and briefings as well as any ad-hoc/additional meetings convened as a result of an action within a meeting.

It is anticipated that the Clerk role will require 1-2 days per week, with the remaining 3-4 days being focussed on the compliance and GDPR aspects of the post. Flexibility in how these hours are used / distributed will be needed. Given the nature of the responsibilities, the role is expected to be performed in person wherever reasonably possible.

APPLICATION INFORMATION

We welcome applications from all parts of our community as we aspire to attract staff that match the social and cultural diversity of our student intake.

To apply, please visit www.whitgift.co.uk/vacancies. For any queries, please telephone 020 8688 9222 or e-mail the Human Resources Department at SchoolHR@whitgift.co.uk.

We invite interested candidates to apply as soon as possible as applications will be reviewed on a daily basis, and interviews may take place at any time. This vacancy may close earlier than the stated deadline if sufficient applications are received, so early submission is encouraged.

In line with Home Office requirements under the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Act 2006, all successful applicants will be required to demonstrate their right to work in the UK by presenting original documents evidencing their identity and eligibility to work in person. Right to work checks may also be completed using the Home Office online right to work checking service (share code).

The School also requires sight of original qualification and professional membership documents as detailed in the application.

Whitgift School (part of the John Whitgift Foundation) is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of young people and vulnerable adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Where applicable, applicants must be willing to undergo child protection screening including checks with past employers and the Disclosure and Barring Service and online media checks. It is an offence to apply for a role at the school if you know that you are barred from regulated activity with children.

All roles within the school involve contact with children and are therefore classed as regulated activity. Child protection and safeguarding are the responsibility of everyone who works or volunteers in our school. All staff must be committed to providing a safe environment for children and supporting the school's safeguarding ethos.

The post is exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. Applicants are required to declare all convictions and cautions, even those that are "spent" unless they are "protected" under the DBS filtering rules, to assess suitability to work with children. Shortlisted candidates will be asked to disclose information relevant to safeguarding prior to interview.

June 2026