

Governors

The following are the current governors:

Diane Ainsworth **Chair of Governors**
John Sibald
Ernie Croft
Ben Simpson
Jenny Nute
Dylan O'Brien

Terms of Reference

The full board meetings are the formal meetings of the governing body. Governors will often participate in visits, informal observations, walking learning tours, and may take part in many other college activities, but it is the formal meetings where decisions will be made.

Meeting frequency and format

Meetings should happen as often as is necessary to carry out the role of governance at the college. Disc will have at least one meeting per term but more will be called should the need arise. Good practice is that in normal circumstances these should be physical meetings. It is also recommended that they are fully accessible for screen readers.

DISC needs to be confident that key decisions can be made in a timely manner, governance documents are regularly reviewed by governors, and that governors do not lose the ability to effectively check and challenge. The onus is on the senior leadership of the college to put systems in place to keep governors up to date.

Roles during meetings

The chair of the governing body is responsible for chairing meetings of the board. Any further duties or powers of the chair need to be set out in the governing document or agreed by members. Other duties of the Chair may include line management of the Chief Executive / Principal, signing key documents or attending college events.

It is important to establish the quorum for the meeting (the minimum number of board members required to be present for a meeting to be valid) for DISC this is 60%. Meetings can be held with less than the quorum, but decisions taken will be advisory only and will require ratification by a later quorate meeting.

All members will respect the additional challenges faced by a neurodiverse Governing Body and adapt their communication accordingly.

Minutes

It is important to keep minutes of the meeting. The minutes are a formal record and must be recorded accurately and agreed by the members and securely preserved. Minutes will be taken by the DA Finance and Operations Manager. Action based minutes (which record the action, date it will be achieved and who is responsible) enables governors to monitor the progress of actions agreed.

Board members are collectively responsible for the decisions taken by the board as a whole. This applies even if a member is unable to attend a board meeting. It is important, that members always prepare for meetings and read background papers, even if they cannot attend the meeting.

Effective meetings

A well- structured agenda will help meetings to keep their focus. It is useful to have clarity around which items are for decision and which are for information only. The agenda will contain items that cover items relevant to the role of the governing body.

The meeting should be organised in such a way as to ensure that thorough discussions around key aspects of governance take place and the needs of individuals on the governing body are respected by all members and officers.

Members of the governing body will be encouraged to ask questions about the quality of the education provision, safeguarding, equality and diversity and other matters relating to the college.

We recognise that the meetings of the Governing body will be run in a timely way to ensure that the time volunteered by the Governors is used effectively. It could be appropriate to use half or full day meetings occasionally as part of annual self-assessment or strategic planning, but the regular business of a meeting will normally be complete within 1.5 - 2 hours maximum and will be held towards the end of the working day where possible to allow members to attend.

Self-assessment and quality improvement

DISC has developed robust processes for completing a self-assessment review (SAR) and developing and implementing a quality improvement plan (QIP). Governors should be aware of when and how the SAR is completed each year and should monitor the QIP to address identified areas for improvement in a timely fashion.

When actions are taken, meetings of governors should include monitoring the impact of these actions, to ensure they have been effective and identify new actions if required.

As part of the quality improvement process, governors will need to fully understand the provision in the college well enough to be able to assess its strengths and weaknesses, provide challenge to senior managers, and hold them to account.

Governors need to understand the goals and targets set for students, the learning opportunities and programmes provided, and the challenges students are set.

Governors should set a culture of high expectations that is then seen throughout the college senior leadership and all staff.

Data

Collecting and analysing data is an important task for the college leadership. Data can cover a range of measures including attendance, progress, attainment, destinations and more qualitative measures derived from staff, student and parent surveys, and can be presented to analyse issues such as differences between student cohorts, gender and so on. The range and type of data presented will be selected carefully, so as not to overwhelm governors and ensure they focus on key aims for the college. It will be presented to governors so that they can monitor progress across the college and challenge if there are areas of weakness. The intended destinations of students should be key drivers of the design and content of learning programmes.

Governance

It is important to review the operation and effectiveness of the governing body itself. This can be done internally or through an external or independent review of governance. As such we will undertake an initial skills and experience audit as a way of assessing the extent to which the governing body has the necessary skills to fulfil their functions and enjoy the role of being a Governor of DISC.