
POLICY TITLE: Governance and Monitoring - Education

Policy Number: ACS16

Applies to: Schools, Colleges, and CAMH's services

Version Number: V01

Date of Issue: 29/01/2024

Date of Review: 28/07/2024

Author: Charlie Rivers – Head of Quality (Education)

Ratified by: Charlie Rivers – Head of Quality (Education)

Responsible signatory: Jane Stone – Director of Governance and Risk

Outcome: Strong governance is essential for Good and Outstanding schools, colleges, and CAMHs services. The key function of good governance is to support and challenge service leaders to ensure pupils, students and young people are kept safe and receive the best possible education and care, and obtain the relevant assurance for the organisation; It also enable prompt actions to be taken where there is indication of issues within a school or college.

Cross Reference: AOP06 Safeguarding children in Education
AOP06BSafeguarding Children in Education – Wales
AOP08 Safeguarding Adults
AOP08A Safeguarding Adults - Wales
AOP31 Risk Management Strategy and the Group Risk Register
AH&S01 Health and Safety Policy, Organisation and Arrangements
AOP09 Aspris Governance Framework

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY STATEMENT

Aspris is committed to the fair treatment of all in line with the Equality Act 2010. An equality impact assessment has been completed on this policy to ensure that it can be implemented consistently regardless of any protected characteristics and all will be treated with dignity and respect.

This policy cover all parts of Aspris Services – The Care and Education Divisions; Central services and our Fostering service. For the Fostering service and the 2 operational divisions, there are local procedures that relate to some of these policies, where necessary.

In order to ensure that this policy is relevant and up to date, comments and suggestions for additions or amendments are sought from users of this document. To contribute towards the process of review, email AsprisGovernanceHelpdesk@aspris.com

Governance and Monitoring - Education

| CONTENTS | | Page |
|-----------------|--|-------------|
| 1 | INTRODUCTION | 3 |
| 2 | VISION, AIMS and RATIONALE | 3 |
| 3 | GROUP GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE | 4 |
| 4 | KEY GOVERNANCE ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES and PROCESSES | 4 |
| 5 | GOVERNANCE MEETINGS AND REPORTING STRUCTURE | 8 |
| 6 | OTHER OPERATIONAL GOVERNANCE ACTIVITIES | 9 |
| 7 | INSPECTION REPORTS AND ACTION PLANS | 11 |
| 8 | REFERENCES | 11 |

1 INTRODUCTION

Aspris is committed to providing high quality services through a robust governance framework. We nurture a culture of continuous quality improvement that moves beyond compliance and focuses on delivering excellent services. The following principles underpin our governance framework:

- Governance procedures and activities are focused on outcomes, safety and quality
- We work together in a co-ordinated way to deliver services safely and effectively, with risks managed appropriately
- Information about our services is reported promptly to enable us to assess our performance, understand risks and decide next steps
- Our 'central services' have clear functions that support the division
- Each service operates within a structured management and organisational framework
- Every colleague has a line manager to whom they report
- Services are organised into geographical clusters which are overseen by an Operations Director

The divisional Chief Operating Officer (C.O.O.) reports into the Aspris Group's Chief Executive Officer (C.E.O.), who has management oversight of the whole Group

2 VISION, AIMS and RATIONALE

2.1 Vision

Aspris Children's Services are committed to providing high quality Governance through structures and processes that:

- Ensure an ethos and culture of continuous quality improvement that goes beyond compliance to facilitate outstanding provision in our schools, colleges and CAMHs services, and outstanding outcomes for children and young people who attend these
- Establish ownership of and accountability for quality in all colleagues
- Monitor quality and risk through quality assurance processes in order to support services when needed via the escalated concern process
- Use a range of performance and other data to develop the strategic direction of the company
- Facilitate an open and transparent culture that encourages learning from incidents, complaints, and feedback from children, young people and colleagues to create a culture that prioritises positive outcomes
- Ensure that Aspris has highly competent and motivated staff who deliver outstanding education and care to our children and young people
- Ensure that each service has a highly impactful senior management team that drives forward the quality improvement agenda to ensure we have schools, colleges and CAMHs services that are well-led and deliver high quality services to our children and young people
- Nurture a culture that encourages new ideas and innovation.

2.2 Aims

These aspirations are built on the following core aims which align with governance aims in the maintained sector

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- Providing a balance of challenge and support to leaders
- Ensuring best value for our children and young people and stakeholders

2.3 RATIONALE

Aspris Children's Services, whilst not bound by the expectations set out in the DfE Governance Handbook (2020) for LA maintained schools and academy trusts, are committed to the implementation of the key principles of Effective Governance laid out in this document:

- Strategic leadership that sets and champions vision, ethos and strategy
- Accountability that drives up standards and financial performance
- People with the right skills, experience, qualities and capacity
- Structures that reinforce clearly defined roles and responsibilities
- Compliance with statutory and contractual requirements
- Evaluation to monitor and improve the quality and impact of governance

3 GROUP GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

3.1 Group governance structure and Key Meetings

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Level | Executive Committee Meetings |
| Divisional | Divisional SMT Meetings Governance and Specialist Areas Committees Business Reviews |
| Service Level | Service SMT Meetings Governance Meetings Service Business Reviews Other Service Operational Meetings |

- SMT
- Aspris Executive Committee Meetings
- Divisional Risk & Compliance Quality Review Meetings
- Divisional Commercial and Quality Reviews
- Group Health and Safety/IPC committee
- Safeguarding committee
- Policies and Procedures Committee
- Task and Finish Groups as appropriate

4 KEY GOVERNANCE ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES and PROCESSES

4.1 Operations Director as Chair of Governors

Operationally most Aspris schools and colleges are line-managed by an Operations Director (OD) who also acts as a Chair of Governors (CoG). The CAMHs services are overseen by an Executive Head Teacher who fulfils the same function. For the purposes of this policy the term OD also includes the CAMHs Services Executive Head Teacher

4.1.1 OD Responsibilities

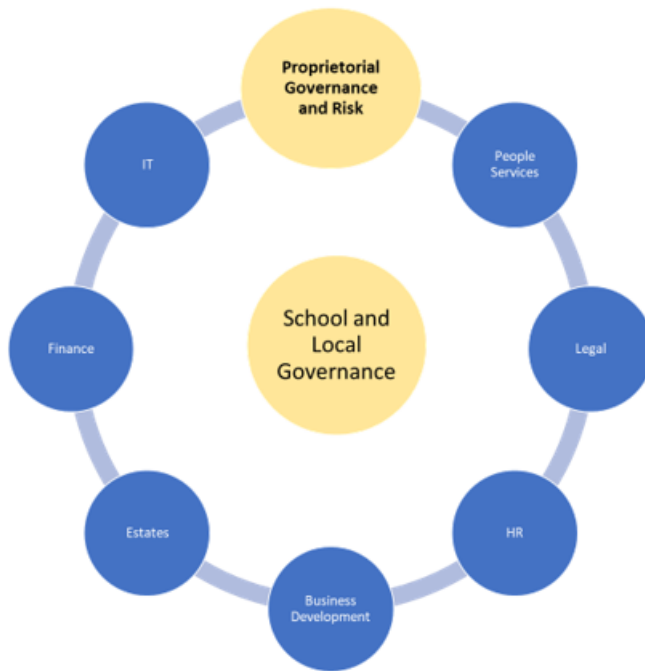
The Operations Director as Chair of Governors:

- Holds responsibility as Regional Lead for Safeguarding and must ensure that supervision is provided to all Designated Safeguarding Leads at the schools and colleges in their cluster
- Must chair at least three formal governance meetings a year (one per term). Forms are provided for this purpose (ACS Form 16G and ACS Form 16GA)
- Must undertake regular visits to all schools and colleges in their cluster providing challenge and support as appropriate
- Must provide regular communication to the service leader and provide specific feedback in a timely manner (verbal and/or written) when this has been requested
- Must provide assurance to the C.O.O. and the Board of Directors related to regulatory inspection readiness, company compliance and risk and mitigating actions
- Should undertake additional visits to schools and colleges in their cluster that require enhanced support e.g. those designated as Watch Sites, providing challenge and support as appropriate
- Should chair emergency governance meetings when necessary

- Should provide regular communication and feedback (verbal and/or written) to the C.O.O/Specialist Directors/Head of Quality (Education) as appropriate
- Should give consideration to and make requests for additional central services support whenever necessary
- Should cooperate closely with the Education Quality Team to provide enhanced challenge/support

4.2 Central Services

Aspris has established a comprehensive central services structure which provides specialist support across all areas of the governance spectrum. These central teams provide our front-line services and operational leaders, who are responsible for the delivery of high quality services, with the effective frameworks required to deliver good practice, alongside the provision of comprehensive monitoring and support networks. The diagram below shows the specialist teams providing support/challenge



4.2.1 Governance and Risk Team

The Governance and Risk team consists of the following sub-teams

- Health and Safety Team
- Policies Team
- Regulations and Registration Team
- Complaints and Claims Team
- Independent Monitoring and Compliance Team
- Safeguarding team
- Quality Teams (Education and Care)
- External Investigators/Advisers

4.2.2 Education Quality Team

The Education Quality Team sits within the Governance and Risk Team and is overseen by the Director of Governance and Risk (DoG&R). It consists of a Head of Quality (HoQ) and 2 Quality Improvement Leads (QILs). Each QIL maintains a portfolio of settings for which they have responsibility.

- 4.2.2.1 The purpose of the Education Quality Team is to be collaborators and critical friends, with a core function of providing assurance to the Executive Committee. They provide challenge and support to operational governance with regard to

- Operational quality
- Readiness for regulatory inspection
- Provision of post-inspection support
- Compliance with company expectations

They work proactively with Operations Directors (ODs) in their capacity as Chair of Governors, school and/or college leads and Central colleagues to: drive improvements in quality and young person outcomes at a service level; teach, coach and mentor staff in schools and colleges to build operational capacity and sustainability; and ensure quality indicators, educational standards and regulatory requirements are fully met

4.2.2.2 Education Quality Team Visits

The Education Quality Team can provide a range of support/challenge visits:

- Entitlement Visits
- Enhanced Entitlement Visits
- Focussed Visits

4.4.2.3 Entitlement Visit

Each school and college will receive a termly support/challenge visit from their QIL as a base entitlement. A record of this visit with identified actions/recommendations will be provided to the OD and the Head Teacher by the QIL following their visit

4.4.2.4 Enhanced Entitlement Visits

The termly visit entitlement will increase if/when identified triggers deem it appropriate. Possible triggers include:

- A regulatory inspection is due within 6 months
- A service receives a Requires Improvement (RI) or Inadequate grading from OfSTED, or Weak or Unsatisfactory grading in Scotland
- Evidence available suggests that service is highly likely to receive an RI or Inadequate grading (England) or Weak or Unsatisfactory grading (Scotland) at upcoming regulatory inspection
- Service has significant leadership changes or has been without a Head Teacher for 30 days or more
- Service is judged to be seriously non-compliant with relevant Independent School Standards
- Service has had a serious safeguarding or other incident or more usually a series of such or there are ongoing serious safeguarding concerns
- Significant concerns are raised by any of the following OD/HoQ/COO/DoG&R/CEO

4.4.2.5 Focussed Visits

In addition to standard QIL visits, schools and colleges may also receive specifically focussed visits. These will usually be commissioned by one of the following OD/HoQ/COO/DoG&R but may on occasion be requested by a service themselves. Focussed visits will usually be one of three types, a Mock Inspection, an Independent School Standards Compliance Check or an Integrated Quality Review (a visit by a joint services team focussing on aspects of provision that have been identified as potentially causing concern) but occasionally 'Other' visits to evaluate a very specific aspect of a setting's provision may be commissioned

4.4.2.6 QIL Activities to support Governance

In addition to entitlement and enhanced entitlement visits to a service, the QILs will also undertake some or all of the following activities to inform the governance process at all levels

- Remote analysis of company intelligence e.g. Engage, Escalations, Learning Lounge compliance, safeguarding concerns, outcomes data etc...
- Dissemination of latest regulatory requirements/changes
- Follow-up to safeguarding issues/concerns
- Follow up to significant incidents

- Delivery of HT (Head Teacher) and other specialist calls
- Preparation and dissemination of materials to support quality of provision e.g. audits
- Validation of setting documentation/practice (e.g. SEF (Self Evaluation Form), SDP, Local Procedures etc...)
- Quality Assurance of Governance
- Delivery of commissioned projects
- Policy work
- Divisionally instigated activities

4.5 Registrations Officer

Aspris has a Registrations officer who supports effective governance by:

- Ensuring services are appropriately registered
- Maintaining records of compliance and distributing inspection feedback and reports

4.5.1 The Registrations officer must be notified by the individual service in the event of:

- Registration of services
- Regulatory inspection
- Regulatory formal communication
- Material changes

4.6 School Improvement Partner

As a service approaches its Inspection window, to enhance the governance process and supplement the support/challenge of the Education Quality Team, Aspris can commission a visit from an external School Improvement Partner (SIP). The Head of Quality is the conduit for the engagement of the SIP

4.6.1 The School Improvement Partner is independent of the operational functions of Aspris. A SIP visit supports services by ensuring they are working within the required legislation, regulations and standards that govern education across the four nations of the UK.

This process allows an objective view of services using methodologies that reflect the approach of our regulators. The School Improvement Partner is an experienced and qualified professional with a robust background in education. This enables them to effectively:

- a) Undertake risk-based inspections that benchmark against regulatory frameworks
- b) Identify thematic issues across the organisation to allow focused and targeted improvement
- c) Act as an early warning system to the organisation, identifying potential and existing areas of non-compliance
- d) Provide information and advice to operational colleagues
- e) Monitor progress in services where improvement is required

4.6.2 Following the school improvement partner visit a report is generated and shared with the Service Lead, The OD as Chair of Governors and the Head of Quality for Education. The Report will identify areas for improvement. These should be addressed by a site action plan which clearly lays out the remedial actions and deadlines for their completion. This Plan should be monitored closely by the OD as Chair of Governors and supported by the Education Quality team and other Central services as appropriate

4.7 Watch Site Process

Occasionally as a result of negative factors a setting may require significantly enhanced support from the proprietorial governance team. Triggers that may indicate the need for this include:

- School or college receives a Requires Improvement (RI) or Inadequate grading from OfSTED, or Weak or Unsatisfactory grading in Scotland
- Evidence available suggests that service is highly likely to receive an RI or Inadequate grading (England) or Weak or Unsatisfactory grading (Scotland) at upcoming regulatory inspection

- Service has significant leadership changes or has been without a Head Teacher for 30 days or more
- Service is judged to be seriously non-compliant with Independent School Standards
- Service has had a serious safeguarding or other incident or more usually a series of such or there are ongoing serious safeguarding concerns

Other significant concerns are raised by any of the following OD/HoQ/COO/DoG&R/CEO

4.7.1 Full details of what is involved and what form the significantly enhanced support will take will be captured in a Recovery Action Plan that will be generated collaboratively by the OD, Head Teacher, and member of the Education Quality Team. Full details of its implementation are contained in the Watch Site Process document available from the Education Quality Team.

The Recovery Action Plan will have an in-built duration, and progress towards its completion and impact will be monitored by regular Watch Site Calls involving a range of Central colleagues and Senior leaders

5 GOVERNANCE MEETINGS AND REPORTING STRUCTURE

5.1 Group and Board Level

Executive and Board meetings are scheduled through the year and place focus on the quality, and Key performance indicators for the Company as a whole. Some specialist committees are also used in order to ensure effective Governance across a range of issues

5.2 Divisional Level

Aspris Children's Education Division hold a Quality Review Meeting monthly to discuss themes and issues and identify settings which require strategic attention as well as service level intervention. These themes will be identified through regulatory inspection, visit reports, incidents and complaints, requests for support and data that is collected at a Divisional level. Services identified as being in need of additional intervention will be designated Watch Sites. Watch sites will usually have an improvement-focussed Action Plan and progress towards the achievement of the plan's objectives will be monitored by regular meetings. Minutes from these meetings should be shared with all relevant stakeholders and stored appropriately

5.3 Local Level - Internal

Service Leaders must have an internal meeting structure in place that is communicated throughout their service, giving their staff team an overview of communication flow. This should enable all staff to understand the purpose of reporting and the timelines for decision-making. An effective meeting schedule that is well communicated should have a beneficial impact on the young people and their outcomes. Each meeting should be effectively chaired and minutes from that meeting should be shared with all relevant stakeholders and stored appropriately

5.3.1 It is expected that each service will hold regular senior leadership/management meetings (SLT or SMT Meetings). Membership of these meetings will be determined locally. They should be at least monthly but could be weekly. Agenda items will be determined locally but are likely to include all or some of the following as appropriate:

- Safeguarding (Mandatory)
- Quality of Teaching and Learning
- Curriculum
- Pupil behaviour and attitudes (including attendance, bullying, RPIs, exclusions)
- Health and safety (Mandatory)
- Incidents and Reporting and Lessons learnt
- Young people's progress towards targets
- Outcomes and transitions of children and young people
- Finance (Mandatory)
- Referrals and admissions (Mandatory)

- Therapy/Medical
- Residential care (Residential Schools/Colleges only - Mandatory)
 - Standard 20 independent visit reports
- Staffing
- SEF/SAR/SER/SDP/Other Development or Action plan review.
- ISS compliance
- Pupil Premium
- Equality and Diversity
- Careers

These meetings will feed into the formal termly governance meetings held by the Operations Director

5.5 Local Level – Formal Governance Meetings

In schools and colleges formal governance meetings should take place at least termly. A Service Leaders Report (ACS Form 16G) should be prepared and distributed to all relevant persons 10 days in advance of the meeting. The Operations Director, in the capacity of the Chair of Governors, should chair the meeting and provide support and challenge with the view of making further improvements as well as celebrating, and building upon, successes. Where the Operations Director feels the need to provide additional expertise, they can commission this from a range of sources. Minutes from formal governance meetings should be shared with all relevant stakeholders and stored appropriately

- 5.6 ODs in their capacity of Chair of Governors may choose to hold additional meetings with their service leaders to enhance the governance process e.g. Cluster meetings or regional Safeguarding Meetings. Attendance at these will be locally determined

6 OTHER OPERATIONAL GOVERNANCE ACTIVITIES

- 6.1 Governance takes many forms and is not limited to formal governance meetings. There are a number of other functions and activities which support and contribute to an overall framework of governance. These include the monitoring and analysis and benchmarking of data, including that gathered from reporting systems, MIS systems and stakeholder feedback. All governance activity should support the core aim of providing the best outcomes for the children and young people in our services. It is also intended to assist services in meeting their; compliance obligations, regulatory expectations, and Aspris key performance indicators

- 6.2 To ensure that the stated aims of Aspris governance are met
- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
 - Providing a balance of challenge and support to leaders
 - Ensuring best value for our children and young people and stakeholders
- governance processes and activities must ensure the following aspects of each are addressed

- 6.3 Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- Schools and colleges should have a clear and explicit vision for the future which has pupil progress and achievement at its heart and is communicated to the whole organisation
 - Schools and colleges should have strong and clear values and an ethos in place
 - Schools and colleges should have effective strategic planning in place that defines medium to long-term strategic goals (with improvement priorities in place)
 - Schools and colleges should have effective processes in place to monitor and review progress against agreed strategic goals and to refresh the vision and goals periodically and as necessary including at key growth stages or if performance of the organisation drops
 - Schools and colleges should have effective processes in place to listen, understand and respond to Stakeholders.

- Schools and colleges should actively promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs
- Schools and colleges should actively encourage students to respect other people, with particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010 and accompanying guidance

6.4 Providing a balance of challenge and support to leaders

- Schools and colleges should have effective Quality Assurance mechanisms for gathering data pertaining to school improvement, analysing this and implementing the necessary changes through a pertinent and effective Development Plan
- Schools and colleges should be effectively tracking its progress towards previous inspection recommendations
- Schools and colleges should have a positive learning culture which effectively tracks and challenges engagement, attendance, behaviour and bullying
- Schools and colleges should have rigorous processes in place for the analysis of pupil progress and attainment information with comparison against local and national benchmarks and over time;
- Schools and colleges should be raising standards for all children, including the most and least able, those who are Looked After, those with special educational needs, those receiving free school meals and those who are more broadly disadvantaged, boys and girls, those of a particular ethnicity, and any who are currently underachieving
- Schools and colleges should be preparing pupils to be adequately engaged with the world of work and being best prepared for adult life. Schools should have secured access to independent careers guidance for pupils in years 8-13
- Schools and colleges should be promoting a healthy active lifestyle
- Schools should be actively promoting the cultural development of its pupils through the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development education requirements
- Schools should be effectively developing pupil reading skills
- Schools and colleges should be tracking and challenging the quality of teaching
- Schools and colleges should be doing all it can to reduce unnecessary workload for teachers
- Schools and colleges should be keeping pupils safe. They should be ensuring that they are building pupil awareness of and resilience to the risks of extremism and radicalisation.
- Schools and colleges should have rigorous processes in place for overseeing and monitoring quality improvement and providing constructive challenge to its leaders at all levels;
- Schools and colleges should have the right staff and the right development and reward arrangements. Schools and colleges should have rigorous and transparent processes in place for performance managing staff, which is understood and linked to defined strategic priorities
- Schools and colleges should be compliant with statutory requirements placed upon them
- Schools and colleges should be adhering to their responsibilities under the Equalities Act, promoting equality and diversity
- Schools and colleges should have and implement a fair and effective complaints and grievance policy and procedure

6.5 Ensuring best value for our children and young people and stakeholders

- Schools and colleges should have a regular cycle of meetings and appropriate processes to support business and financial planning
- Schools and colleges should have effective controls for managing within available resources and ensuring regularity, propriety and value for money

7 INSPECTION REPORTS AND ACTION PLANS

- 7.1 Following regulatory inspection published Reports must be made available to the young people, parents/carers and other stakeholders as per regulatory requirements. If necessary Action Plans should be generated. Generation of a Plan can be supported by the Education Quality Team. Governance processes should ensure that all required actions are completed within the timescales identified on the action plan and regular monitoring takes place through visits, remote monitoring and calls.

8 REFERENCES

The Education Inspection Framework (2023)
Further education and skills Inspection handbook 2023
Guidance handbook for the inspection of further education colleges from September 2019
A Framework for Evaluating the Quality of Services and Organisations (Overarching Framework)
DfE Governance Handbook (Updated 2022)
The Independent School Standards (2019) – England
The Independent School Standards (Wales) Regulations 2024

Associated forms:

ACS Form 16AB Blank NMS for Residential Special Schools Audit
ACS Form 16M Governance and Challenge Record Schools and Colleges
ACS Form 16G Schools/ Colleges Termly Governance Report
ACS Form 16GA Termly Governance Meeting Notes
ACS Form 16QA ACTION PLAN FOR SPECIFIC QUALITY IMPROVEMENT TEMPLATE
ACS Form 16S v01 Single Central Record Checklist
ACS Form 16R ENVIRONMENT WALK AROUND template 2022 colleges
ACS Form 16RA ENVIRONMENT WALK AROUND template 2022 Estyn
ACS Form 16RB ENVIRONMENT WALK AROUND template 2022 Ofsted
ACS Form 57A Careers Guidance Gatsby Benchmarking Checklist Self-Assessment Tool

Associated Audits:

ACS Form 16A (Schools) ISS Audit Tool