

Rawdah Montessori Primary School Governance Board & Framework

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1. Introduction

This document sets out the complete governance framework for Rawdah Montessori. It is the authoritative source for all matters relating to the governance of the school and is intended for:

- Governors and Proprietors
- The Senior Leadership Team (SLT)
- Inspectors (Ofsted / ISI)
- Regulatory and compliance bodies
- Parents and the wider school community (as a summary)

This handbook defines:

- The governance structure and hierarchy.
- The roles, responsibilities, and accountabilities of all governance bodies.
- The Terms of Reference for all committees.
- The Scheme of Delegation between the Proprietors, Governing Body, and Headteacher.

- The mechanisms for accountability, compliance, and review.
- The standards of conduct expected of all governors.

Governance at Rawdah Montessori operates at a **strategic level**, distinct from the **operational management** delivered by the Headteacher and staff.

2. Governance Purpose

The purpose of governance at Rawdah Montessori is to:

Area	Purpose
Strategic Leadership	To set the school's vision, ethos, and strategic direction, ensuring fidelity to Islamic values and the Montessori philosophy.
Safeguarding	To ensure that safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is the school's paramount priority.
Educational Excellence	To hold the school to account for the quality of education and pupil outcomes.
Financial Sustainability	To ensure the school's long-term financial viability and effective use of resources.

Area	Purpose
Compliance	To secure full compliance with all statutory and regulatory requirements for independent schools.
Risk Management	To identify, monitor, and mitigate strategic and operational risks.
Reputation	To protect and enhance the school's standing within the community and with regulatory bodies.

3. Governance Structure

3.1 Governance Hierarchy

The **Full Governing Body (FGB)** retains ultimate strategic accountability. Committees operate under delegated authority as set out in their Terms of Reference and report directly to the FGB.

3.2 Legal Status

Rawdah Montessori is an independent school. The governance structure operates within the framework of the **Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014** and, where applicable, charity and company law. The Proprietors are the legal owners and have ultimate responsibility for the school.

4. Proprietors

4.1 Named Proprietors

Name	Portfolio
Dr Azeem	SEND / Inclusion Governor
Yassar Ali	Safeguarding Governor

4.2 Responsibilities of Proprietors

The Proprietors have overarching ownership accountability. Their specific responsibilities include:

- Appointing and, where necessary, removing members of the Full Governing Body.
- Ensuring the long-term financial and operational sustainability of the school.
- Holding the Full Governing Body to account for its performance.
- Ensuring that safeguarding and compliance are prioritised at the highest level.
- Approving fundamental changes to the school's structure or ethos.
- Monitoring the effectiveness of governance and intervening where necessary.

Proprietors do **not** involve themselves in the daily operational management of the school, which is delegated to the Headteacher.

5. Full Governing Body (FGB)

5.1 Composition

Role	Name	Portfolio
Chair of Governors	Sohaib Tanvir	Leadership & Strategy
Treasurer / Finance Governor	Aaishah Vicki Hussain	Finance, Audit & Risk
Quality of Education / SEND Governor	Safeena Nazam	Education & SEND
Montessori Lead Governor	TBC	Montessori Pedagogy
Legal / HR Governor	Faizah Akram	Legal, HR & Compliance
Parent Governor	TBC	Parent Voice
Clerk to Governors	Ifsa Hussain	Governance & Compliance

The **Headteacher** attends meetings of the FGB and its committees as required, providing professional advice and reporting on operational matters. The Headteacher is not a governor and does not have voting rights.

5.2 Core Functions of the FGB

The FGB is responsible for the three core functions of governance:

Function	Description
1. Ensuring Clarity of Vision, Ethos, and Strategic Direction	Setting the school's vision, values, and long-term priorities. Approving the School Development Plan (SDP).
2. Holding the Headteacher to Account for the Educational Performance of the School and Its Pupils	Monitoring standards and outcomes. Reviewing data on pupil progress. Ensuring the quality of education is in line with the school's Montessori ethos.
3. Overseeing the Financial Performance of the School and Making Sure Its Money Is Well Spent	Approving annual budgets. Monitoring financial performance against budget. Ensuring value for money and long-term financial sustainability.

In addition, the FGB has specific statutory duties for:

- **Safeguarding:** Ensuring compliance with KCSIE and that safeguarding is embedded across the school.
- **Health and Safety:** Ensuring a safe environment for pupils, staff, and visitors.
- **Policies:** Approving all statutory policies and reviewing them regularly.
- **Risk Management:** Maintaining a strategic risk register and reviewing it termly.

5.3 Meetings and Quorum

- The FGB meets at least **termly** (three times per academic year).
- The quorum for a meeting is **four governors**, including either the Chair or Vice-Chair.
- Decisions are taken by majority vote. In the event of a tie, the Chair has the casting vote.

6. Committee Structure

To enable depth of scrutiny, the FGB delegates specific responsibilities to three standing committees. Each committee:

- Operates under written **Terms of Reference** (included in this handbook).
- Meets at least **termly**.
- Submits a written report to each meeting of the FGB.
- Has a quorum of **three members**, including the committee Chair.
- May co-opt external advisors with relevant expertise (non-voting).

6.1 Education & Montessori Committee

Role	Name
Chair	TBC (Montessori Lead Governor)
Members	Safeena Nazam, Dr Azeem

Role

Name

In Attendance

Headteacher, Clerk

Purpose:

To oversee the quality of education, ensuring fidelity to the Montessori philosophy and alignment with national expectations.

Responsibilities:

- Monitor curriculum quality and implementation across all age groups.
- Review pupil progress and attainment data.
- Oversee the school's SEND provision and compliance with the SEND Code of Practice.
- Scrutinise the school's approach to teaching, learning, and assessment.
- Review staff professional development (CPD) and its impact on pupil outcomes.
- Oversee the School Development Plan (SDP) in relation to education.
- Prepare for and monitor inspection readiness (ISI / Ofsted).

Reports to: Full Governing Body

6.2 Finance, Audit & Risk Committee

Role	Name
Chair	Aaishah Vicki Hussain
Members	Faizah Akram, Sohaib Tanvir (ex-officio)
In Attendance	Headteacher, Clerk, (External Advisor as required)

Purpose:

To ensure the school's financial health, regulatory compliance, and effective risk management.

Responsibilities:

- Recommend the annual budget to the FGB for approval.
- Monitor financial performance against budget on a termly basis.
- Oversee the school's financial systems and internal controls.
- Liaise with external auditors (where applicable).
- Maintain and review the strategic risk register.
- Oversee compliance with all legal and regulatory requirements, including employment law, health and safety, and data protection.
- Monitor the condition and security of the school's premises and estates.
- Advise on fundraising and financial sustainability planning.

Reports to: Full Governing Body

6.3 Safeguarding, Inclusion & Wellbeing Committee

Role	Name
Chair	Yassar Ali
Members	Dr Azeem, Faizah Akram, Parent Governor (TBC)
In Attendance	Headteacher (DSL), Clerk

Purpose:

To ensure that the school's safeguarding culture is robust and that all pupils feel safe, included, and supported.

Responsibilities:

- Monitor safeguarding logs, including the number and nature of concerns and referrals.
- Receive and review termly reports from the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL).
- Oversee the school's compliance with **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE)** .
- Monitor safer recruitment practices and the Single Central Record (SCR).
- Ensure all staff receive appropriate and timely safeguarding training.
- Review the effectiveness of the school's SEND and inclusion policies.
- Monitor pupil and staff wellbeing strategies.
- Ensure alignment with the Equality Act 2010 and the school's duties under the Public Sector Equality Duty.

Reports to: Full Governing Body (with a standing item on every FGB agenda).

7. Scheme of Delegation

The following table summarises the delegation of key functions between the Proprietors, FGB, Committees, and the Headteacher.

Function	Proprietors	FGB	Committee	Headteacher
Strategic Vision & Ethos	Approve	Set	Recommend	Implement
School Development Plan (SDP)	Review	Approve	Scrutinise	Draft & Implement
Budget Approval	Review	Approve	Review & Recommend	Draft & Manage
Financial Management	Oversight	Oversight	Monitor	Operational
Safeguarding Accountability	Non-Delegable	Non-Delegable	Monitor	Operational Lead
Policy Approval	Review	Approve	Draft/Review	Draft & Implement
Staff Appointments (SLT)	Consult	Approve	(HR)	Recommend
Staff Appointments (Other)	–	–	–	Approve
Curriculum Implementation	–	Oversight	Monitor	Deliver
Pupil Discipline (Exclusions)	–	(Appeals)	–	Decision

Function	Proprietors	FGB	Committee	Headteacher
Risk Register	Review	Approve	Maintain	Inform

Key:

Non- Delegable: means the function cannot be delegated further and remains with the named body.

Operational : means it is the responsibility of the Headteacher and staff.

8. Governance Standards

8.1 Governor Conduct

All governors operate under the following principles:

- **Collective Responsibility:** Decisions of the FGB are binding on all governors.
- **Strategic Focus:** Governors focus on strategy, not operational detail.
- **Integrity and Professionalism:** Governors act with honesty, openness, and in the best interests of the school.
- **Confidentiality:** All governance discussions are confidential unless formally approved for publication.
- **Accountability:** Governors are accountable to the Proprietors and, through them, to parents and regulators.
- **Respectful Challenge:** Governors challenge respectfully and constructively to secure improvement.

8.2 Conflicts of Interest

- All governors must declare any actual or potential conflicts of interest annually, on a **Register of Interests** form.
- Declarations are recorded in the minutes of the relevant meeting.
- Where a conflict arises, the governor must withdraw from the relevant discussion and decision.

8.3 Quorum

The quorum for FGB meetings is **four governors**. For committee meetings, the quorum is **three members**, including the committee Chair.

8.4 Reporting

- Each committee submits a written report to every FGB meeting, summarising its work and any recommendations.
- All decisions are formally recorded in minutes, which are approved at the subsequent meeting.
- Actions are tracked and reviewed at each meeting.

8.5 Training and Development

- All governors are expected to undertake appropriate training, including:
 - Safeguarding (KCSIE Part One and Annex B).
 - Prevent Duty awareness.
 - Induction on the school's governance structure and policies.
- The Chair of Governors will conduct an annual skills audit to identify training needs.

9. Role of the Chair of Governors

The Chair of Governors (currently **Sohaib Tanvir**) provides leadership to the board and ensures its effectiveness. The Chair:

- Sets the agenda for FGB meetings in consultation with the Headteacher and Clerk.
- Chairs meetings, ensuring that all governors can contribute and that challenge is respectful.
- Acts as the primary link between the FGB and the Headteacher.
- Ensures that decisions are properly made and recorded.
- Leads the annual review of governance effectiveness.
- Acts as an escalation point for serious concerns (in liaison with the Proprietors).

10. Role of the Clerk to Governors

The Clerk to Governors (currently **Ifsa Hussain**) is the board's professional advisor on governance and compliance. The Clerk:

- Ensures that meetings are properly convened and that notices are sent in accordance with the timetable.
- Advises the board on governance, constitutional, and procedural matters.
- Takes, prepares, and circulates accurate minutes of meetings.
- Maintains the official records of the board, including the Register of Interests and governance documents.
- Manages the policy review schedule.

11. Safeguarding Priority

Safeguarding is a **standing agenda item at every FGB meeting**. The board's ultimate accountability for safeguarding is non-delegable. To fulfil this duty, the board ensures:

- All governors receive appropriate safeguarding training.
- The school's safeguarding policy is reviewed annually and is compliant with **KCSIE 2025** .
- The Single Central Record (SCR) is reviewed at least termly.
- The DSL provides a written safeguarding report to every FGB meeting.
- Any serious incidents or allegations are reported to the board immediately.
- Safer recruitment practices are embedded across the school.

12. Annual Review & Effectiveness

The board will conduct an annual review of its own effectiveness. This will include:

Area of Review	Method	Timeline
Governance Structure	Review committee structure and Terms of Reference.	Autumn Term
Skills Audit	Assess the skills of the current board against future needs.	Autumn Term
Member Review	Review attendance and contribution of individual governors.	Summer Term
Governance Self-Evaluation	Complete a formal self-evaluation questionnaire.	Summer Term
Risk Register Review	Review the strategic risk register and update as necessary.	Ongoing (formal review termly)
Policy Review Schedule	Confirm that all statutory policies are up to date.	Summer Term

The outcome of the review will be reported to the Proprietors and used to inform governor recruitment, training, and development.

13. Current Vacancies and Recruitment

13.1 Current Vacancies

The board currently has the following vacancies:

Role

Portfolio

Montessori Lead Governor

Montessori Pedagogy

Parent Governor

Parent Voice

13.2 Recruitment Process

- Vacancies are advertised within the school community and, where necessary, more widely.
- Applicants are interviewed by a panel including the Chair of Governors and at least one other governor.
- All appointments are subject to an enhanced DBS check and, for the Parent Governor role, are elected by parents where there is more than one candidate.
- The Proprietors approve all governor appointments.

14. Review Cycle

This Governance Handbook will be reviewed:

- **Annually** by the Full Governing Body.
- Following any significant change to the governance structure.
- Following any change in legislation or regulatory guidance that impacts governance.

The review will be led by the Chair of Governors and supported by the Clerk.