



OPTIMAL SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

OSG-S6

OVERCOMING THE CHALLENGES OF GOVERNANCE AND MINIMISING RISK

OVERVIEW OF THE COURSE

COURSE RATIONALE: An important part of the board's role is to “develop, implement and review risk management strategies in relation to strategic direction, governance, operations and finance” (NESA Requirements, section 3.9.3.1-G). One effective way of minimising risk is to avoid the pitfalls of poor governance. This course helps ‘responsible persons’ to identify and be on the lookout for structures, processes and practices that have the potential to generate significant risk, and in extreme cases, crises. Practical frameworks are presented and trialled to help boards resolve conflicts and work more productively.

COURSE OBJECTIVE: This course is designed to help ‘responsible persons’ [as defined under Section 47(1)(b) of the Education Act in New South Wales] understand and implement sound policies and ongoing procedures for effective governance in ways that comply with the NESA requirements upon school boards. Specifically, the course is designed to provide in-depth appreciation and practical application of ways in which ‘responsible persons’ can work positively and productively together to ensure (a) effective implementation of established principles of ‘best practice’ in the area of governance and (b) compliance with relevant NESA requirements in this area. Furthermore, the course provides opportunities through discussion and problem-solving for ‘responsible persons’ to build unity of understanding, a common purpose, and a commitment to implementing ‘best practices’ for effective school governance in a strategic manner that enhances the school's outcomes. The course is designed to address ongoing professional learning needs rather than serving as a key component of the induction of new ‘responsible persons’.

COURSE AIMS:

1. To help ‘responsible persons’ understand and implement effective ways of overcoming challenges that arise in governance in order to minimise risk.
2. To inform ‘responsible persons’ about the NESA requirements and expectations as they relate to overcoming governance challenges in order to minimise risk.
3. To expand knowledge of the NESA requirements and expectations into a solid, practical understanding that is demonstrated by a commitment to fulfil the requirements and adhere to principles and practices of ‘best practice’ in overcoming governance challenges in order to minimise risk.
4. To help ‘responsible persons’ develop a practical strategy to fulfil the NESA requirements in terms of (a) record keeping, (b) understanding effective governance principles and practices, and (c) implementing ‘best practice’ in overcoming governance challenges in order to minimise risk.
5. To help ‘responsible persons’ reflect upon the importance of overcoming governance challenges in order to minimise risk, the board's effectiveness in fulfilling its role of governance in this area, and if appropriate, initiate an ongoing process of improvement.

DURATION OF THE COURSE: 4 hours.

MODE OF DELIVERY: Face-to-face interactive workshop with all the ‘responsible persons’ in one group, usually delivered at the school or at another suitable venue organised by the school.



SUMMARY OF COURSE CONTENT:

- Poor governance - the Achilles heel of school effectiveness.
- The importance of understanding a school's distinctive culture.
- How do school cultures differ from corporate (and other institutional) cultures?
- How can the board add value and minimise risk?
- Understanding governance and management.
- The accountability-responsibility relationship.
- What can go wrong - problem board members.
- What can go wrong - problematic board dynamics.
- The relationship between school board effectiveness and student achievement levels.
- Characteristics of poor governance.
- Characteristics of good governance.
- Resolving disagreements.
 - Organisational conflicts.
 - Personal conflicts.
- Creative positive problem solving.
 - De Bono's Six Hats.
 - Parallel problem solving.
 - Three hypothetical situations.
- The risks inherent in leadership transitions.
- Solutions to foreseeable risks.
- Four essentials for building a stronger board.

This course focuses on the following governance requirement as outlined in the *Registered and Accredited Individual Non-government Schools (NSW) Manual* (December 2017): 3.9.3.1-G.

CERTIFICATION: Upon successful completion of the course, a signed letter is issued to the school certifying the name of the course, the content covered, the duration of the course, the venue, and the names of those persons who attended.