



Dubai
English
Speaking
Schools

Job Description and Person Specification

Job Title: Head of Assurance, Risk and Compliance

Reports to: CEO

OBJECTIVE OF THE ROLE

The Head of Assurance, Risk & Compliance is the independent oversight, challenge and assurance across Dubai English Speaking Schools (DESS).

The role exists to support the CEO and Trustees in maintaining effective organisational governance, risk management, compliance and internal control arrangements. The postholder will provide assurance that key organisational, regulatory and operational obligations are being met and that significant risks are identified, appropriately managed and escalated where necessary.

The role will develop and maintain frameworks for risk, compliance, assurance, governance and policy management across the Group while supporting a culture of accountability, transparency and continuous improvement.

SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE ROLE

The postholder:

- Provides challenge, scrutiny and assurance across schools and central services.
- Reports independently to the CEO and Trustees on matters relating to risk, compliance, governance and assurance.
- Supports leaders in identifying and managing risk.
- Monitors compliance and assurance activity across the organisation.

The postholder does **not**:

- Assume operational ownership of risks that sit with school or functional leaders.
- Manage operational departments on behalf of leaders.
- Replace the accountability of Headteachers or Central Services leaders.
- Act as the organisation's legal adviser.

MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES

Strategic Risk Management

- Develop and maintain a Group-wide organisational risk framework.
- Maintain a consolidated strategic risk register.
- Identify emerging risks and trends requiring leadership or Trustee attention.
- Support risk owners in assessing, monitoring and mitigating organisational risks.
- Provide regular risk analysis and reporting to the CEO and Trustees.

Compliance and Regulatory Assurance

- Maintain a compliance obligations register covering regulatory, statutory and organisational requirements.
- Monitor compliance controls and evidence across schools and central services.
- Coordinate responses to significant compliance issues or concerns.
- Support compliance with UAE governing bodies.
- Maintain a centralised repository for compliance and inspection evidence.
- Escalate material compliance concerns appropriately.

Assurance and Audit

- Develop and maintain a proportionate assurance framework across the Group.
- Prepare and maintain an organisational assurance map.
- Lead a programme of internal reviews and assurance activity.
- Track audit findings and agreed actions through to completion.
- Provide independent confirmation regarding the effectiveness of key controls.

Policy Management

- Maintain oversight of policy review cycles.
- Support the CEO and Trustees through the provision of governance information and analysis.
- Monitor policy compliance and policy-review requirements.

Board and Trustee Reporting

- Produce concise, evidence-based reports for the Board and its committees.
- Report by exception, highlighting significant risks, compliance issues and assurance gaps.
- Prepare risk, compliance and assurance dashboards.
- Present information with clarity, independence and professional judgement.
- Ensure Trustees have sufficient information to discharge their governance responsibilities.

Investigations and Escalation

- Support the investigation of significant compliance, governance or control concerns.
- Maintain escalation protocols for material organisational risks.
- Monitor resolution of agreed actions arising from reviews, audits or investigations.
- Support a culture of transparency, accountability and continuous improvement.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

Qualifications:

- Degree-level qualification in Accounting, Finance, Business Administration, Governance, Law or a related discipline, or equivalent professional experience.

Experience:

- In compliance, governance, assurance, finance, administration, audit or risk-related roles.
- Supporting senior leaders, Boards, Trustees, Governors or Committees.
- Preparing reports, briefing papers or management information.
- Developing or maintaining frameworks, registers, controls, policies or governance processes.
- Managing multiple priorities and working with a high degree of accuracy.
- Strong Microsoft 365 and technology skills with the ability to learn quickly, adopt new systems, platforms and digital solutions.

Knowledge and Skills

- Excellent organisational, prioritisation and project-management skills.
- Exceptional attention to detail.
- Strong written communication and report-writing ability.
- Sound judgement and analytical capability.
- Ability to manage confidential information appropriately.
- Ability to work independently and influence constructively.
- Strong stakeholder-management and relationship-building skills.

Desirable

- Experience within schools, education or not-for-profit organisations.
- Experience of audit, regulatory inspections or assurance reviews.
- Accounting, governance, compliance or risk-management qualifications.
- Experience of policy management and governance frameworks.
- Experience of Trustee, Governor or Board reporting.
- Understanding of safeguarding, data protection, health and safety or employment compliance.

The Head of Risk, Compliance & Assurance is expected to:

- Act with integrity, discretion and independence.
- Demonstrate sound professional judgement and objectivity.
- Build trusted relationships whilst maintaining appropriate challenge.
- Promote accountability without assuming operational ownership.
- Maintain high standards of accuracy, professionalism and confidentiality.
- Support a culture of continuous improvement and organisational learning.
- Model the values and behaviours expected of senior leaders within DESS.

This list is not exhaustive and is designed to provide a framework for areas of development the successful candidate will have responsibility for within the Primary school.