The Compass School

Appointment of

Chair Of The Board Of Governors

from January 2027

Applications are invited from suitably experienced, enthusiastic and committed leaders for the above post, which will be tenable from January 2027

The School

The Compass School is an independent primary school in East Lothian for girls and boys from pre-school (nursery) to Primary Seven. Children attending the School enjoy its friendly and caring environment in which they can feel secure and happy and in which they are encouraged to succeed, developing confidence, skills and ability. Its small class sizes allow each child to enjoy a very high level of individual attention. Over the years, it has built up an excellent reputation for providing high quality education and for the excellent results it achieves with its children. In 2022, The Compass achieved Gold status as a UN Rights Respecting School. In recent years, the School has been awarded 'Champion School' status by iTeach and became one of Scotland's first Digital Schools in recognition of its work in digital learning within the curriculum. In September 2025, the School received a national Excellence Award for its intergenerational work in confronting age discrimination and stereotypes.

The School is located in a beautiful situation in Haddington, which is situated less than fifteen minutes along the A1 from the outskirts of Edinburgh.

The Post

Key Purpose:

To provide leadership to the School's Board of Governors ensuring that it fulfils its functions, and to work closely with the Headteacher to support, advise and shape the strategy of the School and its implementation, as follows:

Leading governance:

- ensure that the Board and Headteacher have a shared vision and sense of purpose
- lead the Board in monitoring the implementation of the strategy
- set the culture of the Board, in the context of the fulfilment of the fiduciary duties of Board members
- ensure the Board acts as a team
- where required, represent the Board of Governors in its dealings with external partners and be an advocate for the School
- attend school functions (e.g. performances/concerts) as appropriate and encourage other Governors to do so

Leading and developing the team:

- ensure that the Board has the required skills and commitment to govern well, and that identified skills gaps are filled
- ensure a diverse team that reflects the communities served with a mix of new and experienced members and a variety of backgrounds
- ensure all members of the Board have a thorough understanding of their role and receive appropriate induction and training as required
- ensure that Board members are involved and feel valued
- encourage the development of Board members
- ensure that there is a plan for succession for the Chair and the Board

Working with the Headteacher

- build a professional relationship with the Headteacher that allows for honest conversations, acting as a sounding board and ensuring there are no surprises at meetings
- meet regularly with the Headteacher
- ensure there are transparent and effective processes for the recruitment and induction of the Headteacher
- ensure appropriate Governor involvement in the recruitment of other members of the Management Team *(Bursar and Deputy Headteacher)*
- ensure all Board members concentrate on their strategic role and hold the Headteacher to account
- ensure that the Management Team provide information that allows the Board to fulfil its function
- oversee and participate in the Headteacher's annual Professional Review & Development, ensuring that appropriate continuing professional development (CPD) is provided
- ensure the workload and wellbeing of the Management Team is considered
- ensure the Headteacher provides staff with an understanding of the role of the Board of Governors and acts as link between the two

Leading improvement:

- ensure the Board is involved at a strategic level in the School's self-evaluation process and that this feeds into its key priorities
- ensure the Board's business is focused on the strategic priorities
- ensure the Board has the information it needs to monitor the success and well-being of pupils and consider appropriate actions to improve outcomes
- ensure the Board has a good knowledge of the School
- ensure there are mechanisms in place to listen to the views of parents, pupils and staff

Leading governing board business:

- chair meetings effectively, promoting an open culture that allows ideas and discussion to thrive while ensuring clear decisions are reached as quickly as possible
- ensure that decisions taken at the meetings of the Board of Governors are implemented
- ensure that effective arrangements are in place for dealing with complaints made to the Board of Governors under the School's complaints procedure
- ensure that effective arrangements are in place for dealing with employment matters, (for example, grievance, disciplinary, capability) under the procedures of the School

Profile of Applicants

The successful candidate must be able to subscribe fully to the values and aims of The Compass School. He/she will have excellent interpersonal and communication skills and the ability to inspire and motivate others, empathise with others, and create and maintain a positive atmosphere.

Candidates for the role of chair should be able to demonstrate a good number of the following skills and attributes:

- personal integrity
- good understanding of the environment in which the School is operating
- good understanding of the role and legal responsibilities of the Board and its members
- negotiation and diplomacy skills with the ability to have courageous conversations
- ability to think strategically and objectively; to take the long view and prioritise
- capacity to process information quickly and understand relevant data, drawing valid conclusions with a considered approach to risk
- ability to chair meetings well, encouraging debate and facilitating decision-making
- ability to build and get the best out of a team while addressing any skills or experience gaps
- ability and willingness to delegate and trust others

Time Commitment

The Board of Governors meets five times during the academic year: in late September; late November/early December; January (AGM); late March; late May/early June. Meetings are normally between 1 and 1 ½ hours duration on average.

In addition to these, the Chair normally meets with the Headteacher for an hour (either in person or via Teams/Zoom) in advance of each meeting. During the year, the Headteacher may contact the Chair at various times to discuss any matter arising which may involve his/her involvement or advice.

The Chair and fellow Governors are invited to attend the main public events during the academic session, such as concerts, the Carol Service, our summer productions and Sports Day.

Governors serve for a four year period, which may be extended for a further four years.

Terms and Conditions

The post is unpaid and post-holders give their time on a voluntary basis. Reasonable expenses can be claimed for costs incurred in attending external meetings and conferences on behalf of the School.

The appointment is subject to a PVG Enhanced Disclosure/SCRO police check through the Disclosure Scotland Procedures and a check with the relevant professional body.

The Compass School is a non-smoking campus.

Additional Information About The School

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The Compass School is firmly committed to purposeful child-centred learning with small class sizes (average number of pupils in each class – 17; maximum - 20) allowing for a significant level of individual attention for each child. Children are encouraged to develop their individual skills and abilities to the full within a wide ranging and stimulating curriculum. French is taught from age four as are Judo, Music and Swimming alongside the main core subjects. The curriculum is broadly based on the Curriculum for Excellence in Scotland although has been adapted to meet the needs of our children and the academic standards to which we strive. Classes are made up of a wide span of abilities and the School is able to cater for the gifted as well as the less able.

A wide-ranging programme of sporting activities is also offered with all of our older children taking part in fixtures with other schools in a variety of sports.

Outdoor education is also a feature of life at The Compass School with overnight visits to such places as London, York, France, the Scottish Highlands, the Belmont Outdoor Centre in Perthshire and the Broomlee Outdoor Centre in the Scottish Borders, being combined with day visits to a variety of places of interest in East Lothian, Edinburgh and beyond, as our children explore the 'outdoor classroom'.

The School has been in existence for over 60 years, having been created by the Founder headmistress, Mrs Alny Younger, to fill a gap in educational provision in the area. The School since 1992 has been under the trusteeship of a Board of Governors.

There are currently 141 children on the school roll organised into eight classes, ranging from Reception/Nursery (4 year olds) to Primary 7 (12 years).

French, PE, Music and Judo are taught by specialist staff, but most other subjects are taught by class teachers.

The Compass offers an attractive environment in which to work, with well-motivated happy children guided by a friendly and committed staff. We have very good relations with the parents and strong support from the governing body.

Staff have access to a wide-range of Continuing Professional Development opportunities through the Scottish Council of Independent Schools professional learning programme and via many online or in-person courses and conferences.

The School last underwent an HMI inspection in March 2016 and received what the local media described as, a glowing report. Many strengths were identified within the School, particularly its strong positive ethos and its wide-ranging curriculum. Since annual inspections by the Care Inspectorate commenced in 2004, our Form 1 class and Compass Care, our after-school care facility, has enjoyed successive highly satisfactory reports. Our most recent report in September 2026 saw us being awarded ‘Very Good’ which denotes major strengths in every aspect of our provision which was inspected.

Further information on the School can be obtained from the School's website at www.thecompassschool.co.uk .

Application Procedure

Applications should be submitted by letter, to the Chair at the address below, enclosing a completed application form (available also from the School website or School Office), along with the names and contact details of two referees. A Curriculum Vitae may also be submitted along with the above if the applicant so wishes. The closing date for receipt of applications is **12pm on Friday 21 November 2026.**

Applications should be sent to:

The Chair of The Board of Governors
The Compass School,
West Road
Haddington
East Lothian
EH41 3RD

Or by email to: **office@thecompassschool.co.uk**