



# Governance Online Modules

These online courses are designed as a suite of self-paced Governance modules that provide essential knowledge and understanding for prospective or newly appointed members to school governing bodies. The online activities will also be valuable for current members of school boards to ensure they understand their governance role and are able to discharge their financial and legal responsibilities.



Available from 06/01/2020 to 20/12/2020

SD 3.9.3.4



1hr

## MODULE 1

Introduction to School Governance

## MODULE 2

School Governance

## MODULE 3

Legal Compliance

## MODULE 4

Financial Governance

## MODULE 5

Executive Supervision

## MODULE 6

Managing Risk

## MODULE 7

School Board Survey

## MODULE 8

Child Protection for Board Members

## MODULE 9

Strategy

## MODULE 10

Reputational Risk

## MODULE 11

Financial Governance A

## MODULE 12 (to be released during 2020)

Financial Governance B

## MODULE 13

Child Safe Schools  
Values, Behaviours and Culture

## MODULE 14

NESA Accreditation and Registration for Boards

If you already have an AIS user profile, please login to the AIS website to **REGISTER** for any of these online courses. To establish an AIS user profile please go to [www.aisnsw.edu.au](http://www.aisnsw.edu.au). If you require assistance contact Cecilia Waites, Course Administrator at [cwaites@aisnsw.edu.au](mailto:cwaites@aisnsw.edu.au).



Completing the Governance Online Modules will contribute towards NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) Registration and Accreditation Standards addressing 3.9.3.4 of the NESA Registered and Accredited Individual Non-Government Schools (NSW) Manual.

## **MODULE 1: Introduction to School Governance**

This online course is the first in a suite of self-paced Governance modules that are designed to provide essential knowledge and understanding for prospective or newly appointed members to school governing bodies. These online activities will also be valuable for current members of school boards to ensure they understand their governance role and are able to discharge their financial and legal responsibilities.

Module 1 provides an overview of Australian schooling, introduces the independent school sector, the role of AISNSW and the key functions of the school board.

## **MODULE 2: School Governance**

This online course provides essential knowledge and understanding for prospective, newly appointed or current members to school governing bodies. It will also be valuable for current members of school boards to ensure they understand their governance role and are able to discharge their financial and legal responsibilities. This module looks at OECD research on school boards and how they create value for the schools they govern. The course also examines the shifting and complex role of the Principal and the corporatisation of schooling.

## **MODULE 3: Legal Compliance**

This online course introduces participants to the school as a legal entity, examines four key legal concepts and outlines the duties and obligations of 'Responsible Persons' as directors of a not-for-profit organization.

## **MODULE 4: Financial Governance**

In this online course the obligations of directors to be informed and to monitor the school's financial position are exemplified by a case study. The key duty of directors - to prevent the school trading while insolvent - is emphasised. The module concludes with a financial literacy quiz suggesting a level of financial knowledge required by all directors.

## **MODULE 5: Executive Supervision**

Under corporations law boards have a key duty to supervise management. What does supervision mean, and how should executive supervision be conducted? These questions are explored in the context of the complex interactions between governance and management, the importance of the relationships between the Board and the Principal, and how authority can be delegated from the Board to the Principal to ensure appropriate supervision systems are in place.

## **MODULE 6: Managing Risk**

In order to manage risks Boards must have in place risk management systems and risk management processes that link into that system. This module explores the risks that are inherent in schools, outlines appropriate risk management strategies, and proposes an effective risk management system for Boards to consider. Importantly, risk is understood as the chance of something impacting upon the achievement of strategic goals rather than simply the avoidance of adverse events.

## **MODULE 7: School Board Survey**

Module 7 asks directors of school boards to reflect upon the efficiency and effectiveness of their board practices. A broad range of board processes and issues seek structured feedback and commentary, and the final section of the module requires participants to evaluate the contribution their governance practices make to the strategic direction of the school. Responses from individual directors will be aggregated and generated into a report for the board.

## **MODULE 8: Child Protection for Board Members**

This online course provides an essential overview of the legislation in NSW that relates to child protection. As a board member, how well do you understand your responsibilities in relation to the protection of children? Are you familiar with the school's Child Protection Policy, or the School's Code of Conduct? These and other important questions are explored to assist board members understand four key strands of legislation that relate to the safeguarding of children in this state.

## **MODULE 9: Strategy**

Strategy is an over used and abused term. So, what is strategy, and what does strategic planning look like in schools? Participants will gain a better understanding of what strategy is, look at more recent trends in school strategic planning and identify key strategic goals in their school.

## **MODULE 10: Reputational Risk.**

What are the key risks which affects a school's reputation? What steps can schools take to mitigate reputational damage, and how can schools respond to adverse events and circumstances in ways restore and rebuild the confidence of community. Some recent case studies illustrate how schools have dealt with challenging events and responded to them with thoughtful and constructive action that have sustained community confidence and trust.

## **MODULE 11: Financial Governance A**

This module is recommended for directors who do not have a finance background. It introduces participants to the financial management framework, the fiduciary duties of a Director as well as the Board's responsibilities, the role of the audit committee, and the key concepts around the components of financial statements. It seeks to help Directors understand that good financial governance depends upon quality financial reports and the capacity of the entire board to read and interpret financial statements. This module includes quizzes to ascertain each Director's baseline knowledge to gauge improvement, and builds towards Directors effectively completing Module 12.

## **MODULE 12: Financial Governance B (to be released 2020)**

This module is intended for directors who are not finance professionals and builds on the work done in Module 11. It examines areas of financial risk, internal controls, ratio analysis and analysing financial statements. A case study enables participants to examine a set of school financial statements, calculate the impacts of various changes in enrolments, funding and expenditure to assess a school's current financial position. Key financial ratios are introduced asks participants need to calculate these ratios for the school based on a set of financial statements.

## **MODULE 13: Child Safe Schools - Values, Behaviours and Culture**

In April 2018 Cara Langley, Manager: Child Protection at AISNSW, addressed the AIS Governance Symposium with a presentation named "Creating Safer Independent Schools". This module includes her presentation, the panel session that followed and a series of questions to ensure that you understand your responsibilities as a board member.

## **MODULE 14: NESA Accreditation and Registration for Boards**

NSW Education Standards Authority (NESA) has made a number of revisions to its registration requirements for non-government schools, including changes to Section 3.9 of its manual, Management and Operation of the School. The AISNSW Governance Resource Manual (GRM) was developed to assist member schools meet their registration requirements in relation to governance: standards for the 'proper governance' of independent schools were introduced by Board of Studies, Teaching and Educational Standards (BOSTES).