

## **Governor Role Description, January 2020**

Widcombe Church of England Junior School is a member of the Palladian Academy Trust (PAT) which is made up of ten local schools.

The overall purpose of the WJS governing body is:

- to ensure all pupils/students within the Trust have access to a high quality education provision in line with the shared vision
- to monitor the implementation of the school's development plan ensuring that it is delivering against agreed strategic and local objectives; moving the school and the Trust as a whole towards achieving and sustaining a regulatory judgement of outstanding in all areas
- to ensure that the academic and wellbeing needs of pupils/students are being met effectively through the design and delivery of a broad and balanced curriculum which, through use of personalised, developmental support, helps to maximise each student's success and enjoyment
- to ensure all pupils/students are safeguarded
- to uphold and promote the ethos of the school within the context of the Trust's vision and values
- to ensure the school's allocated resources are applied and managed effectively within the context of Trust's financial framework and other relevant regulations, policies and procedures
- to maintain the Christian character of the school.

The term of office for a Governor is currently four years.

Governors are expected to:

- treat governing matters in the strictest confidence
- attend meetings of the School Governing Body (SGB). These are held six times a year (one per term) at Widcombe Junior School on a variety of weekday evenings at 5.30pm. Meetings usually last about 2 hours
- read the considerable amount of paperwork sent out prior to each of these meetings and be prepared to discuss and comment on matters raised within it at the meeting. Time requirement 2-3 hrs per meeting
- be a member of a sub-committee, forum or panel and in some cases to be a designated governor
- attend school events and worship when possible. This is particularly appreciated by the pupils, staff, parents and carers.
- take part in monitoring visits
- use the school email system for all school email communications and learn to use the online Sharepoint system for electronic storage of governor documents.

Training in governorship is offered by the LEA (B&NES) and the Diocese, and is highly recommended to all governors, new and ongoing.

### **School Governing Body (SGB).**

The SGB currently has 13 members; two staff governors including the Headteacher, two parent governors and seven foundation governors (one of whom is currently Chair, another Vice Chair and another the Vicar of St Matthew's Church in Widcombe). In addition, there may be a co-opted and/or associate community governors.

## **Scheme of Delegation**

There are two sub-committees and one panel. The background and interests of a governor are considered when allocation to a sub-committee is made but sometimes it is a matter of filling in where required. It is hoped that a governor will be interested in taking on a chairing role at some point, typically between one and two years. A governor might be asked to clerk for a sub-committee that they have joined. This means taking notes during the meeting and then writing them up as Minutes using a pro-forma template.

These sub-committees meet three times a year, usually during or just after the end of the school day. They are:

### **Pupil Welfare**

The sub-committee; ensures that the school's safeguarding procedures are robust and fully implemented, and that the school collects relevant safeguarding data (there is a designated Safeguarding Governor within the sub-committee); ensures that all members of the school community (children, staff, stakeholders and visitors) are not disadvantaged as a result of their gender, race, disability, religious belief or social background and that the school promotes equal opportunities and tackles discrimination (there are designated Pupil Premium and SEND Governors within the sub-committee).

### **Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural**

All Foundation Governors must be members of this sub-committee, which ensures the Christian faith is central to the life of the school. It prepares the school for SIAMS inspections.

### **Admissions Panel**

Responsible for implementing the PAT Admissions policy and agreeing the Pupil Admissions list for the relevant year.

There are three designated governors and one open forum reporting directly to the SGB:

- **The Finance Governor** who liaises with the Headteacher (HT) and School Business Manager (SBM) and reports directly to SGB. Finance or business skills are essential for this important role which includes understanding the strategic context of the school's budget, helping with its planning and enabling governors to have an informed discussion about the draft budget. The Finance Governor will also facilitate the SGB's responsibility for in year monitoring of the budget.
- **The Health & Safety Governor** who liaises with the HT and SBM and reports directly to the SGB.
- **Pay and Staffing Governor** discusses the staffing structure with the HT and monitors changes throughout the year; convenes an HT Performance Management Review Panel; assists with interviews for Deputy Head appointments and helps with other staff interviews if requested by the HT; forms part of the HT Appointment Panel when necessary.
- **The Education and Achievement Forum** chaired by the HT, monitors the full range of educational data in each year group. The forum monitors the use of BlueSky

and supports and challenges initiatives intended to improve achievement data for all pupils. This forum is open to all governors and meets three times a year.

As you become more experienced there are other roles you might want to take on, which would increase your degree of involvement and level of responsibility (e.g. Chair of a sub-committee). This document does not cover the additional roles taken on by the Chair, Vice-chair or the Chairs of sub-committees.

The role of a governor is largely a thinking and questioning role. The purpose of governance is to provide confident and strong strategic leadership which leads to robust accountability, oversight and assurance for educational and financial performance.

A governor does NOT:

- write school policies
- undertake audits of any sort – whether financial or health & safety - even if the governor has the relevant professional experience
- spend much time with the pupils of the school – if you want to work directly with children, there are many other voluntary valuable roles within the school
- fundraise – this is the role of the PTA – the governing board should consider income streams and the potential for income generation, but not carry out fundraising tasks
- undertake classroom observations to make judgements on the quality of teaching – the governing board monitors the quality of teaching in the school by scrutinising data provided by the senior staff and from external sources
- do the job of the school staff; if there is not enough capacity within the paid staff team to carry out the necessary tasks, the governing board need to consider and rectify this.

### **Confidentiality**

All governors are expected to abide by the PAT Code of Conduct Policy. Matters regarding individual staff/pupils are discussed in SGB and sub-committees, and these matters must remain private to the meetings.

### **Parent Governors**

The school has greatly benefitted from having active parent governors over recent years, they have a precious stake in improving the school's provision; their own child's education. However, it is important to realise that the SGB must make decisions on what is in the interest of the whole school community, and this may sometimes be in conflict with what you feel may be best for your particular child.

### **Foundation Governors**

These governors need to be practising member of a Christian Church, often Church of England. Their appointment is overseen by the Diocese. They are automatically a member of the SMSC Committee.

### **Expenses**

Governors may receive out-of-pocket expenses incurred as a result of fulfilling their role as governor, and the PAT has an Expenses Policy. Payments can cover incidental expenses, such as travel and childcare, but not loss of earnings.