



HITCHIN GIRLS' SCHOOL

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Headteacher: Mrs F.C. Manning

Ref: 071

17 January 2022

Dear Parent/Carer,

We have three vacancies on the Board of Trustees for a Parent Trustee (Governor) and welcome and encourage applications from parents of all backgrounds who would be keen to serve in this role. Serving as a Trustee is both a challenge and a pleasure and Hitchin Girls' is fortunate to have Trustees who play a full part in the life of the school. Parent Trustees have an important role to play as they can bring a contemporary view through the school life of their child(ren) as well as a wide variety of skills and experience to the table. Training and support will be available to the successful candidate. The Trustees are keen to ensure that the composition of the Board reflects the whole school community and encourage applications from all members of society, regardless of background, gender, ethnicity, disability or age (as long as you're over 18).

There are six Parent Trustees on our Board (Governing Body) and the position is held for a period of four years. If elected you may serve the full four years even if your child leaves the school before your term of office finishes. Parent Trustees are only elected by parents or guardians of children attending the school.

If you would like to stand for election please complete and return the attached Parent Trustee's nomination form to the school office addressed to the Clerk to the Board of Trustees, Mr. T. Hankin, by **11.30 a.m. on Monday 31 January 2022**. Another parent of a child at the school must sign the form in support of your nomination. Please be aware that regulations require everyone elected or appointed to a Trustee Board to undergo a DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check. On election you will be asked to sign a statement of eligibility and also provide proof of identity.

Please give brief details about yourself on the form (strict limit of no more than 100 words please). If an election is needed these details will be copied and sent to other parents with the ballot papers.

If you are unsure about whether to stand or not and would like to find out more about the role, please contact the Clerk via admin@hgs.herts.sch.uk and either I or another of our Trustees will be pleased to discuss this with you.

If only three nominations are received, a ballot will not be necessary and the parents nominated will be duly elected. If a ballot is needed, it will be by secret ballot and you will be provided with information regarding this process. If there are no nominations, the Board of Trustees has the power to appoint a Parent Trustee to fill the vacancy.

Further information regarding Parent Trustee elections is contained in the attached notes. Your attention is particularly drawn to the information about our constitution as an Academy and the roles and responsibilities of Trustees. If you have any questions about whether you are eligible to stand or vote in the election or about anything else in this letter, please contact the Clerk to the Trustees at the school.

Yours sincerely,

Chris Hall
Chair of Trustees

HITCHIN GIRLS' SCHOOL

NOTES AND INFORMATION FOR PARENTS TAKING PART IN PARENT TRUSTEE ELECTIONS

Additional information on the Governance structure at Hitchin Girls' School, including links to the Articles of Association, the Funding Agreement for the Academy Trust and approved minutes of Trustee Board meetings are available via the [Governor pages](#) on the school website. The Department for Education has produced a Governance handbook which is available at:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/788234/governance_handbook_2019.pdf

The Academy Governance Structure

The Academy Trust is a charitable company limited by guarantee (the liability of the members is set at £10 in the Articles of Association). The Trust has two layers of governance:

- The members, who operate at a strategic level with ultimate control over the direction of the Academy Trust, and
- The Trustees/Governors with responsibility for the management and operation of the Academy Trust.

The Members

The functions of the members of the Academy Trust include:

- Overseeing the achievement of the objectives of the company.
- Taking part in Annual and Extraordinary General Meetings.
- Appointing some of the Governors.

The Trustees/Governors (the Board of Trustees or Governing Body)

In Academies, the Governors are directors or trustees of the Academy Trust. Most management decisions are made collectively through a board of directors typically referred to as the Board of Trustees or Governing Body.

The Board of Trustees manages the Academy on behalf of the Academy Trust and the key responsibilities are to:

- Ensure the quality of educational provision.
- Challenge and monitor the performance of the school.
- Manage the Academy Trust's finances and property.
- Exercise reasonable skill and care in carrying out their duties.
- Ensure that the Academy Trust complies with charity and company law.
- Operate the Academy in accordance with the Funding Agreement that has been signed with the Secretary of State.

Trustee/Governor Criteria

All parents and carers are eligible to stand for election, except

- Persons liable to be detained under the Mental Health Act 1983;
- Un-discharged bankrupts;
- Persons who have in the previous 5 years (or since becoming a Trustee/Governor) been sentenced to 3 months or more in prison (whether suspended or not) without the option of a fine;
- Persons who have in the previous 20 years been sentenced to imprisonment for 2½ years or more;
- Persons who have at any time been sentenced to imprisonment for 5 years or more;
- Persons who have been fined for causing a nuisance or disturbance on school/academy premises during the 5 years prior to, or since, appointment or election as a Governor;
- Persons disqualified under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986;
- Persons subject to disqualification as a Charity Trustee;
- Persons whose employment is prohibited or restricted;
- Persons disqualified from being proprietors of independent schools;
- Persons on the DfES List 99 (this is a list of people banned from working with children);
- Persons who are unwilling to make an application for a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check;
- Persons who work at the school for more than 500 hours in any consecutive 12-month period (at the time of election or appointment);
- Persons who are an elected member of the Local Authority;
- Persons who are the Clerk to your own Governing Body.

Hitchin Girls' School – Roles and Responsibilities of Trustees

Hitchin Girls' School became an Academy in August 2011 when the Trust was constituted as a charitable company limited by guarantee. The Board of Trustees consists of fourteen Trustees appointed by the Members, a minimum of two Parent Trustees and the Headteacher.

We are a community school with a comprehensive intake, accountable to the Department for Education and funded directly by it. Although independent of the Local Authority we continue to purchase certain services from it. We employ our staff under current national agreements. We are subject to the School Admissions Code, but are able to consult on admissions criteria.

There are three main areas of governance:

- **Strategic Direction.** This is the vital task in laying the plans for the development of HGS, whether this is in refining the curriculum, finding new ways to learn and teach, or building new sports and other facilities. The Trustees' task is to enrich the vision for the school and help to achieve it.
- **Challenge and Support.** We have a very long and proud teaching and learning tradition at HGS and of supportive governance. Trustees will test most issues against the template of *'is this what is best for HGS?'* The task of teaching and managing in this new world of education reform is tough, so Trustees will challenge, encourage and support the Headteacher and staff.
- **Monitoring and Accountability.** Trustees are accountable to the DfE, parents, staff and the community. This is done through application and monitoring of all relevant policies and regulations in conformance with statute law and the objects under the Trust's Articles of Association.

Much of the detailed governance work is carried out through our five committees and Trustees are expected to serve on at least one of them: Curriculum & Performance, Finance & Resources, Audit and Risk, Personnel, and Admissions. Each Trustee is also linked to a specific curriculum department so that a greater insight can be shared in the working of the school and Board of Trustees.

Parental Responsibility: Who has it?

Parents (including carers) of registered students at the school. 'Parent' is defined for the purposes of the Constitution Regulations as including 'any individual who has or has had parental responsibility for, or cares or has cared for, a child or young person under the age of 18'. It includes a person who the child lives with or who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child. The reference in the definition must be someone involved in the full-time care of the child on a settled basis.

Only parents of children registered at the school are entitled to stand or vote in the election. Each parent is only eligible to vote once, regardless of how many children they have at the school.