

Recruitment Policy for New Governors

This Policy sets out the strategy to deliver the most effective Governing Council composition over time, via a structured and transparent recruitment process, which draws on the widest pool of abilities and is able to adapt to changing circumstances. The National Governors' Association guidance sets out eight aspects of effective governance of which the first is 'getting the right people round the table' and George Watson's College recognises that strong governance is a key part of a successful school.

The Governing Council comprises the Chair, Principal, a Staff Nominee and up to 13 other Governors, of whom a majority must be members of the Merchant Company. The Chair of Governing Council is appointed by the Merchant Company Education Board (MCEB) and is a member of the MCEB. Three Governors are appointed by the Master of the Merchant Company, and the remainder appointed directly by the Governing Council, for terms of three years and five years respectively.

The members of the Governing Council are not Trustees but act on delegated authority from the Merchant Company Education Board (MCEB). The Chair of the Governing Council is also a member of the MCEB and therefore acts as a Trustee of the MCEB in that latter capacity.

The Governing Council meets for a Strategy Day, usually before the start of the school year as well as holding quarterly meetings during term time, as do the various Committees of Finance, Property, Education, External Relations & Development, Health & Safety, Staff and Nominations. Additionally Governors are expected to support the school by attending events and serving the Council on an ad hoc basis.

As a result of the natural process of retirements, new Governors are required annually from people who can offer the time, enthusiasm and commitment to achieving the School's mission.

The Governing Council maintains a skills audit which plots the key skills required on the Council relative to the current make-up of the Council over time. This provides valuable guidance on the existing skills profile and future needs. Key skills apart, the Governing Council recognises the value of being able to draw upon the sound judgement of a range of capable people, who are able to look at issues from many angles. Therefore possession of one of the core skills should not be viewed as an essential requirement to being a Governor.

The Governing Council recognises that an important part of effective governance is to ensure that the net for new Governors is cast as widely as is appropriate, to offer opportunities to suitable candidates, and not inadvertently exclude any groups.

The Governing Council should also represent, as far as possible, a broad mix of past and present Watson's stakeholders – for example current parents, former parents/pupils, former staff. Inclusion and equality of opportunity is an important part of the School's ethos and applies equally to the Governing Council.

An open and inclusive recruitment policy aims to encourage more people to come forward with knowledge of what is required and expected of a Governor.

Vacancies arising on the Governing Council over a 12 month horizon are posted on the School website, the Merchant Company website, School publications and any other relevant media, with details of any key skills sought.

Such vacancies also form an agenda item on regular Governing Council meetings so that Governors can encourage applications from suitable contacts and acquaintances.

Candidates interested in applying to serve on Governing Council should contact the Bursar and Clerk to the Governors for more information or to register their interest.

The Governing Council implements a structured approach to recruitment for the benefit of the School and potential candidates. Potential new Governors have an initial informal discussion with a member of Governing Council followed by a structured familiarisation pathway incorporating informal meetings with senior management, staff, pupils and parents to provide an appreciation of the issues, time commitment and expectations of the role.

The final part of the recruitment process is a structured interview with the Governing Council Nominations Committee who then makes a recommendation to the full Governing Council.

Prior to taking up a position on the Governing Council new Governors are required to complete an appropriate Disclosure application and are also required to adhere to the Seven Principles of Public Life, also known as the Nolan Principles, which relate to selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

Subject to the need to maintain the necessary numbers and skills, new Governors once approved by Council will, where possible, participate in a six month shadowing' process, attending Governing Council and committee meetings as confidential observers in preparation for the new role.

New Governors are expected to participate in on-going governor development via seminars and conferences (for example SCIS). Where possible Governors are encouraged to consider 'buddying' with Governors of other private schools to share experiences and ideas.

Version 3/Issue 01/April 2018