

Queen Mary's Grammar School

Proud to be part of the Mercian Multi-Academy Trust

Becoming a Governor: frequently asked questions

A good Governing Body is vital to a School's success. But why is this?

- Governors make key decisions such as appointing new members of staff including appointments to the Senior Leadership Team. Additionally the Governors will make recommendations in relation to the appointment of a new Headteacher.
- Governors' decisions directly affect the education and wellbeing of children
- Governors can make a difference in improving standards throughout a School.

What are the benefits of being a School Governor?

- The knowledge that you have played a part in improving children's education
- A chance to develop new skills and to practice existing ones, such as chairing meetings, speaking in groups, asking questions, making suggestions and appointing staff
- The opportunity to contribute your knowledge and skills to the team.

Do I need qualifications to be a School Governor?

No. Schools need volunteers with a variety of life experiences.

While you do not need qualifications to be a Governor, the following are important:

- A commitment to regular attendance at meetings of the Governing Body and any Committees to which they are appointed
- A desire to raise the standards of education within the School
- A willingness to share skills and expertise within the context of the Governing Body.

I work full-time. Will I still have time to be a School Governor?

Most of our Governors are in full-time work. We positively welcome applicants who are working. Governors' meetings rarely take place during the working day as most are arranged for the evenings.

What makes a good Governor?

- You want to make Queen Mary's Grammar School an outstanding centre of education
- You care about improving children's education
- You want to contribute to your local community
- You want to work as part of a team and can value the contribution made by other people

- You accept the need to receive training
- You are willing to ask questions
- You are open to ideas and willing to learn

What can I offer?

Enthusiasm and commitment

If you are a parent, you will understand other parents' concerns, but you don't need to be a parent to be a School Governor.

As a member of the School's community your local knowledge will be valuable – you will have a feel for what is important to people in the area.

How does a Governing Body work?

- Works closely with the Headmaster and the Senior Leadership Team
- Plays a fundamental part in the strategic direction of the School
- Makes decisions democratically as a team
- Often delegates decision-making to committees or to individuals such as the Headmaster
- Gets to know the School, and forms links with the teachers and students
- Meets at least once a half-term
- Conducts most of its business through meetings.

How much time does it take?

The amount of time that Governors can give to the role will vary, but if you are serious about helping Queen Mary's Grammar School be outstanding, then you do need to:

- Be willing to prepare for meetings – there can be a lot of papers to read
- Attend meetings – the Governing Body must meet at least once per half-term; in addition, there is one meeting of the Governing Body during the afternoon in the summer term;
- Take decisions, sometimes quite difficult ones
- Participate – if you cannot prepare for, and attend, meetings you will not be able to make an effective contribution to help the School.

What committees are there?

As well as attending meetings of the full Governing Body you may, from time to time and as the need arises, be asked to sit on sub-committees formed to determine the outcome of parental complaints, student disciplinary matters and any appeals made by members of staff against entries made within their annual appraisal statement.

Can I expect to receive any help and support?

Yes. There are courses provided by the Local Authority for new Governors, but we ask a serving Governor to help you understand what is going on – a sort of mentor.

Governors can expect to receive:

- Written support materials published by the Department for Education and the Local Authority
- Induction and other training to help Governors carry out their duties
- Readily accessible advice and support from the Clerk to the Governors
- Help from the School's Headmaster, other staff and fellow Governors

What does it mean that the school is an Academy and part of a Multi-Academy Trust?

The School is a selective Boys' Grammar School with Academy Status. It is publicly funded.

Having received approval from the Secretary of State and the Education and Skills Funding Agency, the Mercian Trust came into being on 1st January 2018. The Mercian Trust consists of Queen Mary's Grammar School along with six other local schools working together under a common banner and an over-arching structure of governance.

Whilst the Board of the Mercian Trust is responsible for determining Trust strategy, managing finances and holding the Trust's executive team to account, each of the member schools retains autonomy through the operation of individual governing bodies established by the Trust to support the effective operation of each of the schools.

Accordingly, as a member of the School's Governing Body, you will have responsibility for:

- Overseeing the implementation of the School Improvement Plan.
- Holding the Headteacher and the Senior Leadership Team to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils.
- Recommending targets for academic performance.
- Overseeing the School's individual budget.
- Overseeing the School's curriculum.

How do I apply to be a Governor?

You should send your CV and a supporting letter of no more than 2 pages to David Milne, the Clerk to the Governing Body either by email (clerk@qmfoundation.org) or by post to Queen Mary's Grammar School, Sutton Road, Walsall, WS1 2PG,

Candidates will be expected to provide two referees, preferably one professional and one personal. References will be taken up for short-listed candidates prior to interview.

Applications will need to be received by close of business on Friday 12th July. A small panel of Governors and advisors will consider the applications, and a short-list of candidates will be asked to attend for interview at the school at a time to be arranged.