

# AIMS AND GOVERNANCE

## 1 Aims of the School

### 1.1 School size

St George's is an independent girls' boarding and day senior school. Admission is by selective examination at 11+, 13+ and Sixth Form. A few girls join at other times. There are normally 26 - 34 girls in each of the first two years, divided between two or three teaching classes and tutor groups. The next three years average approximately 45-48 in the year group; the additional girls usually join at 13+ entry. It is the School's policy to aim to keep class numbers to 20 or fewer.

### 1.2 Academic and Co-curricular aims

St George's aims to provide an excellent education for girls in a supportive environment where they can grow as an individual, produce their very best results and outcomes and have departments of excellence so that all pupils flourish. There is, however, no wish to turn the School into an academic hot house; one of St George's strengths is that girls feel they are valued for skills or talents in a variety of different areas. Girls are encouraged to embrace all the opportunities available to them within the extensive co-curricular programme and our longer school day means that everyone can take part in co-curricular activities and make the most of our impressive on-site facilities. They are also encouraged to use the communal prep period each evening constructively, so that they learn structured working habits.

### 1.3 Pastoral aims

The size of the School and the approach of the staff mean that girls are known individually and gain confidence from an atmosphere of trust and respect. Each girl is well supported by a close network of teaching and pastoral staff and her creative, physical and imaginative interests are fostered as well as her academic abilities. The staff's main aim is to provide an environment in which learning can flourish and be enjoyed, not just as a means to good examination results, but as an education for life. Pupils are given increasing freedom and responsibility as they progress through the School, so that by the time they leave the Sixth Form they are prepared for university life.

### 1.4 Christian aims

**Ethos.** The School has a strong Christian emphasis, although it welcomes girls of all faiths and of none. Girls are encouraged to live their lives within a moral and spiritual framework and to think about how they treat others, both within and outside the School community. The girls are noticeable for their friendly, open and natural good manners, and our aim is to encourage the development of each girl's inner resources so that she has the wisdom and integrity to make positive choices in a rapidly changing world. St George's has an ethos where work, study and spirituality are combined in a creative mix that runs in harmony with the whole School community. Pupils are encouraged to live with integrity and social responsibility, upholding our Christian tradition.

**Worship.** It is central to the ethos, culture and tradition of the School that girls attend regular Christian services and we are fortunate to have the use of our Chapel throughout the year. A spiritual programme takes place weekly on Tuesdays or Fridays at 8.15 am with all pupils present

and the Eucharist is celebrated at least once a term. Visiting speakers representing other faiths are invited to join the programme and pupils of those faiths, or none, attend every service but are not required to sing the hymn or pray if it contradicts their own religious beliefs. It is explained to staff on appointment that they are expected to attend services as part of their commitment to the School community. On occasions such as Harvest Festival, Remembrance, Advent and others that might be deemed appropriate, there is an optional formal service on a Sunday as well as a Carol Service on the last day of the Autumn Term in Windsor Parish Church. The Chaplain prepares girls for Confirmation each year. Formal services follow the Anglican liturgy. Boarders who wish to worship outside the School on a Sunday may request to do so from their Housemistress, who will make suitable arrangements.

**Assemblies.** Morning Assembly usually takes place on two mornings a week and lasts about fifteen minutes. It is led by the Heads, members of staff, visiting speakers, tutor groups, pupil committees and departments on a rota. Themes need not be religious but must have spiritual, moral or cultural content and be suitable for the whole age range and appropriate for a Chapel setting. There is usually a hymn, prayer and a short address before notices for the day.

## **2 Governance**

### **2.1 Constitution of Board**

The Governors of St George's School are responsible for the overall strategic management and development of the School. The Governors are selected from a wide range of backgrounds, and the aim is to achieve a balanced Board with a core of individuals with educational, legal, accountancy, finance, property management, business, marketing and pastoral backgrounds. All share a genuine commitment to the future of the School. A full list of current Governors, together with details of who sits on each sub-committee, is listed on the school website. The Governing Body includes people with a particular stake in the School (current and former parents) and those who can provide a wide range of relevant experience and skills. The constitution prohibits anyone who is employed by the School from becoming a member of the Governing Body.

### **2.2 Contact**

The Governors ensure that they keep in contact with the staff and girls by arranging regular meetings and lunches and attending various presentations. The Governors also regularly attend School functions and events. Governors also take part in Strategy Days to decide the future direction of the School.

### **2.3 Responsibilities**

Governors work collectively as a group and are accountable to the wider community (the "stakeholders") for the delivery of the best possible educational, pastoral and support service. They are responsible for ensuring that the overall structure is fit for purpose and consistent with the School's charitable objects. Particularly important is the oversight of Safeguarding, Finances, Recruitment and Health and Safety. The conduct of day to day operations of the School is delegated to the Senior Leadership Team and the Governors monitor performance in the light of an agreed framework.

**Constitutional.** These responsibilities are as follows:

- Acting in the best interests of the Charity, its pupils, parents and staff (its beneficiaries) and its future beneficiaries.
- Electing a Chair and Chairs of Sub-Committees in accordance with the Memorandum and Articles.
- Ensuring that governance is managed in accordance with the Memorandum and Articles and provides public benefit.
- Maintaining the ethos of the School and setting a clear, strategic direction.
- Arranging voting and the Chair's casting vote.
- Updating and amending the Memorandum and Articles as necessary, e.g. to permit the School to become co-educational, or to expand the age range being educated.
- Appointing new Governors.
- Retiring or removing Governors, in accordance with the Memorandum and Articles.
- Appointing (or removing) a Clerk to the Governors.
- Changing the Board structure.
- Approval of the terms of reference of the Sub-Committees.
- Complying with the law, ISI regulations and provisions.
- Complying with charity and financial regulations.
- Avoiding conflict of interest.
- Maintaining a register of interests.
- Taking appropriate professional advice.
- Appointing professional advisors.

**Appointments.** These responsibilities are as follows:

- Appointing the Head.
- Appointing the Bursar and Clerk to the Governors, in close conjunction with the Head.
- Assisting with the appointment of the Deputy Heads and other members of SLT.
- Approving pay and conditions of service of the Head and the Bursar.
- Arranging the appraisal of the Head and Bursar.

**Financial.** These responsibilities are as follows:

- Managing, safeguarding and using the resources to their maximum potential.
- Applying sound financial management and control of resources.
- Approving an annual budget, including a fee and salary rise that is reasonable and prudent.
- Monitoring of in-year expenditure against budget regularly.
- Monitoring fee debtors.
- Approving internal financial controls.
- Reviewing financial models and sensitivity analysis.
- Reviewing long-term financial projections.
- Approving the annual Governors' report and the statutory accounts.
- Monitoring the School as a Going Concern and reporting at least annually.
- Reviewing insurance levels, including Governors' indemnity insurance.
- Approving delegated levels of expenditure for capital projects, maintenance, IT and contracted out support services.
- Approving bank loans and overdrafts.
- Monitoring investments and their performance, appointing an Investment Manager if required.
- Approving the Reserves Policy.
- Approving the SORP Risk Register.

- Complying with financial, company and charity regulations and best practice.
- Approving the Fee Remission Policy.
- Agreeing the Scholarship and Exhibition remission levels.

**Development.** These responsibilities are as follows:

- Planning the future development of the School.
- Establishing the framework and objectives for the future.
- Reviewing performance in the light of development plan objectives.
- Approving appeals and fundraising.
- Overseeing the marketing strategy.

**Property.** These responsibilities are as follows:

- Approving acquisitions and disposals of property or assets.
- Agreeing the appointment of professional advisers.
- Approving capital development and deciding the award of major contracts.
- Maintaining an overview of maintenance projects.
- Approving and interrogating health and safety procedures and policies.
- Considering any issue that could result in legal proceedings.

**Employment.** These responsibilities are as follows:

- Approving employee terms and conditions of service, including primarily pay and pensions.
- Considering any employment issues that could result in legal proceedings.
- Establishing a staffing complement and agreeing changes to it.
- Agreeing staff fee remission.
- Regular overseeing and interrogation of the Single Central Record(SCR) of Appointments (Chair of Governors).

**Public.** These responsibilities are as follows:

- Approving annual bursary awards.
- Ensuring the School meets its public benefit obligations.

**Academic.** These responsibilities are as follows:

- Approving the Admissions Policy.
- Monitoring academic targets and performance.
- Endorsing the aims and objectives of the School.
- Maintaining an overview of changes to the curriculum.
- Approving changes to the structure of the School day.
- Approving the framework for reporting and tracking of pupils' progress.
- Monitoring compliance with ISI standards.

**Pastoral.** These responsibilities are as follows:

- Appointing a Governor with responsibility for child protection and safeguarding.
- Approving and interrogating the implementation of safeguarding policies, procedures and training, including arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

- Maintaining an overview of the safety and security of the premises.
- Considering any issues affecting a pupil that could result in legal proceedings.

## 2.4 Meetings

**Schedule.** Full meetings of the Governing board are held at least three times a year: in March, June and November/December. The two Sub-Committees, Education and Finance, meet three times a year, usually in February, June and November. The Strategy and Marketing Group meets twice a year, usually in September and April/May. There is scope for an extraordinary meeting of the Governors to be called if a particular issue requires it. Senior members of staff may be asked to deliver a paper or briefing on a particular topic. Items of relevance from meetings are normally communicated to the staff at the next staff meeting.

**Clerk to the Governors.** The Clerk is delegated the following:

- Preparing a schedule of regular meetings of both the Governing board and the Sub-Committees well in advance.
- Preparing agenda, papers and minutes of meetings of the Governing board and the Sub-Committees in conjunction with the Head, for approval by the Chairs.
- Ensuring that the agendas enable Governors to fulfil their responsibilities (including regulatory and statutory) for the proper governance of the School throughout the academic year.
- Collating papers prepared by the Head and other staff.
- Ensuring that meetings are quorate as specified in the governing instrument.
- Managing the online governance portal and ensuring Governors have satisfactory access and training.

## 2.5 Code of conduct

**Integrity.** Governors should act at all times with honesty and integrity. Each Governor has an important role in supporting and encouraging the Head, although prime responsibility for developing the partnership rests with the Chair of Governors. As the employer, it is important for the Governors to meet staff wherever possible, and groups of pupils, when the opportunities are offered. Qualities of integrity, impartiality and objectivity are important. The Governing board, under the leadership of the Chair should be as transparent and open as possible, with all members conscious of their responsibilities towards the School community and of the clear distinction between the roles of trustees and of paid employees.

**Attendance.** Regular attendance at meetings and major functions is important and expected, and governors need to be prepared to devote the time and energy that is necessary to carry out their role and to develop their understanding of the School. They should arrange their visits in advance via the Head. While in-person attendance is encouraged, certain circumstances may occasionally preclude this. In order to broaden attendance and to facilitate engagement, meetings may also be held in-person, entirely online, or as a hybrid of both methods. The premise is that everyone at the meeting can see and hear each other and it is based on the most widely accepted definition of a valid meeting. Such attendance will be sufficient to count towards a quorate group and provided the conditions are met, voting is permitted by all governors. Questions must be raised verbally (not typed online) and the sharing and display of documents is permitted online or by reference to a document on the Governors Virtual Office (GVO). If technical issues arise, the meeting may

continue if practicable and agenda items may be postponed if preferable. Voting will only be permitted if the group remains quorate. If the Chair cannot attend, for example due to technical issues, the meeting will be postponed. Charity business may also be conducted by other means, for example telephone when required but this is not a substitute to the requirement to hold regular meetings.

**Collaboration.** Individual governors should express their personal views within meetings; but once a decision has been reached, they are bound by collective decision-making. They need to take care to avoid breaches of confidentiality and to avoid undermining the Head, since their relationship can only flourish if it is based upon mutual respect and collaboration. They should only speak on behalf of the Governing Board if they have been specifically authorised to do so – a function that normally falls to the Chair. Conflicts of interest must be declared in advance and the Clerk to the Governors maintains a register of interest, which is reviewed annually.

## 2.6 Training

Governors are encouraged to attend training courses and seminars arranged by AGBIS and other professional providers, in order to reinforce their awareness of their varied duties and responsibilities. The Clerk to the Governors circulates lists of courses on a regular basis. New governors undertake induction training with the Head and SLT. Governors are also required to complete mandated safeguarding training and a record of this is to be maintained by the Clerk to the Governors.