

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+. There are normally 36 girls in each of the first two years, divided between three tutor groups. The next three years average approximately 48 in the year group; the additional girls usually joining at 13+ entry. It is the School's policy to aim to keep class numbers to 20 or fewer. Most girls join the School in the First Year aged 11, but there is additional entry at 13+ and at 16+, dependent on space. A few girls join at other times.

1.2 Academic aims

St George's aims to provide an excellent education for girls in a caring environment where they can grow as an individual. We hope to produce the best results of which each girl is capable 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 our strengths is that girls feel they are valued for skills or talents in a variety of different areas. Girls are 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. Our longer School day means that everyone can take part in co-curricular activities and make the most of our facilities. They 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 other 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 on Fridays at 8.15 am with all pupils present and the Eucharist is celebrated each 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, Advent, Epiphany, Whitsun 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 of their Housemistress, who will make suitable arrangements.

Assemblies. Morning Assembly usually takes place on two mornings a week and lasts about twenty minutes. It is led by the Headmistress, members of staff, visiting speakers, tutor groups 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 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 and in the termly School Calendar. 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. The Governors also regularly attend School functions and events. Staff are

invited on a rota system to join the Governors for lunch after Governors' meetings. Governors also take part in Strategy Days to decide 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, Recruitment and Health and Safety. The conduct of affairs 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 Chairman and Chairmen 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 Chairman'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) of a Clerk to the Governors.
- Changing the board structure.
- Approving 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 the 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.
- 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.
- Approving the reserves policy.
- Approving the SORP Risk Register.
- Complying with financial, company and charity regulations and best practice.

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 Central Register 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 reports – tracking 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 three times a year: in March, June and November/December. The two Sub-Committees, Education and Finance & Marketing, meet three times a year, usually in February, June and November. 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 give a brief paper 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 Chairman.
- Ensuring that the agenda 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.

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 Chairman 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 Chairman 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.

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 Chairman. 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 Headmistress and SLT.