



# Chair of Governors

Vacancy Information Pack

September 2026



— St Mary's School  
Gerrards Cross

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# Introduction from the current Chair of Governors

At St Mary's School, Gerrards Cross we believe that for a student to flourish and discover herself a holistic approach to education should be taken. We aim to provide a learning environment, where individuals are encouraged to embrace and discover their unique potential. We are dedicated to empower our students with the knowledge, skills and confidence they need to navigate an everchanging world. Through innovative teaching and personalised learning experiences, we strive to equip them with the tools to face challenges head-on, and to become compassionate, independent thinkers. Through this ethos, we inspire our students to excel in all aspects of their lives.

The school is an independent day school for girls whose ages range from 3 to 18 years. Founded in 1872, the school is in the heart of South Buckinghamshire. Over the years the single site has been regularly updated to benefit from a delightful mixture of buildings, from old and elegant, to modern and efficient.

After 19 years serving as Chairman of the Board of Governors, the time has come for me to stand down. The school is now looking to appoint a new Chair to lead and direct the Board of Governors whose prime responsibility will be to develop and ensure the implementation of the School's strategy, in association with the Headteacher, and to ensure that the Head has all the staff and materials necessary to deliver on its vision for the future.

The successful Chair must encourage an air of openness, informed debate and collaboration amongst the governing body, the senior leadership team, the staff and all stakeholders. I have found the past years as Board Chair of St Mary's to have been immensely rewarding and feel sure that my successor can look forward to the same.

Mr Derek Wilson  
Chair of Governors, St Mary's



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# Job Description - Chair of Governors

The Board of Governors at St Mary's is a committed team of volunteers from a wide range of professional backgrounds working in synergy with senior school leaders to support and oversee the strategic direction of the school and ensure delivery of its vision. Governors and senior school leaders are jointly accountable for ensuring the school adapts appropriately to changes and challenges that arise in the field of independent education.

St Mary's School is in the process of appointing its next Chair of Governors.

Term of Office: 3–4 years (renewable, subject to governing body approval)

The Chair of Governors provides strategic leadership to the Governing Body, ensuring St Mary's is well governed, financially sustainable, and delivering an excellent education in line with its vision and values. The Chair works in close partnership with the Head to uphold high standards of governance, compliance, and educational quality as required by the Independent School Standards (ISI).

## Core Responsibilities

### 1. Strategic Leadership and Vision

- Lead the Governing Body in setting and reviewing the school's strategic direction, ensuring it reflects the school's ethos and values:
  - Fostering an inclusive, supportive, and respectful school community
  - Enabling pupils, staff, and leaders to thrive and take responsibility
  - Promoting high standards, ambition, and continuous improvement
- Ensure decisions are informed, evidence-based, and focused on long-term sustainability and educational excellence.



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# Job Description - Chair of Governors

## 2. Financial Oversight

- Work closely with the Bursar and the Finance Lead Governor to support financial sustainability and robust financial governance.
- Knowledge and understanding of basic financial and accounting principles to be able to demonstrate sound judgement when making business decisions, including effective oversight of budgeting and cash management.

## 3. Governance and Compliance (ISI Alignment)

- Ensure the Governing Body meets its statutory and regulatory responsibilities under the Independent School Standards, including:
  - Quality of education and pupil outcomes
  - Spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development
  - Safeguarding, welfare, health, and safety
  - Leadership and management effectiveness
- Lead the Governing Body in preparing for, responding to, and acting upon ISI inspections, ensuring recommendations are addressed promptly and effectively.
- Promote a culture of accountability, transparency, and life-long learning.

## 4. Relationship with the Head

- Act as a critical friend and source of support to the Head, maintaining a constructive, professional relationship.
- Lead the appointment, appraisal, and (where appropriate) succession planning for the Head.
- Ensure there is clarity between governance and operational management, respecting the Head's professional autonomy.



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# Job Description - Chair of Governors

## 5. Effective Board Leadership

- Chair governing body meetings effectively, ensuring:
  - Clear agendas aligned to strategic priorities
  - Inclusive, respectful, and focused discussion
  - Robust challenge and collective decision-making
- Ensure governors have appropriate induction, training, and ongoing development, particularly in relation to ISI standards and safeguarding.
- Oversee the performance and composition of the Governing Body, including committee structures.

## 6. Safeguarding and Pupil Wellbeing

- Champion safeguarding and pupil wellbeing as a core priority of governance.
- Ensure governors understand their safeguarding responsibilities and that policies, procedures, and culture meet ISI requirements and best practice.

## 7. Stakeholder Engagement and Ambassadorship

- Act as an ambassador for the school, representing it positively to parents, alumni, regulators, and the wider community.
- Support strong relationships between governors, senior leaders, staff, and parents, while respecting appropriate boundaries.

## Time Commitment

- Attendance at governing body meetings (typically 3–4 per year) and committee meetings as required.
- Regular meetings with the Head by arrangement (these can be held virtually or in person to suit).
- Attendance at annual Speech Day and other major school functions and activities whenever possible
- Additional time around inspections and strategic planning sessions.

## Remuneration

This role is voluntary, with reasonable expenses reimbursed in line with the school's policy



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# How to Apply

To apply please submit your current CV and covering letter ensuring you provide your full name, address and contact details including an email address and mobile number. Please include a brief description of why you are interested in the role and why you are suitable. The deadline for applications is 3rd September 2026, and all applications should be submitted to:

[governorrecruitment@stmarysgx.co.uk](mailto:governorrecruitment@stmarysgx.co.uk)

Interviews will commence week beginning 14th September 2026 with the aim of completing these by the end of September. Final stage interviewees will additionally be invited to a tour of the school.

Final decisions will be communicated at the latest by the end of October 2026.

The appointment commences from March 2027 but there will be a substantial handover period and induction programme to the benefit of the successful candidate.

Any queries should be directed to the above email address.

**Please note eligibility to apply excludes parents or other family members of a child or children in the school in January 2027 onwards, or any staff member employed by the school January 2027 onwards.**

**St Mary's is committed to an inclusive and equal recruitment process. We welcome applications from every background. The selection process for the Chair of Governors will be based on merit and will follow a transparent and equal process for all internal and external candidates.**



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