

# School Governor Candidate Info Pack

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Website: [www.stmaryscolchester.org.uk/vacancies](http://www.stmaryscolchester.org.uk/vacancies)

# Welcome



Dear Applicants,

Welcome to St Mary's School. We have been educating girls from Colchester and the surrounding areas since 1908 and as such have built a very strong reputation within our local community. Throughout this time the school has grown in size and is now located on two sites. The Senior School is close to the town centre whilst the Lower School and Kindergarten enjoy a more rural location.

St Mary's is a happy and thriving school and we are proud of each and every one of our pupils. We are proud of our diverse student population and we are passionate to create a team of staff reflective of this diversity.

The Senior Leadership Team at St Mary's is small and the positive and collective vision of the team has ensured the success of the school.

This is a truly exciting time for prospective candidates who are looking to further their careers in a dynamic learning community.

If you believe that you can rise to the broad and challenging expectations of the role and you have a genuine desire to work in an environment that has the needs of its students at heart, we look forward to hearing from you.

**NICOLA GRIFFITHS**

Principal

# The school

St Mary's is an Independent day school in Colchester, Essex for girls age 3-16 and boys age 3-4.

Our vision is to empower girls to thrive at school and beyond.

St Mary's aims:

- To provide an ambitious, girl-centred education
- To foster high aspirations and a bold attitude
- To create a compassionate culture where every girl is known, supported and understood
- To develop pupils' understanding of the world so they become dynamic and engaged global citizens
- To promote intellectual curiosity and an enquiring mindset

St Mary's Senior School was identified as 1st in Essex in the Sunday Times Parent Power League Table 2025 for its rankings of top independent secondary schools with no sixth forms. The Lower School was ranked 12th highest performing Preparatory Schools in England in the last table released by the Sunday Times. Many girls achieve scholarships to senior school and we have an impressive 11+ pass rate for those who choose to sit the exam. At the Senior School, excellent GCSE results are achieved each year. We're able to achieve such success by tailoring the education to suit the needs of each individual in our small classes and by giving the girls the encouragement and support they need to aim high.

St Mary's provides an enlightened, empowering and complete education, designed specifically for girls aged 4-16 to thrive. With a huge variety of clubs, enrichment activities, music and drama productions, visits and international travel experiences on offer, there's ample opportunity to learn new skills and develop talents. There are numerous positions of responsibility available to the girls which help develop their leadership skills, and we foster team spirit through initiatives such as the School Council and School Houses.

We challenge our pupils academically, creatively and physically. With small class sizes and high standards, our focus is on individual success.

Our environment is safe in every respect - to experiment and question, to take risks and follow passions, to innovate and lead - free of judgement and stereotypes, and full of respect and support.

So when our pupils move on to their next steps in education, they are empowered to rise to the challenges and opportunities the world presents.

# Governance

We are proud to have charitable status, meaning all fees are reinvested in the school. We are a Company limited by Guarantee and are truly independent.

We are overseen by a committed and knowledgeable Governing Body who help ensure we provide a high quality and brilliantly balanced education, and a happy learning environment.

The Governing Body has overall responsibility for the school. The Governors have a wide range of experience and skills, and exercise highly effective oversight.

The Governors have an excellent understanding of the day-to-day working of the school.

The full Governing Body meets 4 times a year. A number of sub-committees provide regular reports to the Governing Body in areas such as Finance & Operations, Marketing & Business Development, Education etc.

The day-to-day running of the school is delegated to the Principal along with the Head of Finance & Operations, Vice Principal, and Head of Marketing, Admissions & Communications who make up the Senior Leadership Team.



# Finance

The school's finances are well managed, and its financial position is strong. St Mary's School has no borrowing and uses cash reserves to support medium-term and long-term capital development projects.

Governors recognise that the current financial economic and political context of the sector will require careful financial and risk management over the next few years. The school is mindful of the ongoing challenges being faced by independent schools in respect of affordability for parents, recruitment and retention in the highly competitive local market.

The major part of the school's expenditure remains on staff and the school strives to ensure that it attracts and retains the best talent. The school invests in high-calibre staff, offering competitive pay scales and an attractive working environment. The school employs its own staff to look after the routine maintenance of both the grounds and buildings. Catering and cleaning are managed through external contracts.

# Job description

Job title: Governor

## Overall Purpose

The Board of Governors is responsible for the overall governance and strategic direction of St Mary's School Colchester; developing the School's vision, aims, objectives and goals in accordance with the governing document, legal and regulatory guidelines.

## Main Responsibilities

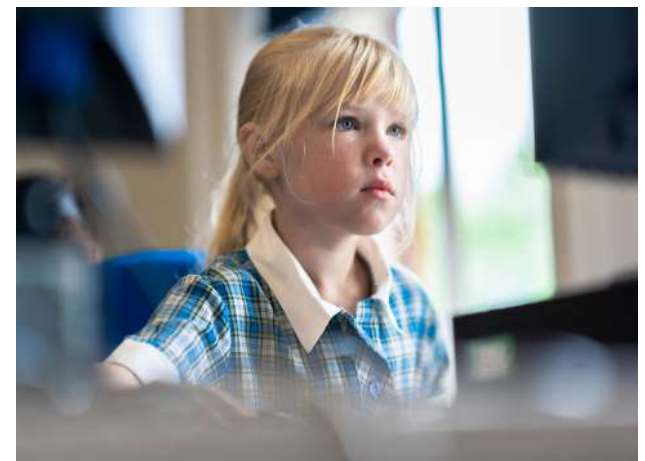
- To determine the overall direction and development of the School through good governance and clear strategic planning
- To ensure that the School and its representatives function within the legal and regulatory framework of the sector and in line with the School's governing document, continually striving for best practice in governance
- To uphold the fiduciary duty invested in the position, undertaking such duties in a way that adds to public confidence and trust in the School
- To ensure that the School discharges its duties as a charity within its charitable objects

## Main Duties

- Ensuring the School complies with legislative and regulatory requirements and acts within the confines of its governing document and in furtherance to organisational activities contained therein
- Acting in the best interest of the School, beneficiaries and future beneficiaries at all times
- Promoting and developing the School in order for it to grow and maintain its relevance to society
- Contribute to the strategic discussions at Governing body meetings
- Ensure that the necessary resources, expertise and support are made available
- Maintaining sound financial management of the School's resources, ensuring expenditure is in line with its objectives and investment activities meet accepted standards and policies
- Interviewing, appointing and monitoring the work and activities of the Senior Leadership Team
- Ensuring the effective and efficient administration of the School and its resources
- To maintain absolute confidentiality about all sensitive/confidential information received in the course of Governors' responsibilities to the School and to comply with the Conflicts of Interest Policy

When required, serve on Governor Panels to:

- Appoint the Principal and other senior leaders
- Appraise the Principal
- Set the Principal's pay and agree the pay recommendations for other staff
- Hear staff matters relating to issue such as grievances and discipline
- Hear parents' complaints



# Person specification

Governors should be able to demonstrate:

- An active interest in education
- Commitment to lifelong learning and the role of the School as a major provider of education and training
- Commitment to promoting equality and diversity
- Commitment to quality and raising standards
- Willingness to promote the School within the community it serves
- Ability to work positively with others and to contribute as a member of a team
- Ability to agree policies and strategies and ensure these can be monitored and implemented
- Ability to make reasoned decisions and to act honestly, diligently and in good faith
- Ability to contribute to establishing performance targets and the monitoring of performance
- Commitment to attend Governors Meetings, Committees, Away days and Training
- Integrity to act without self-interest
- Ability to work within a framework of collective decision-making in the best interests of the School
- Awareness of standards in public life and accountability and a determination to abide by them

Generic Skills/Experience

- Previous Governor experience
- Strategic awareness
- Financial awareness
- Sharing best practice
- Vision and commitment
- Critical listening and appraisal skills
- Analytical and problem solving abilities
- Communication skills (written and verbal) and the ability to influence

Specific Skills/Experience - (candidates are not required/expected to obtain skills/experience in all areas listed below; expertise in one specific area will be welcomed)

Premises

- Project management
- Health and Safety
- Construction / Property development



- Planning
- Architecture
- Premises management
- Budgets

#### Finance

- Finance qualification
- Financial acumen
- Finance reporting at a senior level
- Budgets
- Financial planning and Investment
- Auditing procedures

#### HR/Legal

- HR qualification and practise
- Pay reviews
- Employment law
- Charity Law
- Company Law

#### Compliance

- Experience of working within legal or compliance frameworks
- Setting, monitoring and evaluating policies
- Safeguarding

#### Miscellaneous

- Contracting services
- Links to the local community
- Links to St. Mary's School
- Fundraising





# Application process

Date of interviews: You will be contacted upon receipt of your application to arrange a convenient date.

An application form can be downloaded from the school website:  
[www.stmaryscolchester.org.uk/vacancies](http://www.stmaryscolchester.org.uk/vacancies)

Candidates should complete their application form and return it to Molly Terry, Clerk to the Governors at:

Email: [clerk@stmaryscolchester.org.uk](mailto:clerk@stmaryscolchester.org.uk)

Post: St Mary's School, 91 Lexden Road, Colchester, Essex, CO3 3RB

## Safeguarding

St Mary's is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. All candidates must be willing to undergo child protection screening.

Please visit [www.stmaryscolchester.org.uk/vacancies/](http://www.stmaryscolchester.org.uk/vacancies/) to read our Application & Recruitment process explanatory notes.

## Privacy notice

Please read our Privacy Notice for Job Candidates, which can be found at  
[www.stmaryscolchester.org.uk/vacancies/](http://www.stmaryscolchester.org.uk/vacancies/)

We respect your privacy and are committed to protecting your personal data. Our Privacy Notice will inform you as to how we look after personal data held by us and tell you about your privacy rights and how the law protects you. It is important that you read this Privacy Notice together with any other privacy notice or fair processing notice we may provide on specific occasions when we are collecting or processing personal data so that you are fully aware of how and why we are using personal data. This Privacy Notice supplements the other notices and is not intended to override them.



St Mary's  
Colchester

