Policy Name: Recruitment of Governors

Policy Number: 9.13a

Date: 10 October 2020

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1. Introduction

1.1 Sidcot School is committed to ensuring the most inclusive and best possible learning environment for the children and young people in its care whilst giving them the best opportunities to grow as individuals. The premise for so doing, is based on its commitment to exemplary standards and Quaker values. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of students is the highest priority.

1.2 All governors are volunteers. The School aims to recruit governors who share and understand the School's commitment to the ethos and aims of the School, and who can bring a range of skills and life experiences to benefit to the School community. The School's safeguarding policies apply to Governors.

1.3 All queries regarding the governors' recruitment process should be directed to the Chair of the Governance and Membership Committee – which is a sub-committee of the Board of Governors; please refer to Appendix 1 for contact details.

1.4 The safety and wellbeing of all children is at the forefront of all of Sidcot's operations; this policy forms part of the safeguarding and child protection suite of policies.

2. Scope

2.1 This policy offers guidance to those who may wish to apply to become a governor of the School, or make a nomination. It also provides information to those who wish to understand the process by which governors are appointed. It is available on the School's website, and upon request free of charge. It may be made available in other accessible formats.

3. Aims of this Policy

- To support the enrichment of the governance of Sidcot School;
- To plan for the future, ensuring that the Board of Governors continues to provide the mix of skills and experience needed to fulfil its duties effectively;
- To ensure consistency in the appointment of governors;
- To ensure transparency in the recruitment process;
- To recruit governors who will be committed to the School and share its values;
- To ensure that safer recruitment and compliance with the relevant legislation around background checks is consistently adhered to.

4. Definitions

The **Articles of Association (the Articles)** form the company's constitution and define, amongst other things the charitable purposes of the company, the responsibilities of the governors, the process for the appointment of the Chair and Deputy Chair, and the method of appointment for all governors. The Articles are a public document and are available upon request.

The **Board** means the Board of Governors of the School acting collectively.

The **Company** means Sidcot School – a company limited by guarantee.

The **Charity** means Sidcot School.

SQ**GM** means the **Sidcot General Meeting**, the annual meeting of the "Religious Society of Friends" (Quakers) consisting of representatives from local Area Meetings (as listed in the Articles). This meeting is often held in March.

SQ**GM Noms** means the Nominations General Meeting which is a sub-committee of the Sidcot General Meeting.

G and M means the Board's sub-committee for governance and membership.

ISI means the Independent Schools Inspectorate. ISI is responsible for the inspection of many independent schools (including Sidcot) who are members of the Associations that make up the Independent Schools Council. The School's most recent inspection reports may be found on the School's website or via the ISI website – www.isi.net.

ISSRs means the Education (Independent Schools Standards) Regulations 2014, the regulations against which the School is inspected.

The Proprietor means the Board of Governors who bear the ultimate responsibility for management of the School. This term is referred to by the Department for Education and the Independent Schools' Inspectorate. It is a requirement for the School to identity the proprietor and publish this information. The School provides details of its Board of Governors on its website, and in the "Blue Book" and elsewhere, as appropriate.

Recruiting Manager means the identity of the recruiting manager for prospective governors will the Chair of Governors

Sidcotians means the community of all current sixth form students, all former students, all former teaching and non-teaching staff, and all former members of the School Governing Body.

5. Constitution of the Board

5.1 The Board wishes to promote Governors from a variety of backgrounds, whilst ensuring that the Quaker representation on the Board is maintained in accordance with the Articles. The School is active in its responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010 and will not discriminate on the basis of race, colour, religion or belief, national, ethnic or social origin, gender, gender reassignment, sexual orientation, pregnancy or maternity, disability or special educational need.

5.2 The Articles detail the maximum and minimum number of governors permissible, and stipulate that the majority of the governors shall be:

a) Active in a Quaker meeting or Organisation, or

b) In the discernment of the Quaker General Meeting's Nomination Committee, of such a convincement that they would promote and uphold Quaker Values in the governance, management and life of Sidcot School.

At least one Governor, and no more than three, must be a Sidcotian and at least one, but no more than two Governors shall be parents or Guardians of students in the School. All Governors must be a minimum of 16 years of age. The Articles also provide for the circumstances in which a Governor's term may cease or be terminated.

5.3 In the event of a casual vacancy arising, for example, upon the early retirement of an existing Governor, or if circumstances dictate that an appointment cannot be made

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from 1st September, the Board may appoint a person who is willing to act to be a co-opted governor provided that any such person must retire on the date on which the Governor in whose place he or she is appointed would have retired.

5.4 Care is taken to select Governors who are prepared to serve for a minimum of four years, (which is the normal length of a term of appointment), and to be prepared to commit the time necessary to get to know the School. The four-year term may be renewed on one occasion.

5.5 A number of committees serve the Board, to whom powers are delegated as stated in their terms of reference; please refer to Appendix 2

6. The Role and Responsibilities of being a Governor

6.1 Governors bear considerable responsibility for the smooth running of the School in addition to their responsibilities as charitable trustees and company directors. The Governance Manual which may be found here gives further guidance, as do the terms of reference, to be found in Section 4 of the Governance Manual.

6.2 The Board of Governors is the School's Proprietor. The members delegate some School management functions to the Senior Leadership and Senior Management Teams (SLT/SMT), but retain overall responsibility for proper management. As such, the Governor's role requires active participation. Scrutiny is an essential function.

6.3 The Independent School Standards Regulations (ISSRs) specify various responsibilities of governors relating to compliance.

6.4 Standard 34 relates to the Quality of Leadership and Management of Schools and states:

"*The standard about the quality and leadership and management is met if the proprietor ensures that persons with leadership and management responsibilities at the School:*

- *Demonstrate good skills and knowledge appropriate to their role so that the independent school standards are met consistently;*
- *Fulfil their responsibilities effectively so that the independent schools standards are met consistently; and*
- *Actively promote the wellbeing of students".*

The Governors' job description may be found at Appendix 3.

7. The Appointment Processes

7.1 The Board's Governance and Membership Committee works in partnership with Sidcot Quaker General Meeting's Nomination and General Meeting to identify and nominate prospective Governors.

7.2 The flowchart at Appendix 4 identifies the route by which a nomination may be made.

7.3 When a potential Governor has been identified, he or she will be invited to visit the School and to ideally meet informally with the Headmaster, the Chair of G and M

committee and the Chair of Governors, and to have a tour of the School. The visitors' policy applies including the precautions around Covid-19

7.4 At that meeting, the School's strategic vision for the next 3 – 5 years will be outlined, along with the direction in which the Governors see the School moving. The aims at the informal meeting are predominantly:

- To ensure that every Prospective Governor has a clear understanding of the commitment expected of him or her, in terms of time and attendance; and
- To provide the Prospective Governor with sufficient material about the School that is in the public domain to allow a well-informed judgement to be made before committing themselves to the appointment process. Such documents may include Statutory Accounts and the Annual Return, the Safeguarding and Child Protection policy, and the latest ISI Inspection Report. Some of these documents are available on the School website, others may be provided. Any Prospective Governor is encouraged to peruse the School's website which provides a wealth of information about the School, its ethos and values, the range of activities on offer, and its successes.

7.5 At the informal meeting, Prospective Governors will also be briefed about the range of statutory checks that are required as part of the safer recruitment appointment process as outlined below.

7.6 Should both parties wish to pursue the appointment, the Prospective Governor shall forward their contact details to the Human Resources (HR) department following the informal meeting. HR will then provide an application pack to the Prospective Governor for completion.

7.7 When the application form is returned, the HR administrator will forward the application form to the Recruiting Manager who will identify any discrepancies to be explored as part of the ongoing process – for example large gaps in the CV, conflicts or potential conflicts of interest, or uncertainty around dates.

7.8 The Prospective Governor will then be invited to a formal interview. All interviews will ideally be conducted by Recruiting Managers to provide good oversight and connectivity between the two routes of appointment.

7.9 The Prospective Governor must bring with them documents to verify identity and right to work in the UK.

7.10 The interview will be recorded on the form available on the School's intranet (Firefly), in accordance with the School's safer recruitment procedures.

7.11 If the appointment is to proceed, the vetting checks as outlined in paragraph 8 will then be undertaken by the HR administrator.

7.12 Upon successful completion of the checks, a formal letter of appointment is sent by the Recruiting Manager or Chair of Governors, which will also identify, if appropriate, the areas of special responsibility. A Governor will be assigned one or more areas of special responsibility in accordance with their skill set, experience and area of interest.

7.13 Appointments will take effect from 1st September, or date of co-option. All new appointments are formally recorded in the Board minutes.

8. Safer Recruitment Checks

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The following checks will be undertaken of all Prospective Governors:

8.1 Evidence of identity;

8.2 An enhanced DBS certificate;

8.3 A barred list check; if they will undertake regulated activity (as defined by the Safeguarding of Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012);

8.4 Evidence of entitlement to work in the UK, where relevant;

8.5 Overseas checks where appropriate if they have lived or worked overseas (EEA check);

8.6 Confirmation that they are not disqualified from acting as a Charity Trustee or Company Director, for example by virtue of an undischarged bankruptcy or criminal offence;

8.7 Confirmation that they have not been prohibited from participating in the management of independent schools (section 128 direction);

8.8 A declaration that they are not disqualified from providing childcare under the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009 – but only if they are to be concerned with the day to day management of the provision;

8.9 If the new Governor is also to be appointed as a Company Director, a completed Form AP01 (downloadable from www.completeformations.co.uk) will be sent to Companies House to register the appointment;

8.10 Such checks as necessary in connection with the Prevent duty – for example internet search / references to cover this point;

8.11 Self-declaration confirming medical fitness to perform the role and if relevant verification of medical fitness for the role by the School's HR Manager or medical adviser;

8.12 The receipt of satisfactory references (including, where appropriate) a reference for most recent work with children);

8.13 Verification of professional qualifications which the School deems a requirement for the post, or which were otherwise cited in support of an application (where they have not been previously verified);

8.14 When a new Chair of Governors is appointed, further relevant checks are undertaken as advised by the HR administrator.

9. The Conduct of Board Meetings

9.1 The School's Articles provide for the use of Quaker Business Method in Meetings. Meetings of the Governors for the conduct of the Charity's business carry the expectation that God's guidance can be discerned if the Governors are truly listening together and to each other and meetings are conducted according to this principle.

10. Data Protection and Confidentiality

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10.1 It is acknowledged that in some cases, it may be beneficial for a Prospective Governor to commence their work with the School in advance of the date of their formal appointment – for example in the case of handovers. To ensure compliance with data protection and safeguarding, in such cases a Prospective Governor may be appointed as a school volunteer, pending formal appointment as a Governor and may be granted appropriate access to the School's system at that point.

10.2 Governors are privy to sensitive and confidential information about the School and are under a duty to maintain confidentiality.

10.3 Prospective Governors will not be invited to Board meetings until the recruitment process has been finalised.

10.4. The School is legally required to undertake the specified safeguarding checks. Therefore, if a Prospective Governor is successful in their application, the School will retain on their personnel file any relevant information provided as part of the application process. This will include copies of documents used to verify identity, right to work in the UK, medical fitness and qualifications. This documentation will be retained by the School for the duration of the Governor's work with the School with the exception of the DBS check which is not retained after it has been checked by the HR Administrator. . The information will be retained in accordance with the School's Digital Security policy (12.2).

10.5 If the application is unsuccessful, all documentation relating to the application will be destroyed within 6 months.

11. Training and Induction Programme for Governors

11.1 The Chair of the Board's G & M Committee is responsible for induction of new Governors. Individual Governors will be provided with information about appropriate training courses, and are expected to take up training as necessary. They are requested to keep the Headmaster's PA appraised of all training that they attend in order that he or she may document it. Training is reviewed by the Chair.

11.2 Child protection and Safeguarding is covered in the induction (standard form used for all staff and volunteers).

11.3 Governors are provided with an induction prior to starting their role, the induction will cover the items set out in appendix 5.

11.4 Governors are given the opportunity to attend relevant external training where appropriate.

12. Payment of Expenses

Governors give of their time on an unpaid basis, however, certain expenses may be reimbursed in accordance with the expenses policy.

13. Review and Monitoring of this Policy

13.1 This policy forms part of the recruitment procedures and Annual Safeguarding Review which is the responsibility of the Board of Governors. If revised legislation, regulation or statutory guidance require a need for amendment to this policy, this will be effected as soon as possible and ratified by the Chair of Governors and Governor responsible for Safeguarding. Any proposed substantive changes (as determined by

them) will be ratified by the Board at the next available meeting. Any incident that dictates a change to this policy will likewise trigger an immediate review.

13.2 This policy is the responsibility of the Chair of Governors in conjunction with the Deputy Head who is the Designated Safeguarding Lead.

14. References

Keeping Children Safe in Education, DfE, 2020

Counter – Terrorism and Security Act 2015 (sections 26 and 29)

The Prevent Duty Guidance for England and Wales (March 2015) and the Prevent Duty Guidance departmental advice for schools and childminders (June 2015)

The (Education) Independent Schools Standards) Regulations (ISSRs) (2014)

The Handbook for the Inspection of Schools – Commentary on the Regulatory Requirements (September 2020).

The National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools (effective from April 2015)

Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (effective from September 2014)

15. Relevant Policies

2.1 Safeguarding Children and Child Protection

2.2 Staff Code of conduct

3.5 Visitors' policy

9.1 Equal Opportunities

9.14 Volunteers policy

9.28 Expenses policy

11. Anti-bribery

11.2 Risk Management

11.3 Conflicts of interest policy

12.1 Digital Safety

12.2 Digital Security

Governance Manual

16. Document Change History – New Policy adopted by Board on 8 October 2016.

Date of change 07 October 2017	Detail significant changes and any new legislation / guidance taken into account
	Policy reviewed and adopted by Board at Annual Safeguarding Review.
22 June 2018	Approved by Board
	Para 10.4 and 10.5 – clarification of retention periods and data protection principles
	If revised legislation, regulation or statutory guidance require a need for amendment to this policy, this will be effected as soon as possible and ratified by the Chair of Governors and Governor responsible for Safeguarding. Any proposed substantive changes (as determined by them) will be ratified by the Board at the next available meeting. Any incident that dictates a change to this policy will likewise trigger an immediate review.
18 December 2018	Hyper link added to Governance Manual
	Paragraphs 4 and 5 updated in line with revised Articles of Association
	Para 8 Additional safer recruitment checks added
	Appendices updated
April 2019	Policy reviewed, appendix 5 updated.
5 October 2019	Minor grammatical changes
	Reviewed and adopted at Board at Annual Safeguarding Review
10 October 2020	Paragraph 5.3 amended to provide for contingency where appointment cannot be made on 1 September.
	Insertion to confirm that visitors' policy applies.
	Reviewed and adopted by Board at Annual Safeguarding Review.

Appendix 1 – Ways of Working diagram

Governance Ways of Working

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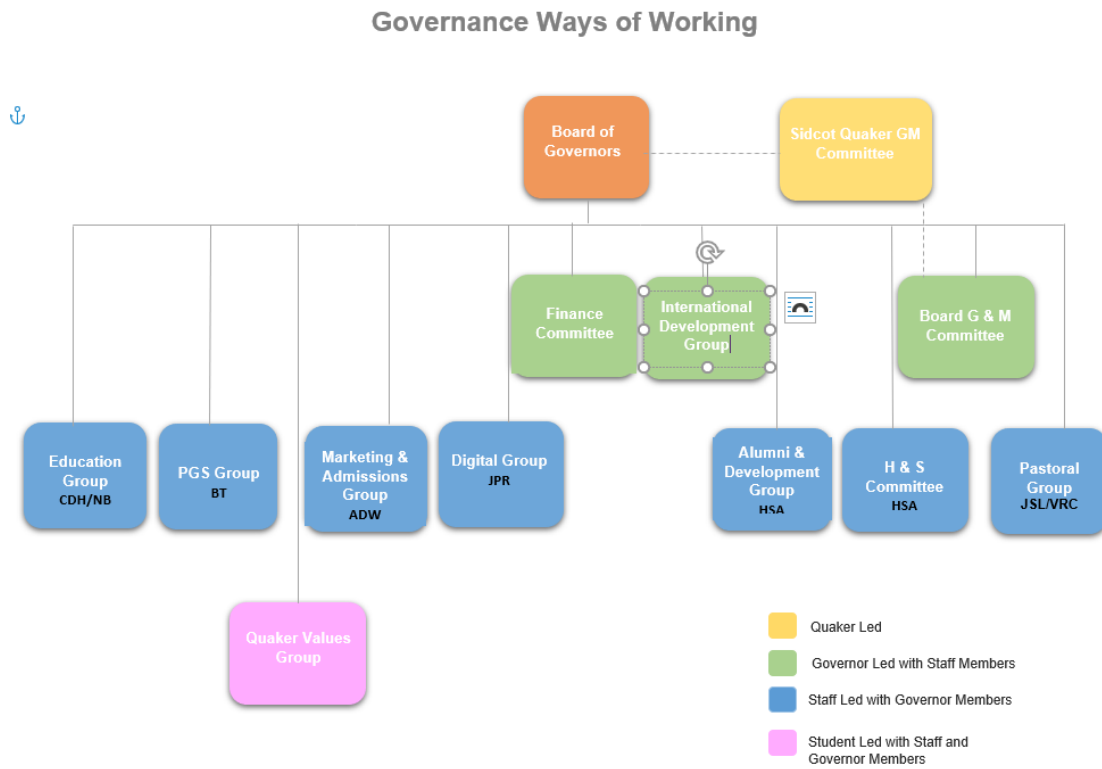
Appendix 2 Contact details as at October 2020

Chair of Governance and Membership (G and M) sub-committee – Vicky Hemming

Contact: Victoria.hemming@sidcot.org.uk

Appendix 3 Governor Job Description

Sidcot School Governor Job Description

1. Collectively with other members of the Governing Body, a Governor must:

Main Responsibilities

- Determine the overall direction and development of the School through good governance and clear strategic planning.
- 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.
- Uphold the fiduciary duty invested in the position, undertaking such duties in a way that adds to public confidence and trust in the School.
- Understand and uphold the School's values.
- Conform to the Nolan Principles of Public Life.
- Conduct oneself according to the Code of Conduct for Governors,

Main Duties

- Act in the best interests of the School, its beneficiaries and its future beneficiaries at all times.
- Know and support the aims of the School and its mission statement, and ensure that these are achieved.
- Ensure that the School complies with legislative and regulatory requirements, including the Independent Schools Standards Regulations particularly, and those related to Safeguarding and Health and Safety, and acts within the confines of its governing document.
- Maintain sound financial management of the School's resources, ensuring expenditure is in line with its objectives, and investment activities meet accepted standard and policies.
- Ensure the effective and efficient administration of the School and its resources, striving for best practice in good governance.
- Maintain confidentiality about all sensitive information received in the course of their responsibilities to the school, and respect the confidentiality of information received about the school's staff, parents and pupils.
- Study relevant background and current papers in order to contribute his or her expertise to the discussions of the Governing Body.
- Serve on Working Groups and Appeal Panels when requested.
- Undertake appraisal sessions as required by the Clerk/Chair.
- Participate in the appointment of members of the Senior Leadership Team.

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2. Commitment Expected from a Governor

The degree of commitment required of a governor is to:

- Be prepared and willing to conform to all aspects of the appointment and induction procedure required by law and the School.
- Be cognisant of Quaker Business Method.
- Be prepared to attend appropriate training.
- Attend at least two thirds of Board meetings every year and at least two school events each term.
- Attend Sidcot General Meeting (annually).
- Accept appointment as a Link Governor with at least one Faculty/Department
- Become knowledgeable with as many aspects of school life as is practicable.

3. Accountability

As Board members are responsible and liable for the governance and functioning of the School, they are accountable in varying degrees to a variety of stakeholders, including: Sidcot General Meeting, parents, students, Alumni, the Charity Commission and Companies House.

Appendix 4 – Flowcharts for the Appointment of Governors

New flow chart in the process of development

Appendix 5 – Content of Governor Induction

Sections A, G and Z of the staff induction programme which will include:

- Overview of ISI handbook – commentary on the regulatory requirements/update protocols - including NMS for Boarding Schools and EYFS Statutory Framework
- Governance Manual which includes the Governors' Code of Conduct
- Overview of Sidcot School policies and documentation including:

  - Safeguarding and Child Protection policy, Staff/Student Code, Whistleblowing and accompanying obligations
  - Recruitment, Selection and Disclosure policy
  - Acceptable use and digital-safety / security policies
  - Supervision of students (children) policies
  - Health and Safety policy and accompanying obligations
  - Complaints policy
  - Conflict of interests policy
  - Anti-bribery policy
  - Receipt of gifts policy
  - Expenses policy
  - Strategic Plan - including Vision and Values, and Quakerism at Sidcot

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- Monitoring of disciplinary issues
- Overview of Sidcot Curriculum, Governor responsibilities, Board ways of working and confidentiality obligations,
- Tour of school premises not covered during recruitment tour