

12th January 2024
amh/Governor Role

Dear parents, carers and the community

Information re **Governors Role**

You will be aware that St John's School is part of the Excalibur Academy Trust (EAT).

Founded in 2012, **Excalibur Academies Trust** has grown from two schools in Marlborough, Wiltshire, to some 20 schools reaching from Bristol to Reading along the M4 corridor, providing high quality education to 10,000 children from age 2 to age 18.

As a result of this growth, the Trust are continually reviewing and revising processes and roles and responsibilities.

As your current Governors for St John's, we wanted to bring you some clarity with regards to our role.

Although our title remains "Governors", the original board of Governors is now called the St John's Academy Committee. Its remit has changed considerably over the years.

As part of the Excalibur Trust, each Head Teacher/Principal of every school/Academy is accountable to the Board of the Excalibur Trust and not to the Academy Committee and Governors.

Our Academy Committee is made up of a Chair, parent Governors and community Governors and a clerk. New parent governors are elected from amongst the current parent body. Fresh elections are held for the positions whenever a current parent governor's term of office expires.

The new purpose of the Academy Committee is to support, challenge and advise both the Board (Trust) and the Principal, but it is no longer part of the formal governance structure for the school/Academy or the Trust.

We support the Principal to deliver effective welfare, behaviour, careers, safeguarding and extracurricular provision. The Academy Committee supports and challenges the Principal in these areas, however, it is the role of the Trust's CEO and executive team to hold the Principal to account.

The monitoring and improving of educational outcomes (academic results) is no longer our responsibility but the responsibility of the Trust's professional Academy Improvement Team.

We recognise that these changes have not been clearly communicated to the parent community and we have advised the Trust that they should take steps to address this so that the whole school community understands how the school is governed, and to whom the principal is accountable.

Although some of us are parent Governors, elected by parents/carers at St John's, our role is not to represent parents and escalate their issues to the Principal. We simply fulfil the Academy Committee's remit as elected members. Furthermore, we cannot intervene in the running of the school, nor can we become involved in parental complaints. In such cases, parents must follow the published complaints policy, which is available on the school website.

We hold 4 meetings per academic year. During those meetings, held at school, our Chair of Governors will invite key school staff to present around areas such as Safeguarding, Equality, Health & Safety, SEND (Special Education Needs) and Equality. The Principal is always in attendance and presents his Principal's report. This allows us to ask challenging questions to ensure that established processes are followed and make recommendations where appropriate. Although we are privy to overall educational outcome figures (i.e GCSE

& A' Level achievement results), this is not an area that we can challenge as the school is accountable to the Trust in those areas.

Outside of these official meetings, Governors visit the school to speak to teachers and students to understand life at St John's 'through the lens of the child'.

We are planning to organise further "school walks" this academic year to get direct feedback from teachers and students alike.

We use our role to support the school to the best of our ability, in line with the Trust's delegated responsibilities for the Academy Committee.

Our photos and profiles are on the St John's website <https://www.stjohns.excalibur.org.uk/> under: About us -> Staff & Governors.

Although we may not be very visible to you as parents and carers, we can assure you that we have direct engagement with the school and ensure that we feel the above areas are addressed with the staff and recommendations are implemented.

We hope this will bring you some clarity around the role of your Academy Committee. Governors are only in post for 4 years and we would like to encourage you to consider becoming a Governor when elections are published as it is such an important role for the school.

With our Kindest Regards

St John's Governors