

Introduction

Queen Alexandra College is a charity and a thriving specialist provider of education, training and independence skills for people with visual impairment and other disabilities. The College is an incorporated Company limited by guarantee and a registered charity. The main site is in Harborne, Birmingham and there is also a garden centre in Selly Oak and a trading subsidiary, QAC Enterprises Ltd. The Board of Governors is mainly made up of volunteers who are appointed to bring a range of skills and experience to the College's most senior decision-making body. Governors make a positive contribution to the success of the College, with an important and rewarding part to play in ensuring the continued provision of high quality education and training for our learners. The college aims to reflect diversity of local community within the Board.

What will I be doing?

As a member of the Board, you will contribute your knowledge and expertise to debate and collective decision-making - setting strategy, providing direction and assessing performance. You will act as a critical friend and sounding board for the Principal and the College Management Team, providing constructive support and offering effective challenge. For this role to be effective we need a variety of viewpoints and a diverse Board.

You will read reports and digest information from other sources in preparation for board and committee meetings. In addition to meetings you will be asked to make a visit each term to an area of the College and are encouraged to take part in some College events during the year, such as award ceremonies and other ad hoc visits, a list of which will be provided.

What experience and attributes do I need?

Specialist education is a challenging policy and funding environment and the role demands a variety of skills. We do not expect all of these skills from one individual but look for the Board to provide a balance of these skills across all members.

Skill requirements for the Board as a whole include

- Business, professional or governance acumen, preferably in a self-made capacity or at a senior management or director level.
- Experience of disability or an understanding of the difficulties of living with a disability.
- Sound knowledge of marketing, social media, local authority processes, financial decision-making, legal or audit matters.
- Evidence from current or recent roles of contributing to strategic and business planning, quality assurance, risk management, accountability and engagement, HR, or further education. (NB Governors are not asked to provide "professional advice" to the College.)
- Understanding of the local community and the groups within it.

You will need the ability to interpret information and apply your knowledge strategically and to communicate effectively in order to contribute to discussions constructively. An empathy for the values and aims of the college is important.

The wellbeing of our learning community is important and prior awareness of safeguarding, health and safety and equality and diversity best practice would be useful but is not essential and relevant training is given.

Applications

You can apply by completing an application form and sending it to Alison Lydon, Governance Director, Queen Alexandra College, Court Oak Road, Harborne, Birmingham, B17 9TG or email alydon@qac.ac.uk. To find out more information or arrange an informal chat about the role and look around the college please contact Alison at the above email.

Main duties and responsibilities

1. To assist in fostering an environment that enables the college to fulfil its mission, for the benefit of learners and the wider community.
2. To be fully committed to Safeguarding (including the Prevent Duty and the principles of British values) and promoting the welfare of all learners, including health and safety, equality and diversity and guarding against radicalisation and extremism.
3. To contribute to achievement of the responsibilities of the board of governors.

The Board shall be responsible for the following functions:

- a) *the determination and periodic review of the educational character and mission of the college and the oversight of its activities;*
 - b) *approving the quality strategy;*
 - c) *the effective and efficient use of resources, the solvency of the college and safeguarding its assets;*
 - d) *approving annual estimates of income and expenditure;*
 - e) *the appointment, grading, suspension, dismissal and determination of the pay and conditions of service of the holders of senior posts; and*
 - f) *setting a framework for the pay and conditions of service of all other staff.*
4. To take part in overseeing the College's governance and internal control processes to ensure compliance with the College's regulatory and accountability framework.

Responsibilities of individual Governors

- To attend meetings of the Board of Governors, the AGM and other occasional events arranged by the College.
- To be a member of at least one committee of the Board and to attend the necessary meetings (in exceptional circumstances the Board may waive this responsibility).
- To be a member of ad hoc working groups as required.
- To participate actively and constructively in meetings of the Board and the appropriate committees.
- To participate in the "Link Governor" Scheme, visiting areas of the college.
- To take an active interest in specialist education and training in general and in the College in particular.
- To sign and abide by the Code of Conduct for Governors and to declare any relevant financial, business and personal interests. This includes complying with the Nolan principles of acting with
 - Selflessness
 - Integrity
 - Objectivity
 - Accountability

- Openness
 - Honesty
 - Leadership
- To contribute to the strength of the Board by bringing an external perspective and experience to the Board's oversight of the College but to stop short of giving professional or operational advice.
 - To act as an ambassador for the College and to foster good relations between the College and the local community.
 - Always to act in the best interests of the College and not to speak or vote as if mandated by other persons or bodies.
 - To be aware of and comply with the College's policies when carrying out the duties and responsibilities of a governor, including but not limited to equality and diversity, safeguarding (including the Prevent Duty and the principles of British values), health and safety, and rules relating to visitors on College sites.
 - To respect the confidentiality of matters and data relating to the College, students and members of staff when required.
 - To undertake relevant training, including mandatory Safeguarding and Prevent Duty training.
 - You will be expected to participate in an annual appraisal.

Support

You will receive induction briefings and training to assist you in your role. The Governance Director will act as a point of contact and provide information and advice, as well as the formal papers for meetings. Another governor can be nominated to offer mentoring to the extent you consider it helpful. (See below for information about expenses.)

DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

All governors are required to complete a Register of Interest each year. This document is a record of all governors' business interests, financial or otherwise – the name of their employer; self-employment and details of significant customer clients accounting for more than 10% of business; directorships; significant shareholdings; partnerships; membership of professional bodies; membership of closed organisations; any financial interest with the college such as the provision of goods or services or remuneration for lectures or consultancies; and elected offices, trusteeships and public appointments (paid or unpaid).

Time commitment

You will need to aim to allocate sufficient time to undertake your duties and be willing to attend some College events to gain an appreciation of the work of the College and to meet stakeholders. The Board aims for 100% attendance but recognises that this can be difficult to achieve and expects a minimum average 80% meeting attendance rate across members. The time spent carrying out the role is likely to be greater if a governor is appointed to the

role of chairman, vice-chairman or committee chair or if ad-hoc matters occur requiring input. The time commitment shown below is therefore an indication of the minimum time required to fulfil the role.

Attendance at 5 Board meetings and a Board development day each year	22 hours
Attendance at 3 or 4 committee meetings each year	10 hours
Preparation time at 2 hours per meeting	18 hours
Attendance at additional training events	4 hours
Participation in Link Governor Scheme	6 hours
Approximate total annual time commitment	60 hours

Eligibility, term of appointment and remuneration

Appointment requires an Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, completion of the declaration of eligibility on the application form and acceptance of the Code of Conduct.

External members of the Board of Governors are appointed for an initial term of 1 year and may be considered for reappointment for three further terms of 3 years.

Governors are not remunerated but are able to reclaim reasonable travel and other expenses (such as child care) incurred in the course of agreed College business.

Some people are not eligible to become governors including those who are under 18 and a full list of eligibility criteria will be provided.