

19th May 2023

Dear Parents/Guardians

Re: Election of Parent Governors at Ruislip High School

I am writing to inform you that the school will be electing two new parents/guardians to join the Local Governing Body. Parent governors are very valuable members of the Governing Body: please click [here](#) for Vanguard Learning Trust's governor role description and [here](#) for information for potential parent governors. The school relies on parent governors to help keep in touch with what parents are thinking and to help decide what is best for all students.

Please note:

- Parents do not need to be experts in education to be effective governors, but have to want to help the school to be the best it can be.
- There is support and training available to help governors understand the role and their responsibilities.

Besides parents/guardians, the Governing Body includes members of staff and people from the local community. All of these individuals play an important part in building good relationships between the school, parents and the wider community. Together they decide the key priorities for the school, help plan to achieve them, and then check whether the actions taken have had the desired impact. The Local Governing Body also plays an important role in deciding how the school's budget should be spent and it helps to appoint staff.

The Local Governing Body is particularly looking for people who have experience in special educational needs, finance, HR or law. Governors also need what are known as 'soft skills': the ability to be able to build relationships with a range of people; to be able to work as part of a team; to be able to question; and to make connections between different types of information. All governors are expected to be able to read straightforward budget reports and data on school standards.

Parents who would like to stand for election should complete the nomination form, available [here](#), and return it either electronically to Janet Beater, Company Secretary/Lead Governance Professional at jbeater@vlt.org.uk or to the school, marked for the attention of Janet Beater. Paper copies of the nomination form are also available from the school's reception. Nomination forms may be typewritten or handwritten. Another parent of a child at the school must sign the form in support of the nomination. If an election is needed, the details supplied on page 3 of the form will be copied and sent to all parents with the ballot papers.

Please note: all nominations must be received by 9am on Monday 5th June 2023.

Nominated candidates will be sent an acknowledgement of the receipt of their nomination form within two working days. If candidates do not receive an acknowledgement, they should contact Janet Beater (jbeater@vlt.org.uk) as failure to do so may result in a nomination not being considered.

Parents need to be aware that any appointment may be subject to a satisfactory identity and/or Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, (previously Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) check). This is to ensure the safety of the students.

Should there be fewer nominations than the number of vacancies, parents will be informed that the closing date for receipt of nominations will be extended by five working days.

If the final number of nominations is the same as, or smaller than, the number of positions to be filled, then the people nominated will be deemed elected unopposed. If, at the end of any extension period, there are not enough nominations, the Governing Body has the power to appoint parent governors to fill the vacancies.

The term of office for a parent governor is four years, as determined by the Local Governing Body. If elected, parents may serve the full four years even if their child leaves the school before their term of office finishes. Governors may resign at any time during their term of office.

If a ballot is required, all parents will be sent a ballot paper. Only parents of children registered at the school are entitled to stand or vote in the election. Each parent will be sent one ballot paper regardless of how many children he/she has at the school, and each parent will have one vote per vacancy. The ballot will be secret and candidates will be notified of the result as soon as possible afterwards.

In most cases it will be obvious whether individuals have parental responsibility, but to avoid uncertainty, and for the purpose of the election of a parent governor, parental responsibility is outlined on the following pages.

Should parents/guardians have any questions about whether they are eligible to stand or vote in the election or about anything else in this letter, please contact Janet Beater at jbeater@vlt.org.uk.

Yours sincerely



Mr Gareth Davies
Headteacher



Mr John Garner
Chair of Governors

Parental Responsibility

For the purposes of education law, section 576 of the Education Act 1996 defines a 'parent' as:

- All biological parents, whether married or not;
- Any person who, although not a biological parent, has parental responsibility for a student registered at the school (eg. adoptive parents, step parents, guardians or other relatives);
- Any person who, although not a biological parent, has full time care of a student registered at the school.

Who has parental responsibility?

A mother automatically has parental responsibility for her child from birth.

A father usually has parental responsibility if he is married to the child's mother; and/or listed on the birth certificate (after a certain date, depending on which part of the UK the child was born in).

An individual can acquire parental responsibility if they do not automatically have it.

Births registered in England and Wales

If the parents of a child are married when the child is born, or if they've jointly adopted a child, both have parental responsibility. They both keep parental responsibility if they later divorce.

An unmarried father can only get legal responsibility for his child in one of three ways:

- jointly registering the birth of the child with the mother (from 1 December 2003);
- getting a parental responsibility agreement with the mother;
- getting a parental responsibility order from a court.

Births registered in Scotland

A father has parental responsibility if he's married to the mother when the child is conceived or marries her at any point afterwards. An unmarried father has parental responsibility if he's named on the child's birth certificate (from 4 May 2006).

Births registered in Northern Ireland

A father has parental responsibility if he's married to the mother at the time of the child's birth. If a father marries the mother after the child's birth, he has parental responsibility if he lives in Northern Ireland at the time of the marriage. An unmarried father has parental responsibility if he's named, or becomes named, on the child's birth certificate (from 15 April 2002).

Births registered outside the UK

If a child is born overseas and comes to live in the UK, parental responsibility depends on the UK country they're now living in.

Same-sex parents - civil partners

Same-sex partners who were civil partners at the time of the treatment, eg. fertility treatment, will both have parental responsibility.

Same sex parents - non-civil partners

For same-sex partners who aren't civil partners, the second parent can get parental responsibility by either:

- applying for parental responsibility if a parental agreement was made;
- becoming a civil partner of the other parent and making a parental responsibility agreement or jointly registering the birth.

Acquiring parental responsibility

If you're not the mother, you can either acquire parental responsibility by agreement or by applying to court to acquire parental responsibility. The school reserves the right to ask for a copy of the court order or signed / certified agreement in such cases.

As a result of this provision, more than two people can have parental responsibility for the same child. All individuals with parental responsibility will be treated equally for the purposes of parent governor elections.