

John Masefield High School and Sixth Form Centre

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Dear Parent/Carer

Governors at JMHS

I am the current Chair of Governors at JMHS, Dr Debs Hiley. I have been a governor at both Ledbury Primary School and JMHS for many years and am hugely committed to supporting the students and whole school community. I am also a local GP and in this wider sense am committed to supporting our whole community.

We are currently updating our governor area on the website, and as part of this and our ongoing work as governors I wanted to communicate to you an outline of what our role is.

We are also looking to recruit new members to this voluntary role this term. We welcome anyone with an interest in governance and the school, with an ability to commit time, enthusiasm and any other experience and skills you may have. Experience in this area is great but we offer support if you are new to governance so knowledge or experience of governance is not at all essential.

Basic time commitment needed is variable – you are generally expected to attend around 6 hrs of meetings over a term; do a link visit (approx. 2 hrs overall with preparation); reading for the above – around an hour for every hour of meeting time as a rough guide; and you may be asked to support other projects or panels from time to time – this equates to approximately 5 – 6 hours a month term time only. However additional time may be required for training and reading occasionally and many governors commit to more than this as they chose to be on more than one committee or take on additional responsibilities such as chairing a committee. Some timings are fixed as outlined below – some 4.30pm/5pm starts for committee meetings.)

The support we offer includes induction material and time with Clerk, Head Teacher and myself (where practical); allocation of a mentor/ buddy (a more experienced governor) to support at meetings and generally; comprehensive online training access and online resources; access to training via Hereford Governors Association; friendly committee meetings where staff and other governors will support new members development informally; very knowledgeable and experienced Clerk who can offer support and guidance; accessible and approachable Chair ; regular governor updates produced by me covering what's going on at JMHS overall and in governance terms – where link visits and professional development events are also shared in one document.

Please do get in touch if you are interested in this rewarding and interesting role, or if you would like to know more contact myself or our clerk, Rebecca French, at the addresses below or leave a message via reception at school.

chair@jmhs.hereford.sch.uk

rebecca.french@jmhs.hereford.sch.uk

Governance at JMHS

The purpose of governance is:

- Ensuring clarity of vision and ethos and strategic direction

- Holding leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its students and performance management of staff
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure money is well spent , including its pupil premium money

In addition, we at JMHS believe that good governance is not possible without ethical leadership and governance.

Ethical leadership embraces:

- The Nolan principles of public life (honesty, integrity ,objectivity, selflessness, accountability, openness and leadership)
- The ethical values – trust, wisdom, kindness, justice, service, courage and optimism

The purpose of governance is not:

- To manage or micro-manage staff/leadership of the school, although we have a responsibility to hold the head teacher to account
- To deal with initial complaints parents or others may have regarding a student or issue. There is a complaints procedure for this and communication and working collaboratively with your school is always key
- To make comments/pass judgements in the public domain regarding management issues at JMHS
- To make your own voice heard as a parent or individual or friend of an individual governor. Processes are in place for communication and as governors, we review complaints and significant events with a strategic role annually or as relevant.

We try to achieve good governance by developing trusting relationships with all staff and senior leaders which in turn allows us to challenge and question in the right way for the right reasons – primarily acting as a “critical friend” supporting strategy and questioning impact of developments to improve/change the school to improve student outcomes in all ways.

At our last OFSTED inspection the governance of the school gained really positive and good feedback as a general line of enquiry but also in other areas such as SEND and safeguarding.

We do this by working in small committee groups to consider detailed areas and impacts and consider strategy and by over-viewing this and more generic key areas at full governors meetings. We also achieve regular contact, knowledge and first-hand experience with staff and students through our link governor visits in school; as well as considering external data and advice from school improvement partner/ local data interpretation/guidance for schools.

Our current committees meet once or twice termly at 4.30-5pm on Tuesdays and include:

- Personnel and Welfare (student and staff welfare including safeguarding , behaviour, attendance and staffing issues)
- Finance, Audit and Premises
- Teaching, Learning and Progress (including consideration of progress and results, impact of strategies implemented, quality of teaching)

In addition we have a Pay Committee, Head Teacher Performance Management group and a Chairs committee/forum group for committee/chairs/vice chairs that meet 1-2 times yearly or more.

We hold approximately 5 full governors meetings per year at 7pm on Tuesdays.

In addition governors are expected to do 2 link visits per year – flexible arrangements agreed with relevant staff on an individual basis.

We focus agendas around key areas of the school development plan and financial planning, which we review regularly and is featured in our annual report, We also consider key areas as they develop regarding the local

community/buildings/ staffing and curriculum change – the importance of which has been recently emphasised by OFSTED changes. We also focus on important areas regularly such as overall financial health; student and staff wellbeing and safeguarding, attendance and behavioural aspects of the school.

We are extremely fortunate in having a superb Clerk who supports us in the running of governance and advises us and writes fantastic minutes evidencing the impact of governance at JMHS in supporting school development!

We have a highly committed group of governors currently who bring a huge amount of knowledge , experience and skill to our board with backgrounds in business, finance, medical fields, teaching (at leadership level) and IT. However their key attribute is their commitment to good governance - effective and ethical and their commitment to learning via online courses; updates provided by me; sessions we provide as a school for governors and attending courses – this aligns us with governors’ competency framework which is hugely important.

We are a friendly bunch and would welcome new governors and provide induction and support with mentoring for new governors. Generally at meetings we provide challenge and are rigorous but we also do have some fun!

Please do consider taking on the role of governor if you have the time and commitment and are keen to support the students and community at our great school.

With thanks and best wishes

Dr Debs Hiley

Chair of Governors