



Girls' Learning Trust

www.girlslearningtrust.org

Recruitment Pack

Chair of Trust Board

The Girls' Learning Trust
April 2025



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WELCOME

Dear Candidate

Thank you for your interest in the post of Chair of Trust Board for the Girls' Learning Trust.

The Girls' Learning Trust (GLT) was formed in September 2015 and comprises three successful and high-performing girls' schools: Nonsuch High School for Girls, Wallington High School for Girls and Carshalton High School for Girls. All three schools are located in the London Borough of Sutton. As the largest all-girls multi academy trust in the UK, we have over 4,500 students aged 11-18 and almost 500 staff. We have a financial turnover of £30m and operate over three large sites. Our aim is to empower girls and young women by delivering a first-class education and provide an inspirational start to their futures.

As a Trust, we undertook an external review of governance in Spring 2024 and are implementing its recommendations. One of the recommendations recognised the importance of succession planning on the Trust Board and ensuring that we have individuals with the right level of experience to contribute to the organisation's governance. We are now seeking an individual to join our Board as a Trustee and as Chair of the Trust Board when our current Chair steps down from the role in January 2026.

Volunteering as a Trustee is an extremely rewarding experience. I have been involved in the Girls' Learning Trust since its formation – firstly as the Chair of Governors at Wallington High School for Girls, then Vice Chair and now Chair of the Trust Board which oversees all our schools. I have learned so much from my involvement, but more than anything, it has provided a remarkable opportunity to make a positive impact on the lives of our students.

I hope you find this recruitment pack useful, and if you would like to arrange a call with me or our Chief Executive Officer, contact details are provided at the end of this pack.

Kind regards



Sandy Gillett
Chair of Trust Board



Dr Thomas Flynn
Chief Executive Officer



OUR TRUST

What is a Multi Academy Trust?

Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) are where more than two schools have joined to form one organisation, governed by one Trust board. Our MAT is both a registered (exempt) charity and a company limited by guarantee, and since we operate within the state sector, we are regulated by the Department for Education (DfE). We receive our funding direct from the government on per pupil basis, and we also generate some income through various additional activities (including targeted capital funding bids, and out of hours lettings), which we invest directly into our educational activities.

What makes Multi Academy Trusts different?

The original academies programme started in 2010 and was intended initially to provide an alternative governance model for schools. Since this process started, many schools have now identified the significant benefits associated with forming partnerships with other schools – enabling cost savings across central services, alongside the ability to invest in strategic roles supporting schools to become more effective. By ‘clubbing together’, our three schools have access to resources and support that individually they would not be able to afford, and ultimately, we are able to collaborate to provide better outcomes for our pupils.

What is the history of the Girls’ Learning Trust?

In 2015, Nonsuch High School for Girls formed a multi-academy trust with Wallington High School for Girls, the Nonsuch & Wallington Education Trust. In 2018, the company became the Girls’ Learning Trust (GLT) and later that year Carshalton High School for Girls joined.

Our schools share many characteristics and are held in high regard by the local community. They are high performing and deliver a broad, balanced and challenging curriculum setting high expectations. Students benefit from being taught by well-qualified, dedicated and committed staff who are experts in girls’ education. The Trust benefits from the expertise within an executive support staff team that provides shared services for schools, including Finance,

Estates, IT, Procurement, Capital Development Projects, HR, Governance, Audit and Risk. This core team of professionals ensure consistent methods of operation, strong quality assurance and best value across the Trust.

Relationships in the Trust, between staff and students or between volunteers, are built on mutual trust and respect. These relationships drive school improvement and contribute to the wellbeing of everyone. Visitors often comment on the high levels of motivation and positive behaviour of the students, the commitment and professionalism of the staff and the well-equipped school buildings. Strong academic performance is complemented by highly effective pastoral care. We believe in offering a broad experience that goes well beyond the academic, and girls are encouraged to develop their confidence, independence and resilience across a wide range of enrichment and extra-curricular activities.

What makes the Girls' Learning Trust special?

While we work across the Trust to support school performance and ensure value for public money, we believe in allowing our schools autonomy in developing approaches to pedagogy and the curriculum that will deliver the very best outcomes for their students. Nevertheless, our shared values and the many opportunities we have for collaboration across our schools mean that we learn lots from each other and that we remain outward-focussed.

What is it like volunteering at the Girls' Learning Trust?

The environment is fun, fast paced and collegiate. Colleagues volunteer with us from all different walks of life and for a host of different reasons. But the one thing that we all share is a passion for education and a desire to make sure young people get the best education possible.

There are some common features to volunteering in any role at the GLT:

- You will be supported by a passionate and dedicated staff team who believe in the transformative power of education and take pride in the positive impact their roles have both inside and outside of the classroom.
- You will join a team of problem solvers who constantly figure out ways to help pupils achieve better outcomes, tackling challenges both big and small together.
- We work in a fun and empathetic environment: staff and volunteers support and take care of each other, bringing a sense of humour to the role.
- We are committed to professional development and are proud of our culture of developing staff and volunteers in their roles.
- We have an unshakable commitment to safeguarding and wellbeing: we operate a rigorous recruitment procedure that includes DBS, medical screening (for staff) and confirmation of qualifications. And we are committed to ensuring this remains our top priority.



OUR SCHOOLS

All three schools in the Trust share many common characteristics and are held in high regard in the local community. They are high performing, deliver a broad, balanced, and challenging curriculum, and set high expectations. Students across the Trust benefit from being taught by highly qualified, dedicated and committed staff who share their passion and knowledge of their subject.

More information on the schools in our Trust can be found here:



Carshalton High School for Girls

Headteacher: Mr. Peter Baumann-Winn

Students: Approximately 1,450 students

Address: West Street, Carshalton SM5 2QX

Website: www.chsg.org.uk



Nonsuch High School for Girls

Headteacher: Ms. Alexis Williamson-Jones

Students: Approximately 1,550 students

Address: Ewell Road, Cheam SM3 8AB

Website: www.nonsuchschool.org



Wallington High School for Girls

Headteacher: Ms. Tracey O'Brien

Students: Approximately 1,550 students

Address: Woodcote Road, Wallington SM6 0PH

Website: www.wallingtongirls.org.uk



OUR GOVERNANCE

We have three levels of governance:

1. [The Members](#)
2. [The Trust Board](#)
3. [Subcommittees and Local Governing Bodies](#)

The Members

Our Members are akin to the shareholders of a company, except that as a charity we accrue no profits. The Trust can have no fewer than three Members, the majority of whom cannot also be Trustees. Independent Members have an overview of the governance arrangements of the Trust and appoint the Trustees. Our current Members are (with appointment dates):

- Tony Hyams-Parish (01/09/2015)
- Donna Evans (01/01/2016)
- Sandy Gillett (25/08/2020)
- Angela Attah (08/12/2020)
- Marie Grant (01/09/2022)

Trust Board

Our second level of governance is the [Trust Board](#). The Board is:

- Responsible for setting the strategic direction for the Trust, including key performance indicators (KPIs)
- Accountable for the educational performance of the Trust and all schools within it
- Responsible for determining Trust-wide policies as appropriate
- The employer of all Trust staff

Subcommittees and Local Governing Bodies

Our third level of governance comprises the Trust subcommittees and a Local Governing Body (LGB) for each school. The Board has the following subcommittees:

- Admissions Committee

- Exclusions Committee
- Finance Committee
- Governance, Audit and Risk Committee
- HR and Remuneration Committee
- Local Governing Bodies

Each Local Governing Body:

- Is responsible to the Trust Board for the performance of the school
- Supports and challenges the Headteacher and the school leadership to secure strong student performance
- Provides oversight and monitoring of the school's activities to ensure an excellent standard of education is delivered
- Ensures that the School KPIs set by the Trust Board are delivered alongside the school development plan
- Contributes to the wider work of the Trust through membership of Trust subcommittees

We are committed to the highest standards of governance and publish an annual Governance Handbook that clearly sets out how the Trust operates and who is accountable for what.

OUR STRATEGY & FUTURE PLANS

At the start of the 2024/25 academic year, we moved to a new Executive Leadership Team model within the Trust, including a new Chief Executive Officer (and Accounting Officer). Working with Trustees, LGB members, staff and students, we have reviewed our strategic plan, which will be launched publicly in April 2025.

Our purpose: transforming lives through girls' education.

For **students**, we help them achieve their full potential by creating an inclusive, supportive and aspirational learning environment. We equip them with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to thrive in school and in life, preparing them for their future.

For **staff**, we create a positive working environment where they are valued, supported, and motivated. We offer opportunities for development and career growth, encouraging collaboration and enabling everyone to contribute to the success of our students and the whole Trust.

For **schools**, we support and assure their education development with the freedom and autonomy to define their own values and priorities, respecting their individual character and unique identities. We promote collaboration across the Trust, enabling sharing of resources, exchanging ideas, and driving continuous improvement.

Our Education Mission: to empower girls to thrive through a holistic, rigorous and transformative education that nurtures their intellectual, emotional, and personal growth.

We believe in the limitless potential of our students. All our schools are empowered to develop their own education vision that reflects their local context and needs of their students. But this is underpinned by a shared belief in:

1. The transformative power of girls-only education
2. The holistic measurement of success based on the whole student
3. The prioritisation of student wellbeing and character development
4. The promotion of girls' leadership rooted in strong values
5. The value of equity, diversity and inclusion

You can read more about our new strategy here: <https://www.girlslearningtrust.org/about-us/purpose>.

Trust Development and Growth

Following a period of development and consolidation and with a new Executive Leadership Team and strategy in place, we are now seeking to grow as a Trust. Our new strategy sets out the framework for how we grow and make decisions about adding new schools to the Trust.



THE OPPORTUNITY

This is an exciting time to join the Girls' Learning Trust, as we start the work to implement our new Trust Strategy. The Trust is financially strong, is led by a team of talented individuals, and all our schools are high performing. Our governance is professional and robust, and we are now looking at the next stage of our development.

As we look to our medium-term future, we recognise the importance of succession planning and ensuring that we have individuals with the right level of experience in the organisation's governance.

A number of our longest serving Trustees are due to finish their terms of office over the next two years, and we are therefore recruiting a 'wave' of new individuals to join our Board. This will give us the perfect blend of renewal within our current membership, as well as set the organisation up positively for the future.

The role of Chair of Trust Board is a crucial one to the organisation. As well as being a member of the Trust Board, there are a number of additional responsibilities that the Chair holds. The Chair is a key link between the Chief Executive and the Trust Board and we are looking for a Chair who can lead by example and provide confident leadership for the Trust.

A full job description and role description is provided below.

ROLE DESCRIPTION

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Role Title | Chair of Trust Board |
| Reporting To | Trust Board |
| Type of Role | Voluntary / Governance |
| Time Commitment | <p>4 x Board meetings a year (in person)</p> <p>Regular meetings with the Chief Executive</p> <p>1 x Governance Development Day a year (in person)</p> <p>Trustees are expected to volunteer for 1 x subcommittee which also meets 3 times per year (mostly over MS Teams)</p> <p>Voluntary engagement in between meetings on ad-hoc issues</p> |

The Department for Education and the Charity Commission for England and Wales have both published comprehensive guidance on the role and responsibilities of Trustees within an organisation. This guidance can be found:

www.gov.uk/guidance/-governance-in-academy-trusts
www.gov.uk/guidance/charity-trustee-whats-involved

A good way of understanding the role is that Trustees are ultimately responsible for:

- **Strategic Leadership**: approving and championing the vision, ethos and strategy of the Trust.
- **Accountability**: holding the organisation and each other to account for driving up educational standards and financial performance.
- **People**: ensuring the Trust recruits, retains and develops staff with the right skills, experience, qualities and capacity.
- **Structures**: approving and upholding the governance structure that reinforces clearly defined roles and responsibilities, and ensures the right decisions are made by the right people at the right time.
- **Compliance**: ensuring the Trust complies with statutory and contractual requirements as required by relevant regulation.
- **Evaluation**: continually monitoring and reporting against key indicators to improve quality and impact

On a day-to-day basis, this might include activities such as:

Overseeing financial performance, including the submission of annual accounts and returns to Companies House and the Department for Education.

Overseeing the strategic plan for the Trust and overseeing its implementation, keeping senior leadership accountable for maintaining a trust's vision and power structure.

Ensuring the Trust is compliant with our charitable objectives, as well as company law that covers all aspects of employment law.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

The principles and personal attributes that individuals bring to our Trust Board are as important as their skills and knowledge. These qualities enable members to use their skills and knowledge to function well as part of a team, and make an active contribution to effective governance. All members of our Board are expected to exhibit the [seven principles of public life \(the Nolan principles\)](#) in all our work.

We are looking for a Chair who:

Strategic Leadership and Oversight

- Provides clear strategic direction, facilitating positive organisational change.
- Knowledgeable about national educational priorities and their impact on the Trust.
- Holds executive leaders to account effectively for educational standards, financial performance, and risk management.
- Leads inclusive meetings, ensuring diverse viewpoints inform decision-making.
- Demonstrates integrity, transparency, and manages conflicts of interest proactively.

People and Team Development

- Builds strong, supportive relationships among trustees, senior leaders, and stakeholders.
- Establishes a culture of openness, trust, and constructive challenge.
- Promotes effective induction, ongoing training, and clear succession planning.
- Sets high standards and acts as an exemplary role model in governance behaviours.

Governance, Compliance, and Self-Evaluation

- Ensures compliance with charity law, company law, and regulatory frameworks.
- Understands effective delegation and holds the governance professional accountable.
- Leads purposeful evaluations of Board and executive performance, actively seeking and responding positively to feedback.
- Demonstrates self-awareness and prioritises the Trust's interests, recognising when appropriate to transition leadership.

In addition, all those involved in governance should be:

- **Committed**: devoting the required time and energy to the role and ambitious to achieve best possible outcomes for young people. Prepared to give time, skills and knowledge to developing themselves and others in order to create highly effective governance.
- **Confident**: with an independent mind, able to lead and contribute to courageous conversations, to express their opinion and to play an active role on the board.
- **Curious**: possessing an enquiring mind and an analytical approach and understanding the value of meaningful questioning.
- **Challenging**: providing appropriate challenge to the status quo, not taking information or data at face value and always driving for improvement.
- **Collaborative**: prepared to listen to and work in partnership with others and understanding the importance of building strong working relationships within the board and with executive leaders, staff, parents and carers, pupils/students, the local community and employers.
- **Critical**: understanding the value of critical friendship which enables both challenge and support, and self-reflective, pursuing learning and development opportunities to improve their own and whole board effectiveness.

- **Creative:** with an ability to challenge conventional wisdom and be open-minded about new approaches to problem-solving; recognising the value of innovation and creative thinking to organisational development and success.

A comprehensive articulation of the knowledge and skills we're looking for can be found in the Department for Education publication Competency framework for governance available here: www.gov.uk/guidance/-governance-in-academy-trusts

As part of the recruitment process, the Department for Education carries out statutory suitability checks for newly-appointed Chairs on behalf of the Secretary of State for Education. Academy Trust Chairs must complete a suitability check as soon as they are appointed. More information about these checks can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academy-trust-chair-suitability-checks>

In this round of recruitment, we are open to all applications but are particularly keen to hear from individuals with previous experience as a Chair or with previous Board experience in a Multi-Academy Trust setting or similar.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Safeguarding

The Girls' Learning Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. Candidates are expected to demonstrate a sound understanding of leadership of and contribution to a safeguarding environment. The successful candidate will be required to undergo an enhanced DBS with barred list check followed by safeguarding training as part of their induction.

Data Protection

As part of our recruitment process, Girls' Learning Trust collects and processes personal data relating to job applicants. The Trust is committed to being transparent about how it collects and uses that data and to meeting its data protection obligations. For further information about this and to read our Data Protection and Freedom of Information Policy, please visit: www.girlslearningtrust.org/our-governance/policies

Application Process

Applications should be made through MyNewTerm, our online application programme.

Closing Date

Applications must be received by no later than Monday 12th May at 4pm.

Interviews

Interviews will take place in the week commencing 2nd June 2025 at Nonsuch High School for Girls with a selection of Trustees. Alternative arrangements over MS Teams may be available if required.

Notification and Feedback

Candidates who have taken part in interviews will be notified as soon as possible – please ensure that you have provided day and evening numbers on which you can be reached. Constructive feedback will be provided for all candidates invited to interview.

Additional Information

If you would like further information, we will be happy to organise a telephone call with the Chief Executive Officer or Chair of Trustees to discuss the role and the immediate priorities of the post, please contact us on: governance@girlslearningtrust.org



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