

## **Parent Trustee Vacancy**

Dear Parent / Carer

We have a vacancy on the Board of Trustees for a Parent Trustee, and I am writing to all parents and carers of current Birchwood students to invite you to stand for election. While being a trustee is a significant commitment, it is also an extremely rewarding role.

Our Board is a professional and committed group, but we are also very friendly and approachable. You don't need any specific qualifications or background, but you do need a commitment to supporting the school to be a great place to learn and to work for all of our 1,500 students and staff.

There is more detail about the role on the next page. If you have any questions or would like to discuss what it is involved please get in touch by emailing [turnerg@birchwoodhigh.org.uk](mailto:turnerg@birchwoodhigh.org.uk) or by phoning the school and leaving a message for me with your contact details.

If you would like to stand for election, please complete the attached nomination form and return it to me by Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> June at [turnerg@birchwoodhigh.org.uk](mailto:turnerg@birchwoodhigh.org.uk) or by handing it to reception marked for my attention. If more than one person stands for election there will be a confidential vote of the parent body, all current parents and carers will have one vote.

Yours sincerely

Gill Turner

*Chair of Trustees Birchwood High School*



## **Parent Trustee Vacancy – More Information**

### **What do the Trustees do?**

The role of trustee is one of strategic oversight. We are not involved in the day-to-day operation of the school but we support and challenge the school to:

- develop and implement the overarching vision and strategy,
- oversee financial performance and make sure money is well spent,
- hold the Principal to account for the educational performance of the school, and
- ensure that all stakeholders views are heard and taken into account.

Principal, Mr Sam Griffin  
Parsonage Lane, Bishop's Stortford, Hertfordshire, CM23 5BD  
Telephone: 01279 655936 | Email: [admin@birchwoodhigh.org.uk](mailto:admin@birchwoodhigh.org.uk) | Website: [www.birchwoodonline.co.uk](http://www.birchwoodonline.co.uk)

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### **What is the difference between a trustee and a school governor?**

You may be more familiar with the term governor – we use trustee and governor interchangeably, but we formally use trustee to emphasise that due to the legal structure of Birchwood the trustees have additional legal responsibilities. You can find out more about the role of trustees here [Academy trust governance guide - Guidance - GOV.UK](#)

### **Do I need any particular skills or qualifications?**

You don't need any particular skills or qualifications to be a Trustee. Professional experience in areas such as education, finance, law, estates management, marketing or HR can be useful but is not a requirement and full training will be given.

Being comfortable using a computer for applications such as Outlook, Word and Teams is useful, but again we can provide support if you need it.

You need to be interested in education and the running of a school and be confident in critically evaluating and applying information from a range of sources. You need to be able to understand and take into account other people's needs and opinions, especially where they might be different to your own.

We are always looking to improve the diversity of our board and make it as representative as possible of our school community. Our strength as a board comes from the range of different skills, experiences, backgrounds and perspectives of our Trustees.



### **How much time will it take?**

All trustees are unpaid volunteers, the time commitment varies depending on what particular responsibilities a trustee takes on, but the minimum expectation from next year will be 4 full board meetings and 5 committee meetings a year, together with time for meeting preparation and for training.

### **When do meetings take place?**

We currently hold meetings on a Wednesday evening from 7pm to 9pm. In addition, many Trustees also sit on additional committees or working groups, take on key responsibilities for a particular area such as SEND, Safeguarding or Health and Safety and visit the school for monitoring visits and school events.

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### **How long would I be appointed for?**

Trustees are appointed for a 4-year term. To be a parent trustee you need to be a parent at the time of your appointment, but if your child subsequently leaves Birchwood you will continue to be a parent Trustee up to the end of your term.

### **Are there any reasons why I couldn't be a Trustee?**

All trustees need to have mandatory checks and will need to sign a fit and proper persons declaration. We will also ask for references prior to your appointment.

Appendix 1 sets out reasons why someone may be excluded from being a Trustee.

### **Where can I find more information?**

Contact Gill Turner at [turnerg@birchwoodhigh.org.uk](mailto:turnerg@birchwoodhigh.org.uk) to find out more about the trustee role at Birchwood.

There is a lot of information online about being a trustee, some useful links are:

[Interested in becoming a school governor or trustee? | National Governance Association](#)

[Academy trust governance guide - Guidance - GOV.UK](#)

[School Governors: who are they and what do they do? - GfS](#)

<https://www.birchwoodhighschool.co.uk/page/?title=Trust+Governance&pid=45>

### **How do I stand for election?**

Fill in the nomination form attached to this email and return it to me at [turnerg@birchwoodhigh.org.uk](mailto:turnerg@birchwoodhigh.org.uk) or by handing it to reception marked for the attention of Gill Turner by Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> June.

### **What happens if there is more than one nominee?**

The form asks you to provide a few words about yourself and why you are interested in the role. If there is more than one nomination, we will circulate these words along with your name and the name of the person who has nominated you to all parents and carers of pupils at the school and ask them to vote in a secret ballot.

All parents and carers will be eligible to vote once and the nominee with the greatest number of votes will be appointed.

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