

The Function and the Structure of the Governing Body

What are Governors for?

School Governors are the strategic leaders of St Monica's. Working closely with the Headteacher, they set the policies which govern how the School is run, define the objectives for the annual School Improvement Plan and monitor how effectively those objectives are being met. Governors also have overall responsibility for the management of the School's finances and the maintenance of its premises. They are **not** involved in the day-to-day running of the School or the direct delivery of education; those are the distinct responsibilities of the Headteacher and the Senior Management Team. The Headteacher is, nevertheless, accountable to the Governing Body for the effectiveness with which she discharges them.

The School's policies must, of course, conform to the statutory requirements of education and other relevant legislation, including the National Curriculum. As a voluntary-aided maintained school, we are guided by the local authority, Enfield Borough Council, which funds our running costs. As a Catholic school, we are also overseen by the Diocese of Westminster's Education Department and have a statutory duty to maintain the Catholic ethos on which the School was founded. The Diocese administers the Department of Education (DfE) funding for any major building works.

How is the Governing Body structured?

At St Monica's, we have:

a Headteacher Governor;

a Staff Governor. He/she is elected by the staff at the School to represent them. The Staff Governor should honestly report views widely shared by staff, but is not a delegate and cannot be instructed to vote a particular way. They can play a valuable role in informing other Governors about the curriculum and the workings of the School.

seven Foundation Governors. These are appointed by the Archbishop of Westminster, but are usually people living locally whose appointment has been recommended by the parish priest at St Monica's Parish or other neighbouring Catholic churches. Foundation Governors must be practising Catholics and have a particular responsibility for the maintenance of the School's Catholic ethos. One of the Foundation Governors is always the parish priest (or assistant priest) at St Monica's Church;

one Local Authority (LA) Governor. He/she is appointed by Enfield Borough Council as a representative of the wider local community. A Local Authority Governor is not a delegate: he/she is not obliged to reflect a particular political position and cannot be instructed on how to vote in meetings;

three Parent Governors. These are elected by parents. They must be parents of children on the School roll at the time of election. Like the Local Authority Governor, Parent Governors are not delegates and cannot be mandated to vote a particular way. They do, nevertheless, play a valuable role in advising the Governing Body of parents' views on major issues. If parents wish to raise a specific concern or complaint, they should not approach Parent Governors – or any other individual Governor – but follow the School's Complaints Procedure;

one Co-opted Governor. This position can be filled by an individual who will bring particular skills or experience that the Governing Body considers beneficial but who may not be eligible to serve in one of the other categories of governorship.

All Governors share collective responsibility for the strategic direction of the School and are expected to support Governing Body decisions and co-operate in their implementation.

The Governing Body elects a Chair and Vice-Chair. The Chair must be a practising Catholic and should normally be one of the seven Foundation Governors. He/she works with the Headteacher and Clerk to the Governing Body to identify the priorities it needs to address and set the agendas for its meetings. The Chair also takes the lead in exercising the Governing Body's role as 'critical friend' to the Headteacher and Senior Leaders by offering support, challenge and encouragement. He/she also ensures that the Headteacher's performance management is rigorous and robust.

The full Governing Body meets at least once a term. The current Governors, their terms of office and meeting-attendance record can be found on the governors' page on the website

The Governing Body acts in accordance with its Code of Conduct (based on that published by the National Governors' Association) and Standing Orders, which can be found here: [St Monica's GB Code of Conduct and Standing Orders 2023-24](#)

Committees and individual governor responsibilities

A substantial proportion of Governors' business is delegated to the following sub-committees:

Staffing and Finance

This Committee sets and monitors the Headteacher's management of the School's annual budget. It considers how much should be charged for extra-curricular provision, such as the Breakfast and After-School Clubs, and the letting of the School's premises outside school hours. It also monitors the effectiveness of the staffing structure and approves any changes with significant budgetary implications;

Curriculum

This Committee monitors delivery of the curriculum and the annual School Improvement Plan. It reviews data on pupil progress and holds the Headteacher and Senior Leaders to account for the effectiveness of the strategies adopted to support particular groups of children such as those with Special Educational Needs (SEN); and

Premises

This Committee oversees the safety and integrity of the School's grounds and buildings. It assesses priorities for major repairs or refurbishment. Because DfE funding for such work is administered by the Diocese's Education Department, the Committee has a role in ensuring that the information about the condition of the School logged on the Diocese's database is up to date.

These Committees meet once a term.

There is also an **Admissions Committee** which is responsible for reviewing the School's Admissions Policy annually and deciding on amendments as necessary. (These usually arise from directions given by the DfE or the Diocesan Education Department.) The Committee meets during the spring term to

review applications for admission to the School the following autumn and ensure that they are ranked correctly in accordance with the Admissions Policy.

Individual Governors are appointed to oversee some specific areas, for example special-needs provision and safeguarding. The Governing Body also allocates 'link' Governors to individual subject areas. Link Governors try to meet subject leaders on a termly basis to discuss how the curriculum is being delivered. As far as possible, Governors also meet children during these visits to see examples of their work and hear what they feel about their learning. Governors are thus enabled to meet the expectations set out in the revised school inspection framework adopted in 2019 by the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted), ie that they be familiar with the intention, implementation and impact of the School's curriculum.