



Governance Policy

Purpose of the policy

The purpose of this policy is to set out the robust governance practices that will ensure that at all times Wildwood Nature School strives to achieve its ethos.

Role of the Trustees (Governors)

The primary role of the trustees at Wildwood is to:

- Ensure the safety of all the children at the school;
- Review the performance of the school on a regular basis, to ensure that all work and key decision making is done with the objective of attaining or maintaining the school ethos, and to set strategic objectives with that aim;
- Support the school in overseeing key aspects of the school (see below);
- Promote the health and well-being of all members of the school community, including staff and children;
- Supervise the Head of School;
- Appoint the Head of School and to review their performance on an ongoing basis (Chair);
- Contribute to the recruitment of high-quality staff members.

The Governing body and roles

We understand the importance of having a governing body that is diverse, in terms of socio-economic background, and balanced, so that it is not weighted towards a particular type of trustee (eg, founder, parent, staff). It is important that there are enough trustees to ensure this diversity and balance.

Therefore, we aim to have seven trustees, with at least:

- One parent trustee
- One staff member
- Two trustees from the wider community

Initial governing body – founders

Currently the governing body comprises of the following trustees, with roles / areas of responsibility defined below:

Tara Royle – Founding trustee - ethos, values, strategy

Emma Shaw – Chair of Trustees & founding trustee – quality of education, SEND, safeguarding

Steven Tromans – Founding trustee – health and safety, compliance, finance and administration, admissions, complaints

Susie Knox - Community, transition to secondary school, building broader networks within the field of education

Clare Bunston - Head of school - staff well-being, curriculum development

Oliver Thornton - Parent trustee - to provide a voice for the parent community

These areas of responsibility are reviewed as new trustees join and are re-assigned to ensure that areas of responsibility match trustee expertise and to ensure a balanced workload across the team.

Reviewing school performance

The Head of School meets once per term with other trustees to review a particular aspect of the school – either with individual trustees or with small groups of two or three, depending on trustee roles. These termly meetings will include the following, plus others as needed (to be determined by the trustees):

- Safeguarding
- Well-being of the children and staff
- Quality of learning and SEND
- Parent and community engagement
- School administration and finance

The purpose of the meetings is to ensure that the school's leadership is consistent in making decisions to attain and maintain the school ethos, and to determine needed and desirable school improvement actions and initiatives.

Supervising the Head of School

Across the school, all staff have regular supervision meetings. Similarly, the Head has a termly supervision meeting with a founding trustee. This is not a performance review, but will follow the format of a supervision as used in the Early Years – the aim is to identify means of supporting the Head through discussing specific concerns they have about children, staff or any aspect of the school.

General trustee meetings

The whole governing body meets once per term – after the termly school performance reviews (described above) have taken place – to review ongoing strategic initiatives and to determine new initiatives to drive school improvement, and to review any significant findings from the termly school performance reviews, including identifying areas of concern.

The termly meetings seek the views of all trustees but final decision-making rests with the founding trustees.

Reporting to parents

The governing body will report to the parent community a summary of key decisions made at general trustee meetings.

Safeguarding

All trustees are formally trained in safeguarding and have a good understanding of their role in keeping the children of the school safe by holding to account the staff and leadership of the school, and also have a good knowledge of *Keeping Children Safe in Education*. The Governor responsible for safeguarding is trained to Level 3.

Terms of office

Founding trustees are permanent members of the governing body, unless they choose to resign.

Parent and other trustees are appointed for a term of one year and can serve up to three terms consecutively, but must be voted in by the rest of the governing body. After this time

they must step down for a period of three years at least before being eligible to re-apply for the role.

Recruitment of Trustees

The process for non-parent trustees

- Serving trustees review the expertise and backgrounds of current board members and determine what is needed.
- A tailored advert is created, based on that requirement.
- The role is advertised on the Wildwood Nature School website as well as other outlets. Outlets are chosen to ensure equal access to the advert for people from all backgrounds.
- Applicants apply using a standard Wildwood Nature School Trustee application form.
- Current board members review and short-list applications, then interview the short-listed candidates.
- Based on the interviews, the most qualified candidate is offered the role.

The process for parent trustees

The serving trustees advertise the vacancy via email to all parents of children attending the school. Bearing in mind the small school population, the vacancy will likely be open to all parents with no specific background or expertise required. It will be made clear that applications are welcome from any parent and the advert and job description will be designed to show that the role is accessible to all. If more than one parent applies, informal interviews will be held and the most suitable parent will be appointed.

Policy review

Policy created: December 2022

Last reviewed: April 2024

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Next review date: April 2026