



Recruitment Pack  
for our new  
Chair of Council

**GDST**  
GIRLS' DAY SCHOOL TRUST

# Welcome

Dear Candidate,

Thank you for your interest in joining us as our new Chair of Council. This is an exciting time to join the GDST: one of the UK's largest charities and a dynamic and progressive leader in girls' education.

Established in 1872 by four pioneering women who believed that girls should have the same educational opportunities as boys, 150 years later we remain rooted to our original purpose as a family of 25 girls' schools including two academies. Today, we enjoy a reputation for academic excellence, for research-based innovation and for fostering a climate in all our schools that is positive, nurturing and aspirational. As experts in education, we understand the complexities of modern childhood and adolescence, particularly for girls and young women. We focus on equipping the girls in all our schools with the skills and attributes they will need for success in their lives in the 21st century. Our alumnae network of impressive women in all professional and creative fields is testament to the ongoing success of our mission and provides an unparalleled resource for our girls as they build their networks for the future.

From our inception, the intention was for a GDST education to be accessible to able girls, whatever their background, and we have offered scholarships from the outset. The principles of breadth, fearlessness, inclusivity, and a focus on developing the individual to achieve her potential were enshrined from the foundation of the Trust. These principles remain core to our purpose today and currently 20% of our girls receive a bursary or scholarship. This year, to celebrate the 150th anniversary of our founding, we have launched a new fundraising campaign (**GDST150**) to offer a further 150 life-changing bursary places to girls who will be supported to learn at one of our schools.

We also continue to broaden our reach and impact through partnerships and outreach as an important part of our community offer, as well as the exchange of ideas and best practice. We partner with more than 400 state schools and several universities to undertake research and to host high impact events as well as being a founding and active voice in the International Coalition of Girls Schools.

Our Chair, Juliet Humphries, is standing down in July 2023 at the end of her eight-year term as Chair of Council during which she has tirelessly led Council and supported the Executive with vision and wisdom. We are now seeking an exceptional and experienced Chair to join us, one who can lead our committed Council and support our talented Executive team as we continue to meet the constantly evolving opportunities and challenges of providing an outstanding education in a complex contemporary world.

We are open to your professional background, so long as you bring effective governance experience, strategic thinking, strong commercial acumen and experience of leading change. Importantly, you will also share our commitment to the benefits of an all-girls' education for young women today. You will need to be in touch with the realities of life for our students as they move through their school careers and on to higher education and their working lives and be ambitious for what GDST can achieve for our reputation and impact, as well as for opportunities for innovation.

We seek a strong communicator who can represent the Trust internally across our school communities and externally, we are looking for someone who will embrace this role with energy and commitment, working closely with the Chief Executive to recruit new Heads for our schools and being visible to our school governing bodies.

At the GDST we are Undivided. We have an organisational wide commitment to diversity, inclusion, and real change. We are actively committed to increasing the diversity of our Council and welcome applications from all sectors and backgrounds.

If you believe you have the skills and qualities we are looking for, we very much look forward to hearing from you.

**Kathryn Davis and Vicky Tuck, Co Vice Chairs, GDST Council**



# About the GDST

The Girls' Day School Trust is the UK's leading group of independent girls' schools, with 23 schools and two academies throughout England and Wales. The GDST educates 9,000 students and employs 4,000 staff.

The GDST Family has four core values:

- We always put girls first.
- We are fearless, never afraid to think differently.
- We are forward-thinking, embracing change.
- We are a family, collaborative and supportive in pursuit of our mission.

GDST schools are global leaders in girls' education, with decades of experience in part backed by the expertise and resources of the Trust.

We bring teachers the latest ideas, innovations and insights in education. We invest in new facilities, and we encourage collaboration between schools, so that everyone benefits from each other's insights.

We nurture a culture of diversity and inclusion, where every person is valued and supported. We are a family of schools where everyone feels that they belong.

With a team of central experts, we also help schools with finance, fees, governance, HR, legal, marketing and maintenance.

For more information on who we are, please click here and watch **The Spirit of the GDST** or visit our website at **<https://www.gdst.net/>**



# Aims and Ethos

Our vision is to be unrivalled in empowering our girls to discover, nurture and project their unique identities and character. Each of our schools offers an inspiring, enlightened, and intellectually challenging education for its pupils in a lively, vibrant, and warmly supportive environment. Our family ethos across the GDST enables us to know, value and nurture each pupil as an individual. We celebrate diversity and draw strength from the GDST's rich social and cultural mix.

The pursuit of excellence is the GDST's defining feature. It nurtures pupils to attain success across the widest spectrum of activity, extending far beyond the conventional 'academic' horizon.

Pupils, whether they are very able or later developers, learn to navigate the landscape of the human spirit and achieve beyond the realms of expectation.

Our salient features are:

- We are pioneers in and the shapers of girls' education.
- Our curricular specialisation from an early age.
- Our trailblazing approach to supercharge our girls with life skills that enable them to embrace and instigate change.
- Our family, not factory, environment supporting individual families' needs.
- Our buzzy, diverse community, celebrating difference and drawing strength from all that is great about our nationwide network.

Our purpose is to enable every girl to achieve beyond the bound of expectation on a daily basis, across the spectrum of endeavour.



# The GDST Schools

GDST schools in London:



GDST schools and academies outside London:

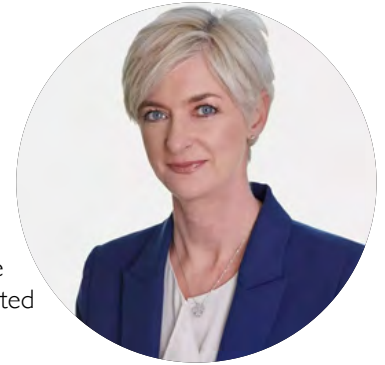




# GDST Chief Executive

## The GDST is led by our Chief Executive, Cheryl Giovannoni.

Cheryl Giovannoni joined the Girls' Day School Trust as CEO in 2016. Born and brought up in South Africa, Cheryl's first career saw her leading some of the world's largest companies in the advertising and creative industries in the WPP Group. She was CEO of boutique design agency Coley Porter Bell, European President of global brand consulting firm Landor Associates, and UK CEO of advertising agency Ogilvy & Mather London.



Cheryl has spent much of her career supporting women in the workplace, helping them thrive and push the boundaries, often in male dominated industries. Over many years, she has dedicated time to mentoring people from all walks of life, in the GDST family and through the WACL mentoring programme.

She is passionate about the power of education to solve the world's most intractable problems, and the role women play in creating an equal and better world for all.

Joining the GDST – an organisation dedicated to educating girls - was a dream role for Cheryl. As Chief Executive of one of the UK's largest charities, Cheryl is responsible for 25 schools and nearly 20,000 students across the UK, leading an talented workforce of 4,000 teachers and support staff, all committed to the mission of helping girls learn without limits.

As the GDST turns 150, Cheryl's ambition is to build on the organisation's powerful legacy as the global leader in girls' education, pioneers in and shapers of the future for the next 150 years and beyond.

A yoga devotee and eternal optimist, Cheryl lives in London and has two daughters; one who has recently entered the teaching profession, and the other who has just graduated and is beginning her own journey into the world of work.

*"Now is an incredibly exciting time to join the GDST, as we celebrate our 150th anniversary and look to the future. As we lay foundations for the next 150 years, we remain as fearless and uncompromising as our founders in shaping the future of girls' education and building an equal society for girls and women everywhere. You will be joining an organisation of passionate individuals, all dedicated to helping girls learn without limits. I look forward to working alongside you, to help steer this unique organisation as we remain determined in our mission to reach as many girls as possible"*

**Cheryl is supported in her role by the GDST Senior Management Team.**

## GDST Council

**The Council** is responsible for determining and approving the guiding strategy and sustainability of the GDST. It meets about seven times a year with the Chief Executive and the Senior Management Team and is responsible for essential considerations including: financial accountability, capital investment, compliance, leadership, innovation and the safety and welfare of pupils. In addition to these meetings of the full Council, there are several Committees which provide for more in-depth analysis and development of policy.

### The Committees

- Estates Committee
- Audit Committee
- Health and Safety Committee
- Investments Committee
- Safeguarding Committee
- Senior Appointments and Remuneration Committee (SARC)

# Role profile

## Overall responsibility

The role of Chair is to provide inspiring leadership and effective governance to the GDST. The Council of Trustees is responsible for setting the strategic aims, objectives, and direction of the GDST, delegating day-to-day management to a senior management team led by the Chief Executive, and ensuring the long-term sustainability of the organisation. The Chair ensures the Council is effective, cohesive, and collaborative and acts as an ambassador and visible champion for the GDST in support of the Chief Executive.

## Leadership

- Provide clear and engaging leadership to the charity and its Council, ensuring that GDST maximises its impact, reach and reputation.
- Ensure that Council has the necessary and diverse range of skills, expertise and life experiences, encouraging all Trustees to contribute and ensuring challenge, scrutiny and diversity of perspectives are welcomed.
- Safeguard the reputation of the GDST, upholding its values by example.
- Ensure that the Trust operates within its charitable objects and provides clear strategic direction for the GDST.
- Ensure that the Council fulfils its duties and responsibilities to ensure the sound financial health of the GDST, with systems in place to ensure financial accountability.
- Develop a highly effective partnership with the Chief Executive, based on mutual trust and respect and demonstrated through regular contact.
- Lead in the annual appraisal of the Chief Executive, support her and delegate the day-to-day management of the organisation to the Chief Executive and Senior Management Team.
- Chair stage 3 parental complaint panels, undertaking preparation with the legal team as required and informing the parents of panel decisions.
- Chair the interview panels for all prospective Heads (including for the Academies).

## Governance

- Ensure that the governance arrangements are working in the most effective way and that the Council regularly reviews major risks and associated opportunities, satisfying itself that systems are in place to manage and mitigate risks.
- Chair meetings of the Council of Trustees effectively and efficiently, bringing impartiality and objectivity into the decision-making process.
- Ensure the composition of the Council of Trustees is regularly refreshed and incorporates the right balance of skills, knowledge and experience needed to govern the GDST effectively, maintaining its commitment to board diversity, renewal, and succession planning.
- Promote the highest standards of governance, ethics and compliance within the Council and the wider organisation.
- Lead the process for appointing new Trustees.
- Appraise Trustees' performance annually.
- Maintain oversight of all committees to ensure that Trustees with the right skills, knowledge and experience are members.
- Interview all prospective Chairs of School Governing Bodies.
- Ensure that all School Governing Bodies (SGB) are engaged with the work of the GDST.
- Review annual appraisals for all Heads, carried out by the Chief Executive.

### Ambassadorial

- Act as an effective ambassador for the GDST, maintaining close and productive relationships, along with the Chief Executive, with key internal and external stakeholders. This is likely to include:
  - First Heads conference of the academic year
  - Hosting annual dinner for Trustees
  - Chairing annual strategy day
  - Hosting annual dinner for SGB Chairs
  - Attending and speaking at GDST conference (biennial)
  - Attending Schools' Governing Bodies' one day conference
  - Attending annual school reviews – 2/3 spring and 2/3 summer term
  - Attending events for Campaign 150
- Champion GDST and the innovative work it does as a family of schools focused on the relevance of girls' schools at a local, national, and international level.
- Work closely with the Chief Executive, her Senior Management Team and trustees to identify and develop new opportunities for influence and impact.





# Person specification

## Part One

### Knowledge and Experience

- Significant experience as a non-executive, ideally as a Chair or Vice Chair.
- A compelling personal track record of strategic leadership at a senior level within organisations that have been through a successful journey of growth and change.
- Demonstrable business and financial acumen gained through leadership experience in organisations of at least the same size as GDST.
- Successful track record of working collaboratively with senior individuals at the highest levels and of bringing people together around a common vision and purpose.
- Excellent understanding of good governance and the discipline of board leadership and management.
- Strong experience of representing organisations externally from public platforms and through effective stakeholder management.
- Sound understanding of UK charity governance.
- Relevant experience of supporting a successful fundraising campaign would be an advantage.

## Part Two

### Skills and Abilities

- High intellectual capacity and credibility, a clear and independent strategic thinker; able to understand complex strategic issues, analyse and resolve difficult problems.
- Highly effective relationship and alliance building abilities.
- An active listener; keen to encourage diverse opinions in the pursuit of optimal decisions.
- Sound judgement with high capacity for self-reflection.
- Politically astute, with the ability to grasp relevant issues and understand relationships between interested parties.
- Outstanding verbal and written communication and interpersonal skills.
- Able to apply or adapt learning from best practice across sectors and organisations.

## Part Three

### Personal Style and Attributes

- Strong commitment to the GDST values and its purpose of providing educational excellence for girls and enabling girls with ability to experience the benefits of the GDST in as many ways as possible through scholarships, bursaries, outreach, and partnership.
- Appropriate leadership style that guides the Council and Senior Management Team to fulfil their respective responsibilities in relation to governance, strategy, and operational delivery.
- A natural networker who secures confidence immediately, has a diplomatic style and is happy to galvanise support for the GDST and the impact it has within education for girls.
- Team player who enjoys working with others, has a sense of humour and will foster a collaborative culture.
- Drive, enthusiasm, and resilience.

# Terms of appointment

## Time commitment

This role requires a time commitment of approximately one to two days a week with some variation according to demands of the academic term and quieter times in between. The Council currently meets six times a year plus once for a strategy day. The Chair currently attends the meetings of the Senior Appointments and Remuneration Committee and the Estates Committee but may choose to attend the meetings of other committees.

## Remuneration

This role is remunerated at £30,000 per annum.

## Length of appointment

The appointment is for an initial three-year term (potentially renewable for two more terms).

## Additional requirements for safer recruitment in education

**All appointments within education are governed by KCSIE.** All candidates who are invited to final interview will be required to complete an application form provided by GDST in addition to your initial CV and letter. This is to ensure that a complete, verified history, for both work and education is provided and to be compliant with KCSIE. You will also be required to complete an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, and this will be arranged for you during the process.

## Equality, Diversity & Inclusion

GDST is fully committed to increasing the diversity of its Council. To this end, we welcome applications from candidates with different skills, life experiences and different backgrounds.



# How to apply

If you would like to discuss the role before making an application please contact Katy Giddens at [Katy.Giddens@starfishsearch.com](mailto:Katy.Giddens@starfishsearch.com) or Hilary Clifford at [Hilary.Clifford@starfishsearch.com](mailto:Hilary.Clifford@starfishsearch.com).

To make an application, please go to <https://starfishsearch.com/jobs/gdst-chair/> and click on the apply now button, with the following prepared:

- your CV or equivalent biographical information
- a covering letter that sets out your motivation for applying for this appointment and why you think your skills and experience make you suitable.

We would be grateful if you would also complete the Equality and Diversity monitoring form on the online application process. This form is for monitoring purposes only and will not be seen by the selection panel and is not treated as part of your application.

**Closing date is Friday 21st October 2022**

If selected, you will be invited to meet with our advising consultants during w/c 31st October and w/c 7th November 2022.

Agreement of the final shortlist will take place on the 14th November 2022 with meetings at GDST Head Office in Victoria, London on 18th November and 28th November 2022.

