

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

RULES AND REGULATIONS
FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF
ACKWORTH SCHOOL

A company limited by guarantee

Revision 2025

Introduction

Ackworth School, a company limited by guarantee, is one of six schools which are governed following the principles of the Religious Society of Friends in Great Britain. These schools were established at various times during the 18th and 19th century and their constitutions vary considerably. In 1777 London Yearly Meeting (now Britain Yearly Meeting or BYM) considered the advantages which would result to the Society from a 'guarded instruction of our youth' and it encouraged the establishment of boarding schools suitable for the education of children whose parents were not in affluence. As a result an estate at Ackworth, then the property of the London Foundling Hospital, was purchased and following the first Ackworth General Meeting held on 29th July 1779 the School was opened on 18th October of the same year. The first Rules of Government were adopted in 1785 and these have been changed over the years to reflect the contemporary needs. The process continues today as Ackworth School became a company limited by guarantee from 13th January 2017.

Over the years authority for government and management has been delegated to Ackworth General Meeting and, in turn, to the School Committee appointed by that meeting. The arrangements encapsulated in the following pages of this document now reflects the changes in status after Ackworth School became incorporated and these are fully detailed in the Articles of Association.

Whilst the school was originally established for the education of children of Friends, other children have been admitted to Ackworth for many years, as with the other Friends Schools. The School continues to offer an education based on the Christian principles and practices of the Religious Society of Friends thereby offering a sound and broadly based education suitable to prepare children for the challenges of the adult world.

These Rules flow from the Articles of Association (drafted in 2017) and cover the detail considered necessary for the effective operation of the charity and company. They are binding on all Directors, Members, the School Committee and the Ackworth General Meeting.

DEFINITIONS

- (a) The 'Religious Society of Friends' refers to all the Quaker meetings for worship in Britain and their work together and separately;
- (b) 'Britain Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain' is the church and charity which encompasses Quaker activity in England, Scotland and Wales.
- (c) 'Area Meetings' are the main meetings for church affairs in Britain Yearly Meeting and are the bodies where membership is held. They may each be a separate charitable entity;
- (d) 'Quaker' refers to a member or attender in good standing attached to an Area Meeting or other Quaker body;
- (e) 'The School' refers to Ackworth School, the company limited by guarantee and charity;
- (f) 'The School Committee' is the properly constituted body responsible for the running of the School. School Committee members are Governors of the School and members of the Company and Trustees of the Charity.

RULES FOR GOVERNMENT

1. GENERAL MEETING: OBJECTS & FUNCTIONS

(i) OBJECTS

The objects of Ackworth General Meeting shall be:

- (a) To have oversight of the Christian principles and practices of the Religious Society of Friends in the overall conduct of the School;
- (b) To support the spiritual life of the School;
- (c) To provide a forum for the demonstration of the School's Quaker ethos and outreach;
- (d) To provide advice to the School Committee on relevant matters brought before it.

(ii) FUNCTIONS

The functions of the General Meeting shall be:

- (a) To receive and consider annual reports from the Head and the School Committee;
- (b) To appoint the School Committee;
- (c) To appoint the clerk and assistant clerk of the General Meeting;
- (d) To appoint the Joint Nominations Committee;
- (e) To amend the Rules for Government as relevant to the objects of General Meeting, in consultation with the School Committee;
- (f) To help to provide Quaker oversight to the operation of the School;
- (g) To promote links between the School and the wider Religious Society of Friends.

2. GENERAL MEETING: CONSTITUTION

Quakers are entitled to attend Ackworth General Meeting. In order to provide an adequate attendance each Area Meeting shall be asked to appoint Quakers to attend the General Meeting; and to ensure that there shall be a reasonable degree of continuity to appoint for a triennial period.

The following, whether they are Quakers or not, shall also be welcome to attend General Meeting on prior notification to the clerk of General Meeting:

- (a) members of the School Committee;
- (b) members of the school staff;
- (c) former Ackworth scholars;
- (d) Parents of current Ackworth scholars;
- (e) Partners of all the above.

3. GENERAL MEETINGS: ORDINARY MEETINGS

- (a) Ackworth General Meeting shall meet at least once in every year, either at Ackworth school or by electronic means, on a date set apart for the purpose, and to be fixed by the School Committee. Due notice of each Meeting shall be given by advertisement through relevant channels and by notification to the Clerks of the Area Meetings.
- (b) There shall be a General Meeting Arrangements Committee which shall comprise: the clerk and assistant clerk of General Meeting, the clerk of School Committee (or an alternate), the Head and the Director of Finance and Operations. This committee shall be convened by the General Meeting clerk and serviced by the Director of Finance and Operations or Head's Office.

4. GENERAL MEETING: SPECIAL MEETINGS

The School Committee, in consultation with the clerk of General Meeting, may call a Special General Meeting when necessary with such notice as is directed. In addition, any Area Meeting may apply by minute to the clerk of General Meeting for the holding of a Special General Meeting: minutes from a minimum of two Area Meetings are required before a Special General Meeting, following consultation with the School Committee, may be called. A Special General Meeting shall be clerked by the current clerk of the General Meeting unless the Special General Meeting directs otherwise.

5. SCHOOL COMMITTEE: FUNCTIONS

The School Committee retains strategic oversight of the educational policy, administration and management of the School while delegating the day-to-day responsibility to the leadership team led by the Head. The School Committee holds the Head and leadership team to account in their running of the School.

6. SCHOOL COMMITTEE: CONSTITUTION

The School Committee shall be appointed by the General Meeting on the recommendation of the Joint Nominations Committee following a skills and experience audit to identify the needs of the Committee. The committee shall consist of a minimum of 9 and a maximum of 20 members, all with an understanding of and sympathy with Quaker beliefs, ethos and values, comprising:

- (a) Up to seven people who are not old scholars, at least three of whom are Quakers;
- (b) The Treasurer, recommended by the School Committee and not necessarily a Quaker;
- (c) Up to five former Scholars of the School, not necessarily Quakers;
- (d) Up to two parents of former or current Scholars, recommended by the parents, staff or leadership of the school and recommended to the joint nominations committee in the usual way;
- (e) The Head, the Director of Finance and Operations, the Head of Coram House;
- (f) Up to one member of staff nominated by the staff body and recommended to the joint nominations committee in the usual way.
- (g) The School Committee may co-opt additional members for their expertise for limited time periods in response to a specific focus, General Meeting to be informed of their names each together with the reason for the co-option. There should be no more than two co-options at any one time, and a co-option should be for no longer than is reasonably necessary for the specific focus.

Other members of staff may be invited to attend the School Committee as required by the Head, and subject to the Clerk's approval.

The School Committee shall appoint one of its members as its Clerk. The School Committee shall also appoint one of its members as its Assistant Clerk. In the Clerk's absence, unless the Committee arrange otherwise, the Assistant Clerk shall act in her or his place.

7. SCHOOL COMMITTEE: PERIOD OF SERVICE

- a) **All Members.** All members appointed in accordance with the categories in 6 above, with the exception of co-options, shall be appointed for a four-year period and shall then be eligible for immediate reappointment for a further period of four years. Thereafter they shall not normally be eligible for reappointment for a further period of four years until after an intervening period of one year has elapsed.

- b) **Clerk.** The member appointed by the School Committee as Clerk of the School Committee can serve for a four-year period and shall be eligible for immediate re-appointment for a further period of four years, to serve for a maximum period of eight years as the Clerk, in addition to any previous service on the School Committee.
- c) **Treasurer.** The Treasurer shall be eligible for immediate re-appointment at the end of the first four-year period, to serve for a maximum period of eight years, in addition to any previous service on the School Committee.

It is possible that a member may be eligible to serve in more than one capacity. In such cases the member may serve in different capacities but not concurrently and must not exceed the terms of service described above. A period of co-option immediately prior to appointment is not to be counted against the period of service of eight years.

8. SCHOOL COMMITTEE: VACANCIES

If any member of the School Committee wishes to lay down their service, they shall do so by letter addressed to the Clerk of the School Committee. The resignation of appointees is detailed in the Articles of Association.

9. SCHOOL COMMITTEE: CO-OPTIONS

When vacancies occur as in 8 above, the School Committee may co-opt a member to serve until the next 31 August, reporting this co-option to the next General Meeting.

When a member of the School Committee comes to the end of their eight years of service, as specified in 7 above, the Committee may, if their service is still required, ask General Meeting for permission to co-opt them for a further year at a time. Such co-options may not extend for more than two calendar years.

10. SCHOOL COMMITTEE: MEETINGS

The School Committee shall meet at least three times a year on such dates as it may arrange. It shall be the responsibility of the Clerk of the School Committee to ensure that each meeting is quorate (a quorum is defined in the Articles of Association).

11. JOINT NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE: CONSTITUTION

General Meeting in 2025 and every three years thereafter shall appoint members to a Joint Nominations Committee to serve for the ensuing three years. The General Meeting Nominations Committee shall comprise:

- (a) Up to four Quakers appointed by General Meeting on the recommendations of a Committee appointed by the preceding General Meeting, some of whom should have served for part of the immediately previous three-year period.
- (b) Two members of the School Committee appointed by General Meeting on the nomination of the School Committee, one of whom should have served for part of the immediately previous three-year period.

- (c) Two former Scholars appointed by General Meeting on the nomination of the Old Scholars Association, one of whom should have served for part of the immediately previous three-year period.
- (d) A Clerk to the Nominations Committee appointed by General Meeting on the recommendation of the retiring Nominations Committee.

Service on the Nominations Committee shall be for a maximum continuous period of six years, unless a Quaker member is then nominated as Clerk in which case the term of service may extend to nine continuous years.

12. JOINT NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE: FUNCTIONS

Following a skills and experience audit to identify the needs of the Committee, and taking into account the factors that the Nominations Committee reasonably believe will most benefit the School Committee in performing its obligation, the Nominations Committee shall bring to each General Meeting (considering, but not obliged to refer, those nominated under 6(d) and (f):

- (a) The names of sufficient persons in each of the categories 6(a) to (d) and (f) to serve on the School Committee for the four-year period commencing 1st September of that year.
- (b) The name of a clerk and assistant clerk for General Meeting in the following year.

It shall also bring to General Meeting 2025 and every three years thereafter, the name of a Friend to serve as Clerk to the Nominations Committee for the ensuing three years.

13. JOINT NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE: Processes

On bringing names of persons to serve on School Committee it is particularly important that regulatory processes are observed that will ensure that the presence of new persons on the school campus do not conflict with the obligations of the school to provide a safe environment for all who have a legitimate reason to be on the premises.

A policy, see Appendix A, has been developed to provide a guide to 'Safer Recruitment'.

Note: no person will be allowed on the school premises for a meeting of the School Committee without the process being completed. For vacancies that fall between General Meetings it is the responsibility of the school to ensure that the processes (b) to (c) are completed in the correct manner.

14. TRUSTEES

All members of the School Committee are both School Governors and charity trustees. As charity trustees, members of the School Committee have legal duties and responsibilities to ensure the school operates exclusively for its charitable purpose and complies with regulatory expectations. They also have a legal duty to protect the financial health and sustainability of the school. While operational financial management is handled by the Director of Finance and Operations, members of School Committee provide strategic oversight to ensure sound financial governance and compliance with charity and company law.

15. ALTERATIONS TO RULES FOR GOVERNMENT

Alterations to the Rules may be required from time to time in order to comply with statutory obligations or to ensure that best practice is being maintained in the effective running of the School. Such alterations, where they relate to the objects of General Meeting, will be made in consultation

between the School Committee and the Clerk and assistant Clerk of General Meeting who may consult with Area Meetings. Such changes will be proposed to the ensuing General Meeting for agreement.

16. REGULATIONS FOR MANAGEMENT

The School Committee shall formulate regulations for the conduct of its business. Such regulations and any proposed amendments thereto shall be submitted to the ensuing General Meeting for its information.

17. MEMBERSHIP OF TRUST FUNDS

Membership of the various Trust Funds is as follows:

(a) Ackworth School 1950 Trust

Trustees are all members of the School Committee but excluding members of staff.

(b) Wennington School Director of Finance and Operations Fund

Trustees are the members of the School Committee

(c) Ackworth and Freshfield Educational Foundation

The trustees are five persons appointed by the School Committee on the recommendation of their Nominations Committee, and in exceptional circumstances a further two members may be co-opted. Trustees need not be members of the School Committee. Persons who hold any interest in the property of the Foundation, other than as a Trustee, or receive any remuneration, or who wish to supply goods or services at the cost of the Foundation may not be Trustees.

REGULATIONS FOR MANAGEMENT

a. Board of Directors

As a charitable company limited by guarantee Ackworth School is subject to both charity law and company law. The School Committee appoints some members to serve as Directors these are:

As Executive Directors: Head and Director of Finance and Operations.

As Non-Executive Directors: Clerk and Assistant Clerk to the School Committee together with the Clerks of the sub-Committees

Directors have specific responsibilities, but the obligation under the Articles of Ackworth School Limited is for directors to act on behalf of the School Committee in the general management of the School and in so doing will work with and be steered by the School Committee. Directors may meet separately on occasion to ensure regulatory obligations are met as well as helping to support the company, for example to plan the AGM, organise or plan committee meetings, to discuss and make recommendations to the full School Committee. The directors will report any proceedings to each succeeding meeting of the School Committee, who can provide counsel, approval and direction to the Directors.

b. SUB-COMMITTEES

The School Committee may appoint Sub-Committees as may be necessary to deal with specific matters, being responsible to the School Committee with powers to act and report as the School Committee may decide. The Clerk of the School Committee and the Treasurer shall be ex officio member(s) of all Sub-Committees.

c. REPORTS AND ACCOUNTS

An Annual Report together with an Income and Expenditure Account and a Balance Sheet of the finances of the School shall be prepared annually by the School Committee. The Accounts and Balance Sheet shall be audited and attested by the Auditor appointed for that purpose by the Annual General Meeting of the Company and these together with the Annual Report shall be submitted to the succeeding Annual General Meeting of the Company.

d. FEES

The School Committee shall determine the level of school fees.

e. BURSARIES

A Bursary Fund shall be available for bursaries for children of Quakers, to be granted by the School Committee and the School Committee shall from time to time transfer the surplus or deficit of the Fund to the Income and Expenditure Account.

f. LEGACIES etc

Donations, gifts, legacies and any other capital money belonging to the School may be invested in a manner approved by the School Committee who have the same powers of investment as a sole beneficial owner. Any such monies may be used in any way that the School Committee may sanction, including the purchase of additional property for the benefit of the school and structural improvements.

g. DEEDS etc

All deeds, documents and other papers belonging to the School shall be under the care of the Director of Finance and Operations or other person authorised by the School Committee.

h. SAFER RECRUITMENT

The Joint Nominations Committee shall, in the course of its deliberations, liaise with the Director of Finance and Operations to see that all statutory and regulatory requirements have been fully met before appointment of any person as a member of School Committee to General Meeting can take place. If this is not possible, in extraordinary cases, General Meeting shall be informed and the appointment deferred until all requirements have been met. See appendix B, page 11.

i. HEAD, DEPUTY HEADS AND HEAD OF CORAM HOUSE

The School Committee shall appoint a Head and a Head of Coram House and shall report each such appointment to the next General Meeting. The Head shall be fully involved in the appointment process for the posts of Deputy Head and Head of Coram House and shall be

expected to make recommendations to the Committee. In the Head's absence, unless the Committee arrange otherwise, the Deputy Heads shall act in her or his place.

j. DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND OPERATIONS

The School Committee shall appoint a Director of Finance and Operation (Bursar role) for the School, who shall be responsible, through the Head, to the School Committee for such matters relating to finance and administration, as the Committee shall from time to time determine. The Head shall be fully involved in the appointment process for the post of Director of Finance and Operations and shall be expected to make recommendations to the Committee.

k. TEACHERS

Teaching Staff shall be appointed by the Head within staffing ratios and budgets set by the School Committee, and on salary scales approved by the School Committee. The Head shall report all appointments to the next meeting of the School Committee, using a contract of service that will have previously been approved by committee.

l. OTHER STAFF

Non-teaching staff shall be appointed by the Director of Finance and Operations within budgets set by the School Committee and on salary scales approved by the School Committee using a contract of service that will have previously been approved by committee. The Clerks of the Estate and Domestic Committee or the the Finance Committee will assist the Director of Finance and Operations in the appointment of senior members of the non-teaching staff, with full opportunity being given to the Head to consider candidates. The Director of Finance and Operations shall report all appointments to the next meeting of the School Committee.

Appendix A

Rules and Regulations Process for the recruitment of members of the School Committee

Ackworth School has a legal responsibility to provide and appropriately safeguarded environment for all who have a legitimate reason to be on the campus or in contact with any of the people, whether young or old, who attend the school.

The School Committee has the ultimate responsibility to ensure that a safeguarded environment exists and the management has responsibility to ensure that everyone is safe from harm, in whatever form, on a daily basis.

It is essential, therefore, to ensure that all new members of the School Committee are properly vetted to the same standards as members of staff and that statutory procedures are carried out to verify the suitability of candidates to be members of the School Committee.

(a) Joint Nominations Committee

The Joint Nominations Committee receives names for consideration as members of the School Committee. Candidates will be identified through the nominations process as to their name, their affiliation and their skills relative to the needs of the School Committee.

In line with safer recruitment processes, after names have been considered by this committee candidates will be required to provide the following documents:

- A CV of employment history, to identify skills and to reveal any gaps in that career, and demonstrating suitability to serve
- A completed volunteer application form outlining why the nominated person wishes to serve;
- The names of two referees.

At this stage, references will be checked and a standard internet search carried out. Prospective members will be invited to an informal interview with the Clerk to the School Committee and the Head.

If the initial checks are acceptable names can be brought to General Meeting.

(b) General Meeting

General Meeting will receive, and appoint where appropriate, the names of potential members of the School Committee.

(c) School HR Department

The Joint Nominations Committee will pass the names and details of approved candidates to the HR Department for checking against photo ID, as part of the DBS check.

NOTE: this process should be for all candidates, even if there is already an existing DBS.

The School, via the Director of Finance and Operations, will advise the Joint Nominations Committee and the candidates when the checking process is complete.

In performing each stage of the process all those involved must remain aware that any person appointed shall not take up that appointment until all statutory and regulatory requirements have been fully met. This includes an enhanced DBS check and internet search.

Appendix B

Flow chart of the Nominations Process.



