



## Wargrave House

### 'The Autism Specialists'



## Becoming a Trustee at Wargrave House

"On a Journey Together,  
Learning about Life"

'Wargrave House  
is an exceptional  
school'

OFSTED 2014

"The quality and  
consistency of care  
that residential  
pupils receive is  
outstanding"

OFSTED Residential  
Inspection 2017

'Students love  
coming to school'

OFSTED 2014

"Wargrave House is a service  
that enables some very  
vulnerable young people to  
develop a sense of  
belonging, ownership and  
community that enhances  
their wellbeing and self-  
esteem which results in very  
positive outcomes for  
students and their families."

NAS Accreditation 2018



## What are the personal benefits to be gained from being a Trustee?

The main benefit you can gain from being a trustee is a sense of satisfaction through involvement in one of the most important volunteering roles in education. The collective decisions you make, as a member of the Board of Trustees, will help shape the future of children and young adults here at Wargrave House.

Other benefits will include:

- ♦ The opportunity to develop new skills and to strengthen existing ones
- ♦ The opportunity to practise work talents. As part of a team, being a trustee will give you the opportunity to work with a wide range of people from a variety of social, cultural and religious backgrounds
- ♦ The opportunity to gain an understanding of the decision making process of a charity and an awareness of the education system as a whole
- ♦ The opportunity to make a real difference and the chance to contribute to the good of the community, leading to personal satisfaction and a sense of achievement
- ♦ The opportunity to undertake training.

## Who are we?

Wargrave House Limited is a registered charity (No.1104715) which operates as a residential special school and independent specialist college supporting children and young adults diagnosed with autistic spectrum disorder. Located in Newton-le-Willows, Merseyside, we are approved by the Department of Education and provide a valuable specialist service to over 14 local authorities for some of the most vulnerable young people in our region.

Our educational focus centres on the holistic needs of the child or young adult, integrating therapeutic approaches to develop skills for learning, communicating and being independent, alongside working to support the real issues families of children with autism face. Our dedicated Board of Trustees delegate the day to day running of the school and college to a team of senior managers and governor volunteers who act as 'critical friends'.

## What are the responsibilities of a Trustee?

The Board of Trustees is legally accountable for the activities of Wargrave House Ltd including its commercial activities and LEAP (Lakeside Early Adulthood Provision) Specialist College.

The role of the Board of Trustees has five main parts:

- ♦ To **lead** the Company and its services and ensure it has a clear purpose, and an overall framework of policies and standards.
- ♦ To **develop overall strategies** to achieve the aims and to ensure that there is a clear system to delegate the implementation of the strategies to the staff team.
- ♦ To **monitor the progress** of each service (receiving reports from the Governing Body) and ensure that it provides the highest quality of education and care which is balanced with the **effective, efficient and economic use of company resources** and assets.
- ♦ To ensure **compliance with the law and accountability** to the company's stakeholders including the local community.
- ♦ To ensure that **the Board itself performs effectively**, contains people with the skills and experience it needs and makes plans to ensure the recruitment, induction and development of new trustees.

## How much work does being a Trustee involve?

The amount of time spent on trustee business varies tremendously. The minimum requirements are that trustees have time to:

- ♦ Attend the Board meetings (currently 10 times per year, 2-3 hours per meeting)
- ♦ Read papers sent out in advance and prepare for the meetings;
- ♦ Liaise with other Board members between meetings;
- ♦ Attend the AGM;
- ♦ Maintain a good understanding of what the company does, eg through visits, or other occasional activities;
- ♦ Take shared responsibility for making unannounced visits to the residences, which must take place 6 times per year, and report on findings in accordance with National Minimum Standards of Care.

Most trustees are able to commit more time and get involved in other activities too, such as:

- ♦ Working on Governing Body committees or with working groups;
- ♦ Taking part in particular projects such as a fundraising appeal.

## How do we ensure the Board is effective?

Members of the Board of Trustees are ambassadors for the company and its services. You will need to be confident enough of the work of the company and college to promote it to the people whom you know and meet in your community. One of the hallmarks of a well run charity is that it conducts its affairs in a way that enhances its reputation and that of the charity sector in general.

A key role of the board is to ensure that it is effective in itself. To support the day-to-day operation of the services, the board has delegated responsibility to the governing body.

## How big a commitment is this?

The normal term for serving as a trustee is three years. If you want to be an effective trustee and provide stability and continuity you will ideally be able to commit to this period of time. As a volunteer you can choose to leave at any time.

## Working in Partnership

Trusteeship is primarily about helping the company to provide quality education and care to children and young adults with autistic spectrum disorders and associated learning difficulties. The role of trustees is at times complex and can be arduous, but the Board is not expected to carry out its work alone. Trustees are supported in their governance role by the skill and experience of a variety of professionals including solicitors, accountants/auditors and the governing body.

The Board works in close contact with the Chief Executive Officer who attends Board meetings and advises on operational and strategic progress and development. The staff are responsible for implementing the policies agreed by the Board. Their knowledge of education, care and behaviour, as well as managerial and other professional input are critical to the effective development of policies by the Board. This partnership is vitally important to the health and effectiveness of the company and its services.

## I am interested in finding out more – who should I contact?

We would like to invite you to support us in our journey to make a real difference to the lives of this very special group of people and enjoy the rewards of working with us. So if you are interested in becoming a trustee and would like to find out more, please contact Tracy Smith, Clerk to the Board of Trustees, who will be pleased to arrange for you to visit Wargrave House and meet with senior staff to see for yourself the vital work that we do.

Tracy can be contacted on:

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## WE LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING FROM YOU!

