Balcarras Local Governing Body
Register of Governors 2026-27

All governors are appointed or elected for a 4-year term of office.

Dominic Burke – Headteacher

Dom became a governor of Balcarras when he took up the headship in September 2016 although he had attended governor meetings since joining the senior management team in 2011.

He has over twenty years' experience of teaching, starting his career in 2002 at Prince Henry's High School in Evesham teaching history, politics and performing a number of other roles including Assistant Head of Year, training manager and a staff governor.

In 2007 Dom joined Balcarras as Head of History. In 2009 he took on responsibility for new staff induction and for several years oversaw the entry of some incredibly talented teachers into the profession. He joined the senior management team in 2011 taking on responsibility for teaching and learning and co-ordinating our Teaching School offer.

In 2014 Dom was appointed as Deputy Head with responsibility for curriculum and timetable. He designed three school timetables (2014, 15, 16) and found it surprisingly enjoyable. When Chris Healy announced his retirement in January 2016 Dom applied for the headship and was very proud to be appointed in February that year.

Member of the Admissions and Curriculum & Standards committees.

Olivia Dickinson – Parent Governor

Olivia has a child in Year 10 at Balcarras and joins with over 15 years of experience in specialist education. Olivia is passionate about accessible and inclusive education for all, with key strengths in SEND, curriculum development, quality assurance, safeguarding, Ofsted and Careers Education.

Member of the Curriculum & Standards committee.
Governor Representative for Pupil Premium.

Term of office: 25/10/2024 ~ 24/10/2028

Chris Hansen – Appointed Governor

Following a 4-year term as a parent governor which began in 2019, Chris has now been appointed to the board by governors. Chris has a daughter who attends Balcarras.

Having initially trained as a PE teacher, Chris has been in school leadership for 19 years and currently works as headteacher of a large split-site primary school in Worcestershire. He is committed to supporting all aspects of life at Balcarras, from the enrichment of a broad and varied curriculum to maintaining strong pupil outcomes and readiness for life beyond school. Through his capacity as a school governor, Chris also Chairs the Strategic Board for the Balcarras Teaching School hub.

Member of the Curriculum & Standards committee.
Governor Representative for the Teaching School Hub.

Term of office: 22/05/2023 ~ 21/05/2027
Previous term of office: 22/05/2019 ~ 21/05/2023 as a Parent Governor.

Dylan Hawkes – Parent Governor

I'm a Director of Consulting at CGI, where I lead teams, manage large projects, and provide strategic advice to clients. These skills will help me take a practical and collaborative approach as part of the governing body at Balcarras.

I have one daughter at Balcarras and another at Glenfall Primary and am passionate about supporting their education and helping the school thrive. I've worked with regional schools to encourage young people to explore careers in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) and also mentor young professionals, which has given me a strong understanding of how to inspire students and help them achieve their potential.

I'm proud to represent parents and contribute to Balcarras' continued success.

Member of the Curriculum & Standards committee.

Term of office: 25/10/2024 ~ 24/10/2028

Pak Wai Hung – Appointed Governor

Pak Wai is a former solicitor. He was a solicitor in London for 10 years. He specialised in the areas of Human Rights, Asylum and Immigration Law. His final position before leaving the law was as the Supervisor of the Appeals Team for a central London practice. His caseload included appeal cases to the Court of Appeal and the High Court. In his time as a lawyer, he also practiced family and children's law, crime, employment and benefits. Pak Wai has two daughters at Balcarras. He enjoys road cycling, running and dog walking.

Pak Wai left London in 2005 and set up a small family restaurant in Cheltenham with his wife, a former RE teacher and Head of Department. He has a completely hands on approach to the business. He has sole responsibility for the budget, purchasing, pay roll and customer service. Pak Wai is the **Data Protection Officer**.

Member of the Community committee.
Governor Representative for the Catering committee and for Well-being as well as Allergies.

Term of office: 02/03/2026 ~ 01/03/2030
Previous term of office: 21/02/2018 ~ 20/02/2022 as an appointed Governor.
01/03/2022 ~ 01/03/2026 as an elected Governor.

Amy Lilley-Stewart – Appointed Governor

Amy is currently the Assistant Director for Professional Learning and Development at High Performance Learning. Amy has worked in the education sector both nationally and internationally in a variety of educational contexts. Amy started her career as a teacher of art, progressing quickly to Head of Art in large secondary school in the North East of England. Amy has a wealth of experience working in Initial Teacher Training, having led the Art and Design PGCE at Northumbria University for a year, moving into a Programme Leader role for the North East Partnership and GTP programme at Northumbria University. During her time in Australia, Amy was the Professional Learning and Conference Manager for the Design and Technology Teachers Association working across the state of Victoria. Amy spent a year in the Netherlands as a consultant for Breda University of Applied Sciences. On her return to the UK, Amy worked in education settings in Gloucestershire ranging from Primary, Secondary, Pupil Referral Units and FE colleges. This inspired Amy to seek opportunities in raising aspirations in young people and was employed as the Marketing and Outreach Manager at the University of Gloucestershire. Most recently, Amy worked at the University of Gloucestershire leading the Secondary Initial Teacher Training routes and working closely with colleagues in schools on delivering high quality mentoring and trainee teacher outcomes. Amy is currently completing her PhD in Creative Arts Practice and Wellbeing.

Amy lives locally and one of her children attends a local primary school and one attends Balcarras.

Chair of the Curriculum & Standards committee.

Term of office: 20/01/2021 ~ 19/01/2025

Paul Meathrel –Appointed Governor

Paul was elected as a parent governor in Feb 2022 and has a son and daughter at Balcarras. He is passionate about ensuring the best possible provision and opportunities for all children. At the end of his term of office as a parent governor, he was elected for a further term of office as an appointed governor.

He currently leads Mosaic Church Cheltenham having previously led a group of churches and spent more than a decade as General Manager of a successful Software business. The charity he currently works for also runs an independent school. Paul has been a trustee of multiple charities and held other board positions in the past, mainly in the education sector.

Vice-Chair of the Operations & Community committee.
Governor Representative for The Health & Safety committee.

Term of office: 22/02/2026 ~ 21/02/2030

Peter Mitchener – Appointed Governor

Peter is an appointed governor and was elected in June 2020. He is an Actuary with 33 years experience in the Insurance Industry where he worked for Eagle Star, Zurich, Bupa, Friends Life and Aviva. Over this time, he has performed a wide variety of commercial, governance, analytical, marketing and leadership roles. Peter has been an appointed governor of Balcarras previously (2006-2012) and he chaired the finance committee for a number of years, was a member of the curriculum committee and was heavily involved in the admissions process and appeals to the school. Peter is delighted to have a second opportunity to be a governor at Balcarras.

Peter has lived in Cheltenham since 1991. He has a partner, a son called Tom and a cat called Archimedes. He plays competitive tennis at East Glos club, regularly competes in running events, is a qualified "Leader in Running Fitness" for the Almost Athletes running club and is a member of the Cheltenham parkrun core team which organises the event each week.

Chair of the Local Governing Body – Balcarras.
Member of the Operations & Community committee.
Member of the Curriculum & Standards committee.

Term of office: 30/06/2024 ~ 29/06/2028
Previous term of office: 30/06/2020 ~ 29/06/2024 as an appointed Governor.

Louise Forey – Parent Governor

Louise Forey was elected as a parent governor in May 2026. Louise has a son in Year 7 at Balcarras, and a younger son who will join the school in 2027.

She has over 20 years of community engagement and development experience, with a focus on sustainability and social value. She has worked across the charitable, social housing and public sector realms and is experienced in collaborative partnership working. Currently Louise manages the Cheltenham Education Partnership, this charity is an equal partnership of all the state and independent secondary schools in Cheltenham. The charity was founded to expand horizons and enrich opportunities for young people. Louise has been a school governor twice before, in both a London and a Cheltenham based primary school.

Louise has lived in Cheltenham for 15 years and enjoys spending time on the local hills, in her garden, on her bike, on a rock face or simply curled up enjoying a good book.

Member of the Operations & Community committee.

Term of office: 22/05/2026 ~ 21/05/2030

Heather Eggelton – Parent Governor

Heather has 2 children at Balcarras (a son in Y11 and a daughter in Y8) and is a Fundraising Consultant. She is committed to working collaboratively with the school to help ensure the very best outcomes for all our children and the local community as a whole. She has 20+ years experience of working in and alongside schools, colleges and universities both in the UK and US, particularly in fundraising, which has given her a strong understanding of the opportunities and challenges facing the education sector. As a former governor at Charlton Kings Infant School, she has previous experience of governance.

Member of the Curriculum & Standards committee.
Term of office: 22/05/2026 ~ 21/05/2030

Helen Robinson – Parent Governor

Helen has one daughter at Balcarras and another at Holy Apostles' Primary School and is passionate about supporting young people's education and helping schools thrive. She has been actively involved in the Holy Apostles' school community for a number of years, including serving as Chair of the PTA for over six years. Working in higher education, she is passionate about helping young people find the right educational environment to enable them to flourish and achieve their potential. She is committed to supporting Balcarras in continuing to provide an ambitious, inclusive and supportive environment for all students.

Member of the Operations & Community committee.

Term of office: 22/05/2026 ~ 21/05/2030

Faye Potter – Parent Governor

Faye was elected as parent governor in Oct 2024 and currently has a daughter in Year 10 with another daughter in Year 8.

Faye has a background in commercial leadership, coaching and business psychology bringing together experiences in leadership, strategic development and delivery, along with people and capability development. Faye currently works for Spirax Sarco in a Learning & Development team within HR, focused on progressing the capabilities of sales managers working around the world. This is complemented by freelance consultancy work that focuses on helping teams and individuals feel better, cope better and perform better through managing stress, avoiding overwhelm and building resilience.

Faye is passionate about the psychology of leveraging performance through people and enabling individuals to reach their full potential.

Member of the Curriculum & Standards committee.

Term of office: 25/10/2024 ~ 24/10/2028

Joanna Reid – Parent Governor

Joanna was appointed governor in September 2023. She has one daughter who is studying at university after 7 enjoyable years at Balcarras, and a second daughter who after having gone through Balcarras is on a gap year before university.

Joanna has worked at four Gloucestershire secondary schools over the years and is currently a German teacher and Head of Year locally. She has a keen interest in safeguarding, diversity and in pastoral work, in particular in supporting children who may be struggling with their mental health.

Over the years, she has co-authored the book, Winning the H Factor, the Secrets of Happy Schools, provided copy for various educational magazines and websites, and delivered Inset training to local schools on the subject of Mindset.

Member of the Operations & Community committee.
Governor Representative for Safeguarding and SEND.

Term of office: 01/09/2023~ 31/08/2027

Clare Shields – Support Staff Governor

Clare was appointed as a support staff governor in 2021 and has worked at Balcarras School in the Individual Learning Department for over 11 years before moving to the Sixth Form team to work as a Study Supervisor and Tutor.

Member of the Operations & Community committee.

Term of office: 12/01/2026 ~ 11/01/2030
Previous term of office: 11/01/2022 ~ 11/01/2026 as a Support Staff Governor.

Jen Swanepoel – Teaching Staff Governor

Jen Swanepoel began her career as a Design and Technology teacher at Bradley Stoke Community School in Bristol, where she developed a passion for inspiring students through creativity and problem-solving. After several years, she moved to Balcarras School, taking on the role of Head of Design and Technology. In this position, Jen leads the department with a focus on innovation, practical learning, and equipping young people with skills for the future. A strong advocate for diversity in STEM, Jen is especially passionate about encouraging girls to explore design and technology, helping them to see the exciting opportunities available in creative and technical careers.

Member of the Curriculum & Standards committee.

Term of office: 7/5/2025 ~ 6/5/2029

Gavin Thomas OBE – Appointed Governor

Gavin was appointed as a parent governor in November 2019 and was elected as an appointed governor in 2023. He has a daughter still at Balcarras and is delighted to be part of the Balcarras team and is committed to supporting the staff and pupils to continue to deliver both a first-class education who are well prepared for life beyond school life.

Gavin works as a consultant, having previously been a senior police officer both in Gloucestershire and in a national role. He has previous experience as a school governor, and in wider governance roles on national bodies, and has experience in child protection and safeguarding, both locally and nationally. He enjoys sport, long distance cycling, walking and his garden, which is never finished!

He was appointed OBE in the Queen's Birthday honours 2019 for services to policing.

Vice-Chair of the Local Governing Body – Balcarras.
Chair of the Community committee.

Term of office: 12/09/2023 ~ 11/09/2027
Previous term of office: 26/11/2019 ~ 25/11/2023 as an appointed Governor.