

About School Governors

Governors are people like you!

School governors are people with a common belief that children should receive the best possible standard of education. School governing bodies reflect the diversity of the local community.

An effective governing body is a source of enormous strength to a school, and schools where governing bodies suffer from high numbers of vacancies may already be proportionately disadvantaged. They will find the future significantly more challenging as they seek to deal with major issues such as expansion of knowledge and resource, the pace and type of change, the implications of faith, race and language, and the influence of new technology.

School governors do not need to be parents, know about education or be particular types of people. It is critical that volunteers represent all age groups and the diversity of the communities in which the schools are situated.

If you want to help children achieve the best possible education, please volunteer to be a school governor. If you have any of the following skills these will also add value:

- Decision Making
- Marketing
- Project Management
- Languages
- Problem Solving
- Health & Safety
- Communications
- Art & Design
- Strategic Planning
- Finance
- HR
- Science & Technology
- Team Working
- IT
- Legal Knowledge
- Engineering

Personal Benefits from Being a School Governor

- A sense of satisfaction through involvement in the most important volunteering role in education and knowing children will benefit from your efforts
- The opportunity to develop new skills and to strengthen existing ones
- 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, and experience in, key areas such as finance, personnel, target setting and strategic planning
- An awareness of the education system as a whole
- The opportunity to make a real difference and to contribute to the good of the community

What Makes a Good Governor

- The desire to help children get the best possible education
- The time to get involved
- The willingness to challenge assumptions
- The eagerness to promote innovation
- The readiness to listen
- The desire to represent and help the community
- The ability to work in a team
- An external, work based perspective

The Role of School Governors

School governors make collective decisions as part of the governing body whose primary function is to help raise the educational standards and performance of a school by supporting the work of the headteacher and staff. Governors make important decisions on how a school will be run. The governing body is answerable to parents and the wider community.

Some of the things expected of governors include:

- Promoting high standards of achievement

- Planning the school's long-term future
 - Overseeing the school's aims, values and ethos
 - Setting performance measurement indicators & targets
 - Monitoring the performance of the school against those standards
 - Acting as a critical friend to the headteacher
 - Budgetary allocation and control
 - Appointing senior staff
 - Governors govern rather than manage. They are there to give direction and focus by performing a vital strategic role.
- The management of a school is the responsibility of the headteacher.

Commitment Required of School Governors

This can vary by school and may be dependent on the schools' circumstances. On average, however, 6 hours per month during the school term time will allow you to attend the full governing body meetings, participate in one of the committees that support the governing body, and do the necessary preparatory reading. Governing body meetings in primary schools may take place earlier in the day than those in secondary schools. Some of the duties of the Personnel Committee (e.g. Selection and Disciplinary issues) can only be dealt with during the school day. The ideal commitment to being a governor is 4 years, but as a volunteer and if your circumstances change, you can resign or be re-elected.

The Different Types of Governors

1. Parent governors are elected by parents of pupils on the school roll at the time of the election. They must be parents of pupils on the school roll themselves to stand for election. Parent governors do not have to stand down if their child leaves the school during the period they serve, though they may do so if they wish. They may stand for re-election at the end of their term of office if they still have a child on the school roll. If not enough parents stand for election, parent governors may be appointed by the governing body.
2. Governors appointed by the LEA can be re-appointed when they have served out their current term of office, provided they have not been disqualified for missing meetings of the full governing body. They can also be removed by the LEA.
3. The headteacher is a member of the governing body unless he or she chooses not to be. In either case, the headteacher has the right to attend all meetings of the governing body.
4. Teacher governors are elected by, and from, the teachers at the school. Any person working as a teacher at the school is eligible to stand for election, or to vote. Teacher governors can stand for re-election when they have served out their current term. When they cease to teach at the school they have to stand down from the governing body.
5. Staff governors are elected by, and from, the non-teaching staff at the school. They may be employed under a contract of employment or a contract for services to work at the school. If they cease to have a contract to work at the school, they must stand down from the governing body.
6. Community governors are chosen by at least two-thirds of governors who are not community governors. When deciding whom to co-opt, governors should make sure that the governing body reflects a balance of interests. It is desirable for the local business community to be represented on the governing body. Community governors can be removed from office by at least two-thirds of the full governing body who have not been community governors, but can be re-appointed. If they have been disqualified for missing meetings of the full governing body, they may not be immediately re-appointed as community governors.