

Role of a school governor

To contribute to the work of the governing board in ensuring high standards of achievement for all children and young people in the school by:

- ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the performance management of staff
- overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent

As part of the governing board team, a governor is expected to

1 Contribute to the strategic discussions at governing board meetings which determine:

- the vision and ethos of the school
- clear and ambitious strategic priorities and targets for the school
- that all children, including those with special educational needs, have access to a broad and balanced curriculum
- the school's budget, including the expenditure of the pupil premium allocation
- the school's staffing structure and key staffing policies
- the principles to be used by school leaders to set other school policies

2 Hold executive leaders to account by monitoring the school's performance; this includes:

- agreeing the outcomes from the school's self-evaluation and ensuring they are used to inform the priorities in the school development plan
- considering all relevant data and feedback provided on request by school leaders and external sources on all aspects of school performance
- asking challenging questions of school leaders
- ensuring senior leaders have arranged for the required audits to be carried out and receiving the results of those audits
- ensuring senior leaders have developed the required policies and procedures and the school is operating effectively according to those policies
- acting as a link governor on a specific issue, making relevant enquiries of the relevant staff, and reporting to the governing board on the progress on the relevant school priority
- listening to and reporting to the school's stakeholders: pupils, parents, staff, and the wider community, including local employers

3 Ensure the school staff have the resources and support they require to do their jobs well, including the necessary expertise on business management, external advice where necessary, effective appraisal and CPD (Continuing Professional Development), and suitable premises and that the way in which those resources are used has impact.

4 When required, serve on panels of governors to:

- appoint the headteacher and other senior leaders
- appraise the headteacher
- set the headteacher's pay and agree the pay recommendations for other staff
- hear the second stage of staff grievances and disciplinary matters
- hear appeals about pupil Exclusions

The role of a governor is largely a thinking and questioning role, not a doing role.

A governor does NOT:

- write school policies
- undertake audits of any sort – whether financial or health & safety - even if the governor has the relevant professional experience
- spend much time with the pupils of the school – if you want to work directly with children, there are many other voluntary valuable roles within the school
- fundraise – this is the role of the PTA – the governing board should consider income streams and the potential for income generation, but not carry out fundraising tasks
- undertake classroom observations to make judgements on the quality of teaching – the governing board monitors the quality of teaching in the school by requiring data from the senior staff and from external sources
- do the job of the school staff; if there is not enough capacity within the paid staff team to carry out the necessary tasks, the governing board need to consider and rectify this

To perform this role well, a governor is expected to:

- get to know the school, including visiting the school occasionally during school hours and in agreement with the headteacher, and gaining a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses
- attend induction training and regular relevant training and development events
- attend meetings and read all the papers before the meeting. There will be at least 7 full Board meetings across the year, usually held in the evenings
- act in the best interests of all the pupils of the school
- behave in a professional manner, as set down in the governing board's code of conduct, including acting in strict confidence

As you become more experienced as a governor, there are other roles you could volunteer for which would increase your degree of involvement and level of responsibility (e.g. as a chair of a committee). This role description does not cover the additional roles taken on by the chair, vice-chair and chairs of committees.

Further information about the role can be obtained from the Clerk

Expenses: Governors may receive out of pocket expenses incurred as a result of fulfilling their role as governor and NGA recommends that a governing board should have such an expenses policy. Payments can cover incidental expenses, such as travel and childcare, but not loss of earnings.

Qualifications and disqualifications to serve as a school governor

A governor must be aged 18 or over at the time of his/her election or appointment and cannot hold more than one governorship at the same school.

A person is disqualified from election or appointment as a parent governor if s/he:

- is employed at the school for more than 500 hours in any 12 consecutive months;
- is an elected member of the Local Authority.

A person is disqualified from holding or continuing to hold office as a governor or associate member if he or she:

- is a registered pupil at the school;
- has failed to attend governing board meetings at the school without the consent of the governing board, for a continuous period of six months;

- has been disqualified for failing to attend governing board meetings at the school without the consent of the governing board, for a continuous period of six months whilst serving as a foundation, local authority, co-opted or partnership governor at the school in the last 12 months;
- has had his/her estate sequestrated and the sequestration has not been discharged, annulled or reduced;
- is subject to a bankruptcy restriction order, an interim bankruptcy restrictions order, a debt relief restrictions order or an interim debt relief restrictions order;
- is subject to:
 - a disqualification order or disqualification undertaking under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986
 - a disqualification order under the Companies Directors Disqualification (Northern Ireland) Order 2002
 - a disqualification undertaking accepted under the Company Directors Disqualification (Northern Ireland) Order 2002
 - an order made under section 429(2)(b) of the Insolvency Act 1986 (failure to pay under a county court administration order);
- has been removed from the office of charity trustee or trustee for a charity by an order made by the Charity Commission or Commissioners or High Court on the grounds of any misconduct or mismanagement in the administration of the charity for which he was responsible; or to which he was privy; or to which he contributed or he facilitated by his conduct; or
- has been removed, under section 34 of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005, from being concerned in the management or control of any body;
- is included in the list of people considered by the Secretary of State as unsuitable to work with children (under section 1 of the Protection of Children Act 1999);
- is subject to a direction of the Secretary of State under section 142 of the Education Act 2002 (or any other disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in such a direction);
- is subject to a direction of the Secretary of State under section 128 of the Education and Skills Act 2008;
- is barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006;
- is disqualified from working with children under sections 28, 29, or 29A of the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000;
- is disqualified from registration under Part 2 of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 for child minding or providing day care;
- is disqualified from registration under Part 3 of the Childcare Act 2006;
- has been convicted of any offence and received a sentence of imprisonment (whether suspended or not) for a period of not less than 3 months (without the option of a fine) in the 5 years before or since becoming a governor;
- has been convicted of any offence and received a prison sentence of two and a half years or more in the 20 years before becoming a governor;
- has been convicted of any offence at any time and received a prison sentence of 5 years or more;
- has been convicted of an offence and sentenced to a fine under section 547 of EA 1996 (nuisance or disturbance on school premises) or under section 85A of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 (nuisance or disturbance on educational premise) during the 5 years prior to or since appointment or election as a governor;
- has refused a request by the clerk to the governing board to make an application under section 113B of the Police Act 1997 for a criminal records certificate.