

Guidance for Prospective Governors

The following guidance has been written to assist governing bodies with their duty to conduct informed parent and staff elections in which the expectations and credentials of prospective candidates are made clear. The sections highlighted in brackets should be personalised to the school.

Guidance for Prospective Governors

Being a school governor is both a rewarding and challenging experience. Governors provide strategic leadership and work in partnership with the head teacher and senior leaders in schools to ensure that every child gets the best possible education.

The demands on governors and governing bodies have changed dramatically in recent years and this guidance has been written to help aspiring governors understand the expectations and demands of the role.

Becoming a Governor

This guidance is particularly directed at parents and staff members who are thinking of becoming a governor. Hopefully this provides you with a good overview, the commitment required and the expectations of the role. If after reading this you would like to find out any more information please contact *the Head Teacher, or the Vice Chairs Mary Kate Batterbee and Chris Snowden (both parents in the school),*

The Role of the Governing Body

The governing body is responsible for the conduct of the school and must promote high standards of educational achievement at the school. In all types of schools, governing bodies should have a strong focus on three core strategic functions:

- a) Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- b) Holding the head teacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff; and
- c) Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

In order to do this, governors need to gain knowledge of how their school operates through attending meetings, reading school documentation, analysing data and engaging in regular visits to the school.

The role of the governing body is one of oversight and it is not involved in the day to day management of the school. The head teacher role includes the educational performance of the school and operational responsibility lies with them.

How the Governing Body Works

There will be 10 Full Governor Meetings each year, which will cover subjects e.g. school vision and values, finance, health and safety, the performance of the school, staff development and well being etc.

Meetings are usually 2 hours long and take place in the evening, starting at 6.00pm. Before each meeting, paperwork will be emailed to you to read. You will also be required to attend training and make visits to school. You may also join a working party from time to time. You will need to sign and adhere to our Code of Conduct.

Different governing bodies operate in different ways, but governors will be expected to do far more than merely attend meetings. Effective governors attend the school regularly to see and understand how the school operates. They undertake governor visits for a particular purpose and produce reports for their governor colleagues. Governors will be expected to receive and understand reports from the head teacher and senior leaders so that they can question, challenge and support, thereby improving the quality of the whole educational provision.

The governing body operates a code of conduct which sets an ethos of professionalism and high expectations of governors. You will be provided with this as part of your induction into the school and will be expected to work within it, since a governing body operates as a corporate entity with corporate responsibility.

Skills and Experience

Governing bodies rely on a range of skills and experiences. You will need a strong commitment to the role, the inquisitiveness to question and analyse, and the willingness to learn. Good inter-personal skills, a basic level of literacy in English and sufficient numeracy skills to understand basic data are essential.

What is equally important to us is that you have a willingness to learn and undertake whatever training or development activity is needed to fill any gaps in the skills you have to contribute to effective governance.

Training and Support

The governing body is committed to developing the skills and experience of governors to promote success in the role. As a new governor you will attend induction training and a programme of further training to help you fulfil the role. You will be given a tour of the school and a basic induction by the head teacher.

Next Steps

You can complete the application and add a supporting letter (see Appendix C and D). You may print a copy to give to school or forward it by email.

Appointment of Governors - Qualifications and Disqualifications for LA Maintained Schools

Please read the following list of disqualifications and qualifications for being a governor. If you are eligible, complete the governor appointment form and sign it to confirm your eligibility. If you are *not* eligible, you are unable to be considered for appointment/election as a governor.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Registered pupils of the school cannot be governors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A governor must be aged 18 or over at the time of election or appointment
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A person cannot hold more than one governor post at the same school at the same time
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Elected members of the LA cannot be a parent governor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A person is disqualified from being a <u>parent governor</u> if they are staff, who are paid to work at the school for more than 500 hours in any consecutive twelve month period (at the time of election or appointment)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A person is disqualified from being a <u>local authority governor</u> if they are eligible to be a staff governor at the school
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A person is disqualified from holding or continuing to hold office if that person: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ is the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or an interim order, debt relief restrictions order, an interim debt relief restrictions order or their estate has been sequestrated and the sequestration has not been discharged, annulled or reduced is subject to a disqualification order or disqualification undertaking under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986, a disqualification order under Part 2 of the Companies (Northern Ireland) Order 1989, a disqualification undertaking accepted under the Company Directors Disqualification (Northern Ireland) Order 2002, or an order made under section 429(2)(b) of the Insolvency Act 1986 (failure to pay under county court administration order) ▫ has been removed from the office of charity trustee or trustee for a charity by the Charity Commission or Commissioners or High Court on grounds of any misconduct or mismanagement, or 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 teachers or workers considered by the Secretary of State as unsuitable to work with children or young people ▫ is barred from any regulated activity relating to children ▫ is subject to a direction of the Secretary of State under section 128 of the Education and Skills Act 2008 ▫ is disqualified from working with children or from registering for child-minding or providing day care ▫ is disqualified from being an independent school proprietor, teacher or employee by the Secretary of State

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ has been sentenced to three months or more in prison (without the option of a fine) in the five years before becoming a governor or since becoming a governor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ has received a prison sentence of two years or more in the 20 years before becoming a governor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ has at any time received a prison sentence of five years or more
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ has been fined for causing a nuisance or disturbance on school premises during the five years prior to or since appointment or election as a governor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ refuses a request by the clerk to make an application to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for a DBS check

Failure to attend meetings

If you fail to attend meetings, without the consent of the governing body, for a continuous period of six months you are disqualified from continuing to hold office as a governor at that school. This does not apply to the head teacher or to foundation governors appointed by virtue of their office. If you have been disqualified for failure to attend meetings as a foundation, LA or co-opted governor, you cannot be appointed as a governor for twelve months from the date of disqualification.

Notification to Clerk

You must notify the clerk if you are disqualified from holding, or from continuing to hold, office as a governor of the school.

More information

Details of the above restrictions may be found in The School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2012.

NGAs Code of Conduct for School Governing Boards

This code sets out the expectations on and commitment required from school governors and trustees in order for the governing board to properly carry out its work within the school and the community. It can be amended to include specific reference to the ethos of the particular school. 'School' includes academies, and it applies to all level of school governance.

The governing board has the following core strategic functions:

Establishing the strategic direction, by:

- Setting the vision, values, and objectives for the school
- Agreeing the school improvement strategy with priorities and targets
- Meeting statutory duties

Ensuring accountability, by:

- Appointing the head teacher
- Monitoring progress towards targets
- Performance managing the head teacher
- Engaging with stakeholders
- Contributing to school self-evaluation

Ensuring financial probity, by:

- Setting the budget
- Monitoring spending against the budget
- Ensuring value for money is obtained
- Ensuring risks to the organisation are managed

As individuals on the board we agree to the following:

Role & Responsibilities

- We understand the purpose of the board and the role of the head teacher.
- We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the board has given us delegated authority to do so, and therefore we will only speak on behalf of the governing board when we have been specifically authorised to do so.
- We accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the board or its delegated agents. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside the governing board meeting.
- We have a duty to act fairly and without prejudice, and in so far as we have responsibility for staff, we will fulfil all that is expected of a good employer.
- We will encourage open government and will act appropriately.
- We will consider carefully how our decisions may affect the community and other schools.
- We will always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of our school. Our actions within the school and the local community will reflect this.
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting the school we will follow the procedures established by the governing board.
- We will actively support and challenge the head teacher.

Commitment

- We acknowledge that accepting office as a governor involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy.
- We will each involve ourselves actively in the work of the governing board, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, including service on committees or working groups.
- We will make full efforts to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend explain in advance why we are unable to.
- We will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
- We will visit the school, with all visits to school arranged in advance with the staff and undertaken within the framework established by the governing board and agreed with the head teacher.
- We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for training and development, and will undertake relevant training .
- We accept that in the interests of open government, our names, terms of office, roles on the governing body, category of governor and the body responsible for appointing us will be published on the school's website.

Relationships

- We will strive to work as a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted.
- We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with other governors.
- We will support the chair in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times.
- We are prepared to answer queries from other governors in relation to delegated functions and take into account any concerns expressed, and we will acknowledge the time, effort and skills that have been committed to the delegated function by those involved.
- We will seek to develop effective working relationships with the head teacher, staff and parents, the local authority and other relevant agencies and the community.

Confidentiality

- We will observe complete confidentiality when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern specific members of staff or pupils, both inside or outside school.
- We will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding school business arise outside a governing board meeting.
- We will not reveal the details of any governing board vote.

Conflicts of interest

- We will record any pecuniary or other business interest (including those related to people we are connected with) that we have in connection with the governing board's business in the Register of Business Interests, and if any such conflicted matter arises in a meeting we will offer to leave the meeting for the appropriate length of time. We accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on the school's website.

- We will also declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the situation arise.
- We will act in the best interests of the school as a whole and not as a representative of any group, even if elected to the governing board.

Breach of this code of conduct

- If we believe this code has been breached, we will raise this issue with the chair and the chair will investigate; the governing board will only use suspension/removal as a last resort after seeking to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways.
- Should it be the chair that we believe has breached this code, another governor, such as the vice chair will investigate.

The Seven Principles of Public Life

(Originally published by the Nolan Committee: The Committee on Standards in Public Life was established by the then Prime Minister in October 1994, under the Chairmanship of Lord Nolan, to consider standards of conduct in various areas of public life, and to make recommendations).

Selflessness - Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

Integrity - Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.

Objectivity - In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

Accountability - Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

Openness - Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

Honesty - Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership - Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

Adopted by the governing board of [name of school] on [date].

Signed

Printed name

Date: