

## PARENT GOVERNORS

Many parents wrongly assume that you need to be a 'professional' person (doctor, lawyer, or teacher), or have a university degree to be a school governor. Although having these abilities and qualifications may be useful, they are not an essential requirement. What you must possess, however, is a desire to make a difference plus time, energy and commitment, a readiness to accept responsibility, the ability to work as part of a team and, most importantly, an interest in the future of the borough's children.

Parent governors can either be elected by parents of children at the school, or if insufficient numbers are elected, can be appointed by the governing body to fill any remaining vacancies. Such appointees need not be parents of children currently attending the school – if no suitable candidates are found, they may be parents of former pupils, or of any child of school age. Parents so appointed can be removed from their positions by a majority vote of the governing body.

Under current regulations to be a parent governor you must to have 'parental responsibility' for a pupil at the school. Parental responsibility covers step-parents, foster parents, grandparents and the permanent partner of a biological parent, as well as the biological parent. Also, your child needs to be on the school roll at the time the election is held - although you will not be asked to resign if your child leaves the school before the end of your stint.

A governor does NOT:

1. write school policies
2. undertake audits of any sort – whether financial or health & safety - even if the governor has the relevant professional experience
3. 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
4. fundraise – the governing board should consider income streams and the potential for income generation, but not carry out fundraising tasks
5. 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
6. 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

## Eligibility

Aged 18 or over and living in the UK.

Parent Governors are elected following a ballot by Pupils Parents and to be eligible for election you will need to have a child/children at the school.

Although being a governor is open to almost anyone, there are restrictions:

A person is disqualified from holding or continuing to hold office as a governor of a school if, in summary, that person:

- is the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order; an interim bankruptcy restrictions 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 the Companies (Northern Ireland) Order 2002; 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 trustee for a charity by an order made by the Charity Commission or Commissioners or High Court on grounds of any misconduct or mismanagement in the administration of the charity, or under section 34 of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 from being concerned in the management or control of any body.
- has been removed from office as an elected governor within the last five years.
- is included in the list of people 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 142 of the Education Act 2002 or 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 22
- subject to certain exceptions for overseas offences that do not correlate with a UK offence, has been sentenced to three months or more in prison (without the option of a fine) in the five years ending with the date preceding the date of appointment/election as a governor or since becoming a governor
- subject to certain exceptions for overseas offences that do not correlate with a UK offence, has received a prison sentence of two and a half years or more in the 20 years ending with the date preceding the date of appointment/election as a governor
- subject to certain exceptions for overseas offences that do not correlate with a UK offence, has at any time received a prison sentence of five years or more
- has been convicted and fined for causing a nuisance or disturbance on school or educational premises during the five years ending with the date immediately preceding appointment/election or since appointment or election as a governor
- refuses a request by the clerk to make an application to the Disclosure And Barring Service for a criminal records certificate.

## Being a Parent Governor

You have expressed an interest in becoming a Parent Governor and this outlines what we are looking for from Parent Governors:

### You will be committing to:

- ✦ Attending termly full local Governing Body meetings
- ✦ Attending relevant Committee meetings either BSII (Behaviour Safety Intervention and Inclusion) for T&L (Teaching and Learning)
- ✦ Attending school functions such as Open Evenings, Presentation Evenings, School Concerts etc
- ✦ Being assigned an area of responsibility within school and monitoring any issues/progress and raising these at the Governor Committee meetings
- ✦ The term of office for a Governor when appointed is 4 years, although a parent governor can resign at any time during the course of this period
- ✦ Governor training – forthcoming training sessions are advised at Governor meetings
- ✦ Volunteering several hours each term to attending meetings and the reading preparation involved, attending events and training.

### You will be involved in:

- ✦ As part of the “Governing Body” helping to run the school as a “critical friend”.
- ✦ Recruitment and selection of Management, teaching and support staff
- ✦ Making decisions about all aspects of the school and help to set strategic direction and the school’s vision for the future.
- ✦ Setting standards for the school in terms of discipline, uniform, behaviour and setting long term goals.

### We are looking for someone who:

- ✦ Is enthusiastic
- ✦ Has an interest in education
- ✦ Has expertise in areas such as HR, Finance, Premises Management, Procurement etc that you would be willing to share with the Governing Body
- ✦ Is able to commit voluntarily the time required
- ✦ Is interested in the local community



**In order 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 (full governing board meetings and committee meetings) and read all the papers before the meeting
- ✚ 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

**The School Governing Body is made up of:**

Chair of Governors  
Vice Chair of Governors  
Headteacher  
Chairs of Committees  
Staff Governors  
Parent Governors  
Community Governors

Information relating to School Governors and a Governor Handbook which provides more detailed information relating to Governing Bodies and the role of being a Governor is available on either NGA

<http://www.nga.org.uk/Can-we-help/Be-a-Governor.aspx> or on the Government website at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/governors-handbook>