



The Role of Parent Governors

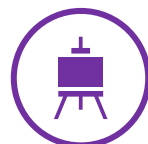
The Governing Body (GB) is the strategic leader of the school and has a vital role to play in making sure all children receive the best possible educational provision, experiences and outcomes. This is reflected in the law, which states that the purpose of maintained school governing bodies is to 'conduct the school with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement and behaviour'. GBs have a strong focus on three core functions: providing a strategic view, acting as a critical friend and ensuring accountability.

The stakeholder model of school governance means that a range of representatives from the wider school community (such as parents, school staff, and members of the local community) are involved in the effective running of the governing body, and have a voice in how their school operates.



Parent governors are elected by other parents at the school. Any parent, or carer, of a registered pupil at the school at the time of election is eligible to stand for election as a parent governor. Parent governors may continue to hold office until the end of their term of office even if their child leaves the school.

Schools must make every reasonable effort to fill parent governor vacancies through elections. The Regulations, however, make provision for the GB to appoint parent governors where not enough parents stand for election.



Parent governors play an important role on governing bodies, as parents have first-hand experience of the school from their child(ren). This brings a different perspective to the strategic management of the school.

Parent governors are elected as representatives of the interests of parents of pupils currently attending the school. They are representative parents rather than representative of parents. Parent governors express their personal views at governing body meetings and cannot be mandated by the parents they represent to support a particular position with which the parent governor does not agree.



All members of the GB have equal status in the responsibilities they share (although there are exceptions for the chairperson); no governor has the authority to act individually on behalf of the school, unless the GB has asked a governor to carry out a function.

As an effective parent governor you will:

- help to decide the priorities for improving the school
- work in partnership with the headteacher, senior leadership team and cooperatively with other governors to raise standards and improve outcomes for all children
- attend full governing body and relevant committee meetings regularly and prepare for meetings by reading papers beforehand
- take responsibility for your own learning and development as a governor, including attending training
- promote the interests of the school in the wider community
- be loyal to the decisions made by the governing body
- respect the confidentiality of governing body affairs
- never promise to 'solve a problem' on your own
- declare an interest and withdraw from any meeting where you, a partner, close relative or a business associate stands to gain, or where you are so close to a matter discussed that it is difficult to be impartial.

It can sometimes be difficult balancing your role as an impartial parent governor and being a parent at the school at the same time. Here is some advice on how to undertake your role effectively:

- Be aware of parental views and any concerns.
- Listen impartially to any concerns raised by parents and advise parents on appropriate courses of action e.g. follow the correct school procedure to resolve their concerns.
- Do not personally become involved in individual parental concerns.
- Do not bring an individual parent's issue (or your own) to governing body meetings.
- Remember, if you have any of your own concerns as a parent at the school, you would need to follow the same procedure as other parents to resolve these.
- If there is some aspect of school life which is worrying a large number of parents, ask the chair/head if this is an appropriate topic to discuss at the next governing body meeting.
- Help to raise the profile of the important work that school governors do – you are a great recruiting tool for the next round of prospective parent governors!



▶ **Time Commitment**

Governors are expected to attend all full governing body meetings (one per term), committee meetings as appropriate, as well as school visits. Although you will have a good knowledge of the school through your child's experience, formal visits as a governor are an essential part of your role, particularly in relation to monitoring and evaluating. Often governors are also invited to attend school events, such as assemblies and sports days.



▶ **Confidentiality**

It is vitally important that all governors respect the Governing Body's confidentiality - you would be breaching confidentiality if you reported how individuals voted, comments made by individuals, individual discussions or if you were to share information relating to individual members of staff, pupils or other sensitive matters.