



Information for potential Parent Governors

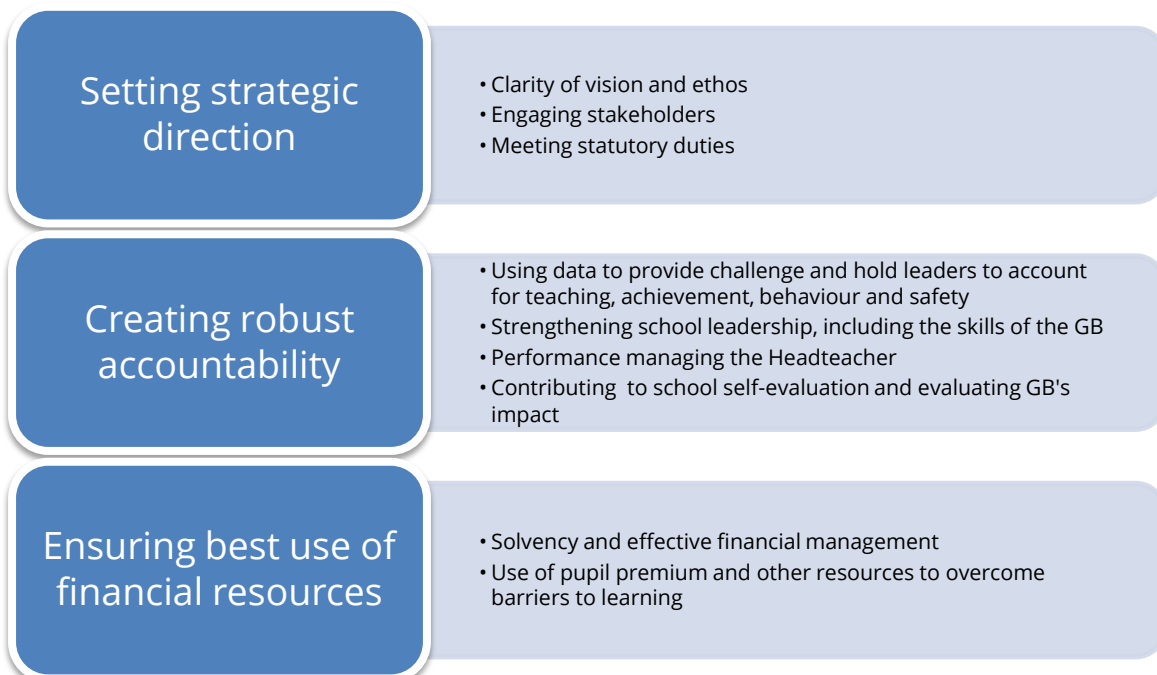
Before applying to become a parent governor, it is strongly recommended that you understand the role of a governor. This information sheet, based upon extracts from National Governors' Association (NGA) material, is designed to support your understanding. If you have any questions about the role, please ask before you apply.

The role of school governing boards

Governing boards are the strategic leaders of our school and have a vital role to play in making sure every child gets the best possible education. This is reflected in the law, which states that the purpose of (maintained) school governing boards is to 'conduct the school with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievements at the school'

The principles of school governance are the same in every school no matter whether the school is an academy, free school or maintained school. They are all state funded schools.

All governing boards should operate as non-executive boards, focussing on three core strategic functions.





A governing board play a strategic role not an operational one. The headteacher is responsible for the day to day management of the school (operational) and the headteacher and staff are responsible for implementing plans and policies established by the governing board. Understanding what this means is probably the most important thing to learn about being a governor.

In exercising their strategic functions the governing board shall:

- Act with integrity, objectivity and honesty and in the best interests of the school; and
- Be open about the decisions they make and the actions they take and in particular shall be prepared to explain their decisions and actions to interested parties.

Much of the work of governing board is conducted in meetings. Almost all of the powers and responsibilities of governing boards are held collectively, and this means that the governing board has to meet to make its decisions.

A governing board uses its powers of delegation to distribute its workload to ensure matters are dealt with appropriately. It may choose to delegate duties to a committee or an individual. Individuals are allocated to committees based on their skills or particular areas of interest. For example, finance, staffing or curriculum. Governing board committees can discuss delegated duties in further detail and report back to the full governing board about their findings, recommendations or decisions.

A governing board acts as a corporate body with an identity separate from its members. Responsibility for all actions and decisions of the governing board lies with the whole governing board rather than individual members. This is known as corporate responsibility.

Governors must never carry out a duty in the name of the governing board without the consent of the governing board. Individual governors have no power outside the governing board and cannot act on behalf of the governing board unless authorised to do so or, in special cases, where emergency action is needed (chair of governors).



Expectations of the role

As a governor you are 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.

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.

When required, serve on panel 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 governor is largely a thinking and questioning role, not a doing role.

A governor does NOT:

- Write school policies
- Undertake audits of any sorts – whether financial or health and safety – even if the governor has the relevant 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



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 chair of a committee).

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.

Training

All governors are expected to undertake training to support them in their role. Each school has a budget to allow for this. Governors do not fund training from their own pocket. Your school may buy training and support for governors from a specific provider, and they will provide details of this to you if you join the governing board.

Other sources of information

Department for Education <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education>

National Governors Association (NGA) <https://www.nga.org.uk/Home.aspx>

Contact

Thank you for taking the time to read through this information. If you have any questions about this role, please contact:

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Emmanuel Arbenser, Governor with responsibility for Governor Recruitment and Training

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The 'Seven Principles of Public Life'

It is vital that from the offset as a potential new governor that you understand that all governors are public volunteers and as such are subject to the same Nolan Committee rules on public life as Councillors and MPs.

The Nolan committee rules are known as the 'Seven Principles of public life'. The principles are given below.

1. Selflessness

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

2. Integrity

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

3. Objectivity

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

4. Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

5. Openness

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

6. Honesty

Holders of public office should be truthful.

7. Leadership

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.