

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The governing body works with the school. Its responsibilities and powers have to be exercised in conjunction with the Headteacher and staff. Governors do not intervene in the day to day management of the school, unless there is something seriously wrong. If there is a weakness in the school they need to take action. There is a fine balance that is not easy to keep.

Individual governors have no power or responsibility. It is only the full governing body which has legal duties and powers and all governors share in that corporate responsibility.

The day to day management of the school is the responsibility of the Headteacher and staff. The philosophy for running the school is a shared responsibility worked out by common consent.

Governors govern rather than manage. They are there to give direction and focus by performing a vital strategic role.

The Time

As a governor you need to make time to:

- * Attend a meeting of the full governing body at least once or twice a term. Most meetings take place in the early evening; but some can also take place during the working day.
- * Attend committee and working party meetings (if you are invited on to a committee they could meet at least once a term)
- * Read reports and background papers prior to meetings.
- * Attend other events such as concerts, open evenings, sports day etc.
- * Take part, if necessary in staff appointment panels, pupil admission and exclusion panels and more rarely staff discipline and grievance hearings.

The Commitment

As a governor you can demonstrate your commitment to the school by:

- * Showing an interest and participating in many of the schools activities
- * Attending governors' meetings
- * Visiting when you can during the day
- * Getting to know the staff, pupils and their work
- * Offering support and expertise

The Knowledge

As a governor it is helpful (but not essential) if you can

- * Keep up to date with local and national developments in education
- * Attend governor training sessions (as appropriate)

The Skills

As a governor you can be most effective when you:

- * Work co-operatively and creatively with others
- * Use your personal qualities and expertise in the interest of the school, its pupils and staff.

TYPES OF GOVERNOR

Parent Governors are elected by parents/guardians of registered pupils and must be parents/guardians at the time of election. Parent Governors do not have to leave if their child leaves during their term of office, but they can if they wish to. If there is a potential vacancy, nominations are sought from parents. If more nominations are received than the vacancies available then an election takes place. If insufficient parents stand for election, the governing body can approach a parent of the school to become a governor.

LEA Governors are nominated by the LEA and are often political appointments or through LEA publicity. LEA Governors do not have to be County Borough Councillors but are usually members of a political party in the area. Applications are sent to interested parties, once received they are forwarded to an officer panel for consideration. Once agreed, the application is given to the cabinet to be agreed. LEA appointments can only be removed from office by the officer panel. It is not the decision of the governing body.

Staff Governors are in all Maintained Schools with exception of schools with less than 100 pupils. Staff governors are appointed by the support staff employed to work at the school or have a contract of employment with the school. They can stand for re-election. If they leave the school, they cannot remain on the governing body.

Teacher Governors are elected by the other teachers employed at the school. They must be permanent members of staff. Teacher governors act as a representative role. Once they cease to work at the school their term of office will be terminated.

Community Governors (previously co-opted Governors) are chosen by the governing body with the exception of the existing community governors. They can be people who live or work locally or people who are committed to "the good government and success of the school".

Minor Authority Governors are appointed by District, Town Councils.

Foundation Governors are appointed by foundation, voluntary controlled or aided schools to represent the interest of the church authority or voluntary trust which set up the school. They have a responsibility to ensure that the school is run in accordance with the beliefs of the organisation. Foundation governors can be removed from office at any time by the people who appointed them but only for reasonable course.

Ex-Officio Governors are often the parish priests in the church schools. A substitute can be appointed to fill their place if they cannot or will not take office.

Sponsor Governors are persons who give or have given substantial financial assistance (including benefits in kind) to the school or proved/provided substantial services to the school.

Headteacher is a governor by virtue of their office. The Headteacher does not have to be a governor if they so wish. If they choose not to become a governor the vacancy will stay open for them. The Headteacher may still be required to attend governing body meetings to give advice and information.

The governing body's main role is to help raise standards of achievement

- * It is accountable for the performance of the school
- * It helps shape the school's future direction
- * It monitors and reviews the performance of the school
- * It makes decisions about the school's budget and staffing
- * It makes sure the National Curriculum is taught
- * It makes sure the school provides for all its pupils, including those with special needs
- * It decides how the school can encourage pupil's spiritual, moral and cultural development

Governors are at the heart of how a school operates. It is important they get things right. How they do their job affects the interests of pupils, staff morale and how the school is seen by parents and others in the community. They are not there to rubber stamp decisions. Governors are responsible for how the school is performing. They have to be prepared to support and challenge their Headteacher by gathering views, asking questions and deciding what's best for the pupils.