



School Governor – Requirements and information

Governing is a job – it just isn't paid! It is perhaps even more important for voluntary jobs than for paid ones to be clear about the parameters, expectations and limitations. It is important that the job description allows Governors varying types of commitment – there are many different ways of being a successful governor.

Governors are expected to:

- Attend meetings
- Visit the School during school time
- Serve on a committee, where required
- Be attached to an area of the school's work e.g. as a Subject Governor
- Participate in executive decisions of the Governing Body
- Undertake training and development
- Work within the agreed code of conduct
- Represent the school within the local community
- Stand by decisions
- Maintain confidentiality as required

The purpose of the post is to contribute to the work of the governing body in achieving its three core functions;

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

The individual governor has a responsibility, working alongside other members of the governing body, to the staff and pupils of the school, parents/carers and the school's wider community. Although some governors may represent particular constituencies (e.g. Parent Governors) they are not delegates of that group.

Responsibilities include:

- Developing the strategic plan for the school
- Determining aims, policies and priorities of the school
- Engaging with parents, pupils and the wider community to ensure the school takes into account stakeholder views
- Monitoring and evaluating the work of the school
- Management of the budget
- Ensuring that all children in the school have access to a broad and balanced curriculum which is suitable to age, aptitude and ability, which prepares them for adult life
- Ensuring the health and safety of pupils and staff

Tasks include:

- Getting to know the school: its needs, strengths and areas for development
- Attending meetings (full governing body, committees and working groups)
- Working as a member of a team
- Speaking, acting and voting in the best interests of the school as one perceives them
- Representing the perspectives of constituencies, where appropriate
- Respecting all governing body decisions and supporting them in public
- Acting within the framework of the policies of the governing body and legal requirements
- Committing to training and development opportunities

What criteria are used when selecting a governor?

- Interest or background in education
- Appropriate availability
- Good communication / interpersonal skills
- Ability to work as part of a team
- Undertaking to participate in the governor's training programme
- A desire to support the school and support the school community
- Other relevant skills & experience – based on the requirements of gap analysis on governing body skills audits

What is the code of conduct?

The Symphony Learning Trust Code of Conduct for School Governors sets out the expectations and commitment required from governors in order for the governing body to properly carry out its work within the school. It is reviewed annually and signed by all governors, and encapsulates many of the points highlighted in this document.

Governors must:

- Respect confidentiality
- Listen to and respect the views of others
- Express their own views clearly and succinctly
- Take their fair share of work / positions of responsibility
- Know, understand and work within the prescribed regulatory framework
- Report any evidence of fraud, corruption or misconduct to an appropriate person or Authority

Governors should:

- Prepare for meetings by reading papers beforehand, forming views and questions for discussion
- Take responsibility for their own learning and development as a governor, including attending training
- Attend meetings promptly, regularly, and for the full time

What being a governor doesn't mean:

- You will be solving any individual child's problems
- You will deal with personal issues
- You will influence any individual child's school journey
- You will discuss individual children

DBS checking procedures

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 specifies that individuals acting as members of the governing body of an educational establishment (defined as either an educational establishment which is exclusively or mainly for the provision of full-time education to children, or a maintained nursery school) need to be checked.

How long a term do Governors serve?

Governors generally serve for 4 years from the date of their election or appointment. Parent Governors serve out their term even if their child leaves the school in the meantime. Staff Governors end their term if they cease to be employed at the school.

How does the Governing Body carry out this work?

Even though they have overall responsibility, Governors cannot possibly be expected to carry out all this themselves. It continues to be the job of the Head Teacher and the staff to carry out all the detailed work of running the School. The full Governing Body agrees the policies it wants the School to follow and checks that this is done. There are a number of committees on which both Governors and staff serve and where the work of both groups can be brought together.

How much time will it take?

The Governing Body meets at school once a term in the evening for about two hours. There can also be additional 'extra-ordinary' full governing body meetings where circumstances require. All Governors are expected to attend full governing body meetings. The sub-committees meetings are scheduled based on the task requirements and generally meet once or twice each term, for about two hours and all committee members are expected to attend. Other governors are also given an open invite to attend. In addition most Governors take a general interest in the School and attend school events and activities like Open Days, concerts, stage productions, FON events etc. Governors with individual responsibilities make their own arrangements to meet with departments about e.g. subject governors, SEN governor etc.

How are Parent Governors elected?

There are quite detailed regulations that have to be followed for electing parent governors. The key steps are that the governing body will communicate any parent governor vacancies that exist, highlight the skills that the governing body is looking to recruit for, and request nominations. Nominees also supply a short supporting statement not exceeding 300 words in length. If the number of nominations matches the number of vacancies then the nominees are elected unopposed. If the number of nominations received exceeds the number of available vacancies then it will be necessary to conduct a secret ballot. Each parent or person who has responsibility is entitled to vote. The candidates shall be ranked in order of whom most votes have been cast.

Who is NOT qualified to stand for election?

A governor must be aged 18 or over at the time of their election or appointment and cannot be a registered pupil at the school. A person cannot hold more than one governorship at the same school.

A person is disqualified from holding or from continuing to hold office as a governor or associate member if he or she:

- Is detained under the Mental Health Act 1983 during his or her period of office
- Fails to attend the governing body meetings – without the consent of the governing body – for a continuous period of six months, beginning with the date of the first meeting missed
- Is subject to a bankruptcy restriction order or an interim order
- Has had their estate sequestrated and the sequestration order has not been discharged, annulled or reduced
- Is subject to:

- A disqualification order or disqualification undertaking under the Company Directors 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
- An order made under section 492(2)(b) of the Insolvency Act 1986 (failure to pay under a County Court administration order)
- Has been removed from the office of charity trustee or trustee for a charity by the Charity Commissioners or High Court on grounds of any misconduct or mismanagement, or under Section 34 of the Charities and Trustees Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 from participating in the management or control of any body
- Is included in the list of people considered by the Secretary of State as unsuitable to work with children
- Is disqualified from working with children or subject to a direction under Section 142 of the Education Act 2002 Is disqualified from registration for childminding or providing day care
- Is disqualified from registration under Part 3 of the Childcare Act 2006
- Has received a sentence of imprisonment (whether suspended or not) for a period of not less than three months (without the option of a fine) in the five years before becoming a governor or since becoming a governor
- Has received a prison sentence of two-and-a-half years or more in the 20 years before becoming a governor
- Has at any time received a prison sentence of five years or more
- 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
- Refuses to allow an application to the Criminal Records Bureau for a criminal records check