

Information sheet for prospective parent governors

Parent Governors

Full details of the role and responsibilities of governors are described in the “Governance Handbook” published by the Department for Education, and available online at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-handbook>

Anyone who has parental responsibility for a pupil on the school roll at the time of the election can stand for election, subject to certain restrictions, and can vote in the election. If insufficient parents stand for election the Trustees can appoint parents to the board. The term of office for a parent governor is four years, although a governor can stand down at any time.

Why become a parent governor?

Parents who have a child at the school and who take an active interest in the education of **all children at the school** should consider becoming a parent governor. They should not take on this role to follow up a particular concern about the education of an individual child.

Parents may have a skill or area of expertise which can be useful to the Academy Committee. Currently, the Academy Committee is particularly keen to welcome new governors with an expertise in *<insert description of required skills>*

It is useful for prospective parent governors to talk to other parent governors to find out what they think about the role and what is really involved before deciding whether to put forward a nomination. Questions could be “What have you found challenging?”, “What have you found rewarding?”

What will parent governors have to do?

- Take an active interest in education
- Give time to find out about the school
- Give time to learn about the role by attending induction training
- Abide by the Code of Conduct and confidentiality
- Undergo pre-appointment checks (DBS) and sign a Declaration of Eligibility form
- Complete a declaration of pecuniary interests
- Undertake safeguarding training
- Attend meetings throughout the year. We hold between four and six Academy Committee meetings per year, and may establish sub-committees to take responsibility for particular delegated functions including complaints and exclusions.
- Visit the school (by prior arrangement and with an agreed focus) to monitor aspects of its work and report back to the Academy Committee.

The Strategic Role

The role of a parent governor is the same as that of a governor from any other category. Some of the ways in which governors work together strategically include:

- Monitoring the school’s performance and working to raise standards and promote pupil welfare
- Ensuring that the school is improving the achievement and attainment of all pupils
- Making sure that special needs are properly catered for
- Supporting in the appointment process for the headteacher
- Taking part in panel meetings, to make decisions on pupil exclusions or parental complaints

- Monitoring the work-life balance of the staff and headteacher
- Monitoring the implementation of Trust policies and helping to set school-based policies
- Being accountable to parents by ensuring they have the information to which they are legally entitled, regularly gathering their views and reporting on their performance of their role.

Collective Responsibility

All governors have equal status. They act collectively to support the school strategically. They participate in and contribute in shared decisions. Once decisions have been made, even if a governor does not personally agree with these, they must act collectively to support these decisions in a united way.

Critical Friend

The Academy Committee is often described as a “critical friend”. It should support the school but also be prepared to question why decisions have been made and request information about the school to help them in their monitoring role.

The Headteacher’s Operational Role

Parent governors and other categories of governor may become involved in other aspects of school life. They may visit the school to help in various capacities, for example to hear children read. What governors must not do is get involved in operational decisions. The headteacher is responsible for the day to day running of the school.

Sometimes it can be difficult to decide where the strategic role ends and the operational one begins. There is a wealth of information available to governors to help them understand their role, including free training provided online and locally.

Confidentiality

The role of governor requires diplomacy, adherence to a Code of Conduct, and particularly confidentiality. A parent governor may be involved in discussions of a confidential nature during the course of a governing body meeting and these discussions may concern a particular individual.

Sometimes, Academy Committee decisions need to remain confidential in the shorter or longer term, until such a time as formal announcements are made.

Communicating with parents and representing parents

A parent governor has a duty to communicate concerns and feelings expressed by parents to other members of the Academy Committee. However, a parent governor is not a delegate who attends meetings with instructions on how to speak on any particular issue. A parent governor is a representative parent and should act in the best interests of the school and according to their own conscience.