

Information about School Governors

Information about what governors do and how to become one.

What do governors do?

- Promote high standards of educational achievement
- Set targets for pupil achievement
- Take general responsibility for the conduct of the school
- Manage the school's budget, including numbers of staff and their pay
- Make sure that the curriculum is balanced and broadly based, in particular that the National Curriculum and religious education are taught.
- Report on pupils' achievement in National Curriculum assessments and examination results.
- Help with appointing senior staff (including appointing the head teacher) and regulate staff conduct and discipline; and
- Draw up an action plan after inspections by the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted)

Why do schools need governors?

Every School has a Governing Body to represent the public in the running of schools. School Governors bring perspectives from ordinary life and work with the staff and the Local Authority to help secure the best possible education for school children.

Governors are people like you

Don't be put off from applying because you are not an expert.

Ask yourself:

- Are you open to new ideas and ready to learn?
- Are you prepared to work as part of a team?
- Do you have some spare time, especially in the evenings and weekends, to go to meetings or read reports?
- Do you want to put something into your local community?
- Do you get on with other people?

If you can answer 'Yes' to these questions, and you live, work or have an interest in the area, then you already have the makings of a school governor.

- You don't need special qualifications, but you do need to be ready to read a fair amount of paper, think about ideas and ask questions like:
- What is most important for the school?
- Where are we now?
- Where do we need to get to?

Governors need to work closely with others to make good decisions and make sure they are followed up. Governors need to ask questions, gather views and then decide what is in the school's best interests.

It helps to be a listener - you will stand a much better chance of understanding how the school ticks. Time and again new governors have been surprised at how their experiences can be used to help solve a problem at their school. You don't have to be a specialist. Think about the skills you use in everyday life.

It's not easy being a Governor

To be honest being a governor can be hard work at times. There may sometimes be a lot of papers to read, and meetings to attend. Governors may need to make difficult decisions about individual pupils or members of staff and Governors are voluntary too!

So why do people do it?

Many find the work is satisfying because it gives them the chance to:

- Make a difference to how well the school runs.
- Do something for the next generation.
- Serve the local community.
- Learn new skills and gain new interests.

Working as part of a team, towards a shared aim is something most governors find very rewarding. They are prepared to give and take and to be loyal to the team's decisions. As long as they act within the law they are protected from any financial liability for decisions they take.

The governing body usually meets at least once a term. Many Governors also sit on one or two of the committees that look in detail at areas such as finance, the curriculum, staffing or the premises.

Being a governor involves more than just taking an interest, though that is an important part of the job. Governors can learn a lot by visiting the school and talking to staff. It also means regularly putting aside some spare time in the evenings and occasionally at weekends. Governors have a legal right to ask their employer for unpaid leave.