

## **GUIDELINES FOR THE ELECTION OF PARENT GOVERNORS**

### **Who can stand as and vote for parent governors?**

Parents must be aged 18 or over. However, all parents, regardless of their age, are entitled to vote in parent governor elections.

The definition of a parent includes:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not;
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person;
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person

### **Seeking Nominations**

All parents should be informed in writing when elections of parent governors are to take place, and be given the opportunity of standing for election.

All candidates must be made aware of the eligibility requirements.

Parents are not allowed to stand for election if:

- **they work at the school for more than 500 hours in any school year ( ie for more than one third of the hours of a full time equivalent);**
- **they are an elected member of the Local Education Authority**

Parent governors normally serve four years unless the governing body has agreed a shorter timescale. Parent governors can serve out their term of office even if their child leaves the school.

### **Nomination requirements**

Nominations must be made in writing with the signatures of a proposer and seconder from amongst other parents of the school. Neither the proposer nor seconder should be the spouse/partner of the person nominated.

### **Closing date for applications**

The closing date for applications should be a maximum of ten school working days from the date on which the letters are distributed. The actual closing date and time should be clearly stated in the letter.

### **Number of applications received**

If the number of applications received is equal to, or less than, the number of vacancies to be filled, a ballot need not go ahead. The applicants should be appointed by the governing body. The headteacher should notify the successful candidate(s) as soon as possible.

If there are more applications than there are vacancies, the headteacher must arrange for a secret ballot to be held.

### **The Ballot**

The headteacher must issue ballot papers to all eligible parents as soon as possible after the closing date for the receipt of applications. Pupil post may be used. It is recommended that a minimum of five school working days is allowed for the return of the

ballot papers.

When issuing ballot papers head teachers need to enclose a brief explanation of the voting procedures. We recommend the following procedure:-

- Two envelopes are sent with each ballot paper
- The parent seals the ballot paper in an unmarked envelope
- The unmarked envelope is sealed in an outer envelope on which the parent has clearly written their name
- The double envelope is returned to the school
- On receipt of the ballot paper the headteacher checks the name on the outer envelope against the list of those parents entitled to vote and ticks off the relevant name
- The outer envelope is removed and the inner envelope is placed in the ballot box for counting at the appointed time

### **The Voting Arrangements**

Each parent is entitled to one vote per vacancy. Where a pupil does not live with the person who has parental responsibility, or they are absent from school when the ballot papers are issued, they will need to be posted or delivered to the parents.

### **The Count**

Candidates have the right to attend the count and should be advised of the venue date and time at the same time as the ballot papers are sent out. Headteachers, in supervising the count of votes, should arrange for two governors to act as scrutineers. If a ballot paper is returned and the headteacher is not able to confirm it is from a person entitled to vote, it should be treated as void.

If there is a tie in the number of votes cast, the first step should be to re-count the votes. If the votes are still equal for two candidates the headteacher should arrange for those candidates to draw lots or toss a coin.

### **After the Election**

The headteacher must notify the result of the election to any candidate not at the count as soon as possible. All governors should be notified of the result within five school working days. The clerk to the governors should arrange for the appropriate Notification Form to be forwarded to Governor Services.

Ballot papers should be kept securely for six months in case the result of the election is challenged. The number of ballot papers issued and the number returned should be noted.

### **The Start Date**

The successful candidate(s) start date is the day after the end of the term of office of the present incumbent. If there is already a vacancy, the start date is the day of the count or the day after the closing date for applications, when an election has not been necessary. Where parent governors are **appointed** (see below) by the governing body the start date is the date of the meeting at which the appointment is made.

### **Unsuccessful Candidates**

Any unsuccessful candidates should be thanked for their interest and encouraged to

consider whether they wish to fill other categories of governorship such as becoming an Associate member.

### **Appointment of Parent Governors**

If, after seeking applications from parents, vacancies for parent governors remain, these may be filled by the governing body in accordance with the regulations relevant to the constitution currently in use.

A person may not be **appointed** as a parent governor unless they are:

- A parent of a registered pupil at the school, or if that is not possible;
- A parent of a former pupil at the school, or if that is not possible;
- A parent of a child of or under compulsory school age (Special schools only and with special educational needs for which the school is approved), or if that is not possible;
- A parent with experience of educating a child with special education needs – Special schools only.