

School Governors Information Sheet - Parent Governors

What does the Local Governing Body do?

The governing body:

- sets the strategic direction, objectives, targets and policies;
- reviews progress against plans and targets;
- acts as a critical friend to the head of school by providing support and challenge.

The governing body has a *strategic role* as opposed to operational role. This helps the governing body focus on their key roles of setting strategic direction, ensuring accountability, and monitoring and evaluation to promote school improvement and raise standards and achievement.



Why are parents needed on the governing body?

The governing body is made up of governors who represent the community served by the school, including the families who use it, and the wider public who pay for it and whose quality of life is affected by it. To achieve the right balance on a governing body, there are different categories of governors representing different groups of the school's community (also known as 'stakeholders') and each category is either appointed or elected onto the governing body. Parent governors are needed on all school governing bodies, as parents play a major part in the school community. Parent Governors are elected by parents of the school. The other categories of governor are:

- Co-opted Governors
- Staff governors
- Associate members

What does being a governor actually involve?

Time

Prospective governors must be able to take time to attend meetings and read necessary papers beforehand. There are normally five meetings a year, four of which take place in the evening and one held in the daytime. Governors are also expected to visit the school at some point during the school day, approximately once per term. Altogether, you can expect to spend between three and five hours per month on governance, although this will vary.

Training

Free training and development opportunities are offered to support school governors in their role, and there is some compulsory training which all governors must do. Some training can be completed online at a time to suit you.

Visiting School

Governors will need to see the school in action and therefore scheduled visits are made with the school. Governors do not make unannounced visits.

Am I eligible to stand as a parent governor?

Only 'parents' of pupils registered at the school are entitled to stand or vote in the election. A 'parent' includes:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not (including those who do not live with their child);
- 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 in the sense that the child lives with them and they look after that child.

Parents who are employed at the school and work more than 500 hours in a school year are not eligible to stand for parent governorship as they qualify to stand as staff governors. However, they may still cast a vote. Parents who are elected members of the Local Authority are not eligible to stand as parent governors.

Do I need any particular qualifications or skills?

No special qualifications are required, although enthusiasm, commitment and an interest in education are helpful qualities to bring to a governor post. It also helps to be a good listener, taking time to understand the views of different people.

I would like to stand for election, what do I do next?

To stand as a candidate in the election, you will need to complete the nomination form below, and return it to the Clerk to Governors before the deadline specified in the letter.

Where can I get further information about school governors before I decide whether to apply?

Contact Kate Boulter, Clerk to Governors, on kboulter@mlp.org.uk