



Governor role description

For those governing in maintained schools

The governor role is a voluntary one and there are several different types of governor that can make up a governing board, which is the school's legally accountable body. Everyone in governance should be aware of and accept 'The 7 principles of public life', (Selflessness, Integrity, Objectivity, Accountability, Openness, Honesty and Leadership) as set out by Lord Nolan. Each individual governor is responsible for contributing to the board's discussions and in meeting its three core functions.

Governing body strategic responsibilities

Governing bodies work closely with headteachers and senior leaders. Headteachers are responsible for day-to-day management whereas the role of the governing body is strategic. As such, governors are responsible for:

- determining the mission, values, and long-term ambitious vision for the school
- deciding the principles that guide school policies and approving key policies
- working with senior leaders to develop a strategy for achieving the vision
- ensuring that parents, students, staff and the wider community are involved, consulted and informed as appropriate
- ensuring that all students have access to a broad and balanced curriculum such that students are well prepared for the next stage of their education and adult life
- setting the school's budget and ensuring it is managed effectively together with premises and other resources
- agreeing the school's staffing structure and keeping it under review to ensure it supports delivery of the strategy
- ensuring robust risk management procedures are in place and that risk control measures are appropriate and effective

Monitoring and evaluating school performance

Governors must monitor the priorities that have been set to ensure progress is being made by:

- measuring the school's impact and progress towards its strategic objectives
- ensuring the required policies and procedures are in place and the school is operating effectively in line with these policies
- evaluating relevant data and feedback provided by school leaders and external reporting on all aspects of school performance
- asking challenging questions of school leaders in order to hold them to account
- holding the headteacher to account for standards, financial probity and compliance with agreed policies
- visiting the school to monitor implementation of the strategy and reporting back to the board (this could be in a link governor capacity)
- ensuring that there are policies and procedures in place to deal with complaints effectively

Contribution to the governing body

Governors should ensure that they are making a positive and meaningful contribution to the governing body by:

- attending meetings (a minimum of 3 full governing board meetings and a number of committee meetings each year), reading papers and preparing questions for senior leaders in advance
- establishing and maintaining professional relationships with senior leaders and colleagues on the board
- getting to know the school, including visiting the school occasionally during school hours
- undertaking induction training and developing knowledge and skills on an ongoing basis

Expenses

- Governors should receive out of pocket expenses incurred as a result of fulfilling their role as governor. Payments can cover incidental expenses, such as travel and dependency care, but not loss of earnings.

Parent Governors:

The board must include at least two parent governors. Parent governors are elected by other parents at the school, except in certain circumstances where they are appointed by the board, for instance, when the number of vacancies is greater than the number of parents standing for election. Any parent or person with parental responsibility, or who is a carer of a registered student at the school at the time of election, can stand as a parent governor. Parent governors can remain in office until the end of their term of office, even if their child leaves the school. The role of a parent governor is not as a spokesperson for the views of parents. They are the same as any other governor on the board, providing a 'parental viewpoint' i.e. representative parents rather than representatives of parents.

Co-opted Governors:

Co-opted governors are appointed by the governing board. They are people who, in the opinion of the governing board, have the skills and experience required to contribute to the effective governance and success of the school. Those eligible to be staff governors can be co-opted governors, but when counted with the staff governor and the Headteacher, must not exceed one third of the total membership of the board. Parents and carers could also be appointed as co-opted governors if the board considers that they have the necessary skills and experiences. Co-opted governors act in the best interests of the school and wider community, but should not be required by others, such as the appointing board or community, to take a particular stance on issues discussed at board meetings.

Local Authority (LA) Governor:

A LA governor is nominated by their LA to the governing board, but it is for the governing board to agree whether to appoint them. It is for the governing board to decide whether the LA's nominee has the skills required to contribute to the effective governance and success of the school. An individual does not need to work for the LA to be eligible to be nominated. LA governors may be removed from office by the LA that nominated them. A governing board must have one LA governor. A LA governor is a representative of the local authority. The role of a LA governor is the same as any other governor, including providing a 'LA viewpoint', and they should participate in the same way as other governors. They are not required to be affiliated to a political party, although they should be aware of local issues.

Staff Governor:

Teaching and support staff who are employed by either the board or local authority to work at the school under a contract of employment, at the time of election, are eligible to stand for election to the governing board. Staff governors are elected by the same category of school staff e.g. those who are also employed in the same school by the school or the local authority. Their role will end either at the end of their term of office, or if they leave the school. The board must have one staff governor. The role of a staff governor is the same as any other governor, strategic leadership and holding the Headteacher to account, but also includes providing a 'staff viewpoint'. It is important for prospective staff governors to fully understand the nature of the role prior to appointment. Staff governors are not a spokesperson for the views of all staff, nor should they be held to account in relation to their staff role by the governing board.

Associate Members:

Associate members can be appointed to a committee of the board based on their specific expertise and experience so they can contribute to the effective governance and success of the school. Subject to the disqualifications set out in 'The School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2012', the governing board may appoint a student, school staff member, or any other person as an associate member. Associate members are appointed by the governing board to serve on one or more governing board committees. They may also attend full governing board meetings. They are not governors and do not have a vote in governing board decisions, but may, on approval from the board, be given a vote on decisions made by committees to which they are appointed.

Link Governors:

The role of a link governor is to ensure that someone has specific oversight of an area i.e. Safeguarding, SEND, Careers/STEM etc and to deepen the board's knowledge of that area. Having link governors does not remove the board's responsibility for these areas. The role will involve visiting the school and meeting with staff leads to understand how the strategic objectives are being embedded, how money is being spent and any issues affecting delivery. These roles should always remain strategic and not operational.