



The role of the school academy governor

Introduction

The role of the school governor is absolutely vital. School governors form the largest voluntary force in the country and the influence they have over the development of children's education is immense. As an Academy school, the Governors are employers of all staff who work on the site and the school owns its own land. This brings great responsibility.

All schools rely on the willingness and goodwill of governors to give of their free time to help schools develop policy and implement developmental ideas.

The Governing Body works closely with the Headteacher to achieve high standards for all the school's children.

A Governor's role can be described as being the critical friend of the school. Whilst being strong supporters and advocates of the school and willing conduits of information between the wider community and the school, it is essential that the Governing Body acts impartially in scrutinising the work of the school and bringing a parental, business and community perspective to the educational planning process. Governors monitor and should challenge, ask questions and seek information.

A key part of the role is to help with the medium and long-term planning process. The development of a strategic plan is a shared responsibility of the Governors and the school community.

In addition to Parent Governors, who are elected by other parents whose children attend the same school as their own, there are other categories of governor:

- Staff Governor – elected by teaching/non-teaching staff;
- Community Governors – appointed by members of the Governing Body;
- The Headteacher of the Academy

Apart from the full Governing Body, there are also a number of Committees with delegated authority. The Committees cover areas such as audit, curriculum, finance, general purposes, staffing and student welfare. Governors will serve on at least one of these Committees in addition to the full Governing Body.

Governors are encouraged to maintain strong links with staff and to work with departments. They are encouraged to visit the school. Such visits might include the following:

- Attending departmental meetings and departmental events (all governors have a link role with an area of the school)
- Meeting with students
- Attending school events and social occasions

There is a protocol for the all of the above which governors should be familiar with

Being a governor is a responsible, rewarding and sometimes time-consuming job. To help you decide, you may wish to speak to a current governor or to the Headteacher. The following specific points may be helpful to you.

1. The term of office is currently four years.
2. Governors should get to know their schools on a first-hand basis; will make decisions corporately which will influence and shape children's education; and, through their commitment, experience and skills, help schools to develop.
3. The kind of decisions that governors make will include the following: setting suitable aims and the strategic framework for the Academy; agreeing educational priorities with the Headteacher and the staff; sharing with the Headteacher and staff responsibility for the curriculum; ensuring that the agreed curriculum is taught and that targets for student achievement are set; setting and monitoring the budget; overall responsibility for staffing decisions; approving school policies; appointing school staff; preparing an annual report.
4. Governors are expected to give up some time to the following: Attending meetings of the Governing Body at least once a term; reading papers in preparation for these meetings; taking part in termly committee meetings, attending annual strategy days; serving on appointments panels from time to time; attending school functions; attending training sessions; keeping themselves informed of both national and local policies and priorities for education.
5. Governors are strongly encouraged to participate in induction training and other training opportunities available.
6. Being a governor is an opportunity for personal development and mental stimulation; the satisfaction of being part of a dedicated team; the opportunity to meet new people; interesting and rewarding work; fulfilment from helping young people.
7. Academies are charitable companies limited by guarantee. Rather than being directly funded and accountable to the local authority, they are funded and accountable to the Secretary of State.
8. Academy governing bodies are not subject to the governance regulations (i.e. constitution, powers, duties and procedures) in the Guide to the Law. Instead, these are determined by the Articles of Association. However, academies are still subject to the law on employment, equalities, admissions and special educational needs and are required to follow the same rules over pupil exclusions as maintained schools; Academies have an Academy Trust which is responsible for the land and assets of an academy. It is possible for the members of the Trust Body and the governing body to be the same; Academy governors are the direct employers of staff, have direct health and safety responsibilities, are the school's admission authority and are responsible for ensuring an annual external financial audit; Some services previously provided by the local authority, such as SEN support for non-statemented pupils, behavioural support, legal services and school improvement services will have to be bought in or procured elsewhere.

9. All academies are charitable companies limited by guarantee and as such have a Trust Body. The academy trust is responsible for the running of the academy and has control over the land and other assets. Any charitable body has two groups involved in the corporate governance of the organisation: Directors and Members. It is usual for all existing governors to become 'Directors' (also known as 'Governors'). Some or all of the governing body also become 'Members' of the Trust Body. Members have a number of additional statutory rights such as the right to appoint Directors and receive accounts.
10. The Memorandum & Articles of Association together with further governance information can be accessed at <http://www.hendonschool.co.uk/ourschool/governance/>
11. The Governance Handbook can be accessed at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-handbook>
12. All Governors are appointed and/or elected subject to Disclosure & Barring Service checks.
13. Parents who, at the time of the election, work at the school for more than 500 hours in the school year are not eligible to be elected as parent governors. They may vote in the election of parent governors and are eligible for election as staff governors.

Publicly available information – National Database of Governors – Get information about schools

The following information about maintained school governors, academy trust members, academy trustees and local governors will be published on the DfE Get information about schools' website. More information can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/national-database-of-governors>

Published details include:

- Full name (including title)
- Appointing body (for example board, foundation, parents etc.)
- Date of appointment
- Date term of office ends (or ended, if this was in the last year)
- In **maintained schools**: whether he or she is the chair of governors or a member of the governing body
- In **academies**: whether he or she is a trust member, a trustee, the chair of trustees or, in the case of MATs, a local governor on a local governing body

Unpublished information held by the DfE

The DfE will also collect a direct email address for the chair, and governors':

- Postcodes
- Dates of birth
- Previous names
- Nationalities

This information will not be published. It will be stored securely on the system and access will be restricted to a small number of people who need it to fulfil their official responsibilities.