



Information sheet for school governors

The governing body has a strategic role as opposed to operational role. They set strategic direction, ensure accountability, and monitor and evaluate to promote school improvement and raise standards and achievement.

The governing body:

- sets strategic direction, objectives, targets and policies;
- reviews progress against the budget, plans and targets;
- approves the school budget;
- acts as a critical friend to the principal and leadership team by providing support and challenge; and
- appoints the principal.

Although governors do not make unannounced visits, they are encouraged to visit the school for a range of events and link meetings outside of the formal meeting structure. In order to perform this role well, a governor is expected to:

- get to know the school, including by visiting the school during school hours, and gain a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses;
- attend link governor meetings regularly;
- attend induction training and regular relevant training and development events;
- attend meetings and read all the papers before the meeting;
- act in the best interests of all the students in the school; and
- behave in a professional manner as set down in the governing body's code of conduct, including acting in strict confidence.

At Uxbridge High School, the categories of governors are:

- Staff governors
- Parent governors (elected by parents of students registered at the school)
- Member governors (appointed by the governing body)
- Community governors (appointed by the governing body from the local community)
- Partnership governors (nominated by parents and local community)

Under usual circumstances you should expect to spend the equivalent of around 10-15 days a year on your governing responsibilities: the top end of this commitment (which equates to about half a day per week in term time) is most relevant to the chair and others with key roles. Initially your commitment is most likely to be nearer 10 days per year. However, there may be periods when time commitment may increase, e.g. when recruiting a principal. Some longstanding governors may tell you that they spend far more time than this on school business; however it is fairly common for governors to undertake additional volunteering roles over and above governance.

Under Section 50 of the Employment Rights Act 1996, if you are employed you are entitled to "reasonable time off" to undertake public duties which includes school governance. This is not defined in law and you will need to negotiate with your employer how much time you will be allowed.

The governing body and school will offer all governors the opportunity to attend training courses to assist them in fulfilling their role.

There are a number of sources of information if you want to find out more about becoming a school governor.

- Contact the principal, chair of governors or clerk to governors for more information about the role and the school, or speak to one of the existing school governors (contact the school if you would like to do this and we can arrange for someone to call you)
- Visit the following websites:
www.governor.net.co.uk, www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education



Additional information for prospective parent governors

The governing body is made up of governors who are representative of the school's community. 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 schools' governing bodies. They play a major part in a school's community and can help to ensure that the governing body keeps a clear focus on making sure that the school provides an effective, safe and stimulating learning environment for all students.

The role of a parent governor is no different to that of the other governors. They have the same equal status and role to fulfil. The governors from each 'stakeholder' category are representative of the stakeholder groups, not representatives of the stakeholder groups. They cannot be mandated by any group to take any particular course of action or decision. The first loyalty of all governors should be to their school and the community it serves.

Parent governors are representative of parents and therefore have a responsibility to communicate parents' views to the governing body as far as they are able. However, they are not delegates obliged to get voting instructions on every item on the agenda and to vote in accordance with the views of some or all of the parent body. If an issue comes to a vote, parent governors must vote for what they personally believe to be in the best interests of the school. Objectivity is essential as parent governors are not there to promote the interests of their own children, but of all children.

Parents recorded as having parental responsibility are eligible to stand or vote in the election as parent governors except where:

- they work 500 hours or more at the school during a school year;
- they are elected members of the local authority;
- and they meet the criteria which exclude anybody from qualifying as a governor (see nomination form).

No special qualifications are required, although enthusiasm, commitment and an interest in education are essential qualities to bring to a governor post. It also helps to be a good listener, taking time to understand the views of different people. The term of office of a parent governor is four years.

To stand as a candidate in any election, you will need to complete the nomination form and return it to the school before the deadline specified. Part of the form will be used to assist parents with voting if an election is required.