

SOME QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS FOR PROSPECTIVE PARENT GOVERNORS

What is the composition of the Governing Body?

2 parent governors,
1 staff governor
1 headteacher
1 local authority governor
7 foundation governors - total 12 governors

A list of governors is posted on the school website.

The Clerk to the Governors (Lynn Adey) attends governors' meetings, and other staff are sometimes invited to advise some of the Committee meetings.

How much time will it take up?

Meetings of the Governing Body are held once a term (6 times a year) from 6.30 - 8.30 pm. Committees usually meet once a term, from about 6.00 pm for an hour or so. There are occasional evening (7.00 – 9.00 pm) training sessions.

You will need to spend some time reading the agenda, the minutes and other papers to prepare for a meeting. Governor appointments are for a period of four years.

Can I get help to understand what happens at meetings?

Yes: the Chair will meet new governors before their first meeting to talk through the agenda. We will also provide you with another governor as a “mentor” to help you through the first few meetings.

There is also induction training provided by Northamptonshire Governor Services and other outside providers to help you to understand how governing bodies operate and you should try to attend the training which take place on either two Saturday morning sessions or three evening sessions.

Do I get paid for being a governor?

No. All school governors are unpaid volunteers.

What do governors actually do?

Governors are responsible for the strategic direction of the school: they make long term decisions about the progress and development of the school.

Governors help to appoint the senior staff, they make decisions about the school's budget, they decide on policies for every aspect of the school and they set targets for pupil achievement and attendance. Governors ensure that the school provides the highest standard of education for **every child**.

Can I talk to parents or other people about what goes on in meetings?

You can talk about matters in a very general way, but you must not identify any individual member of staff or any child.

As the governing body acts as a “corporate body” you cannot talk about any differences of opinion during the meeting, you can only report the final decision of the governing body. Part of the agenda is strictly confidential (it covers discipline, exclusions and similar items) and you must not talk about anything discussed in that section.

Governors are asked to agree to a Code of Conduct (a copy is on the school website) that will be explained at your first meeting.

What are the benefits of becoming a governor?

You will learn how the school manages its budget, personnel and buildings, and how school policies are developed.

Are there any restrictions on becoming a governor?

Governors must be over 18 years of age; not be bankrupt, nor have served a long prison sentence nor have been disqualified from working with children.

All governors are required to sign a declaration to this effect and a disclosure and barring service (DBS) Check will be carried out.

If I enjoy being a governor here, can I become a governor of other schools?

Yes, you can be a member of another school governing body, but you cannot be a member of more than two governing bodies.

As an effective parent governor you should:

- help to decide the priorities for improving the school
- make yourself available to parents and listen to other parents' opinions and take account of them as you contribute to governors' decisions
- work in partnership with the Headteacher, senior leadership team and cooperatively with other governors to raise standards and improve outcomes for all children
- prepare for meetings by reading papers beforehand
- take responsibility for your own learning and development as a governor including attending training
- attend full governing body and relevant committee meetings promptly, regularly, and for the full time
- read briefings and newsletters for governors; present a balanced view of issues representing different sections of the community
- promote the interests of the school in the wider community
- be loyal to the decisions made by the governing body
- respect the confidentiality of governing body affairs
- never promise to 'solve a problem' on your own
- never press your own child's case at the expense of others
- declare an interest and withdraw from any meeting where you, a partner or close relative or associate stands to gain, or where you are so close to a matter discussed it is difficult to be impartial
- have regard to the broader responsibilities as a governor of a public institution in regard to promoting accountability for the actions and performance of the governing body