



Becoming a School Governor

The Main Purpose of Governance

The purpose of governance is to provide confident, strategic leadership and to create robust accountability, oversight and assurance for educational and financial performance. All boards, no matter what type of schools or how many schools they govern, have three core functions:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the performance management of staff; and
- Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent.

Source: Governance Handbook. For academies, multi-academy trusts and maintained schools January 2017

Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction

Governing bodies are the key strategic decision-making body in every school. It is their job to set the school's strategic framework. This includes ensuring the school has a long-term strategic vision – including for the type of school that will offer them most opportunities. The governing body should agree the strategic priorities, aims and objectives for the school and sign off the policies, plans and targets for how to achieve them. They should check on progress and review regularly their strategic framework for the school in the light of that progress.

Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the performance management of staff

Governing bodies should support and strengthen the school's leadership in the day-to-day running of the school, including the performance management of teachers. Governing bodies should play a strategic role, focusing strongly on holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of its pupils, whilst avoiding being drawn into direct involvement in operational matters. It is essential to have skilled governors, but equally important to emphasise that the skills required are those to create robust accountability, not to do the school's job for it. They do this by:

- Asking the right questions
- Understanding the importance of objective data

- Using different sources of data – Ofsted Data dashboard, Performance Tables, the online services: ‘Compare School Performance’ and ‘Analyse School Performance’ (which has replaced RAISEonline), school’s internal pupil data
- Visiting the school

Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent.

Governing boards are responsible for making sure their school’s money is well spent. They should do this by making sure they have at least one governor with specific skills and experience of financial matters, and by asking questions such as:

- Are we allocating our resources in line with our strategic priorities?
 - Are we making full use of all our assets and efficient use of all our financial resources?
 - Are other schools buying things cheaper or getting better results with less spending per pupil?
 - How can we get better value for money from our budget? Features of effective governance
- Source: A Competency Framework for Governance, January 2017

Instrument of Government

Under the School’s Instrument of Government, the Governing Body is comprised of 9 Governors in total, as follows:

| | |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| 7 Foundation Governors | (Appointed and may be removed by the Bishop of Clifton ¹) |
| 1 Local Authority Governor | (Nominated by Gloucester City Council) |
| 2 Parent Governors | (Elected by parents) |
| The Headteacher | (Ex-officio) |
| 1 Staff Governor | (Elected by Staff of the School) |

(The term ‘Ex-Officio’ is used here to describe someone who is entitled to be a governor of the school because of his/her job role).

Governors serve for a period of 4 years but may be re-elected / re-appointed at the end of their term of office.

For more information about being a school governor, visit:

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/education-and-learning/become-a-school-governor/> or contact the Clerk to Governors: clerk@st-josephs.gloucs.sch.uk

Who can stand and vote as a parent governor?

Parent governors are elected by parents of children at the school.

The definition of a parent in education legislation includes:

¹ or any other person exercising Ordinary jurisdiction in his name including, where the See is vacant or impeded, the person or persons on whom the governance of the See has devolved.

- all natural parents whether they are married or not;
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person and;
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person.

and

- has a child on roll at the time of election.

Further guidance on the definitions of parent, parental responsibility and care of a child or young person can be obtained from the Governor Services Team on (01452) 427802/427803.

Parent governors generally serve for four years unless stated otherwise in the school's Instrument of Government. If a parent governor ceases to be the parent of a child registered at the school within the period for which they have been elected, he/she may continue to be a governor for the rest of his/her term of office.

The Role of Parent Governors?

- Parent governors should play a full and active part in the governing board but, parent governors, like other governors, do not have the power to act as individuals or as a group, unless specifically authorised to do so by the governing board.
- Parent governors are not on the governing board simply to represent the interest of parents, or to be the only link with parents because all governors must have regard to these issues.
- Parent governors have the same rights, responsibilities and duties as other governors.

Summary of Disqualification Regulations

A governor must be aged 18 or over at the time of his or her election or appointment and cannot be a registered pupil at the school. A person cannot hold more than one governorship at the same school.

A person is disqualified from holding or from continuing to hold office as a governor or associate member if he or she:

- fails to attend the governing body meetings - without the consent of the governing body - for a continuous period of six months, beginning with the date of the first meeting missed (not applicable to ex officio governors);
- is the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order, an interim bankruptcy restrictions order, a debt relief restrictions order, or an interim debt relief restrictions order;
- has had his or her estate sequestered and the sequestration has not been discharged, annulled or reduced;
- is subject to:
 - i) a disqualification order or disqualification undertaking under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986;
 - ii) a disqualification order under the Company Directors Disqualification (Northern Ireland) Order 2002;
 - iii) a disqualification undertaking accepted under the Company Directors Disqualification (Northern Ireland) Order 2002;
 - iv) an order made under Section 429(2)(b) of the Insolvency Act 1986 (failure to pay under a County Court administration order);
- has been removed from the office of trustee for a charity by an order made by the Charity Commission or Commissioners or High Court on the grounds of any misconduct or mismanagement in the administration of the charity, or under Section 34 of the Charities and

Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 from being concerned in the management or control of any body;

- is included in the list of people considered by the Secretary of State as unsuitable to work with children or young people;
- is barred from any regulated activity relating to children;
- is subject to a direction of the Secretary of State under section 142 of the Education Act 2002 or section 128 of the Education and Skills Act 2008;
- is disqualified from working with children or from registering for child-minding or providing day-care;
- is disqualified from being an independent school proprietor, teacher or employee by the Secretary of State;
- has been sentenced to three months or more in prison (without the option of a fine) in the five years before becoming a governor or since becoming a governor;
- has received a prison sentence of two and a half years or more in the 20 years before becoming a governor;
- has at any time received a prison sentence of five years or more;
- has been convicted and fined for causing a nuisance or disturbance on school or educational premises during the five years prior to or since appointment or election as a governor;
- refuses a request by the clerk to make an application to the Disclosure and Barring Service for a criminal records certificate.

A person is disqualified from election or appointment as a parent governor if they are an elected member of the LA or if they work at the school for more than 500 hours in any school year.

Full details of the Regulations covering the disqualification criteria can be found in [The School Governance \(Constitution\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#).