

## GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOL GOVERNORS

### The Role of the Parent Governor

Parent governors can make a valuable contribution to the strategic governance of the school. You will be able to offer your enthusiasm and commitment - and as a parent, you will understand other parents' concerns.

Although elected by the parent body, you are not mandated to represent their views at meetings. You are a representative parent not a parent representative. You may reflect other parents' views to the governing body, and this will involve communicating with and getting to know other parents. All governors make their decisions and vote according to what they believe to be in the best interests of the pupils and the school.

There may be times when you are approached by parents with individual concerns. In this case, it would not be appropriate to take the issue to the governing body and you should encourage the parents to take the matter up with their child's class teacher or the head.

### Understand the role

All school governors contribute to the work of the governing body in ensuring high standards of achievement for all children and young people in the school by:

- setting the school's vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils; and
- overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

All governors are equal, and parent governors, along with all other types of governor, should take part in all aspects of the work of the governing body providing you do not have a personal interest in the item under discussion. As a parent governor, you bring a unique insight through your first-hand experience of the school.

### Effective governance

#### **To effectively fulfil the role, parent governors:**

- Have equal rights with all other governors.
- Should 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.
- Should follow the agreed procedure for putting items on the agenda.
- Should feel free to express your own personal views, it being recognised that this is not necessarily the view of the majority of parents. You should report in good faith any widely held parent views, even if in a vote you decide to vote differently.
- Take responsibility for your own learning and development as a governor including attending training.
- Should respect the confidentiality of governing body affairs and be aware of the sensitivity of governing body meeting discussions. You should clarify after such discussions which items can be reported and which items the governing body wish to remain unreported until the minutes of the meeting have been confirmed or are deemed confidential.
- Attend governing body meetings regularly and play an active role in committees and decision-making.
- Consider how the governing body communicates with parents - could you help them to improve links?

## Governor Development Service

- How accessible is the school – how easy is it for parents to go into school to discuss things with the headteacher or teachers? Could you give feedback to help the school be more open and welcoming?
- How accessible are the governors – do parents ever get the opportunity to meet with governors; do they know how to get in touch with the chair of governors if they need to? Could you encourage the governing body to be more visible?
- Learn how the school handles complaints and read the complaints policy. If another parent approaches you with a complaint, advise them to speak to the headteacher.
- Always support the decisions of the full governing body. Have your say on decisions in meetings and vote in the way you wish; but then support the outcomes of votes – even if you disagree with them.

### **Practical ways to achieve a balance between being an impartial representative parent and the personal interests of your child**

- Never press your own child's case at the expense of others.
- Always observe confidentiality. You will get to know a lot of highly sensitive and confidential information – do not discuss it with anyone who is not a governor. Remember, a governor can be suspended for serious breaches of confidentiality.
- Never promise to 'solve a problem' on your own.
- Be wary of bringing an individual issue to meetings without following the agreed procedures.
- Abide by the agreed protocol regarding agenda items and any other business.
- Keep yourself aware of parental views and concerns.
- Play an active part in governor meetings.

### **Legal and recommended restrictions**

There are no legal restrictions relating to parent governors, however parent governors should not:

- Have involvement in any hearing or case where you have a personal interest or involvement.
- Use the meeting as an opportunity to raise any personal issue relating solely to your own child. If in doubt seek advice from the chair of governors.
- Confuse the role of governor and parent volunteer. You may also help out in school in a voluntary capacity, for example, assisting in the classroom. In this capacity you are acting as a volunteer and not as a governor.

## Support Available

Although this is a very delicate role, there is ample support and training available.

Resources	How To Access
Welcome Pack for all new governors	Sent to all new governors once GDS is notified of a new appointment.
Governor E-Learning (GEL) module – Key Functions of the Governing Body	Access to GEL is included in the Service Order. The link to the module is: <a href="http://www.elc-gel.org/learning-modules/key-functions-of-the-governing-body-2014/">http://www.elc-gel.org/learning-modules/key-functions-of-the-governing-body-2014/</a>
Leicestershire Governor Training and Development Programme	Copies sent to all new governors and available on EIS. Induction training is recommended as a minimum.
Leicestershire Governor Newsletter	Produced termly and made available on EIS.
Governor Announcements	Announcements are posted on EIS throughout the year. They update and inform governing bodies about changes in legislation and new developments.

## Team details

If you have any queries relating to courses, bookings or need general advice, please contact:

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