

## **Role of Parent Governor**

As a parent governor you hold the unique position of having a parental viewpoint. Through the children you will have first-hand experience of the curriculum and how the school is perceived from the consumers' point of view. You will be able to bring this perspective to the strategic management of the school.

As a parent governor you do not have to vote in a particular way because you have been pressed to do so by parents. Objectivity, however, is essential. You are not there to promote the interests of your own children but all children. Parent governors are elected by other parents and it is important to establish a rapport with the parental body that elected you, whilst continuing to maintain a strategic approach to school governance.

### **As an effective parent governor you:**

- 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 Head Teacher, 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

### **Time commitment**

- Governors are expected to attend all full governing body meetings and committee meetings as appropriate.
- Each governing body must meet at least three times per year (once per term) but some meet twice per term. 7

- Each school is different in respect of their schedule of meetings and you should clarify with your governing body the time commitment required. In addition to meetings you will also be expected to visit the school in action.
- Although you will have a good knowledge of the school through your child's experience, formal visits as a governor are an essential part of your role, particularly in relation to monitoring and evaluating.
- Note: a governor is disqualified from holding office if they fail to attend 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. In addition to meetings, you will also be expected to visit the school in action.
- This is an essential part of your role, particularly in relation to monitoring and evaluating. Often governors are invited to attend school events such as assemblies and sports days.

### **Time off from work**

- Under employment law, employers must give employees who are school governors, reasonable time off to carry out their duties. The employee and employer have to agree on what is reasonable. Employers may give time off with pay but do not have to do so.

### **Communication and confidentiality**

- You have a significant part to play in raising the awareness of the role of governors amongst parents and in enhancing home-school communication in general. There are several ways you could do this which might include, for example:
  - contributing to a governors' column in the parents newsletter or a governors' page on the school website
  - playing a part in drafting surveys to seek parents' views and analysing the feedback
- You can also help to ensure that the governing body keeps a clear focus on ensuring that the school provides an effective, safe and stimulating environment for all children. If, however, an issue comes to a vote, you should vote on the basis of what you consider to be in the best interests of the school.
- The work of the governing body is recorded in the minutes which should be made available to all parents apart from confidential items.
- As a parent governor you are free to report any decision in advance of publication of the minutes if you are sure that you are not breaching a confidence of the governing body and that the information you are presenting is accurate and that it is appropriate for you to report the decision.
- Note - you would be breaching the confidence of the governing body if you reported how individuals voted, comments made by individuals or individual discussions.

## Complaints

- Parent governors are not there to provide an alternative route to addressing individual parental concerns, although if you do become aware of more widespread disquiet about the school's policy and practice then you should alert the Head Teacher and chair. Sometimes a parent governor may be approached with a complaint.
- If a parent has a concern or complaint which is very specific to their child, you should, if approached, advise them to follow the school procedure; do not get involved. It is not your role to hear the complaint details. They should try to resolve their concerns by speaking to the appropriate teacher. If the parent remains dissatisfied with the outcome, suggest that they make an appointment to speak to the Head Teacher or head of year. You should guide parents regarding appropriate lines of action, making them aware of the school's complaints policy and procedures. If a parent raises issues of general concern with you, you should suggest that they make these known to the Head Teacher.
- Being a parent governor does not disqualify you from your usual rights as a parent, including making a complaint.