

School Governor Information Pack

Make a Difference to Children's Lives

School governance is one of the most rewarding voluntary roles available. School governors and academy trustees play a vital role in helping schools provide the best possible education for children and young people.

There is a continuing need for committed volunteers from a wide range of backgrounds, experiences and professions to support schools through effective governance.

Serving on a governing board provides opportunities for personal development, the acquisition of new skills, and the opportunity to use existing skills in a different environment. It can help develop experience in areas such as leadership, strategic planning, finance, project management, risk management and decision making.

Benefits of becoming a governor include:

- Making a positive difference to the lives of children and young people.
- Supporting your local community.
- Developing leadership and strategic skills.
- Working with people from a variety of professional backgrounds.
- Gaining valuable governance and decision-making experience.
- Being part of one of the largest volunteer groups in the country.

What Makes a Good Governor?

Effective governors come from all walks of life and bring a range of different experiences and perspectives.

Good governors will have:

- A commitment to improving outcomes for children and young people.
- A willingness to learn.
- The confidence to ask questions and seek assurance.
- Good listening skills.
- The ability to work as part of a team.
- Integrity and sound judgement.
- A commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion.
- Sufficient time to fulfil the role.
- Commitment to the school's vision and values.

You do not need to have worked in education to become a governor. Schools benefit from individuals with a wide range of professional, community and life experiences.

Who Can Apply?

Anyone who is passionate about supporting children's education can apply.

This may include:

- Parents and carers.
- Grandparents.
- Local businesspeople and employers.
- Professionals from any sector.

- Community and voluntary group members.
- Faith group representatives.
- Retired individuals.
- Young professionals looking to gain governance experience.

No specialist knowledge is required before appointment and full training and support are available. Kirklees Governor Services provides a comprehensive programme of training and development opportunities to support governors in their role.

Governor Role Requirements

To become a governor, you must:

- Be aged 18 years or over.
- Satisfy the relevant eligibility requirements.
- Successfully complete any required safeguarding and recruitment checks, including a DBS check where applicable.
- Be willing to undertake training and development.

School governance is a voluntary role and governors are not paid. However, governing boards may reimburse reasonable expenses in accordance with their Governor Allowances Policy. You do not need to be a parent to become a governor.

What Do Governors Do?

Governors work collectively as part of a governing board.

The role of governance is strategic rather than operational. Governors do not become involved in the day-to-day running of the school as this is the responsibility of the Headteacher and senior leaders.

Governors provide:

(i) Strategic Leadership

Governors help to:

- Set the school's vision, ethos and strategic direction.
- Establish long-term priorities and objectives.
- Ensure resources are used effectively.
- Support improvement and school development.

(ii) Accountability and Assurance

Governors hold school leaders to account by:

- Monitoring educational performance and outcomes.
- Reviewing financial performance and value for money.
- Ensuring statutory duties are fulfilled.
- Monitoring safeguarding, attendance and pupil welfare.
- Seeking assurance that risks are managed appropriately.

(iii) Stakeholder Engagement

Governors support effective engagement with:

- Parents and carers.
- Pupils.
- Staff.
- The wider community.
- Relevant partners and stakeholders.

Governor Commitment

The National Governance Association estimates that governors typically commit between 5 and 8 hours per month, although this varies depending on the role undertaken and the needs of the school.

Governors are normally expected to:

- **Attend Meetings** - Most governing boards meet at least once each term.
- Additional committee meetings may also take place throughout the academic year.
- **Read Papers** - Meeting agendas and supporting papers are circulated in advance and governors are expected to read and consider these before attending meetings.
- **Undertake Training** - Governors should participate in appropriate induction and ongoing development opportunities.
- **Visit the School** - Governors may undertake monitoring visits linked to school improvement priorities and governance responsibilities.
- **Act Collectively** - Governors make decisions collectively as part of the governing board and support agreed decisions once made.

Most governors serve a four-year term of office, although this can vary depending on the category of governor.

What Happens at Governor Meetings?

Governor meetings are usually held outside school hours, although some schools may hold meetings during the school day.

Meetings are chaired by the Chair of Governors and supported by a Clerk to Governors.

The Clerk:

- Organises meetings.
- Prepares agendas and paperwork.
- Records minutes.
- Provides procedural advice to the governing board.

Governors are expected to contribute to discussions, review information, ask questions and participate in decision-making.

Types of Governors

Co-opted Governors (Maintained Schools) - Co-opted governors are appointed by the governing board because they possess skills, knowledge or experience that will support the effective governance and success of the school.

Local Authority Governors - Local Authority Governors are nominated by the Local Authority and appointed by the governing board.

Applicants normally complete an application process and are selected based on the skills and experience they can bring to governance.

Parent Governors - Parent governors are elected by parents of registered pupils at the school.

They bring the parent perspective to the governing board whilst sharing the same responsibilities as all other governors.

Staff Governors - Staff governors are elected by school staff and contribute a staff perspective to governing board discussions.

Foundation Governors - Foundation governors are appointed in schools with a religious character and help preserve and develop the school's ethos and values.

Academy Local Governors - Many academy trusts have local governing bodies or local committees which support governance at school level.

The responsibilities delegated to local governors vary between academy trusts.

Academy Trustees - Trustees are responsible for governance at academy trust level.

They are both charity trustees and company directors and have specific legal responsibilities for the strategic leadership and governance of the trust.

How Are Governors Appointed?

Appointment arrangements vary depending on the category of governor.

Parent Governors - Parent governors are elected by parents of pupils registered at the school.

Staff Governors - Staff governors are elected by employees of the school.

Local Authority Governors - Local Authority Governors are appointed following nomination by the Local Authority and appointment by the governing board.

Co-opted Governors - Co-opted governors are appointed by the governing board based on the skills and experience required.

Foundation Governors - Foundation governors are appointed by the relevant religious authority or foundation body.

Academy Governors and Trustees - Appointment arrangements are determined by the academy trust's governance arrangements and governing documents.

Term of Office

Most governors serve a four-year term of office, although this can vary depending on the category of appointment.

Governors who remain eligible may seek reappointment at the end of their term and may resign at any time.

Time Off Work

Employment legislation provides employees with the right to reasonable unpaid time off work to undertake public duties, including serving as a school governor.

Many employers actively support staff who undertake governance roles and recognise the transferable skills and experience gained through governance.

Interested in Becoming a Governor?

If you would like to make a positive difference to the lives of children and young people and believe you have skills, experience or enthusiasm to contribute, we would be delighted to hear from you.

Further information and application details can be found via the Kirklees Council School Governors webpage or by contacting the Governance Service.