



WHAT DOES A GOVERNOR DO?

Role of a school governor in Trust schools: To contribute to the work of the School Standards Board in ensuring high standards of achievement for all children and young people in the school by:

- With Senior Leaders, monitor and evaluate the school's progress towards achieving the Trust's vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- Challenge and support the Senior Leaders regarding the educational performance of the school and its pupils;

Activities: As part of the standards board team, a governor is expected to:

1. Contribute to the strategic discussions at School Standards Board meetings which, with the Senior Leaders, determine:
 - How the school achieves the vision and ethos of the Trust;
 - Challenge and support the Senior Leaders to achieve ambitious strategic priorities and targets for the school;
 - That all children, including those with special educational needs, have access to a broad and balanced curriculum;
2. Hold the Senior Leaders to account by monitoring the school's performance. This includes:-
 - Agreeing the outcomes from the school's self-evaluation and ensuring they are used to inform the priorities in the school development plan;
 - Considering all relevant data and feedback provided on request by school leaders and external sources on all aspects of school performance;
 - Asking challenging questions of school leaders;
 - Ensuring senior leaders have arranged for the required audits to be carried out and receiving the results of those audits;
 - Ensure the school is operating effectively according to statutory and agreed policies;
 - Acting as a link governor on a specific issue, making enquiries of the relevant staff, and reporting to the School Standards Board on the progress on the relevant school priority;
 - Listening to and reporting to the school's stakeholders: pupils, parents, staff and the wider community, including local employers.
3. Ensure the school staff have the resources and support they require to do their jobs well, including the necessary expertise in business management, external advice where necessary, effective appraisal and continuing professional development, and suitable premises, and that the way in which those resources are used has impact.
4. When required, serve on panels of governors to:
 - Support the appointment of all school staff;
 - Support the appraisal process of staff;
 - Hear appeals about pupil exclusions.

The role of governor is largely a thinking and questioning role, not a doing role.

A governor does not:

- Write school policies
- Undertake audits of any sort – whether financial or health and safety – even if the governor has the relevant professional experience;
- Spend much time with the pupils of the school – if you want to work directly with the children, there are many other valuable voluntary roles within the school;
- Fundraise – that is the role of the PTA – the School Standards Board should consider income streams and the potential for income generation, but not carry out fundraising tasks;
- Undertake classroom observations to make judgements on the quality of teaching – the School Standards Board monitors the quality of teaching in the school by requiring data from the senior staff and external sources;
- Do the job of the school staff – if there is not enough capacity within the paid staff team to carry out the necessary tasks, the School Standards Board needs to consider and send recommendations to the Trust for rectifying this.

As you become more experienced as a governor, there are other roles you could volunteer for which would increase your degree of involvement and level of responsibility.

In order to perform the role well, a governor is expected to:

- Get to know the school, including by visiting the school occasionally during school hours, and gain a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses;
- Attend induction training and regular relevant training and development events;
- Attend meetings and read all the papers before the meeting;
- Act in the best interest of all the pupils of the school;
- Behave in a professional manner, as set down in the standard board's code of conduct, including acting in strict confidence.

Time commitment: Under usual circumstances, you should expect to spend between 10 and 20 days a year on your governing responsibilities, although this is the top end of this commitment. Initially, we would expect your commitment to be nearer 10 days a year. However, there may be periods when the time commitment may increase, for example when recruiting staff. Some longstanding governors may tell you that they spend far more time than this on school business; however, it is fairly common for governors to undertake additional volunteering roles over and above governance.

Under Section 50 of the *Employment Rights Act 1996*, if you are employed, then you are entitled to 'reasonable time off' to undertake public duties; this includes school governance. 'Reasonable time off' is not defined in law, and you will need to negotiate with your employer how much time you will be allowed.

Expenses Governors may receive out of pocket expenses incurred as a result of fulfilling their role as governor, and NGA recommends that a governing body should have such an expenses policy. Payments can cover incidental expenses, such as travel and childcare, but not loss of earnings.

Safeguarding In line with statutory expectations, governors will be expected to undertake a Disclosure and Barring Service check for safeguarding purposes.