

## Becoming a Governor

*School governors are people who want to make a positive contribution to children's education.*

Governors are one of the largest volunteer forces in the country and have an important part to play in raising school standards. The role of the governing body is absolutely key to the effectiveness of a school. Time and time again Ofsted (the national inspection body for schools) has noted that the most effective schools demonstrate effective leadership and management - including by the governing body.

### What do governors do?

School governors provide strategic leadership and accountability in schools. The governing body supports the head and staff by positively promoting the work of the school, celebrating its achievements, and working to ensure the best outcomes for the pupils. Governors appoint the head teacher and are involved in the appointment of other staff. In some schools the site is owned by the governing body. Governors hold the main responsibility for finance in schools, and ask questions to check the performance of the school. Working with the head teacher, governors make the tough decisions about balancing resources.

Each individual governor is a member of a governing body, which is established in law as a corporate body. Individual governors may not act independently of the rest of the governing body. Decisions are the joint responsibility of the governing body. So long as they act within the law governors are protected from any financial liability for the decisions they take.

### Recruiting Governors

SGOSS – Governors for Schools was set up in 1999 by the Department for Education to offer free services to volunteers, schools and employers. They are the school governor recruitment experts and their vision is for every school in England to have a diverse and effective governing body driving school improvement.

Visit and register with the SGOSS web site, [SGOSS - Home](#)<sup>[2]</sup>, for comprehensive guidance and information on school governor recruitment - everything you need to know to support governor recruitment for Community/Co-opted, Authority, Parent, Foundation and Sponsorship governor vacancies.

- [Volunteers](#)<sup>[2]</sup>:

Schools need you! Volunteering as a governor is a great way to contribute to your community and use your skills and experience to improve the lives of local children. SGOSS works in partnership with schools and local authorities to match you with the most suitable governor vacancy. We are always on hand to answer your questions and help you through the application process.

- [Schools](#)<sup>[2]</sup>:

Register for a comprehensive guide to governor recruitment - everything you need to help fill your school governor vacancies.

- [Employers](#)<sup>[2]</sup>:

SGOSS has experience working with a wide range of businesses and a proven volunteer brokerage service can match your staff with the schools that need them the most. By working with SGOSS to encourage employee volunteering, you'll be helping to provide schools with access to the vital skills and external perspectives needed to help drive school improvement and pupil attainment. School governance is also a proven skills development opportunity, giving staff the opportunity to test and develop their skills in a unique and challenging environment.

## **What is the role of the governing body?**

The role of the governing body is a strategic one, its key functions are to:

- set the aims and objectives for the school
- set the policies for achieving those aims and objectives
- set the targets for achieving those aims and objectives
- monitor and evaluate the progress the school is making towards achievement of its aims and objectives
- be a source of challenge and support to the headteacher. The headteacher is responsible for the internal organisation, management and control of the school and the implementation of the strategic framework established by the governing body.

## **Who can become a governor?**

Almost anyone over 18 years of age can become a governor. There are no particular qualifications or requirements, other than a willingness to give time to the role and a capacity for working with other people.

## **What will I get out of being a school governor?**

- The knowledge that you have played a part in improving children's education and supported the school's staff.
- A chance to develop new skills and to practise existing ones, such as chairing meetings, speaking in groups, asking questions, making suggestions and appointing staff.
- A chance to help other members of the team, perhaps because they are new, are not used to committee work or need help in learning about the school and about school governance.

## **What makes a good school governor?**

- You care about improving children's educational attainment.
- You want to contribute to the local community.
- You can work corporately and value the contributions of other people who may hold alternative views to your own. You also understand the concept of corporate decision making.
- You accept you might need training.
- You are willing to ask questions.
- You are open to ideas and willing to learn.

## **What can you offer?**

- Enthusiasm and commitment.
- If you are a parent, your own understanding of other parents' concerns, but you don't need to be a parent to be a good school governor.
- Whether you are a parent or not, as a member of the school's community your local knowledge will be valuable: you will have a feel for what is important to people.
- Schools will also find business or other professional skills particularly helpful.

## **Different Categories of Schools and Governors:**

There are different types of school with different categories of governor.

The types of state schools in England are:

- community
- voluntary controlled
- voluntary aided
- foundation
- trust – a type of foundation school

- academies, Free Schools & City Technology Colleges (CTCs) – independent state funded schools

There are also different categories of governor:

- parent
- staff
- community
- foundation
- partnership
- local authority (LA)
- sponsor
- Co-opted

The type of governor you will become depends on your situation; however all governors have the same roles and responsibilities once part of the governing body.

### **Associate member**

Associate members are not governors, and do not have a vote at full governing body meetings. However, they are entitled to attend those meetings and to be sent the papers for them. The definition of associate member is wide and pupils, school staff and people who want to contribute specifically on issues related to their area of expertise (for instance, finance) can be appointed as associate members.