

'JOB DESCRIPTION' FOR SCHOOL GOVERNORS

Governing is a job – it just isn't paid! It is perhaps even more important for voluntary jobs than for paid ones to be clear about the parameters, expectations and limitations.

1. The Role of a School Governor

The role of a school governor is to 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 and supporting the educational performance of the school and its pupils;**
- **Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.**

As part of the governing body team, a governor is expected to:

- Contribute to the strategic discussions at governing body meetings which determine:
- Hold the senior leaders to account by monitoring the school's performance; this includes:
- Ensure the school staff have the resources and support they require to do their jobs well, including the necessary expertise on business management, external advice where necessary, effective appraisal and CPD (Continuing Professional Development), and suitable premises, and that the way in which those resources are used has impact.
- When required, serve on panels of governors to:
 - appoint the Headteacher and other senior leaders;
 - appraise the Headteacher;
 - set the Headteacher's pay and agree the pay recommendations for other staff;
 - hear the second stage of staff grievances and disciplinary matters;
 - hear appeals about pupil exclusion

2. A Governor's Code of Practice

The Governing Body have adopted the National Governor Association Code of Practice which includes sections on: the purpose of the governing body; the role of a governor taking on board commitment; relationships; confidentiality; conflicts of interest and breach of the code.

3. A governor does NOT:

- Write school policies;
- Undertake audits of any sort – whether financial or health & 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 children, there are many other voluntary valuable roles within the school;
- Fundraise – this is the role of the PTA – the governing body 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 governing body monitors the quality of teaching in the school by requiring data from the senior staff and from 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 governing body need to consider and rectify 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 (e.g. as a chair of a committee). This document does not cover the additional roles taken on by the chair, vice-chair and chairs of committees.

4. In order to perform this 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 (full governing body meetings and committee meetings) and read all the papers before the meeting;
- act in the best interest of all the pupils of the school; and
- behave in a professional manner, as set down in the governing body's code of conduct, including acting in strict confidence.

5. Time commitment:

If you become a governor, you'd be expected to serve for four years.

Under usual circumstances, governors would expect to spend between 10 and 20 days a year on governing responsibilities; the top end of this commitment is most relevant to the Chair and others with key roles, such as chairs of committees.

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.

6. Expenses:

Governors may receive out of pocket expenses incurred as a result of fulfilling their role as governor, based on the governing body expenses policy. Payments can cover incidental expenses, such as travel and childcare, but not loss of earnings.

7. DBS (CRB) checks for governors

From September 2012 the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 brought in a new definition of regulated activity (scaling back of regulated activity to focus on work which involves close and unsupervised contact with vulnerable groups including children). School Governors and Volunteers are no longer in regulated activity and will not be DBS checked as part of the appointment process.

It will be a Headteacher's responsibility from September 2012 to decide if a Governor is undertaking regulated work and if so, an enhanced DBS will be applied for. School should undertake a risk assessment to use their professional judgment and experience when deciding whether to seek an enhanced DBS for any volunteer. Governors should be treated in the same basis as their volunteers, that is enhanced DBS check (which will include a barred list check) would only be requested if the governors will be engaging in regulated activity.

Whilst governors would not, where supervised, be engaged in regulated activity and there is no legal requirement to obtain a DBS certificate, the school may obtain a DBS certificate (without a barred list check). The Governing Body has agreed that this is the position for governors at the school and governors will be DBS checked on appointment and reappointment.

8. How are Governors appointed?

All maintained school governing bodies must be constituted under the 2012 Constitution Regulations by September 2015. These regulations provide that the minimum size of the governing body is seven members and the governing body in community schools must include:

- at least two parent governors;
- the Headteacher, unless the Headteacher decides not to be a governor;
- only one staff governor;
- only one local authority governor
- The governing body may also appoint as many co-opted governors as it considers necessary.

The schools Instrument of Government sets out its agreed composition.

Governors are appointed in different ways dependent on the category of governor i.e. parent and staff governors are elected (where more nominations than places available); LA governors are nominated by the LA and appointed by the Governing body; co-opted governors are appointed by the governing body.

9. Eligibility/Disqualification Criteria

Nomination papers will outline the eligibility and disqualification criteria in relation to the appointment of staff and parent governors. All governors will be asked to complete a declaration form in relation to the disqualification criteria.