

Guidance on becoming a Governor and what being a Governor involves

Why do Schools have Boards of Governors?

Board of governors (also known as governing bodies) are responsible for the conduct of the school and they are the body who are accountable for ensuring high standards of achievement for all children and young people in their school.

For maintained schools this will be reflected in legislation and for Academies within their funding agreements and articles of association as well as relevant legislation.

As an individual governor you will contribute to the work of the board by:

1. Setting the school's/academy's vision, ethos and strategic direction;
2. Holding the headteacher/principal to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff; and
3. Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure that its money is well spent.

These functions underpin the criteria that Ofsted (the Office for Standards in Education) use to judge the effectiveness of governors in maintained schools and academies.

"The role of the board is largely a thinking and questioning role, not a doing role"(NGA – National Governors Association – Welcome to Governance

It is the headteacher's responsibility to manage and control the school underpinned and supported by the strategic framework established by the board.

Governors are recruited to deliver the board's core functions effectively based on their skills, expertise and knowledge.



Activities

As per the 3 core functions stated above and as part of the corporate Board of Governors team you will be expected to:-

1. Contribute to the strategic discussions at board meetings which determine:
 - The vision and ethos of the school;
 - Clear and ambitious strategic priorities and targets for the school;
 - That all pupils/students, including those with special educational needs, have access to a broad and balanced curriculum;
 - The school's budget, including the expenditure of the pupil premium allocation;
 - The school's staffing structure and key staffing policies;
 - The principles to be used by school leaders to set other school policies.
2. Hold the senior leaders to account by monitoring the school's performance, including:
 - Agreeing the outcomes from the school's self-evaluation and ensuring they are used to inform the priorities in the school development plan;
 - Consider 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.
3. Ensure the school staff have the resources and support they require to do their jobs well, including any necessary CPD (Continuing Professional Development) and that the way in which those resources are used has impact on educational outcomes.
4. When required, serve on panels of governors to:
 - Appoint the headteacher and other senior leaders;
 - Appraise the headteacher;
 - Consider pupil exclusions;
 - Sit on a final stage complaints hearing.

Time Commitment

Initially the expectation is that your commitment would be 10 days per year undertaking governor responsibilities. However, this could increase up to 20 days per year (approximately ½ day a week in term time) if you become the chair of governors or chair of a committee. There will be periods when the time commitment may increase, for example when recruiting and appointing a headteacher.

Under section 50 of the Employment Rights Act 1996, if you are employed then you are entitled to “reasonable time off” to undertake governance duties. However, the law does not state what “reasonable time off” is and you will need to negotiate with your employer how much time you will be allowed and whether or not this is with pay, or you will use holiday or time off in lieu.

How to be considered for the role of a governor

If you feel you might have the right level of expertise, skills and knowledge and are able to commit to the time required there are 2 ways to find out about vacancies in your area:-

1. Contact schools in your area direct; or
2. Contact Somerset Governor Services at sgs@somerset.gov.uk giving details of your name, address (to identify the schools in your area) and contact details.