

GUIDANCE ON THE CONDUCT OF PARENT GOVERNOR ELECTIONS

1. This statement sets out guidance in relation to parent governor elections and is based on the relevant Schedules of the School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2003.
2. **Eligibility**
 - a) Parent governors are elected by other parents at the school. All parents (including carers) of registered pupils at the school are eligible to stand for election for parent governorship at the school and to vote for the candidate of their choice.
 - b) The school's admissions register will include a list of parents of pupils at the school.
 - c) Anyone who is an elected member of the Local Authority or who works at the school for more than 500 hours in a school year (i.e. for more than one-third of the hours of a full-time equivalent) is not eligible to be elected or appointed as a parent governor.

3. Returning Officer

Where the school themselves organises the parent governor election it is the head teacher who is the returning officer. The returning officer will be responsible for the conduct of the elections, subject to the procedures set out in this guidance.

4. Publicity and Timing of Elections

Elections to fill vacancies should be held as soon as possible after the vacancy arises.

Whoever is organising the election, will need to decide, and specify in the election publicity:

- who the returning officer will be;
- how nominations should be made. (best practice is to distribute a standard nomination form to all parents with pupils in school and allow 10 school days for the return of nominations).
- when and where the election will be held and what time on the final day of the election voting shall close.
- what voting method will be used if a ballot is required and

5. Nominations

- a) The returning officer will write to parents informing them about the vacancy/ies, the intended election and their right to stand/vote and, in the same letter, inviting nominations.
- b) Parents elected to the post of parent governor must complete a health questionnaire and provide two suitable referees before there are able to take up the post.

- c) Nominees should provide on the nomination form a short statement for circulation to parents in the event an election is required.
- d) If the number of qualified nominees is smaller than, or equal to, the number of vacancies, no ballot is required; those nominated shall be declared as governors elected unopposed.
- e) Schools must make every reasonable effort to fill vacancies through election but where there are fewer parents standing for election than there are places to be filled, the governing body may **appoint** someone. This can be a parent of a former pupil of the school or, if that is not possible, someone who has a child of or under compulsory school age. Governors **cannot** elect or appoint an elected member of the Local Authority or someone who works at the school for more than 500 hours in a school year (at the time of election/appointment). To appoint a parent governor, there must be a minimum of 50 % (rounded up to the nearest whole number) of governors in office present at the governing body meeting.

6. Conduct of the Election

- a) In the event of an election, the returning officer will write to parents giving them further information of the election and its conduct. Details of nominees, numbered ballot papers, the date of the election and the time on the closing day when voting will close, will be specified. Best practice is to allow 5 to 10 school days for votes to be cast.
- b) Voting will proceed on the basis of one vote per parent per vacancy.
- c) The ballot must be a secret ballot.
- d) Ballot papers may be returned either by post or by “pupil post” to a specified and secure central point. If the latter is used, care should be taken to ensure that the returned envelope does not identify the voter.
- e) During the period up to the ballot, the governing body may allow candidates the opportunity to hold meetings for parents and will make accommodation available (if such meetings are requested during the school day – it is for the head teacher to determine the matter). Although headteachers and governors are often best placed to identify parents who would be good prospective governors, care should be taken to ensure that the encouragement to stand for election cannot be interpreted by other parents as canvassing of particular individuals.
- f) A duplicate ballot paper will be issued only if the spoilt ballot paper is produced.

7. The Count

- a) Voting will close at the time specified in the election publicity.
- b) The election will be determined by a straightforward count of votes, i.e. the candidate(s) with the highest number of votes is (are) elected.
- c) There is no requirement as to the minimum number of votes that need to be cast.

- d) The count will be conducted by the returning officer in a suitable place in the school. He/she will allow the candidate(s) or their nominated representative(s) to be present if requested.
 - e) The returning officer will have responsibility for determining the validity of spoilt or dubious ballot papers. This will be done in consultation with the Local Authority in difficult cases.
 - f) In the event of a tie, the returning officer will declare the candidate(s) with the youngest child at the school to be elected. Should the children in question have the same date of birth, the successful candidate(s) shall be selected by drawing lots.
 - g) The returning officer will inform the candidates, parents, governors and the Local Authority of the result of the election.
 - h) The ballot papers will be retained securely for one month in case the result is challenged.
- 8.** A parent governor is still entitled to see out his/her current term of office, when their child leaves the school.