Parent Governor Role Description

**Role of a school governor**

To contribute to the work of the governing board 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 the educational performance of the school and its pupils, overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

**Activities. As part of the governing board team, a governor is expected to:**

1. Contribute to the strategic discussions at governing board meetings which determine:

* the vision and ethos of the school
* clear and 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
* 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; 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
* asking challenging questions of school leaders.
* ensuring senior leaders have developed the required policies and procedures and the school is operating effectively according to those policies
* acting as a strategic governor on a specific issue, making relevant enquiries of the relevant staff, and reporting to the governing board on the progress on the relevant school priority

3. 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.

4. When required, serve on panels of governors to:

* appoint the headteacher
* 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 exclusions

The role of a 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 children, there are many other valuable voluntary roles within the school
* fundraise – this is the role of the PTA, the governing board should consider income streams and the potential for income generation, but not carry out fundraising tasks
* undertake classroom observations to make judgments on the quality of teaching – the governing board 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 board needs 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 (eg as a chair of a committee).

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

* get to know the school, including visiting the school occasionally during school hours and gaining a good understanding of the school’s strengths and weaknesses
* attend induction training and regular relevant training and development events
* attend meetings (full governing board meetings and committee meetings) and read all the papers before the meeting
* act in the best interests of all the pupils of the school
* behave in a professional manner, as set down in the governing board’s code of conduct, including acting in strict confidence

Chair’s Expectations

* Strategic Governor responsible for meeting termly/annually with school counterparts.
* Meetings can be either be face to face or online but ideally face to face where possible.
* Governor to prepare a short report to present to the Full Governing Board.
* Report to be shared with Clerk one week before FGB so that Clerk can share reports with Governors prior to the meeting.
* All Governors are expected to actively engage at meetings and prepare some questions on any provided documentation at least **48 hours** prior to the meeting. This will apply for committee and FGB papers.
* When policies are shared with Governors on TEAMS, Governors to ensure a return comment is sent back to Clerk so that Policies can be signed off.

**The Role of the Parent Governor:**

Your role is:

* To bring a parental perspective to the issues discussed – you are not there to speak ‘on behalf’ of the parent body.
* No different from those of other Governors.

**Note** – parents are elected to the board, not appointed (unless there are fewer candidates than vacancies).

**Communicate a parent’s perspective**

It is a fine line to tread, but remember that you are not there to speak on behalf of parents.

Use your perspective as a parent to help the board understand a parent’s viewpoint. This will help the board make good decisions and maintain a link between governance and the parent community.

You can read more about this in the Governance Handbook (pages 16 and 17). <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-handbook>

If another parent approaches you with a grievance:

**Do** ask the parent to put it in writing and follow the school’s complaints procedure. Tell them how/where they can raise their issue. This helps to separate genuine complaints from the customary grumbles.

**Do** explain what the role of Parent Governor actually is. Learn a one-liner such as “Parent Governors don’t speak ‘on behalf’ of the parent body, instead we bring a parental perspective to the strategic decisions the governors make”.

**Don’t** agree to raise it at the meeting or look into it for them – this will set a bad precedent and will cause problems later down the line as the right procedure hasn’t been followed.

**Don’t** respond to comments on social media in your governance role.

You might see comments about the school from parents on social media, perhaps in parent groups you’ve joined. It’s not your role to get involved.

Separate your role as a governor from your role as a parent.

Think about all pupils, not just your child.

As a governor, you are responsible for the progress and wellbeing of all pupils at the school, so keep this at the forefront of your mind in meetings.