

Become a school governor

What we expect from governors

Effective governors do not need educational expertise but do need to be committed to their school, willing to ask questions and act as a critical friend. They also need to be able to work as an enthusiastic member of the governing body team. You do not need specialist knowledge or training to become a governor. It is your lay and community experiences that the governing body requires. However you will become knowledgeable by being a governor and this can help you to participate more fully in your local community or even open up opportunities for you personally, for example involvement in a Parents Teachers and Friends Association (PTFA), voluntary work within school or an awareness of new employment opportunities. Realistically, as a school governor, you will need to attend one full governing body meeting each term. You will also be asked to serve on at least one committee which will probably meet once or occasionally twice a term. So that is about three meetings per term. You will need to get to know your school well (if you don't already) preferably by visiting when the school is in session and the pupils are in school. However this may not always be possible and some governors keep in touch with school life through after school events such as fundraising or charity events, Parents Teachers and Friends Association meetings, sports days, school parties and holidays.

Parent governors

Parents, including carers, of pupils at the school are eligible to stand for election as parent governors. They are elected by other parents. If not enough parents stand for election, the governing body can appoint parent governors. The law does not allow elected members of the local authority, or people who work at the school for more than 500 hours in a year, to become parent governors. The headteacher makes arrangements for holding an election if there is a vacancy for a parent governor at the school.

Disqualification from holding a governorship

Governors or prospective governors must notify the clerk to the governing body if any of the grounds for disqualification apply.

- Registered pupils cannot be governors.
- A governor must be aged 18 or over at the time of election or appointment.
- A person cannot hold more than one governor post at the same school at the same time.
- A person cannot be a parent governor if they are an elected member of the local authority or paid to work at the school for more than 500 hours in any consecutive twelve month period (at the time of election or appointment).

Bankruptcy

A person is disqualified from holding or continuing to hold office as a governor of a school if:

- Their estate has been sequestrated and the sequestration has not been discharged, annulled or reduced; or
- They are the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order, an interim bankruptcy restrictions order, a debt relief restrictions order or an interim debt relief restrictions order.

Disqualification of company directors

A person is disqualified from holding, or from continuing to hold, office as a governor of a school at any time when they are subject to:

- A disqualification order or disqualification undertaking under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986;
- A disqualification order under the Company Directors Disqualification (Northern Ireland) Order 2002;
- A disqualification undertaking accepted under the Company Directors Disqualification (Northern Ireland) Order 2002; or
- An order made under section 429(2)(b) of the Insolvency Act 1986 (failure to pay under county court administration order).

Disqualification of charity trustees

A person is disqualified from holding, or from continuing to hold, office as a governor of a school if they have:

- Been removed from the office of trustee for a charity by an order made by the Charity Commission or Commissioners or the High Court on the grounds of misconduct or mismanagement
- Been removed, under section 34 of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005, from being concerned in the management or control of any body.
- Persons whose employment is prohibited or restricted
- A person is disqualified from holding or from continuing to hold office as a governor of a school at any time when they are:
- Included in the list of teachers or workers considered by the Secretary of State as unsuitable to work with children or young people;
- Barred from any regulated activity relating to children;
- Disqualified from working with children or from registering for childminding or providing day care;
- Disqualified from being an independent school proprietor, teacher or employee by the Secretary of State.

Criminal convictions

A person is disqualified from holding or continuing to hold office as a governor if they have:

- Been sentenced to three months or more in prison (without the option of a fine) in the five years before becoming a governor or since becoming a governor
- Received a prison sentence of two years or more in the 20 years before becoming a governor
- At any time received a prison sentence of five years or more
- Been fined for causing a nuisance or disturbance on school premises during the five years prior to or since appointment or election as a governor

Refusal to make an application for a Disclosure and Barring Service check

A person is disqualified from holding or continuing to hold office as a governor if they refuse a request by the clerk to the governing body to make an application to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for a DBS certificate