



## **Becoming a School Governor**

The role of governor is a very rewarding experience. School and academy governors form part of the largest volunteer movement, with approximately 300,000 appointed or elected in schools and academies across the country. They perform one of the most important voluntary roles in schools, and are made up of people from all walks of life and backgrounds who want to make a difference to children's education.

Becoming a school governor is a great way to contribute to your local community and improve the lives of local children.

There is no need to have specialist knowledge or training to become a governor as schools welcome new governors who can bring skills and expertise they've developed at work, or who have a good understanding of the community served by the school.

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 board team with the aim of raising and maintaining high educational standards for all children.

There are also a number of opportunities for governors to access training or development either through their school or the local authority to develop and enhance their knowledge and skills.

### **How much time will I need?**

The time commitment of a school governor can vary depending on the school and its needs. Commitment is understandably higher for those governors taking on additional responsibility such as the role of chair or vice-chair of Governors. Prospective governors should carefully consider if they are able to commit to the role and devote the necessary time to fulfil their responsibilities effectively.

As a minimum it is expected that governors:

- Attend at least one full governing board meeting each term
- Serve on at least one committee, meeting each term.
- Get to know their school well, preferably by visiting via agreed procedures, when the school is in session and pupils are in school.
- Take part in training to enable them to fulfil their roles effectively.

Those governors who are in employment are allowed 'reasonable time off' to undertake public duties as detailed in the Employment Rights Act. This should be negotiated with individual employers as to what is determined as 'reasonable time off'. This may be granted with or without pay and is dependent on their employer's policies and procedures.

### **How are governors appointed?**

There are various positions available on governing boards, and how governors are appointed or elected is depending on the board that they represent. The governing board stakeholder model ensures that representation is drawn from different groups, for example, parents, staff and members of the community.

It is important to note that representation of a particular body does not require individual governors to report back to that representing body. For example, parent governors are elected or appointed to bring the experience of that individual as a parent to the governing board. They are not expected to report back to parents on any matters relating to the school or governing board without prior consent from the governing board. Governors are free to voice their own opinions and vote how they feel appropriate. This is true for all categories of governors.

There are also different types of schools and education providers, those that are maintained by the local authority and those that are not such as academies and free schools. Some schools have a religious or foundation body to secure the ethos, character or faith of the school.

Further information on the various types of governors can be gained by visiting the [Election and Appointments](#) section of the site.

### **How do I apply to become a governor?**

This depends on the category of governor position applied for and if there are current positions available. Parent and Staff governors are elected via the parent or staff bodies of a particular school. Foundation governors are appointed by the religious or foundation body. Authority/local authority governors are nominated and may be appointed by the local council. Community or co-opted governors are appointed by the individual governing boards.

If you are interested in becoming a governor at a particular school, you should speak to the school directly. Governing boards must ensure that all parents and staff at their school are informed of vacancies when they arise and given the opportunity to be nominated for the positions.

If you do not have a preference of school and would like to become a school governor within Bolton, you may apply directly to the Local Authority using the online application form on this website. The Governor Services Team will process your application and contact you further to discuss your options and possible vacancies within your area.

### **Can anybody become a governor?**

The Government has prescribed qualification and disqualification criteria for persons wishing to become a school governor.

You must be 18 years of age and over, and be able to declare that you are not disqualified via the disqualification criteria.

Anybody wishing to become a governor will be asked to complete a self-declaration form to declare that they are not disqualified from holding a governorship. Those wishing to become a school governor will also be asked to provide documentation to prove their identity on appointment. Copies of the eligibility criteria, declaration and proof of identity forms may be downloaded below.

School governors who are not volunteers at the school, will not have unsupervised contact with children. Those individuals who volunteer at a school will have to follow the school's safeguarding procedures similar to staff and will require the completion of an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check.

### **What is a Code of Conduct?**

Most governing boards adopt an agreed code of conduct which details the expectations of how governors should conduct themselves in relation to their role. The code of conduct ensures that governors agree to always have the well-being of the children and the reputation of the school at heart; to be an ambassador for the school, publicly supporting its aims, values and ethos. A copy of the local authority model code of conduct, which has been developed by the National Governors Association, may be downloaded below. Governing boards are free to adopt their own code of conduct which may vary from the local authority model.

### **What is a Register of Business Interest?**

All new governors must complete a register of interest form on appointment which should be reviewed regularly. Governors should declare any business or pecuniary interest, links to other educational establishments and also any relationships between governors and members of staff on the register. This information should also be published on the school website alongside appointment information about all governors. (Academy Trusts have discretion over the publication of information relating to relationships between governors and staff) Failing to declare information may result in a breach of the governing board's code of conduct. Any queries in respect of this should be directed to the clerk to governors. A model register of business interest form may be downloaded below.

For more information, please see the Governance Exchange Website:  
[www.governorexchange.boltonlea.org.uk](http://www.governorexchange.boltonlea.org.uk)