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 Staff Governor

**The Law**

The school’s Instrument of Government sets out the agreed composition of the governing board within a prescribed framework. The instrument gives the name and category of the school and sets out how many governors there will be. The headteacher is automatically a member of the governing board and counts as a staff governor towards staff membership. If the headteacher decides not to be a governor, the place remains reserved for him/her and cannot be filled by another member of staff.

Staff governors are elected by, and from, all the staff in the school. Teaching and support staff paid to work at the school are eligible as staff governors; volunteers are not.



The standard term of office is four years, after which time governors can stand for re-election. If, however, you leave your post at the school you cannot remain as a staff governor. It is possible for staff governors to be removed by the governing board (as of September 2017). Staff governors are not eligible to stand as chair or vice-chair of the governing board but may chair governing board committees.

**Why have staff governors?**

The role is unique in that, by definition staff are involved in the day-to-day running of the school and yet are asked as governors to put this to one side and be strategic managers.

The staff governor brings to the governing board an understanding of the school’s ethos and culture as well as a close, professional knowledge of its strengths and weaknesses.

Staff must have a voice on the governing board so that they can contribute, in partnership with other governors, to the strategic development of the school.

The staff governor serves as a useful link between the staff and the governing board.

Staff are key stake-holders in the school and as such must have mechanisms for their views to be included in school evaluation and improvement.

**How can you as a staff governor, be a useful member of the governing board?**

Staff governors are representatives of the staff but do not have a mandate to put forward a particular point of view other than their own. Your role is to present the views of the staff reasonably and faithfully. You should seek colleagues’ views and make them known to the governing board, but be free to act in accordance with your own conscience and in the interests of the pupils as you see them. It is crucial to remember that, as a governor, your first responsibility is to the school and the governing board.

The staff governor also brings specialist knowledge and skills to the governing board, which can help in several ways. This includes:

* Contributing to discussions by

- explaining the likely effect of any

proposal on students’ learning or wellbeing;

- drawing attention to the likely effect of a proposal on the staff.

* Developing mutual understanding by - reporting back and explaining the reasons for the governing board’s decision to colleagues and improving staff’s understanding of the role of

the governing board;

- contributing up to date, regular and robust information to broaden governors’ understanding of the curriculum and pupil achievement;

- helping staff and governors get to know one another better;

- assisting the headteacher to ensure that governors are informed about special achievements by individual members of staff and encouraging fellow governors to acknowledge these.

* Supporting the governing board’s monitoring and evaluation processes by

- encouraging the headteacher and other staff to supply information about the school’s progress in clear language;

- encouraging the governing board to ask questions that enable it to measure progress;

- responding positively, constructively

and honestly to questions from colleague governors.

* Focusing on important issues by

- bringing staff opinions to the attention of the governing board;

- keeping the classroom and student’s learning at the heart of discussions by the governing board.

**What works well?**

Here are some examples of good practice in our schools:

* During elections, and on appointment, ensure that all members of staff understand the role of the staff governor. This can prevent members of staff attempting to use you as a channel for concerns. Many staff governors introduce themselves and their role at a staff meeting.
* Attend the induction and refresher - governorship for newly appointed and reappointed governors course. You may feel that you already know a great deal about schools in general, and your school in particular, but governorship brings new and different responsibilities.
* It is helpful to form an understanding with the headteacher as to how you will act in cases where your views may be different from the headteacher.
* Get to know as many members of staff as possible. This is easier in a primary than a large secondary but do your best.
* Encourage governors to take opportunities to get to know the staff.
* Include an agenda item at some staff meetings for staff governors to hear the

staff’s views on subjects to be discussed by governors.

* Represent all staff views and not just particular friendship or work groups. You can give your own view and explain that others hold different views. You do not need to canvass staff to get exact numbers or the complete range of opinion but try and give the governing board an impression of the balance of opinion.
* Inform new staff of your role – ensure this is covered at their induction.



* Make sure that, once agreed, minutes (except confidential minutes) are posted in the staff room or in an accessible file.
* Use notice boards to publicise governing board activities.

**Conduct and Protocols**

Governing boards need the full participation of staff governors in order to be well informed about the implications of their decisions. A few specific points need to be understood by all members of the governing board:

* Staff governors may participate in all activities of the governing board, including the selection and recruitment of staff, as long as they have



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no greater interest in the matter than other staff in the school. In common with all governors, staff governors also need to consider whether there is reasonable doubt as to whether they can act impartially within the principles of natural justice.

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|  | Staff Governor |



The local authority provides:

* general advice and support to staff governors;
* opportunities for training and development;
* periodic training specifically for staff governors.
* publication available

This booklet applies to all those involved in governance. Reference to the ‘governing board’ applies equally to maintained schools and academies.

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* Staff governors must withdraw from the meeting when considering an agenda item in which they have a personal interest greater than that of other staff eg a promotion or possibly a situation where he or she has been involved in a particular issue relating to an individual student or parent.



* The Regulations prevent people employed at the school being present during the discussion of, and decision on, any matter concerned with the pay and appraisal of individuals also employed at the school. It is however, advisable for staff governors to be present when policy matters are discussed such as pay or performance management.
* The chair and the governing board should create a climate where staff governors can speak freely even on occasions when they disagree with the headteacher. However, internal disputes that ought to be settled by the senior

management of the school should not be brought to the governing board until internal procedures have been exhausted.

* Where an issue arises which may be an area of conflict with the headteacher, you are advised to discuss this with him/her before the governors’ meeting so that s/he knows that you may be putting an alternative view at the meeting.
* Remember the importance of not disclosing confidential information or details of voting. Most governing board business is conducted openly and can be shared with colleagues. However, there may be occasions when an item on the agenda is deemed by the governing board to be confidential. This is usually because it involves an individual pupil or member of staff. In these cases, you should not disclose or discuss any information relating to the matter.
* You must stay loyal to the decisions the governing board makes, unless you have requested that the minutes record your dissent.

Support Available

Publications available

* Publications for governors can be viewed on Governorhub

Your headteacher will be able to provide support and guidance on how to fulfil your role effectively and your professional association/trade union may also be a source of advice and information

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