



INFORMATION FOR PROSPECTIVE GOVERNORS

School Governing Bodies

All schools have a governing body who work with the headteacher and the local authority to ensure that the pupils receive the best possible education at that establishment.

Governing bodies vary in size but all have the same functions:-

- Ensuring that the vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school are clearly defined;
- Ensuring that the headteacher performs his/her responsibilities for the educational performance of the school; and
- Ensuring the sound, proper and effective use of the school's financial resources

(The School Governance (Roles, Procedures and Allowances)(England) Regulations 2013)

Governing Bodies work within Regulations, guidance and policies set by central government (Education Acts and Regulations) and the local authority.

Governors in Leicester City Schools

City governors have their own dedicated team – The Governor Services Team – whose role is to provide advice, guidance and support to all city governing bodies to enable them to carry out their governor duties effectively. This includes access to a comprehensive city governors' On-Line website, termly newsletters and regular guidance booklets provided through a traded service with schools. Governors also have access to a comprehensive training programme (through a traded service with the school), including Induction training for new governors.

For further information, please contact the Governor Services Team on (0116) 4541916 or at education.governor.services@leicester.gov.uk

Governing Body Constitution

The constitution and size of each governing body will vary, depending upon the type of school but all governing bodies have:-

- At least 2 Parent governors (elected)
- Headteacher
- 1 Staff governor (elected)
- 1 Authority governor (nominated by the City Council but appointed by the governing body)

Maintained schools must also have at least 2 Co-opted governors (appointed directly by the governing body).

Voluntary Aided, Foundation and Trust schools will also have Foundation governors - appointed by the relevant Foundation and may choose to have 1 or more Co-opted governors.

The Role of the Governing Body

The governing body has three key roles:-

- Ensuring that the vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school are clearly defined;
- Ensuring that the headteacher performs his/her responsibilities for the educational performance of the school; and
- Ensuring the sound, proper and effective use of the school's financial resources.

Strategic Leadership

Governing bodies are the strategic leaders of schools and work closely with their head teacher, school staff and representatives from the Local Authority. The governing body:

- sets the values, ethos and direction of the school
- works with the headteacher who is responsible for the day to day organisation, management, control and of the school;
- agrees a budget to support the school's priorities;
- agrees policies and practice which allows the headteacher to carry out his/her responsibilities;
- agrees principles and targets for improvement;
- acts as the critical friend to hold the school and headteacher to account;
- receives reports, asks questions and discusses progress against agreed priorities;
- reviews its own working practices.

Decisions of the governing body are made in formal meetings, either with the full governing body, or in committees if their terms of reference allow.

Governing bodies will have committees that:-

- carry out tasks specifically given to them by the governing body;
- aid the work of the governing body;
- report back to the governing body.

The number of committees depends on the governing body and its needs.

All governors, once appointed, share the responsibilities and work as a team:-

- Individuals are part of the corporate governing body;
- Duties are carried out as part of the team;
- Governors are not legally liable as individuals (provided they act within the law).

What makes a good governor?

There are no formal qualifications required to become a school governor however all governors need to be able to offer or willing to learn/develop the following skills and qualities:-

- time
- a strong commitment to the role
- a willingness to learn and undertake training and development
- a listening ear
- the ability to assimilate information, ask questions, make judgements and take decisions
- flexibility
- tact
- ability to work as part of a team

There are certain disqualifications from being a school governor and all governors sign a declaration stating that they are not disqualified.

Governors are appointed and elected to provide:

- strong links between the school and the community it serves;
- a wide experience of the outside world;
- an independent view;
- a visible form of accountability for the headteacher and staff of the school;
- a team focusing on long term development and improvement;
- accountability to the community for the use of resources and the standards of teaching and learning in the school;
- support for the headteacher and staff.

Principles of Working as a Governor

Governors, once appointed, are holders of public office, and should be prepared to work to the same principles as any paid public official. This is true both as an individual and as a whole governing body. These principles are:-

Selflessness

Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.

Integrity

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligations to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

Objectivity

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

Openness

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands this.

Honesty

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interest relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

(The Seven Principles of Public Life - The Nolan Committee CM3270 - 1 May 1996)