

## **'Learning and growing within a Christian community'**

The governors at Balshaw's Church of England High School take the role very seriously and as such we require certain skills and commitments. We have put this document together to provide clarification of what the school, The National Governors' Association and the Diocese of Blackburn require as skills and commitment.

**The National Governors' Association (NGA)** is an independent charity that aims to improve the educational standards and well-being of children and young people through supporting and promoting outstanding governance in all state-funded schools, including academies and free schools.

### **What does a governor do?**

**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; and
- 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;
  - considering all relevant data and feedback provided on request by school leaders and external sources on all aspects of school performance;
  - asking challenging questions of school leaders;
  - ensuring senior leaders have arranged for the required audits to be carried out and receiving the results of those audits;
  - ensuring senior leaders have developed the required policies and procedures and the school is operating effectively according to those policies;
  - acting as a link 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; and
  - listening to and reporting to the school's stakeholders : pupils, parents, staff, and the wider community, including local employers.
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 and other senior leaders;
- 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 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 & 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 voluntary valuable 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 judgements 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 need 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 (e.g as a chair of a committee). This document does not cover the additional roles taken on by the chair, vice-chair and chairs of committees.

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

- get to know the school, including by visiting the school occasionally during school hours, and gain 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 interest of all the pupils of the school; and
- behave in a professional manner, as set down in the governing board's code of conduct, including acting in strict confidence.

**Time commitment:** Under usual circumstances, you should expect to spend between 10 and 20 days a year on your governing responsibilities; the top end of this commitment, which equates to about half a day per week in term time, is most relevant to the chair and others with key roles, such as chairs of committees. Initially, we would expect your commitment to be nearer 10 days a year. However, there may be periods when the time commitment may increase, for example when recruiting a headteacher. Some longstanding governors may tell you that they spend far more time than this on school business; however, it is fairly common for governors to undertake additional volunteering roles over and above governance.

Under Section 50 of the *Employment Rights Act 1996*, if you are employed, then you are entitled to 'reasonable time off' to undertake public duties; this includes school governance. 'Reasonable time off' is not defined in law, and you will need to negotiate with your employer how much time you will be allowed.

## **As a Church of England School we also expect governors to:**

Enable the governing board to contribute to the school securing its mission and sustaining its ethos as a Church of England school, as well as ensuring the school provides a quality educational experience for all its children and achieves high standards.

Governors of a Church of England School are committed to upholding and modelling the schools 'Christian values' along with the requirement to ensure the promotion of British Values.

The governing board will always consider carefully how decisions may affect other schools, the local Church and the Diocese.

Drawing on the model of the person, life and teachings of Jesus Christ, the governing board will strive to develop effective working relationships with:

- Headteacher
- Staff,
- Children
- Parents
- The Diocese
- The Local Authority
- Multi-agency representatives
- The Parish, and local communities
- Other local schools and Academies.
- Local educational organisations/businesses etc.

The governing board will ensure that Christian values underpin the relationships between governors and others. These core values based on the Beatitudes may be summarised as follows:

- Faithfulness and integrity
- Dignity and compassion
- Humility and gentleness
- Truth and justice
- Forgiveness and mercy
- Purity and holiness
- Tolerance and peace
- Service and sacrifice

**With regards to current and/or impending vacancies the School Board of Governors are seeking applications from candidates who will commit;**

- to the role of school governor ,
- to attendance and contribution at meetings,
- to the school as a whole

**At this time applications are especially sought from candidates with any of the following skills, experience or knowledge;**

- Financial management and strategic financial planning.
- A Human Resources or employment law background.