



# Learning for Life Trust

## Governor Role Description



### What does a governor do?

The role of a school governor is to contribute to the work of the governing body 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 head teacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils.
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

### As a member of the governing body team, a governor is expected to:

#### I. **contribute to the strategic discussions at governing body 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 and disabilities, 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.

#### II. **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 Improvement plan.
- Considering all relevant data and feedback on all aspects of school performance provided by school leaders and external sources.
- 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 that the school is operating effectively according to those policies.
- Acting as a link governor on a specific issue or subject, making appropriate enquiries of the relevant staff, then reporting to the governing body on the progress made.
- listening to and reporting to the school's stakeholders i.e. pupils, parents, staff, and the wider community, including local employers.

#### III. **Ensure school staff have the resources and support they require to do their jobs well. This includes :**

- Staff developing the necessary expertise on business management.
- Accessing external advice where necessary.
- Having an effective appraisal system.
- Taking part in CPD (Continuing Professional Development).
- Working in suitable premises.

It is important that governors track the impact of this provision.

**IV. When required governors are expected to serve on panels to:**

- Appoint the Executive Principal/Principal and other senior leaders.
- Appraise the Executive Principal.
- Set the Executive Principal's pay and agree the senior leadership's pay recommendations for other staff.
- Hear the second stage of staff grievances and disciplinary matters.
- Hear appeals about pupil exclusions and admissions.

**It is important that governors are aware of what a governor's role does not include.**

**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 valuable voluntary roles within the school.
- Fundraise, this is the role of the PTA. The governing body should consider income streams and the potential for income generation, however they do not carry out fundraising tasks.
- Undertake classroom observations where they will make judgements on the quality of teaching. The governing body monitors the quality of teaching in the school by acquiring 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 body need to consider and rectify this.

As you become more experienced as a governor, there are other governance roles you could volunteer for which would increase your degree of involvement and level of responsibility (e.g. as a chair of a committee). However, this document does not cover the additional roles taken on by the chair, vice-chair and chairs of committees.

**In order to perform a governor's role well you would be expected to:**

- Get to know the school, including 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 local governing body meetings and committee meetings) and read all the papers before the meeting.
- Act in the best interest of all of the pupils attending the school.
- Behave in a professional manner as set down in the governing body's code of conduct including acting in strict confidence.

**Time commitment**

Initially, the commitment of a new governor is expected to be about 10 days a year. However, there may be periods when the time commitment could increase, for example when recruiting a new Principal. In Fairfield Primary School the local governing body meetings are almost always held at or after six o'clock in the evening. Meetings with teachers are arranged between staff and governors at their convenience. Visits to lessons and assemblies are, of course, when the school is in session. There are governors who spend between 10 and 20 days per year on governing responsibilities. The top end of the above 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. Longstanding governors in some schools may tell you that they spend far more time than this on school business. However, this is usually when governors undertake additional volunteering roles over and above governance.

### **Time off work**

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.

### **Expenses**

Governors may receive out of pocket expenses incurred as a result of fulfilling their role as governor. The National Governors association (NGA) recommends that a governing body should have such an expenses policy. Payments can cover incidental expenses, such as travel and childcare, but not loss of earnings.

\*\* This document is based on NGA's document, published in their publication 'Welcome to Governance'