

The following guidance has been written to assist governing boards with their duty to conduct informed parent and staff elections in which the expectations and credentials of prospective candidates are made clear. The sections highlighted in brackets should be personalised to the school.

Guidance for Prospective Governors

Being a school governor is both a rewarding and challenging experience. Governors provide strategic leadership and work in partnership with the head teacher and senior leaders in schools to ensure that every child gets the best possible education.

The demands on governors and governing boards have changed dramatically in recent years and this guidance has been written to help aspiring governors understand the expectations and demands of the role.

Becoming a Governor

This guidance is particularly directed at parents and staff members who are thinking of becoming a governor. Hopefully this provides you with a good overview, the commitment required and the expectations of the role. If after reading this, you would like to find out any more information please contact the Chair or Vice-Chair of Governors via the School Office.

The Role of the Governing Board

The governing board is responsible for the conduct of the school and must promote high standards of educational achievement at the school. In all types of schools, governing boards should have a strong focus on three core strategic functions:

- a) Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- b) Holding the head teacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff; and
- c) Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

In order to do this, governors need to gain knowledge of how their school operates through attending meetings, reading school documentation, analysing data and engaging in regular visits to the school.

The role of the governing board is one of oversight and it is not involved in the day to day management of the school. The head teacher role includes the educational performance of the school and operational responsibility lies with them.

How the Governing Board Works at Orchard Church of England Primary School

The Full Governing Board usually meets four times in the academic year and each meeting usually lasts approximately two hours.

Additionally, there are termly meetings of the Governing Board's committees:

- Teaching and Learning
- Premises (including Health & Safety and Safeguarding)
- Finance and Administration
- Staffing and Performance Management
- Pay (*meets once per year usually*)
- Appeals (*meets if necessary*)

In preparation for the meetings, governors are required to read and understand the papers presented and conduct appropriate background reading.

Individual governors are assigned a class with which they liaise in addition to one, or more, specific allocated responsibilities.

Furthermore, it is expected that governors will make regular visits to the school in their capacity as a governor and attend school events on behalf of the Governing Board.

Comprehensive training opportunities are provided and it is expected that governors would continue to take advantage of these throughout their term of office; the need for training will obviously be greater earlier on in the governor's term of office.

At Orchard all governors sign up to a Code of Conduct regarding their behaviour and commitment; a copy is provided in the pack of papers provided to applicants.

Different governing boards operate in different ways, but governors will be expected to do far more than merely attend meetings. Effective governors attend the school regularly to see and understand how the school operates. They undertake governor visits for a particular purpose and produce reports for their governor colleagues. Governors will be expected to receive and understand reports from the head teacher and senior leaders so that they can question, challenge and support, thereby improving the quality of the whole educational provision.

The governing board operates a code of conduct which sets an ethos of professionalism and high expectations of governors. You will be provided with this as part of your induction into the school and will be expected to work within it, since a governing board operates as a corporate entity with corporate responsibility.

Skills and Experience

Governing boards rely on a range of skills and experiences. You will need a strong commitment to the role, the inquisitiveness to question and analyse, and the willingness to learn. Good interpersonal skills, a basic level of literacy in English, and sufficient numeracy skills to understand basic data are essential.

In addition to the skills outlined above we are looking particularly for governors with an interest and proven skills/experience in financial management (including data analysis), project management, law, risk management and/or strategic planning.

What is equally important to us is that you have a willingness to learn and undertake whatever training or development activity is needed to fill any gaps in the skills you have to contribute to effective governance.

Training and Support

The governing board is committed to developing the skills and experience of governors to promote success in the role. As a new governor you will attend induction training and a programme of further training to help you fulfil the role.

New governors will be allocated a mentor to support them in becoming a valuable member of the governing board from the outset.

Appointment of Governors - Qualifications and Disqualifications

Please read the following list of disqualifications and qualifications for being a parent governor.

If you are eligible, complete the parent governor election form and sign it to confirm your eligibility.

If you are *not* eligible, you are unable to be considered for appointment/election as a governor.

▪ Registered pupils cannot be governors
▪ A governor must be aged 18 or over at the time of election or appointment
▪ A person cannot hold more than one governor post at the same school at the same time
▪ Elected members of the LA cannot be a parent governor
▪ Staff paid to work at the school for more than 500 hours in any consecutive twelve-month period (at the time of election or appointment) cannot be a parent governor
▪ A person is disqualified from holding office if that person:
▫ is the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or an interim order, debt relief restrictions order, an interim debt relief restrictions order or their estate has been sequestrated and the sequestration has not been discharged, annulled or reduced
▫ is subject to a disqualification order or disqualification undertaking under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986, a disqualification order under Part 2 of the Companies (Northern Ireland) Order 1989, a disqualification undertaking accepted under the Company Directors Disqualification (Northern Ireland) Order 2002, or an order made under section 429(2)(b) of the Insolvency Act 1986 (failure to pay under county court administration order)
▫ has been removed from the office of charity trustee or trustee for a charity by the Charity Commission or Commissioners or High Court on grounds of any misconduct or mismanagement, or under section 34 of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 from being concerned in the management or control of any board
▫ is included in the list of teachers or workers considered by the Secretary of State as unsuitable to work with children or young people
▫ is barred from any regulated activity relating to children
▫ is subject to a direction of the Secretary of State under section 128 of the Education and Skills Act 2008
▫ is disqualified from working with children or from registering for child-minding or providing day care
▫ is disqualified from being an independent school proprietor, teacher or employee by the Secretary of State

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ has been sentenced to three months or more in prison (without the option of a fine) in the five years before becoming a governor or since becoming a governor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ has received a prison sentence of two years or more in the 20 years before becoming a governor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ has at any time received a prison sentence of five years or more
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ has been fined for causing a nuisance or disturbance on school premises during the five years prior to or since appointment or election as a governor
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▫ refuses a request by the clerk to make an application to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for a DBS check

Failure to attend meetings

If you fail to attend meetings, without the consent of the governing board, for a continuous period of six months you are disqualified from continuing to hold office as a governor at that school.

Notification to Clerk

You must notify the clerk if you are disqualified from holding, or from continuing to hold, office as a governor of the school.

More information

Details of the above restrictions may be found in The School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2012.