



Good Governance Guides

How to be an Effective Staff Governor

Why Staff Governors?

The current model of governance in schools is a stakeholder model: people who are representative of all those groups which have a vested interest, or a stake, in the effective delivery of education and care in a school have a voice in how their schools operate. This includes those people who work in schools.

Is my role different?

The role of the staff governor is the same as any other governor and this should always be the starting point. Staff governors are like all other governors charged with the responsibility under the Schools Standards and Framework Act of 1998 to:

“Conduct the school with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement”

and like all other governors staff governors too have three strands to their role:

- take a **strategic** view;
- act as a **critical friend**; and
- ensure **accountability**.

Representative not Delegate

What makes the reality of a staff governor a little different and sometimes can lead to staff governors questioning their role is the extra dimension that working in a school brings.

However, much like parent governors who can sometimes find themselves in situations where they need to act as governors first, staff governors need to remember that they are a representative member of the staff and not their delegate. This means that when making decisions as a governor they are mindful of the views of others but make their decisions according to their own views or opinions.

As it is not the role of the parent governor to hold surgery at the school gate to gauge the views of parents and carers on issues to be discussed at governing body meetings, nor is it the role of the staff governor to gather staff views in the staff room.

If the governing body agrees that it would like the views of a wider cross section of any stakeholder group it is for the whole governing body to decide how it wants to achieve this.

Are there things I cannot do?

There are several regulations in law that mean staff governors do have one or two restrictions on what they can and cannot do:

- staff governors cannot be elected as chairman or vice chairman; and
- staff governors may not serve on the Performance Management Review panel for their Head teacher.

Similarly there may be occasions when staff governors must declare an interest in agenda items, such as discussion of salaries etc. In these circumstances, the interest should be declared and the governor must withdraw from that part of the meeting. However, they are entitled to receive minutes of that part of the meeting, which in turn should be suitably and sensitively worded without referencing any individual by name.

Induction Training

It is vital and strongly recommended that all governors including staff governors attend induction training. This course provides an invaluable insight into the role and responsibilities of all governors, emphasising that above all else all governors share collective responsibility and that no governor or category of governor is any different to any other. If you are a new Staff Governor, talk to your Training Link Coordinator regarding booking onto a course.

Acting as the Critical Friend

Often staff governors report that they find this aspect of their role the most difficult. This is not germane to staff governors: most governors would say the same. However, for staff governors, there may be occasions when additional sensitivity and diplomacy may be needed. Again there are parallels with the role of parent governors who must put personal interests aside and participate in governor meetings in the interests of the school and specifically the interests of the children and young people in the school.

Sources of Information

As a staff governor, it will be helpful to ensure that you know as much as possible about your role. In addition to attending induction training, some of the sources of information that you may find useful are:

- School Development Plan;
- Self Evaluation Form;
- Last Ofsted Report;
- RAISEonline report;
- Redbridge Children & Young People's Plan;
- www.governornet.gov.uk; and

- Redbridge Council website www.redbridge.gov.uk.

Please contact a member of the Governors Support team for further details.

Conclusion

We hope you will enjoy being a staff governor and that this Guide will be useful to you. Please remember that support and advice is always available from Governors Support Service. We are only too pleased to help.

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