



Radleys Primary School

The Role of a Parent Governor

The role of parent governors

The School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2012, page 6, explains that a parent governor is a representative and not a delegate of parents. There is no obligation for them to vote in a particular way.

Deciding on responsibilities for parents governors

Parent Governors' skills and experience should be matched with relevant responsibilities, where possible

Parent governors are elected by other parents and it is important to establish a rapport with the parental body that elected you, while continuing to maintain a strategic approach to school governance.

The document goes on to highlight the importance for parent governors to establish a rapport with other parents. However, they should not become personally involved in any individual concerns, as this may jeopardise complaint and appeal procedures.

Parent governors provide a "parental viewpoint", though they are "representative parents rather than representatives of parents".

To fulfil the role effectively, parent governors should:

- Make themselves known to the parent body
- Try to attend in-service training (INSET) sessions
- Listen impartially to concerns raised by parents
- Guide parents about appropriate lines of action and procedures to follow
- Present a balanced view of issues, representing different sections of the community

The guidance suggests practical ways of achieving a balance between impartial representation and the emotional issues relating to a child's education.

Confidentiality

- Governors must observe complete confidentiality especially in relation to matters concerning individual staff, classes, pupils or parents.
- Whilst governors are entitled to disclose the decisions made by the governing body, unless it was agreed as a confidential item by the governing body, governors are **not**

entitled to identify the views expressed by individual named governors, nor are these disclosures to be made before the minutes are made public and signed by the Chair (usually the next full governing body or committee meeting).

- Governors should exercise the highest degree of prudence when discussion of potentially contentious issues arises outside the governing body.

Top Tips for Parent Governors

- **Keep the parental perspective in mind.** Approach every issue with the question “What do I as a parent think about this? What would other parents think about this?”
- **Get it in writing.** If another parent approaches you with a grievance, ask them to follow school procedures e.g. by speaking to a member of staff or by putting it in writing using the school’s complaints policy. This is the correct procedure, and helps to separate genuine complaints from the customary grumbles.
- **Take a step back.** If you have an issue concerning your child, ask his/her other parent to lead the discussion with the school. If this isn’t possible, remember that you are acting as a parent only – leave your governor hat at home!
- **Avoid conflicts of interest.** If the governing body is discussing an issue directly related to a governor’s child or class the governor should disclose his/her interest and leave the meeting.

Activities and duties a parent governor might undertake:

- Making focused visits to the school
- Exploring specific aspects to gain deeper understanding of relevant issues
- Establishing regular contact with people within the school with responsibility for the link area
- Providing support and encouragement and a listening ear for staff members
- Monitoring provision of equipment and use of school facilities
- Attending relevant training, including relevant INSET days
- Being involved with establishing/monitoring/evaluating relevant policies adopted by the governing body within their link area
- Becoming familiar with areas in the school development plan
- Reporting back after visits, making recommendations as appropriate either via committees or full governing body meetings

The benefits of parents governors

- They provide a means to build up strong relationships based on mutual trust and respect, enabling effective governance and supporting school improvement
- Provide OFSTED with concrete evidence of the involvement of the parents in school at a strategic level
- Can see first-hand the available resources in the classroom so that governing bodies can make informed decisions about future budget allocations and tie them to the school development plan priorities

Useful Websites:

All governors are expected to regularly access Ten Governor/The Key (and register as soon as possible, if you have not already done so). The address is:

http://www.tengovernor.com/login_form. It is full of excellent information about the roles and expectations of governors, whose role is now so pivotal to schools.

Modern Governor

Modern Governor is the on-line training package we buy into for all governors. This will enable you to access training from home and tailor your training to your needs. The web address is: www.moderngovernor.com and you will need to log in to access training. You will all have received a letter regarding how to log in, but if you have any problems, let me know.