

The Role of Parent Governors



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PARENT GOVERNORS

Why have Parent Governors?

The current model of governance in schools is a stakeholder model; that is those people who are representative of all those groups that have a vested interest, or a stake, in the effective delivery of education and care in a school. This includes the parents of children at the School.

Parent governors play a vital role on our Local Governing Board, they have the unique position of a parental viewpoint of our School. Through the children, they have a first-hand experience of the delivery of the curriculum and how the School is perceived from the 'consumers' point of view. This enables parent governors to bring a different perspective to the strategic management of the School.

It is important for parent governors to establish a rapport with the parental body that elected him / her, whilst continuing to maintain a strategic approach to school governance.

Although being available to advise parents on appropriate routes of action is a very important aspect of the role, it is vital that parent governors do not personally become involved in individual concerns. Apart from the possibility of this jeopardising appropriate complaints and appeals procedures, no governor has the authority to act individually on behalf of the School.



Representative not Delegate

Parent governors are representative parents rather than a representative of parents. Sometimes it can be difficult to separate any personal issues or experiences from those of being a governor.

To effectively fulfil the role, parent governors should:

- Make themselves known to the parent body.
- Attend in-service training sessions.
- Listen impartially to concerns raised by parents.
- Guide parents regarding appropriate lines of action and procedures. Ensuring that they understand that the parent governor is not elected to represent their personal views.
- Present a balanced view of issues, representing different sections of the community.
- Deal with any personal issues in the same way as any other parent, not through the role of governor.

Achieving a balance between being the impartial representative parent and the often emotional issues relating to individual children's education, can sometimes be very difficult. Some practical ways to achieve this balance include:

- Making yourself available to parents.
- Never pressing your own child's case at the expense of others.
- Never promising to 'solve a problem' on your own.
- Being wary of bringing an individual's issue to meetings without following the agreed procedures.
- Abiding by the agreed protocol regarding agenda items and any other business.
- Keeping yourself aware of parental views and concerns.
- Playing an active part in governor meetings.

Critical Friend

It is the role of all governors to act as a critical friend to the School, taking a strategic view and ensuring accountability.

Parent governors often have lots of contact with the School and can sometimes find this aspect of the role challenging as it requires them to put personal feelings aside and participate in meetings in the interests of the School as a whole.

Although this is a very delicate role, there is ample support and training available. Effective parent governors will find working alongside the other members of the Local Governing Board both interesting and rewarding in that their efforts will ensure that the work of the Local Governing Board fulfils its duties to all children.

Sources of Information

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

- The School Improvement Plan
- Self-evaluation forms
- Latest Ofsted report
- Peterborough Diocese Education Trust (PDET) Website
- PDET's Scheme of Delegation for the School.

