
Model governor role description

Role of a school governor

To contribute to the work of the governing board 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 headteacher 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

Chair _____

Vice chair _____

Clerk _____

Buddy/mentor _____

Activities. As part of the governing board team, a governor is expected to:

1. Contribute to the strategic discussions at governing board 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, 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

2. 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 development plan
 - considering all relevant data and feedback provided on request by school leaders and external sources on all aspects of school performance
 - 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 the school is operating effectively according to those policies
 - acting as a link governor on a specific issue, making relevant enquiries of the relevant staff, and reporting to the governing board on the progress on the relevant school priority
 - listening to and reporting to the school's stakeholders: pupils, parents, staff, and the wider community, including local employers

3. Ensure the school staff have the resources and support they require to do their jobs well, including the necessary expertise on business management, external advice where necessary, effective appraisal and CPD (continuing professional development), and suitable premises, and that the way in which those resources are used has impact.
4. When required, serve on panels of governors to:
 - appoint the headteacher and other senior leaders
 - appraise the headteacher
 - set the headteacher's pay and agree the pay recommendations for other staff
 - hear the second stage of staff grievances and disciplinary matters
 - hear appeals about pupil exclusions

The role of a governor is largely a thinking and questioning role, not a doing role.

A governor does NOT:

- write school policies
- undertake audits of any sort – whether financial or health and 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 board should consider income streams and the potential for income generation, but not carry out fundraising tasks
- undertake classroom observations to make judgments on the quality of teaching – the governing board monitors the quality of teaching in the school by requiring 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 board needs to consider and rectify this

As you become more experienced as a governor, there are other roles you could volunteer for which would increase your degree of involvement and level of responsibility (eg as a chair of a committee). This role description does not cover the additional roles taken on by the chair, vice chair and chairs of committees.

In order to perform this role well, a governor is expected to:

- get to know the school, including visiting the school occasionally during school hours and gaining a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses
- attend induction training and regular relevant training and development events
- attend meetings (full governing board meetings and committee meetings) and read all the papers before the meeting
- act in the best interests of all the pupils of the school
- behave in a professional manner, as set down in the governing board's code of conduct, including acting in strict confidence

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

A Academies

This description can also be adapted to cover the role of trustees. In multi academy trusts (MATs), it will need to be reviewed for members of local governing bodies, who may not have all these responsibilities.

This document can be adapted for use in recruiting new governors: see www.nga.org.uk/guidance for a version which makes reference to the expectations about the time commitment.

