

PARENT GOVERNOR ELECTIONS

All maintained school governing bodies must have at least two parent governors.

Who are Parent Governors?

Parent governors are elected by parents of children at the school. For a person to stand for election and to vote in a parent governor election he/she must either be the natural parent of a child registered at the school, or be a person with parental responsibility for, or having care of, such a child. If there are insufficient eligible candidates for the vacancies at an election the governing body can appoint a parent governor, but there are restrictions on who can be appointed.

Governors normally serve for four years unless a shorter term is specified in the Instrument of Government for the school. If a parent governor ceases to be the parent of a child registered at the school within the period for which they have been elected, he/she may continue to be a governor for the rest of his/her term of office.

What are Parent Governors?

Parent governors have the same rights, responsibilities and duties as other governors.

Parent governors should play a full and active part in the governing body but,

Parent governors, like other governors, do not have the power to act as individuals or as a group, unless specifically authorised to do so by the governing body.

Parent governors are not on the governing body simply to represent the interest of parents, or to be the only link with parents because all governors must have regard to these issues.

What do governors do?

All maintained schools have a governing body which together with the headteacher sets the aims and policies of the school. The headteacher is responsible for the day to day management of the school. Together the governing body and headteacher must ensure the school provides good quality education and helps to raise standards. The governing body:

- is accountable for the performance of the school to the parents and the wider community
- plans the school's future direction
- selects the headteacher
- makes decisions on the school's budget and staffing
- makes sure the National Curriculum is taught
- decides how the school can encourage pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development
- makes sure the school provides for all its pupils, including those with special educational needs.

How much time will it take?

To be an effective member of the governing body team, it takes time. You will need to prepare for and attend at least three full governing body meetings per year. You will also be involved in one or two committees dealing with finance, staffing, curriculum or premises. These usually meet at least once a term. In addition some governors take on other roles such as Special Educational Needs governor. The amount of time you will need to give depends on how involved you become but governing bodies cannot operate effectively with passengers. You must be prepared to take more than an interest.

What support is available?

Lancashire County Council provides a wide range of support services and training for governors. All new governors receive an introductory pack of materials from the county council which outlines the range of training opportunities available to governors and governing bodies and provides the basic reference documents. There is also a termly newsletter which helps to keep governors up to date with recent developments.

Sometimes governing bodies have difficult decisions to take. In such cases the governing body has access to support and advice from the county council and the church authorities/dioceses as appropriate.

If you require more information about being a governor speak to the headteacher at your child's school or contact Governor Services on 01257 516147, governors.central@lancashire.gov.uk.

Disqualification from holding a governorship

Regulations disqualify certain individuals from becoming a governor. Before your nomination can be considered you are required to confirm that you are not disqualified from becoming a governor. **Failure to submit a declaration will debar you from consideration as a governor.** You are required to notify the Clerk to the Governing Body, in writing, if you subsequently become disqualified from continuing as a governor.

Further information on any of the criteria can be found in the School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2012, Schedule 4. This section refers specifically to disqualification from governorship. Alternatively you may contact Governor Services on 01257 516147.

Qualification and Disqualification Criteria

General

- 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.

Particular categories of governor

- A person cannot be a **parent governor** if they are an elected member of the local authority or paid to work at the school for more than 500 hours in any consecutive twelve month period (at the time of election or appointment).

Failure to attend meetings

- A person is disqualified from being a governor of a particular school if they have failed to attend the meetings of the governing body of that school for a continuous period of six months, beginning with the date of the first meeting they failed to attend, without the consent of the governing body. This does not apply to the headteacher or to foundation governors appointed by virtue of their office.
- A foundation, local authority, co-opted or partnership governor at the school who is disqualified for failing to attend meetings is only disqualified from being a governor of any category at the school during the twelve month period starting on the date on which they were disqualified.

Bankruptcy

A person is disqualified from holding or continuing to hold office as a governor of a school if:

- their estate has been sequestrated and the sequestration has not been discharged, annulled or reduced; or
- they are the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order, an interim bankruptcy restrictions order, a debt relief restrictions order or an interim debt relief restrictions order.

Disqualification of Company Directors

A person is disqualified from holding, or from continuing to hold, office as a governor of a school at any time when they are subject to:

- a disqualification order/disqualification undertaking under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986;
- a disqualification order under the Company Directors Disqualification (Northern Ireland) Order 2002;
- 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).

Disqualification of Charity Trustees

A person is disqualified from holding, or from continuing to hold, office as a governor of a school if they have:

- been removed from the office of trustee for a charity by an order made by the Charity Commission or Commissioners or the High Court on the grounds of misconduct or mismanagement or
- been removed, under section 34 of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005, from being concerned in the management or control of any body.

Persons whose employment is prohibited or restricted

A person is disqualified from holding or from continuing to hold office as a governor of a school at any time when they are:

- included in the list of teachers or workers considered by the Secretary of State as unsuitable to work with children or young people;
- barred from any regulated activity relating to children;
- disqualified from working with children or from registering for childminding or providing day care;
- disqualified from being an independent school proprietor, teacher or employee by the Secretary of State.

Criminal Convictions

A person is disqualified from holding or continuing to hold office as a governor if they have:

- 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;
- received a prison sentence of two years or more in the 20 years before becoming a governor;
- at any time received a prison sentence of five years or more;
- 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.

Refusal to make an application for a criminal records certificate

A person is disqualified from holding or continuing to hold office as a governor if they refuse a request by the clerk to the governing body to make an application to the Criminal Records Bureau for a DBS certificate.