

## **INTRODUCTION**

The role of a school governor is for those people who want to make a difference. It is for people with both time and an interest in education who have a common sense approach and who want to give something back. No qualifications are needed to become a school governor however you must be over 18 years of age. School governors play an extremely important part in the running of schools. Governors take major decisions, such as the allocation of funding and the determination of the school staffing structure; they are also responsible for the setting of targets for pupil achievement, and for ensuring these targets are met through the School Improvement Plan. Governing Bodies carry a lot of responsibility but they are not expected to exercise that responsibility without access to information, advice and training. Governors act in partnership with the head teacher to ensure the smooth running of the school, approving the schools' statement of aims, agreeing the curriculum and approving policies that affect pupils, parents and employees.

A Governing Body is made up of a mixture of different people as it is important that all sections of the community have an input into the education of the children and together help raise their expectations, aspirations and achievements. The Governing Body consists of elected parents, the head teacher, elected teaching and non-teaching members of staff, people from the local community and people appointed by the Local Authority (LA) of the County Council. In the case of a church school, trust school or a foundation school, governors are appointed by the relevant foundation body.

To become a Local Authority governor you need to be interested in young people and their need to learn, achieve and contribute to society. You need to be committed to helping a school to develop, improve and solve problems. You will work as part of a team of governors, using training opportunities to become a confident and capable governor, and may have a role to play as the link between the governing body and the County Council (LA). You need to be able to attend meetings at least once a term, however most governing bodies and their committees meet on a more regular basis, sometimes during the day. Other commitments during the day could be staff appointments, governors' visits and attendance at school events. Responsibilities are shared amongst members of the governing body. Many employing organisations are extremely supportive of their employees becoming governors.

## GUIDANCE NOTES

These guidance notes should be read in conjunction with the application form and are numbered to correspond with the questions.

1. Northumberland is served by the following geographical partnerships of schools:
  - Alnwick (includes Seahouses, Whittingham surrounding areas).
  - Amble (includes Warkworth and Widdrington surrounding areas)
  - Ashington (includes Hirst area, Lynemouth and Newbiggin)
  - Bedlington
  - Berwick (includes Wooler and the Tweed area)
  - Blyth
  - Cramlington
  - Haydon Bridge
  - Hexham
  - Morpeth (includes Rothbury)
  - Ponteland
  - Prudhoe
  - Seaton Valley
2. If you have a personal connection with the school or governing body you wish to serve as a LA representative please enter details of the school and the connection.
3. If you have already been in contact with a specific school please enter details of who is supporting your application.
4. Northumberland consists of first, primary, middle, high, secondary and special schools. First schools are for children aged 4 to 9, primary schools for aged 4-11, middle schools for aged 9 to 13, secondary for aged 11- 19 and high schools are for pupils aged 13 to 19. Many First and Primary schools also have attached Nurseries. Whilst most pupils who have special educational needs are taught within the mainstream system, some are better provided for in special schools. There are nine special schools based throughout the County in Berwick, Hexham, Alnwick, Morpeth, Cramlington, Choppington and Seghill.
5. Northumberland currently has approximately 200 schools, the majority of which are community schools where the governing body is made up of both elected and appointed governors including representatives of the community. In Church of England and Roman Catholic schools the Diocese is represented by foundation governors, consequently there are fewer representatives of both the community and the LA.
6. The role of Governor has, over time, become more demanding and complex. Training opportunities are made available for governors to help them undertake their role effectively. Governors would be expected to undertake such training when they can.

7. Governing Bodies in Northumberland have, without exception, adopted the following code of conduct:

**Governors should;**

- Work to understand the needs of parents, children, staff and the wider community served by the school.
- Support the agreed aims and objectives of the school and promote its interests

in the wider community.

- Endeavour to work co-operatively with other governors in the best interests of the school and the education of its pupils.
- Treat other governors, staff, pupils and parents with courtesy and respect.
- Respect majority decisions of the governors.
- Objectively assess matters brought before the governing body as a critical friend.
- Acknowledge that an individual governor (other than the Chair or Vice Chair so authorised) has no legal authority outside the meetings of the governing body and its committees.
- Acknowledge that an individual governor does not have the right, other than through the Chair and with the governors' agreement, to make statements or express opinions on behalf of governors.
- Demonstrate honesty and good faith in matters pertaining to the governing body, by, for example, never using the position of governor to benefit him/her or other individuals or agencies, and always declaring openly and immediately any personal or organisation conflict of interest arising from a matter before the governors or from any other aspect of being a governor.
- Respect the confidentiality of any item deemed to be so by the governors.
- Strive to enhance his or her effectiveness as a governor through training and other developmental activities.
- Regularly attend the meetings of the governing body and its committees.

8. LA governors are appointed by the LA on a school's governing body. They should present the LA's view, in the same way other categories of governor present the views of those groups of people who have elected them. LA governors are not delegates however, and are not required by the LA to take any particular line. They influence the discussion and vote with the interests of the school and its community as the first priority.

9. Individuals will have many reasons for wishing to become a school governor. You may wish to give something back to the community in which you live or work. Alternatively it may be you have particular skills and abilities that you feel could be of benefit both to the school and governing body. Many governors also benefit from being a governor through the opportunity to develop skills and abilities such as budgeting and staff management.

10. Please give details here of any information you have not mentioned elsewhere that you think may be useful in terms of your application to become a school governor.

11. Please give full details of referees who have known you for at least two years.

**N.B THE ROLE OF SCHOOL GOVERNOR IS SUBJECT TO VERIFICATION OF IDENTITY. A CRIMINAL RECORDS CHECK WILL ALSO UNDERTAKEN.**