



# **INFORMATION FOR PROSPECTIVE GOVERNORS**

**September 2024**

## Welcome

Thank you for your interest in the role of Governor. Becoming a Governor allows you to shape the education children receive and make an important contribution to your local community.

We are sure you will have a lot of questions regarding becoming a Governor; this guide hopefully will help to answer these, but should you need any further information please do not hesitate to contact us.

Advice and support is available for schools and governing bodies direct from the Trust; there are however a number of external bodies/organisations that also provide Governor support (see [Appendix 2 for further details](#)). Induction will be provided on appointment and further training opportunities will also be made available for you.

The Heath Family (NW) is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of students and the post is subject to a satisfactory Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check (formerly Criminal Records Bureau). Further information about DBS checks can be found at [www.gov.uk/crb-criminal-records-bureau-check](http://www.gov.uk/crb-criminal-records-bureau-check).

### The Role of The Heath Family Local Governing Body

The governing body has three key roles delegated to them:

- Contributing to the strategic direction of the Trust/School by participating in discussions at local governing body meetings;
- Holding Senior Leaders to account by monitoring the school's performance; and
- In conjunction with the Trust, ensuring 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 continuing professional development, and suitable premises) and that the way in which those resources are used has impact.

Governing bodies are the strategic leaders of schools and work closely with their Executive Leader/s (Exec Principal/Principal/Head of School), school staff, Trust staff and representatives from the Trust Board. The governing body:

- Sets the values, ethos and direction of the school
- Works with Executive Leaders who are responsible for the day to day organisation, management and control of the school;
- Agrees policies and practice which allows Executive Leaders to carry out their responsibilities;
- Agrees principles and targets for improvement;
- Acts as a critical friend to hold the school and Executive Leaders to account;
- Receives reports, asks questions, provides challenge and discusses progress against agreed priorities;
- Reviews its own working practices

Decisions of the governing body are made in formal meetings, either with the full governing body, or in committees if their terms of reference allow.

**NB: Governors are often in receipt of sensitive and confidential information, eg about staff or children. It is essential that this information remains confidential and is not discussed outside governing body meetings.**

Governing bodies have a number of official positions, including the Chair, Vice Chair and the Governance Professional (Clerk) who has an administrative and advisory role. The Governance Professional is appointed by the governing body, and cannot be a governor.

Individual governors alone do not carry responsibilities and have no power unless the governing body delegates a specific matter to them.

As well as committees, governing bodies often have named governors with specific responsibility to link with the school on specific areas such as Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, Literacy, Numeracy, Training etc.

Governors are appointed and elected to provide:

- Strong links between the school and the community it serves
- A wide experience of the outside world
- An independent view;
- A visible form of accountability for Executive Leaders and staff of the school
- A team focussing on long term development and improvement
- Accountability to the community for the use of resources and the standards of teaching and learning in the school
- Support for Executive Leaders and staff

(see Appendix 1 for further details)

## Types of School Governor

Each of The Heath Family's governing bodies are made up of the following types of governors:

Parent Governors:	Elected from the parents of pupils in the school
Staff Governors:	Elected from amongst the staff of the school
Trust Appointed Governors:	Appointed by the Trust Board
Associate Members:	a discretionary category appointed by the Trust Board/Governing Body from individuals who may be able to make specific contributions, but who is not a governor and has no vote at full governing body meetings but may have limited voting rights at committee level.

All Governors, once appointed or elected, share the responsibilities and work as a team. Individuals are part of the corporate governing body, duties are carried out as part of a team. Governors are not legally liable as individuals.

## Constitution of the Governing Body

The constitution and size of each governing body may vary (dependent on need), but as a minimum each LGB must have:

- 2 parent governors
- 2 Staff Governors
- 5 Trust Appointed Governors

## What School Governors Do

A school governing body has a strategic role in the development of the school but does not become involved in day-to-day management issues – that is the role of the Principal.

You are there to:

- **Provide a strategic view** - help to set and maintain the broad framework within which Executive Leaders and staff should run the school
- **Act as a critical friend** - provide Executive Leaders with support and offer advice and information but also to provide some challenge. The governing body is there to monitor and evaluate the school's effectiveness and governors should therefore be prepared to ask challenging questions
- **To ensure accountability** – Executive Leaders and staff report to the governing body on the school's performance. In turn the governing body is accountable to all stakeholders on the school's overall performance

## What makes an Effective School Governor?

- you care about improving children's educational attainment
- you want to work as part of a team and can value and respect the contribution made by different people
- you are willing to listen, learn and to ask questions
- you are open to ideas and have a feel for what is important to people
- you are enthusiastic
- you can commit time and energy
- you will attend relevant training
- you are willing to participate in and contribute to decisions made at meetings

## How much time does it take?

A governor's term of office is usually for four years, but as a volunteer you can resign at any time. Your main task is to prepare for and attend meetings of the school governing body.

Business Meetings of the full governing body take place once half termly (6 per year). There may also be times where the Local Governing Body decide that a specific area of focus requires more detailed discussion, and in these instances the LGB may ask Governors to join a working party in order to complete the task.

Governors are also actively encouraged to visit their schools as part of their role in monitoring and evaluation to observe practice, meet with staff and to familiarise themselves with the school. Governors are usually welcome, by invitation, to attend school performances, events and some staff training.

## What can I offer?

- time
- enthusiasm and commitment
- if you are a parent, your own understanding of other parents' concerns
- your local knowledge and experience; as a member of the school's community, you will be very valuable as you will have a feel for what is important to people
- your skills; business or organisational skills can be particularly helpful, but they are not a requirement as everyone will have something to offer
- tact and flexibility

## What will I gain from becoming a Governor?

- The knowledge that you are playing a part in improving children's education and supporting the school's staff
- A chance to develop new skills and to practise existing ones, such as chairing meetings, speaking in groups, asking questions, making suggestions and being involved in processes such as staff appointments
- A chance to help other members of the team, whether they be new, not used to committee work or need help to learn about the school and/or school governance
- A chance to work as part of a team committed to supporting and improving children's education using a diverse range of skills which can both contribute to and learn from
- Training and support so that you can fulfil your responsibilities as a Governor.

## Do I need qualifications to be a School Governor?

No. No one Governor is expected to know it all. The strength of a governing body relies in its ability to attract and rely upon members from a wide variety of backgrounds, share out the duties amongst its members and be able to take decisions as a group. We need Governors with experience of life. However, although it is not a requirement, some governors may have qualifications or professional skills that add to the skill set of the governing body.

## Appendix 1

### Principles of Working as a Governor

Governors, once appointed, are holders of public office, and should be prepared to work to the same principles as any paid public official. This is true both as an individual and as a whole governing body. These principles are:

- Selflessness:** Holders of public office should act solely in the public interest
- Integrity:** Holders of public office should not place themselves under external obligations that could influence their public duties
- Objectivity:** Holders of public office should make public appointments based on merit
- Accountability:** Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their actions
- Openness:** Holders of public office should be open in their decision making
- Honesty:** Holders of public office must declare any private interest that could impact on their public work
- Leadership:** Holders of public office should promote these principles through leading by example

## Appendix 2 – Useful Links

### General Education Sites

#### **DfE (Department for Education)**

The website is the central source of information on education policy. The DfE's Governance Handbook and Competency Framework provides guidance on the roles and duties of governing boards, and advice on the skills, knowledge and behaviours they need to be effective.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-handbook>

#### **Ofsted**

Here you will find inspection reports for schools, the framework for inspection and evaluation schedule.

[www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)

### Sites Specifically for Governors

#### **National Governors Association (NGA)**

The National Governors' Association (NGA) is the representative body for school governors in England. An independent organisation; their aim is to improve the well-being of children and young people by promoting high standards in all schools, and improving the effective-ness of their governing bodies.

[www.nga.org.uk](http://www.nga.org.uk)

#### **NCTL licensed programmes for Governors**

Regional organisations are licensed to offer the Chairs of Governors' Leadership Development Programme, Clerks' Development Programme and training workshops for governing body members.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/licensees-professional-development-for-school-governors/licensees-professional-development-for-school-governors>

#### **GovernorHub Knowledge (formerly The Key for School Governors)**

GovernorHub Knowledge provides information in response to question from school governors.

[The Key for School Governors | The Key Governance \(thekeysupport.com\)](http://TheKeyforSchoolGovernors|TheKeyGovernance(thekeysupport.com))

#### **Governors for Schools**

Governors for Schools is an independent charity dedicated to recruiting volunteers to serve on school governing bodies across England. The service is free to schools and Local Authorities. The website aims to show what being a governor involves. <https://governorsforschools.org.uk/>