



The Role of a Governor

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School governors are one of the largest volunteer forces in the country, and have an important part to play in raising school standards through their key roles of setting strategic direction, ensuring accountability, and monitoring and evaluating school performance.

The key point to remember for all governors is that the role of the governor is to act in the best interests of all the pupils in the school – whether the governors are monitoring budgets or agreeing equality policies the underlying focus should be what difference will this make to the children and young people in our school.

Personal Liability

The governing body is a ‘corporate body’. This means that it is the governing body as a whole that is liable for decisions taken, rather than an individual governor: this is true even if the actual decision is taken by an individual governor or a committee of the governing body, provided that each has been accorded delegated authority.

How much time should be spent on governance?

Under usual circumstances, a governor should expect to spend between 10 and 20 days a year on governing responsibilities, the top end of this commitment which equates to about half a day a week in term time is most relevant to the chair and others with key roles, such as the chair of committees. Initially the commitment will be nearer 10 days a year. There may be times when time commitment may increase, for example when recruiting a headteacher.

Under section 50 of the Employment Rights Act, if you are employed then you are entitled to ‘reasonable time off’ to undertake public duties, this includes school governance. ‘Reasonable time off’ is not defined in law and you will need to negotiate with your employer how much time you will be allowed.

Training

Training is provided through Hampshire County Council and is free to individual governors, although this is paid for and financed by the governing body from the school budget.

Term of Office

The usual term of office for all governors is four years. A governor can be disqualified if they are absent from all meetings held within six months without the permission of the governors. If the governing body accepts apologies then it has consented to absence.

Attendance at meetings

It is absolutely vital that all members make every effort to attend full governing body meetings to discuss issues and make decisions. Of course, there will be times when it is not possible to attend, in which case make sure you inform the clerk to the governors and the chair of the governors as soon as possible.