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**MAINTAINED SCHOOL GOVERNING BOARDS**

All maintained schools have a governing board who work with the headteacher and the local authority to ensure that the pupils receive the best possible education at that establishment.

Governing boards vary in size, but all have the same functions:

* Ensuring that the vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school are clearly defined;
* Ensuring that the headteacher performs his/her responsibilities for the educational performance of the school; and
* Ensuring the sound, proper and effective use of the school’s financial resources

(As defined by the School Governance (Roles, Procedures and Allowances)(England) Regulations 2013)

Governing Boards work within Regulations, guidance and policies set by central government (Education Acts and Regulations) and Leicester City Council.

**Support for Governors in Leicester City Schools**

City governors have their own dedicated team – The Governor Services Team – whose role is to provide advice, guidance and support to all city governing boards to enable them to carry out their governor duties effectively.

This includes access to a comprehensive city governors’ On-Line website, termly newsletters and regular guidance booklets provided through a traded service with schools. Governors also have access to a comprehensive training programme.

For further information, please contact the Governor Services Team on (0116) 4541916 or at governors@leicester.gov.uk

**Governing Board Constitution**

The constitution and size of each governing board will vary, depending upon the type of school but all governing boards have:

* At least 2 Parent governors (elected)
* Headteacher
* 1 Staff governor (elected)
* 1 Authority governor (nominated by the City Council but appointed by the governing board)

Maintained schools must also have at least 2 Co-opted governors (appointed directly by the governing board).

Voluntary Aided, Foundation and Trust schools will also have Foundation governors - appointed by the relevant Foundation and may choose to have 1 or more Co-opted governors.

**The Role of the Governing Board**

The governing board has three key roles:

* Ensuring that the vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school are clearly defined;
* Ensuring that the headteacher performs his/her responsibilities for the educational performance of the school; and
* Ensuring the sound, proper and effective use of the school’s financial resources.

**Strategic Leadership**

Governing boards are the strategic leaders of schools and work closely with their head teacher, school staff and representatives from the Local Authority. The governing board:

* sets the values, ethos and direction of the school
* works with the headteacher who is responsible for the day to day organisation, management, control and of the school;
* agrees a budget to support the school’s priorities;
* agrees policies and practice which allows the headteacher to carry out his/her responsibilities;
* agrees principles and targets for improvement;
* acts as the critical friend to hold the school and headteacher to account;
* receives reports, asks questions and discusses progress against agreed priorities;
* reviews its own working practices.

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

Most governing boards have committees that:

* carry out tasks specifically given to them by the governing board;
* aid the work of the governing board;
* report back to the governing board.

The number of committees depends on the governing board and its needs.

All governors, once appointed, share the responsibilities and work as a team:

* Individuals are part of the corporate governing board;
* Duties are carried out as part of the team;
* Governors are not legally liable as individuals (provided they act within the law).

**What makes a good governor?**

There are no formal qualifications required to become a school governor however all governors need to be able to offer or willing to learn/develop skills and qualities such as:

* a strong commitment to the role and time to undertake this;
* a willingness to learn and undertake appropriate training and development;
* the ability to assimilate information, ask questions, make judgements and take decisions;
* tact, diplomacy, ‘people’ skills;
* an ability to work as part of a team

There are certain disqualifications from being a school governor and all governors sign a declaration stating that they are not disqualified.

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 the headteacher and staff of the school;
* a team focusing 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 the headteacher and staff.

**Why be a school governor?**

There are immediate and lasting benefits to becoming a school governor. You are making a positive contribution to a school’s success and are therefore having an impact on the lives of its pupils, staff and the local community. In addition, the role can help you develop transferable skills that will be useful/helpful in your working life.

Being a school governor is an excellent way to gain valuable new skills, such as strategic planning, leadership, chairing, team working, understanding data and working with budgets. Schools are looking for volunteers from a wide range of professions and sectors, with skills and expertise in areas such as finance, human resources, law, and marketing.

Being a governor will enable you to gain experience in:

* strategic planning and development
* setting aims and objectives for reaching ambitious goals
* working within a diverse team
* recruitment and performance management of senior leaders
* financial planning, budget control and setting pay
* gaining greater awareness of the education system
* being part of debates and asking challenging questions to support school improvement
* getting to know the community in which you live and/or work
* using your existing skills in a new or different way

### Time commitments

The standard term of office for a school governor is 4 years. You can be re-appointed or re-elected for subsequent terms of office.

The time needed to be an active school governor has been estimated at around 6 hours each school month. The actual amount of time will vary depending on how much you are able and willing to give to the role, but this estimated time commitment should enable you to:

* attend meetings - the governing board must meet at least 3 times in an academic year, but most governing boards meet twice a term. Most governing boards also have a number of committees who report back to the full governing board. You will probably be asked to serve on at least one committee;
* read through papers and minutes prior to the meeting so that you are prepared for any discussions before you get to meetings. NB: some governing boards meet during the day and others in the evening;
* visit the school (at least once a year) during the day and talk to staff and pupils to find out what happens in classrooms and build an understanding of how the school works;
* attend and/or/access training to develop your skills and/or knowledge as a governor.

**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 governing board. These principles are:

**Selflessness**

Holders of public office should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.

**Integrity**

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligations to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties.

**Objectivity**

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

**Accountability**

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

**Openness**

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands this.

**Honesty**

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interest relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

**Leadership**

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

(The Seven Principles of Public Life - The Nolan Committee CM3270 - 1 May 1996)

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