



INFORMATION FOR NEW GOVERNORS

GOVERNOR SUPPORT SERVICE

**Children and Young People's
Department**



2002-2003
Community Legal Services
2003-2004
Transforming Secondary Education
Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services
2006-2007
Positive Youth Engagement

WHERE DO I GO FOR HELP, ADVICE AND SUPPORT?

GOVERNOR SUPPORT TEAM

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Website: The website can be accessed by either of these routes:

1. www.wirral-abc.gov.uk
Select 'Wirral Learning Grid', then select 'Governors'
2. www.wirral.gov.uk
Select A-Z, then Select G – Governing Bodies.



WIRRAL

Governor Support Service

Welcome

Dear New Governor

I am very pleased that you have agreed to undertake the work of being a school governor. As such you will have the responsibility of planning for your school to ensure that resources available, both staff and materials, are used to maximum effect – which is the provision of the best possible standard of education for all pupils. This is a vital role, and I am sure that you and your governing body will cope well with its inherent demands. Given that school relies on support from its local community it is important that as many elements of that community as possible are represented on the school's governing body.

Please find enclosed a welcome pack, which I hope you will find useful as well as informative in your new role. The contents include:

- **Appointment Letter** - detailing the dates of your term of office as a governor.
- The most recent edition of '**The Wirral Governor**' – a newsletter which is sent to all governors each term.
- **Governor's Profile** – please complete this form in order that the Governor Support Service has your latest information.
- **Governors' Guide to Educational Terms & Abbreviations.**

The Clerk or Chairperson to the governing body will let you have a CD copy of 'A Guide to the Law for School Governors'. These are sent directly to the school from the DCSF Publication Centre.

As you will see from the newsletter there are a variety of training courses available to governing bodies, including introductory training for new governors, and I hope you will take the opportunity to make use of these. There is also a governors' 'helpline' where a team of people are on hand to help or advise you and details of this service are advertised in 'The Wirral Governor'.

May I also take this opportunity to personally welcome you as a new school governor and wish you a stimulating and satisfying term of office. Your role is a vital one and I have no doubt that you will find the experience of governorship enjoyable and rewarding.

With best wishes

Yours sincerely

Howard Cooper
Director of Children's Services

This is 100% recycled paper



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WHAT NEW SCHOOL GOVERNORS NEED TO KNOW

This booklet is designed to provide new governors with an overview of what being a school governor involves. It concentrates on your practical and immediate queries as a new governor in a friendly and accessible style:

- What governors are meant to do
- What happens in governing body meetings
- How governing bodies organise their work
- How much time you may have to put in
- Where to go for help and advice.

My colleagues in the Governor Support Service are here to help and support the work of the governing body. This will enable you and your governing body to meet the many and changing requirements placed upon you.

I take this opportunity to thank you for becoming a school governor and giving your time and commitment to the school and its community. We will work with you to enable you to be effective in your role and I look forward to meeting you at some point in the future.

Margaret Dunfey
Principal Officer
Governor Support Service

Remember

**“the Governor who works best for their school
is the one who knows their school best”**

BACKGROUND

School governors are one of the country's largest voluntary groups with around 345,000 school governors contributing to strategic development and raising standards of achievement at over 30,000 schools.

School governors are members of their school's governing body, which is a "corporate body". A corporate body has a legal identity that is separate from its members and as a result, individual governors are generally protected from personal liability as a result of the governing body's decisions and actions, provided they act honestly, reasonably and in good faith. (see p.6)

Individual governors have no power or right to act on behalf of the governing body except where the whole governing body has delegated a specific function to that individual, or where regulations specify that a function is to be exercised in a particular way.

School governors are drawn from different parts of the community, such as parents, the staff, the Local Authority, the community and other groups. This helps to ensure that the governing body has sufficient diversity of views and experience but does not mean that governors of a particular category "represent" that group on the governing body. For example, Parent Governors do not act as a representative of the parents at the school and do not report back to them

Taken from governornet website.

How DO Governing Bodies work:

..... Together

Governors are a team. However much they differ in the opinions and experience they start with, they are united by commitment to the school and the responsibility they share for its well-being. In short they have a common purpose.

GOVERNORS SHOULD ABIDE BY THE FOLLOWING KEY PRINCIPLES

Selflessness

Decisions should be taken solely in the public interest and without consideration of financial or material benefits for the individual, family members or friends.

Integrity

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

Objectivity

In carrying out public business, e.g. making appointments or awarding contracts, 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 appropriate scrutiny.

Openness

Public bodies should be open about their business, should give reasons for their actions and restrict information only when the wider public interest demands this.

Honesty

Individuals have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising.

Leadership

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

Adapted from the report of the Committee for Standards in Public Life

TYPES OF GOVERNOR

People (other than Headteachers) become Governors along one of five routes:

- elected by the parents
- elected by the staff
- appointed by the LA
- invited by the other members of the Governing Body
- appointed by the foundation of the school.

Parents of registered pupils at the school are eligible to stand for election for parent governorship. Parent governors are elected by other parents at the school. If insufficient parents stand for election the governing body can **appoint** parent governors.

Staff Governors - Teaching and support staff paid to work at school are eligible for election as staff governors. At least one staff governor in addition to the Head must be a teacher, but if no teacher stands, a member of the staff can be elected. The Head is automatically a member of the governing body and counts as a staff governor. If the Head decides not to be a governor, they must let the Clerk know in writing and the place remains reserved for them. Staff governors are elected by the staff of the school. If they leave the school, they cannot remain on the governing body.

LA Governors are appointed by the Local Authority to represent the wider community.

Community Governors are appointed by the governing body to represent community interests. They can be persons who live or work in the community served by the school, or persons who do not work or live close to the school, but are committed to the good governance and success of the school.

Foundation Governors in foundation, voluntary controlled or aided schools, are appointed to represent the interest of the Church authority or voluntary trust or organisation which set up the school. Their term of office is given in the Instrument. To become a foundation governor contact the school or diocesan boards. There are sometimes *ex officio* foundation governors, often the parish priest in church schools.

Sponsor Governors are appointed by the governing body. It is at the governing body's discretion whether they choose to appoint sponsor governors or not. Sponsors can be persons who give substantial assistance to the school, financially or in kind, or who provide services to the school. The Governing Body can appoint a maximum of two persons as sponsor governors, or where the school is a secondary school up to four.

Partnership Governors are appointed by the Governing Body, which must seek nominations for partnership governors from the parents of registered pupils at the school and others in the community as it considers appropriate (e.g. staff, community organisations and other local bodies). Registered pupils at the school, their parents, staff eligible to be staff governors, elected members of the LA and those employed by the LA in connection with education functions are not eligible to be partnership governors.

Associate Members can be appointed by the governing body to serve on one or more committees and attend full governing body meetings. Associate members are **NOT** governors and they are not recorded on the Instrument of Government.

CATEGORIES OF SCHOOL

There are six categories of state ('maintained') school, with some variation in Governors' responsibilities between them.

- **Community schools** are fully owned and supported by the LA.
- **Community special schools** are also fully owned and supported by the LA, but cater only for children with severe special educational need.
- **Foundation and Trust schools.**
Foundation schools are run by their own governing body, which employs the staff and sets the admissions criteria. Land and buildings are usually owned by the governing body or a charitable foundation.
A Trust school is a type of foundation school which forms a charitable trust with an outside partner – for example, a business or educational charity – aiming to raise standards and explore new ways of working.
- **Foundation special schools** are similar, but cater for children with severe special educational needs.
- The premises of **voluntary aided schools** are set up and owned by a voluntary body, nearly always the Church of England or Catholic Church, and the schools are partly funded by them and partly by the LA.
- **Voluntary controlled** schools are set up by a voluntary body, often a church body (generally Church of England). Totally funded by the LA. The LA employs the staff.
- **Specialist schools.**
Any maintained secondary school in England may apply to be designated as a specialist school in one of ten specialisms. Schools can also combine any two specialisms. These are as follows:
 - arts (performing, visual or media)
 - business and enterprise
 - engineering
 - humanities
 - language
 - mathematics and computing
 - music
 - science
 - sports
 - technology.

The schools meet full National Curriculum requirements, but have a special focus on the chosen specialisms. They have a key role in revitalising education.

USEFUL INFORMATION FOR NEW GOVERNORS

What should new governors expect from their school?

- A meeting with the Chair and Headteacher soon after appointment;
- A visit to the school while it is in operation;
- Introduction and welcome at the first governing body meeting.

The Headteacher, Chair of Governors or Clerk should provide the following information for new governors:

- School address, telephone and fax numbers, email address, website;
- A list of all staff together with their responsibilities;
- List of membership of the governing body;
- Names and addresses of the Chair and clerk to governors;
- A list of governing body committees, their membership and terms of reference;
- Contact name and address of relevant Diocesan Authority (if appropriate);
- Contact name and address of relevant Local Authority contacts;
- School's Instrument of Government;
- Calendar of governing body dates;
- School Development/Improvement Plan;
- The School Profile;
- The School Prospectus;
- Previous agendas and past minutes;
- Previous Headteacher's Reports to the governing body;
- Ofsted Inspection Report and Action Plan, if available;
- Any yearly cycle of work;
- A plan of the school;
- Information about the Wirral Governors' Forum (see pages 38/39/40);
- A list of statutory and non-statutory policies adopted by the governing body;
- Information about the previous year's examination results;
- School newsletter;
- 'Governors' Guide to the Law' CD Rom.

CHECKLIST

Here is a checklist of actions that will help you to settle into your new role:

Contact the headteacher of your school to:



- Introduce yourself;
- Ask for an introductory visit to the school;
- Enquire if the school provides induction support to new governors (for example, some schools nominate a mentor governor to help new governors in their new role);
- Study the programme of training and try to attend at least one course each term. Book a place on the following Introductory training courses to start with:
 - The Strategic Management Role
 - Monitoring & The Critical Friend Role
 - The Accountability Role

Training sessions are advertised at the beginning of each term in the mailing to all governors, which includes an application form to be returned to the Governor Support Service, Professional Excellence Centre, Acre Lane, Bromborough, Wirral CH62 7BZ. Most courses are held at the Professional Excellence Centre.



- If you have access to the internet keep yourself updated on educational matters by visiting the DCSF governor website:

www.governornet.co.uk

- Attend meetings regularly. You may be disqualified if you miss meetings for six months or more (see page 30 for a list of disqualifications);



- Read papers sent to you before attending the governing body meeting;



- Refer regularly to your Governors' Guide to the Law.
- Be prepared to ask about things you don't understand;
- Join in discussion at meetings;

WHAT BEING A GOVERNOR IS ALL ABOUT

So you have decided to become a Governor. Or maybe you are thinking about it and want to know what is involved.

What are the rewards of being a school governor?

- Investing in the next generation;
- Developing new skills;
- Using your personal qualities and expertise to help the school, its pupils and staff;
- Making new friends;
- Developing a sense of partnership and involvement in the community.

Governors do not need to be experts in education. The most effective governors:

- Listen;
- Ask questions – and are critical if necessary, but do so constructively;
- Work as part of a team – respect the views of others, respect confidentiality and take their share of the work;
- Take an interest in the life and work of their school.

As a governor you have important responsibilities for working with the headteacher and staff of your school to develop still further the quality of education that it provides for its pupils.

The main aim of governing bodies is to promote high standards and to help school provide the best possible education for all pupils. The governing body is responsible for the long-term development of the school, not for the day-to-day decisions and management, which are the legal responsibilities of the headteacher.

The most fundamental thing about what Governors have to do lies in a definition of what they do not do. **Governors do not manage schools.** Schools are managed by their management, which starts with the Headteacher and, depending on the size of the school, will encompass a number of other paid staff: the Deputy Head(s), Assistant Head(s), Heads of Department, Heads of Year. What Governors are required to do is to oversee the development of the school. Ultimately, all Governor responsibilities come back to this, though the route is sometimes circuitous. For example:

You do not:

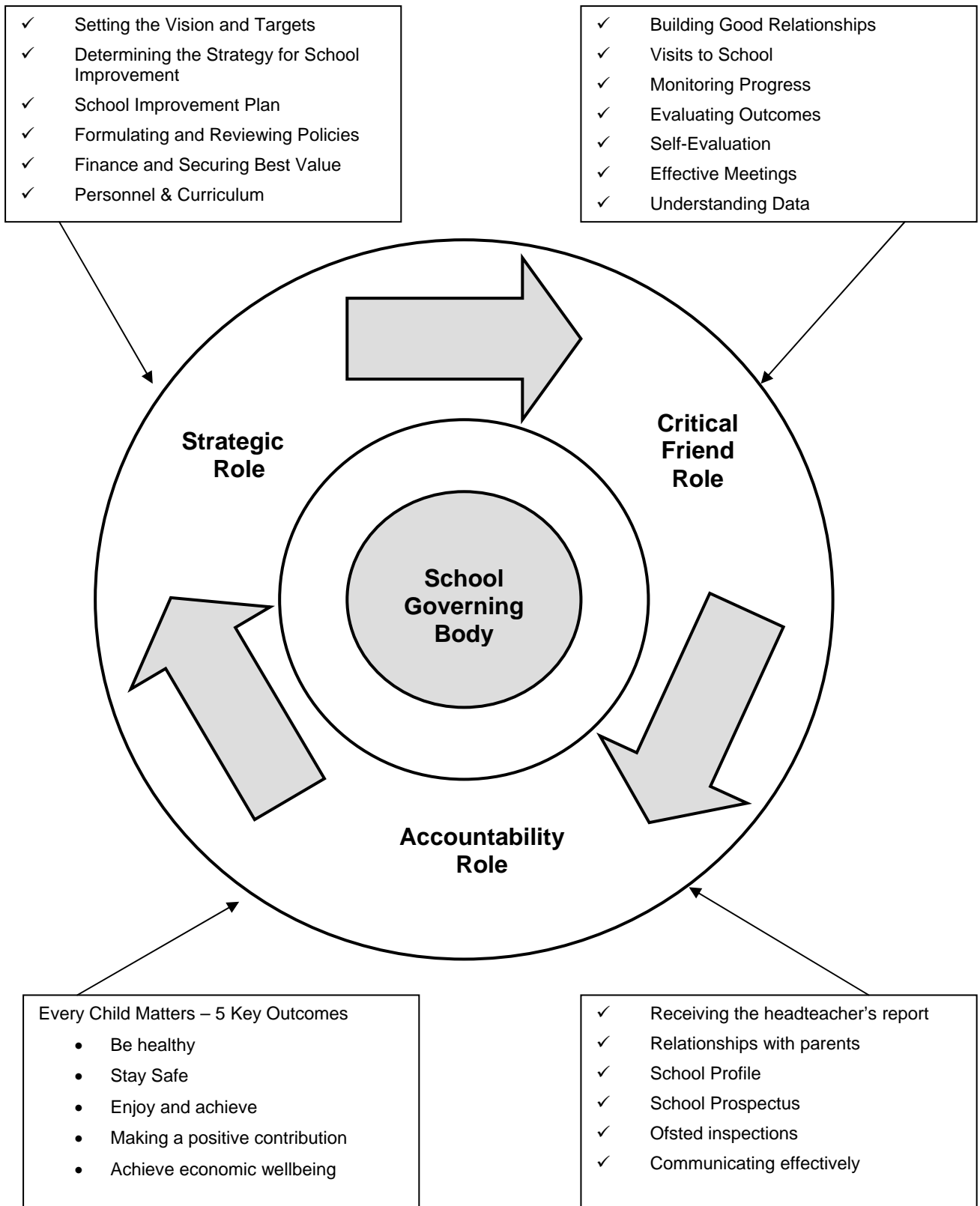
- Choose the books that should be bought for the library
- Decide which teacher should teach which pupils
- Judge individual teachers

But you do:

- Allocate a budget to spend on buying library books
- Decide the number of teachers the school should have, and the balance between different subjects
- Discuss with the Headteacher measures to be taken to improve any subject where the public exam results look poor.

THE THREE MAIN ROLES OF THE GOVERNING BODY

AIM: Focus on raising standards and promoting effective teaching and learning through self-evaluation.



THE THREE ROLES

1. STRATEGIC

Governors have three roles to fulfil. This is setting the general direction of the school, looking at how you want it to develop. For example, if the school was consistently getting disappointing maths results, one strategic decision would be to take measures to improve them. This might mean agreeing with the Head to fund extra training for the staff, allocating money for more books or equipment, or employing an extra teacher or teaching assistant.

Strategic thinking need not always be directly connected with the curriculum. The school may have an unsatisfactory number of instances of poor behaviour or of truancy. It may have neglected after-school sport over the years. It may need to address social problems, or may need to take measure to ensure the integration of increasing numbers of pupils for whom English is not their first language.

Being strategic does not just mean responding to problems or weaknesses. You may decide that you want the school to specialise in a certain curriculum area, or to seek specialist status. Your school may be a faith school, and you would want to ensure that its faith informs the moral teachings of the school. Or you may decide that some radical reorganisation of the school, such as seeking to federate with another school or becoming an extended school, is the way to make a good school even better in the future.

How your governing body makes these decisions should be determined by its **mission statement** and **aims and values**. These encapsulate what the Governors and the school staff consider to be special about their school, and where they want it to go. You should have these explained to you shortly after becoming a Governor.

2. THE CRITICAL FRIEND

The term 'critical friend' is very widely used. The governing body is meant to be the critical friend to the school's Headteacher. The second half of the phrase comes first. The governing body is meant to be supportive of the Head. It is the Head who runs the school, who is at the sharp end. The Headteacher therefore has a right to expect the governing body to be generally sympathetic, to be there to hear about the difficulties, and to unite with him or her in developing the school as they have agreed.

The critical bit means being willing to question and challenge when things do not look right. The 'critical' does not exist separately from the 'friend': you don't ask about a problem area and then simply say it is up the Head to sort things out; you look together at positive steps that can be taken to improve things in the future. Critical friendship is only achieved by trust and mutual respect.

In order to act as a critical friend the governing body needs to establish ways of **monitoring**. Monitoring is keeping an eye on things and seeing whether the decisions you have made are producing the desired results. Some of the strategic decisions will involve setting targets. Monitoring means then asking to see if those targets have been met. It is not just about looking at results on paper. Making a

visit to school during teaching hours is one of the best ways of assessing progress, but this only means occasional visits – perhaps once a year.

3. ACCOUNTABILITY AND THE EXECUTIVE ROLE

Additionally, the governing body is accountable to a variety of ‘stakeholders’ in the school, and at times will exercise executive powers.

The executive powers cover various instances where the governing body has to make a decision that directly affects the running of the school: appointing a new Head or Deputy, or deciding on appeals against exclusion (pupils) or dismissal (staff).

Although at first sight these tasks might appear to blur the distinction between the Governor’s role and that of the school’s management, in practice there are good reasons why Governors, not staff, should undertake them. Some of them belong to the Governors because they affect the strategic direction of the school. For example, making the appointment of a new Headteacher is the single governing body decision that will have most bearing on the future of the school. Others are more a matter of justice: a panel of governors can take an objective view.

Accountability is a term that you hear frequently in relation to figures in the public eye. Politicians are supposed to act in the interest of the public that elected them, not in their own interest or in that of some other group. In this way they are deemed to be accountable to the public for their actions, and not only at election times. The principle of accountability underlies everything that Governors do. You are elected as a member of the public, and you are expected to act with their interest in mind all the time. You are elected or chosen as a member of a particular part of the public (the ‘stakeholders’), according to how you became a Governor.

HOW GOVERNING BODIES WORK

Meetings



Governing Bodies work through meetings. The meeting is at the heart of what governing bodies do because that is the democratic forum where decisions are made. In order to take an active part in meetings, governors need to prepare themselves properly. If they have already familiarised themselves with the school, and read the appropriate documents, they will be better prepared to take part in a meeting.

A quorum is the minimum number of governors who must be present to validate the proceedings of a governors' meeting. The quorum for a meeting of the governing body is one half of the governors in post at the time of the meeting rounded upwards. For example, a governing body with 12 governors, but only 9 governors in post, would need a quorum of 5.

The quorum for a committee is at the discretion of the governing body subject to the quorum being a minimum of 3 governors.

Associate Members do not count towards the number required for a quorum for meetings of the governing body or committees. Additional or surplus governors **do** count for quorum purposes.

How much time will I need?



You will be expected to attend one full governing body meeting each term. The expectation is, and the opportunity is there, that governors will make a significant contribution in time commitment. Governors are not employees, and it is only right that this voluntary commitment is balanced against other personal commitments and responsibilities.

What about time off from work

Under employment law, employers must give employees who are school governors 'reasonable time off' to carry out their duties. The employee and employer have to agree on what is 'reasonable time off'. Among the points they will want to discuss are

- How much time is needed to carry out a governor's duties;
- whether the employee is also being given time off from work for other activities;

- the particular circumstances of the employer's business and the likely effect that the employee's absence may have on it.

Payment for time off

Employers may give time off with pay, but do not have to do so. This is for discussion between the employee and the employer.

Settling disagreements

If the employee and employer cannot agree on any of these questions, either of them can ask for help from the Advisory Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS), which will try to settle any difference informally. An employee who is still not satisfied may complain to an employment tribunal.

(Taken from 'Guide to the Law for School Governors')

Please note

Employers have a legal obligation to permit employees who are in the following categories to have reasonable time off during working hours:

- A Justice of the Peace;
- A member of any statutory tribunal;
- A member of a Regional Health Authority;
- A member of the managing or governing body of an education establishment.

If you are an employee of Wirral Borough Council the Chief Executive is authorised for these purposes to grant employees leave of absence with pay for up to 18 days in any leave year subject to the deduction of any allowance received.

With regard to duties as a member of another local authority, leave of absence with pay for up to 208 hours in any leave year is permitted, in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989, subject to the deduction of any allowance received.

How many governors are on each governing body?

The constitution of the governing body is set out in the **Instrument of Government**. All schools must have an Instrument which is a formal legal document that sets out the legal name and category of the school; the categories and number of governors; their terms of office and the date on which the Instrument of Government took effect. In foundation schools or voluntary schools with a religious character the Instrument also sets out the religious ethos of the school.

Each governing body also must appoint a **clerk**, but the clerk cannot be a governor. The clerk should be paid for their work. Sometimes the role is filled by the school secretary, but it can be anybody that the governing body thinks can do the job well. The Chair's role is vital in directing governing body meetings, driving things forward and enabling things to happen, while giving all governors the opportunity to make a valued contribution to the process.

Governing bodies have to have a **Chair** and **Vice-Chair**, whom they usually elect at the first meeting of each academic year (unless the governing body has decided to appoint them for more than one year). Any governor can fill either of these posts, apart from someone employed at the school. The role of the Chair is not an easy one; successful leadership of a meeting resting heavily on relationships with colleagues, the ability to balance time and input, and management skills of drawing discussions to satisfactory conclusions. The Chair has a strong influence on the effectiveness of a governing body.

The Role of the Head

Even Headteachers who decide not to become governors will normally attend governing body meetings. Indeed, a governing body would find it practically impossible to function unless the head, or a deputy, attended the majority of its meetings. You cannot be a critical friend to someone who is not there.

Much of the governing body's role involves working with the Head to reach decisions. The Head also has a vital function as your main source of information about the school. He or she will probably liaise regularly with the Chair, but this does not remove the need to report fully to the governing body. Once a term he or she should submit a written report, which will concentrate on what the school is doing to meet the various priorities and targets that the governing body has set. The document will be circulated in advance of the governing body meeting, with the agenda, and is there for you to study and then ask questions. If there is anything that you are unsure about in the report, the meeting is the time to ask about it and to explore the issue. Moreover, if there are things not covered in the report that you think are important, you should also ask about them.

The Role of the Clerk

As a governor, in addition to the support from the headteacher, Chair of governors and Governor Support Service, the clerk to governors is there to support the governing body. The clerk works closely with the headteacher and Chair and helps prepare and organise the meetings and a good clerk is invaluable in helping the Chair fulfil his/her role effectively.

The clerk:

- Sends out agendas and supporting papers, e.g. Headteacher's Report. Governors must receive at least 7 day's notice of a meeting.
- Minutes the meeting.
- Is also able to provide advice throughout the meeting.

The clerk does not have a vote at meetings. A governor may not act as clerk unless in an emergency.

Minutes

- The minutes are a record of what happened and are taken by the clerk.
- When the minutes are agreed as a correct record, the Chair will invite discussion on any matters arising from them.
- All governors are entitled to ask a question about the minutes or check on progress since the last meeting.

- There is no need to raise questions on the minutes if they are covered elsewhere in the agenda.

Agenda

- The agenda will list all the items that are to be discussed at the meeting.
- All governors are entitled to ask for an item to be placed on the agenda. To do this they should contact the Chair or clerk a few weeks before the meeting. Governors can also contact the Chair/headteacher and ask for information.
- Items under Any Other Business should be for urgent matters only. Governors should let the Chair know at the beginning of the meeting if they wish to raise a matter under Any Other Business.

Headteacher's Report

- This is a report written by the headteacher which updates governors on issues and provides information on which decisions can be made.
- This report can also enable the headteacher to explain school policies and report on progress.
- The Headteacher's Report provides an important way for governors to get to know the school.
- This report is also one of the ways by which the headteacher is accountable for the running of the school.

Committees

One or two meetings a term might strike you as being too light a load to match the seriousness of the Governing Body's responsibilities. If you thought so, you would be right. The truth is that the Governing Body is responsible for many areas of activity, and it cannot possibly cover them all in a few hours a term. Instead they are usually tackled by setting up various committees. It is up to the Governing Body what committees it has, but most have separate ones for each main responsibility:

- finance
- personnel
- the curriculum
- health and safety
- special educational needs.

A few, mainly small schools prefer to handle these matters in full Governing Body meetings, but most choose to set up committees which have the power to make decisions on behalf of the Governing Body, and then report back to it on what they have done.

There are some areas where it is compulsory to delegate the business to a committee set up especially. These are usually to do with hearing appeals:

- on admissions to the school (foundation and voluntary aided schools only)
- from parents against the exclusion of their child
- from members of staff on pay or dismissal decisions.

The area that any other committee is to cover and how the committee is to be constituted – jointly known as its **terms of reference** – are decided by the full Governing Body. It is important that committees report on their actions to the full Governing Body, and the most efficient way of doing this is by submitting their minutes. Each committee should have a clerk, or minute taker. Committees can have **Associate Members** on them, with voting rights on most issues. Associate Members can also attend full Governing Body meetings, but not vote.

In order to contribute properly to the Governing Body you will probably be expected to volunteer for one or two committees. This is where you can be guided by your own inclinations and interests. The amount of work and the frequency of meetings vary. For example, the Finance Committee is going to be at its busiest around budget-setting time, in the spring. As a very rough rule of thumb you might expect a committee to meet with the same frequency as the Governing Body – once or twice a term.

Working groups

Governing Bodies can also have working groups or working parties. The difference between these and committees is that they usually meet for a finite period of time only, and deal with a one-off issue. They also have no powers to make decisions on behalf of the full Governing Body, only to make recommendations.

This means that they do not only have to have Governors on them; they can contain other people who have just as much say in those recommendations. An example of where a working party might be set up is to review the home-school agreement, where you want views of non-Governor parents.

Nominated Governors

The governing body appoints individual governors to be 'Nominated Governors' for areas of the curriculum and designated governors for SEN and Child Protection. The Nominated Governor is a governor appointed by the governing body to act as the link or liaison between the governing body and a specific subject curriculum area of the work of the school.

GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE HEADTEACHER

The governing body's most important relationship is with the Head. Without the willing co-operation of the Head it is hard to carry out their role. It is therefore essential for every governor to do their best to be on good terms with their Headteacher.

Regulations on terms of reference for heads and governing bodies codify those aspects of the law and regulations that affect the way heads and governors work together. The preamble to the regulations states that

“The governing bodies are to carry out their functions with a view to fulfilling a largely strategic role in the school. As part of this role, they are to set up a strategic framework for the school, setting aims and objectives for the school, setting priorities and targets for the achievement of those aims and objectives and adopting policies for achieving those aims and objectives.

The Head has responsibility under the Regulations for the internal organisation, management and control of the school, for advising the governing body in relation to the strategic framework and for implementing the strategic framework set out by the governing body.

In delegating functions to the Head, the governing bodies are required to have regard to their largely strategic role in the school. When the governing body delegates functions to the Head, the Head must obey their reasonable instructions about how that delegated power is to be exercised.”

In addition to its strategic role, the governing body can act as a sounding board for the Head, as a buffer between the Head and the outside world and sometimes between the Head and the LA. There is no doubt that many Heads use their governors, and particularly the Chair, as a shoulder to cry on and a source of support when things are going wrong, but some still need encouragement to share problems.

The job of a Head is not an easy one. It is good to have people with whom to share anxieties in a way that does not threaten professional status and credibility. But governing bodies have to earn that trust, by getting to know the school, by acting impartially and by respecting confidences. One of the worst things a governor can do is to disparage the school to outsiders.

“As a governor you are an ambassador for your school in the local community. It is your privilege to publicise your school to all you come into contact with. You should commend your school while on the other hand not making adverse comments about other schools.”

WHAT GOVERNING BODIES HAVE TO DO

As you will have seen from the description of the different committees that governing bodies usually have, there are several areas of responsibility. These can be grouped under the headings of curriculum, staff, finance, buildings, health and safety, special education needs, and appeals:

One principle underlies all governing body work:

The main aim of a Governing Body should be to endeavour to raise the school's standards.

By standards it is meant not only the academic achievement of the pupils, although this is a very important part, it also includes all those things that go into making well-rounded and confident individuals. Raising standards can include encouraging the performing arts or increasing the confidence of pupils with special educational needs.

It helps to remember that there is no such thing as a school that is standing still, just as in business standing still means going nowhere. If you are not improving, you are almost certainly getting worse. Schools which achieve good results but which have lost that edge to improve are merely coasting, and some pupils will not be being stretched.

When you are involved in making any decision, however far it may seem from the lessons, it should be made in the context of what is best for the children.

Curriculum and Special Educational Needs

In the broadest sense the curriculum is all the things that go into the education that pupils receive in the school. The aim is usually to have 'a broad and balanced curriculum', as it is only this that will meet the needs of all the pupils.

The largest part of the curriculum is covered by the **National Curriculum**. This determines what subjects must be taught at what stage of schooling. All schools in the state sector have to follow its provisions, and Governors are responsible for ensuring that the National Curriculum is taught in their school. In primary schools they have particular responsibility for seeing that literacy and numeracy are taught, according to the National Primary Strategy.

Under the National Curriculum a child's passage through school is divided into four stages, known as **Key Stages**. An important responsibility of governing bodies is monitoring achievements at the end of each of these Key Stages. The performance of all children is assessed in national tests at the end of Key Stages 1 (ages five to seven) and 2 (ages seven to 11) – except in Wales, which does not test Key Stage 1 and is dropping the other tests. This is done in a series of tests known commonly as **SAT's** (Standard Assessment Tests). Performance at the end of Key Stage 4 (ages 14 to 16) is assessed through public examinations: GCSEs and GNVQs.

The results for each school are published, and schools are related to each other in league tables (except in Wales). Governing Bodies are involved in setting targets for performance of their schools at the end of Key Stages 2, and 4. In practice the targets will be proposed by the Headteacher after discussion with the teachers, but the governing body, or its curriculum committee, is charged with approving them, or asking for revisions.

The other part of the curriculum that Governors are concerned with is the choice of subjects. This affects secondary schools more than primaries. The Headteacher will propose the subjects to offer, and the governing body makes the decision.

The committee often also looks after **special education needs**. This involves ensuring that the requirements of pupils who have learning, emotional or physical needs are being met by the school.

Staff

The only law affecting the number of staff that a school must have is that Key Stage 1 classes should not have more than 30 pupils to one teacher, except in special circumstances. Other than this the governing body decides on how many teachers and support staff it wants to employ to deliver the curriculum.

Governing Bodies have a key role in making **appointments**. If your school needs a new Headteacher or deputy, the selection procedure is handled by the governing body, usually by a panel appointed for the purpose. The final choice of person has to be made by the whole governing body, usually after the selection panel has completed the procedure and made a recommendation.

When it comes to other appointments, in England the governing body is expected normally to delegate the appointment to the Head. Many Headteachers still ask the governing body to be involved in the process.

Staffing responsibilities do not stop with making appointments. All schools have **performance management** of staff. This is a system of review and appraisal. Governing bodies have to draw up a policy for the way that teaching staff will be appraised by the Head or their Line Managers (guidance is provided by the government). When it comes to the Head, the governing body itself acts as Line Manager, and each governing body is required to appoint two or three of its members to conduct the Head's annual review.

You are also responsible for setting the **pay** of the teachers, according to pay scales set nationally each year. Teachers are placed on pay grades, known as spine points, and for their first few years advance up a point annually. Teachers who have been in post a number of years (currently six) advance onto a higher pay level, known as crossing the threshold. There is some discretion as to where they are placed, and the Headteacher will make recommendations to you about these. Similarly with the pay of the Head and deputy; there are specified levels of pay, but there is also some discretion left to the governing body to decide whether to raise its Headteacher a level on the pay spine.

Dismissal of staff is fortunately a rare occurrence in schools. If the Headteacher decides to dismiss someone, that person has the right to appeal to a committee of the governing body.

Finance

Most decisions that affect the development of your school are going to involve spending money. Each school receives various sums of money annually, most of it from central government via the LA. The actual funding system of schools is complex, but the outcome is fairly simple: each Spring you know how much money you are going to have for the next financial year. It is then up to the governing body to decide how this is going to be spent.

Most governing bodies leave the detailed drawing up of the budget to a Finance Committee, but have the final budget approved by the whole governing body. The sums involved can be large – millions of pounds in a big secondary school – which can make budgeting seem awesome. However, the freedom for action is often fairly limited as many items, like salaries, bear costs that you cannot argue about, unless you are planning major change.

Most schools take advantage of the services of an LA officer, who will draft the budget under the various headings, together with the head and other school staff, such as the Bursar or Secretary. So although setting the budget is a very important job, and one that involves making key decisions about the school's future, it does not require you to spend hours trying to balance the books.

Once set, the budget is monitored twice during the year – a job for the finance committee. If necessary, the committee can decide to make changes to the agreed spending if an unexpected expenditure arises, or simply if an estimate was wrong. It is normal to give the Headteacher the freedom to do this up to a specified amount.

Scheme for Financing Schools

The above document has been sent to headteachers of all schools, Nursery, Primary, Secondary & Special. Detailed below are extracts for your information:

Register of Business Interests

The governing body of each school covered by the scheme must establish a register which lists for each member of the governing body, the headteacher and any staff with financial responsibility or duties, any business interest they, or any member of their immediate family have. This register must be kept up to date with notification of changes and through annual review of entries. The register should be available for inspection by officers of the authority, governors, staff and parents.

Financial Management Standard

All maintained schools must demonstrate compliance with the DCSF Financial Management Standard in Schools in line with the timetable determined by the authority and at any time thereafter. The Authority requires schools to demonstrate compliance through the submission of evidence showing that the school has undergone an external assessment. External assessment must be carried out by the Authority's Internal Audit Section.

Liability of Governors

The governing body of each school is a corporate body. Because of this and the terms of Section 50(7) of the Schools Standards and Framework Act, Governors of maintained schools will not incur personal liability in the exercise of their power to spend the delegated budget share provided they act in good faith.

Governors' Expenses

Where a school has yet to receive a delegated budget, the LA may delegate to a governing body of such a school, funds to meet governors' expenses.

Schedule 11 of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998 provides that only allowances in respect of purposes specified in regulations may be paid to governors from a school's delegated budget share. No other payment of any allowance may be made from a school's budget share to governors. No additional payment of expenses may be made from the budget share to additional governors appointed by the Secretary of State to schools under special measures beyond those expenses paid by the Secretary of State.

Buildings

Sometimes the responsibility for the buildings will be handled by the finance committee, as issues concerning buildings generally incur expenditure.

It used to be a simple matter that for community and voluntary controlled schools any work involving the structure of the buildings was the responsibility of the LA, but with increased delegation of funds from LAs to schools, schools have had to take on more of the structural maintenance. With foundation and voluntary aided schools, all the building costs are borne by the governing body, but the budget will reflect this extra responsibility.

Unless you have a new building project, most building work that comes before the governing body is the nature of repair and maintenance. It is normal to pay an annual fee to a Buildings Manager, who may be the LA, so after making this appointment governing body involvement is usually at the level of approving work to be done, and deciding between competing contractors.

Health and safety

School buildings, and the activities that take place in them (and those carried out off the premises), have to be safe for all concerned. It is the Governing Body's responsibility for ensuring that this is so. Governors themselves do not have to carry out safety checks, but the Governing Body should ensure that regular checks are made by qualified staff. They should also be satisfied that staff are familiar with the routines for reporting problems or accidents. This responsibility can be delegated to a separate committee, or may be given to the buildings committee.

Appeals and scrutiny

We have already looked at the governing body's responsibilities in the case of staff dismissal together with other staffing responsibilities. However, this can also be described as a judicial function, because the role of the governing body is to act as an impartial judge. This description also fits dealing with **admissions** and **pupil discipline**.

As described earlier, governing body involvement in admissions only occurs in foundation and voluntary aided schools. The governing body's role in these schools is to administer the admissions process and organise panels to hear appeals by parents of children who have been refused admission to the school (though Governors cannot sit on these panels).

The pupil discipline committee scrutinises all cases of exclusion from the school for five days or longer, including permanent ones, and decides on whether the Head's decision to exclude was fair. This may involve hearing representations from the parents.

It is fairly common, particularly in primary schools, to be appointed to one of these committees for a year and find that it never needs to meet.

Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services & Skills)

Who are Ofsted and what do they do?

Ofsted is the non-ministerial Government department of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools in England (HMCI), accountable to Parliament, responsible for inspecting and regulating the quality of education provision in England.

Self Evaluation and Inspection

The Ofsted framework is the basis for inspection that focuses on:

- educational standards achieved in the school;
- the quality of education provided in the school;
- the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils;
- the quality of leadership and management of the school, including whether the financial resources of the school are managed efficiently;
- how far the education meets the needs of the range of pupils at the school;
- the contribution made by the school to the well-being of those pupils.

Why do we have inspections?

- to provide external evaluation of the quality and standards of the school;
- to report on the quality of education at the school and whether pupils achieve as much as they can;
- to promote a culture of rigorous self-evaluation in school that is complemented by periodic external inspection.

The governing body's role in the inspection process is to:

- inform parents that an inspection will take place;
- distribute the summary inspection report to parents, pupils and others who request it;
- include the action points from inspection in the School Improvement Plan;
- be involved in the preparation of the School Self Evaluation Form (often referred to as SEF).

In preparation for an inspection governing bodies must ensure that they can demonstrate that:

- they have been actively involved in strategic and development planning;
- they have set criteria for reviewing achievement towards the implementation of the development and action plans;
- they have agreed policies in relation to school and community issues;

- they have operated effectively as a governing body;
- they have effectively managed the school's budget;
- there are effective relationships with the wider community/parents/industry;
- they have accurately evaluated the work of their school.

For more information on how Ofsted works, log onto their website at www.ofsted.gov.uk

GOVERNOR TRAINING

The role of a school governor is complex and may call on knowledge of a wide range of subjects. With the best will in the world, no-one can have an in-depth knowledge of everything, so governing bodies should be prepared to call on the help of experts when appropriate. They are expected to undertake relevant training to develop their own skills.

To assist you in carrying out your duties, a programme of training courses runs each term. Details of these can be found on the governor training pages in your termly newsletter and also on the Governor Support website at www.wirral.gov.uk.

Attendance at training for governors is a must. If you are to be an effective governor you should attend at least one training course a term. It is recommended that all new governors start their governorship by attending the following sessions which are offered each term:

- The Strategic Management Role;
- Monitoring and the 'Critical Friend' Role;
- The Accountability Role.

WHO CAN BE A GOVERNOR?

A governor must be aged 18 or over at the time of their election or appointment. A person cannot hold more than one governorship at the same school.

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

- are detained under the Mental Health Act 1983 during their period of office;
- have failed to attend governing body meetings for a continuous period of six months, beginning with the date of the first meeting missed, without the consent of the governing body (not applicable to ex officio governors);
- are subject to a bankruptcy restriction order or an interim order;
- have had their estate sequestrated and the sequestration order has not been discharged, annulled or reduced;
- are subject to:
 - a disqualification order or disqualification undertaking under the Company Directors Act 1986
 - a disqualification order under Part 2 of the Companies (Northern Ireland) Order 1989
 - a disqualification undertaking accepted under the Company Directors Disqualification (Northern Ireland) Order 2002
 - an order made under section 492(2)(b) of the Insolvency Act 1986 (failure to pay under county court administration order);
- have been removed from the office of charity trustee or trustee for a charity by the Charity Commissioners or High Court on grounds of any misconduct or mismanagement, or under Section 34 of the Charities and Trustees Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 from participating in the management or control of any body;
- are included in the list of people considered by the Secretary of State as unsuitable to work with children;
- are disqualified from working with children or subject to a direction under section 142 of the Education Act 2002;
- are disqualified from registration for childminding or providing day care;
- are disqualified from registration under Part 3 of the Childcare Act 2006;
- have received a sentence of imprisonment (whether suspended or not) for a period of not less than three months (without the option of a fine) in the five years before becoming a governor or since becoming a governor;
- have received a prison sentence of 2½ years or more in the 20 years before becoming a governor;
- have at any time received a prison sentence of 5 years or more;
- have been fined for causing a nuisance or disturbance on school premises during the 5 years prior to or since the appointment or election as a governor;
- refuse to allow an application to the Criminal Records Bureau for a criminal records certificate.

A person is disqualified from appointment as a community governor if they are a registered pupil at the school, eligible to be a staff governor at the school, or if they are an elected member of the local authority to which the school belongs.

A person is disqualified from election or appointment as a parent governor of a school if they are an elected member of the local authority or if they work at the school for more than 500 hours in a school year.

YOUR CONTRIBUTION

What should you do to add your part to the Governing Body's work?

Well, first and obviously, attend meetings. If you miss six months' worth of meetings (which might be only two) without acceptable reason, you may be required to leave the Governing Body. If you really cannot make a meeting, you should forward your apologies to the clerk or chair in advance of the meeting.

Then join a committee, or two committees. Much governing body work is done through committees, and it is only as a member of a committee that you will be able to contribute fully to the work of the governing body.

Some governing bodies have a system where each Governor is attached to a curriculum subject. If so, discuss the subject with the Teacher/Head of department responsible, and learn what the school's aims are. Arrange with the teacher and Headteacher to visit the school to see the subject being taught, and report back to the governing body.

Even if you do not have a curriculum allocation system you should arrange to visit the school, say, once a year. Most governing bodies draw up a rota for school visits, which are always agreed with the Head. (see attached notes on School Visits).

You should be prepared to go on training. This is not a huge commitment, involving days off work. Governor training sessions are often held in the evenings. The LA's induction course runs across three evenings. This course is likely to be the longest one you will come across in your time as a Governor, but is well worth attending – indeed essential, unless you are already very well clued up about governance. Thereafter you may need only one or possibly two short training sessions a year, to bone up on the areas of governance that you are particularly involved with.

As with most things, the more you put into being a Governor, the more you will get out of it. So this certainly means some commitment of time, and a willingness to learn. However, it needs enthusiasm more than time, and as you come to enjoy the work, the time spent should be a pleasure.

USEFUL WEBSITE ADDRESSES

WIRRAL GOVERNORS' FORUM

Either www.wirral-abc.gov.uk Select 'Wirral Learning Grid', select 'Governors' then select 'Wirral Governors Forum'.

Or www.wirral.gov.uk Select A-Z, select G – Governing Bodies, then select 'Wirral Governors Forum'.

DEPARTMENT FOR CHILDREN, SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES (DCSF)

www.governornet.co.uk Carries the most up-to-date version of the *Guide to the Law for School Governors*; provides a tool for planning the work of the governing body over the course of the year and gives links to many other websites relevant to governance. You can register to receive a regular email newsletter.

www.dcsf.gov.uk The general DCSF site gives information on recent news items, including copies of official press releases, the DCSF itself and links to other government and official organisations.

Address: Sanctuary Buildings, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3BT.

Tel. 0870 001 2345

www.governorline.co.uk This is a free advice line that offers information and professional support to governors.

Tel. 08000 722181.

www.teachernet.gov.uk Contains guidance documents on a very wide range of topics. All the guidance documents on extending schools' provision are on www.teachernet.gov.uk/extended_schools

www.teachernet.gov.uk/publications DCSF Publications Centre.

Address: PO Box 2093, London E3 3SQ.

Tel. 0845 602 2260

www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/extendedschools A key site for extended schools

www.ncsl.org.uk National College for School Leadership. This site contains the training programme for governors on safer recruitment.

www.parentcentre.gov.uk A useful site for parents and carers who want to understand the education system better or wish to be more involved in supporting their child's education.

www.ofsted.gov.uk Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted)

Address: Alexandra House, 33 Kingsway, London WC2B 6SE,

Tel. 020 7421 6800.

SCHOOL GOVERNORS ONE STOP SHOP (SGOSS)

www.sgoss.org.uk The SGOSS is a charity which exists to find school governors for schools where they are needed most in England.

Address: 64 Essex Road, London N1 8LR.

Tel: 0870 241 3883. Email: info@schoolgovernors-oss.co.uk

NATIONAL GOVERNORS' ASSOCIATION (NGA)

www.nga.org.uk Its aims are to consult and represent governors and promote high standards in the exercise of governors' responsibilities. The NGA site includes a number of good practice guides, its regular magazine *Governors' News*, press releases, research papers and the responses it has made to national consultations.

Address: 2nd Floor SBQ1, 29 Smallbrook, Queensway, Birmingham B5 4HG.

Tel. 0121 643 5787.

NATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS (NCPTA)

www.ncpta.org.uk Aims to advance education by encouraging the fullest co-operation between home and school, education authorities, central government and all other interested parties and bodies. Benefits of membership include insurance cover for PTAs.

Address: 18 St John Hill, Sevenoaks, Kent, TN1 33NP.

Tel. 01732 748850 Fax. 01732 748851 Email: info@ncpta.org.uk

CONTINYOU

www.continyou.org.uk Creates learning programmes and services that offer fresh opportunities to people who have gained least from formal education and training.

Address: Unit C1, Grovelands Court, Grovelands Estate, Longford Rd, Exhall, Coventry CV7 9NE.

Tel. 024 7658 8440. Email: info.Coventry@continyou.org.uk

INFORMATION FOR SCHOOL AND COLLEGE GOVERNORS (ISCG)

www.governors.fsnet.co.uk ISCG provides a free advice line for all governors and produces publications including the Clerks' Manual.

Address: Avondale Park School, Sirdar Road, London W11 4EE.

Tel. 020 7229 0200. Email: ISCG@governors.fsnet.co.uk

THE ADVISORY CENTRE FOR EDUCATION (ACE)

www.ace-ed.org.uk ACE "presses for a fairer and more responsive education system", gives free advice to parents of children in state schools, and issues books and periodicals.

Address: Unit 1c, Aberdeen Studios, 22 Highbury Grove, London N5 2DQ.

Tel. advice line: 0808 800 5793. Email: enquiries@ace.dialnet.com

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES COMMISSION

www.eoc.org.uk

Address: Arndale House, Arndale Centre, Manchester M4 3EQ.

Tel: 08456 015901. Email: info@eoc.org.uk

THE STATIONERY OFFICE

www.tso.co.uk

Address: PO Box 29, Norwich NR3 1GN.

Tel: 0870 600 5522. Email: tsoservices@tso.co.uk

VISITING THE SCHOOL

Governors do not have an automatic right of entry to the school. However, in order to fulfil their responsibilities effectively and understand how the school works they do need to visit.

It is very important that visits by governors are conducted in a positive and supportive way, whilst giving the governor an opportunity to ask questions and find out more about a particular aspect of school life. For these visits to be informative and useful to all parties, it is helpful for a protocol of visiting to be agreed and observed.

The objectives are to understand the way the school works, its achievements and its difficulties, and to foster good relations with the head and staff. This will help to ensure that when the governing body is taking policy decisions it will do so on an informed basis of practical knowledge of the school.

Governors' visits should:

- be prearranged with all parties involved;
- be an opportunity to be positive about the school;
- have a clear focus;
- provide an opportunity for exchange of information;
- provide an opportunity to build relationships with staff and pupils.

Governors' visits are not:

- to inspect the school;
- to make judgements on the quality of teaching;
- unannounced and unplanned;
- an opportunity to quiz pupils;
- unfocused.

It helps if the governing body agree a policy on school visits in consultation with the Head and staff. (The information on the next two pages gives an example of a protocol for visits). The clerk could monitor and update the programme and chase up reports from governor visits.

The policy could include:

- the number of visits a term;
- their focus and purpose, the difference between getting to know the school visit – one by a link or specialist governor or one linked to development plan priorities;
- arranging a convenient time with the Head beforehand;
- ensuring that the staff involved are aware of the visit;
- how governors should behave during a visit e.g. joining in lessons rather than just sitting at the back;
- reporting to the Head after the visit;
- reporting to the governing body.

Planning a Visit

Before the visit it is often helpful to look again at any policies or papers relevant to the topic chosen. The school prospectus, the last Headteacher's report to governors, as well as the school development plan, can also add context to the visit.

A PROTOCOL FOR GOVERNORS' VISITS

- Governors are there to observe and inform themselves. They will intrude as little as possible on the teachers' time.
- Governors attached to a department or class should arrange an appointment to discuss how to proceed with the link arrangement.
- Governors can go into classes when invited to do so by the teacher.
- Governors can talk to pupils in class only when invited to do so by the teacher.
- Governors can attend departmental or staff meetings when invited to do so.
- Members of staff invite governors into the staff room if they wish.
- Governors will always make an appointment when they want to come into school, not just drop in.
- Members of staff are always free to say that it is not convenient for a governor to come in at any particular time.
- These informal contacts should not be used to raise individual problems that should be properly resolved by the Senior Management Team.
- If governors see something that worries them, they will discuss this first with the teacher.

Think about whether you want to spend time in the classroom and talk to pupils, to see samples of work, to discuss what you have seen with staff. If so, find out if it will be convenient to do so.

During the visit remember to introduce yourself to members of staff and pupils, to note and praise the positive, but do not take notes in the classroom. Always thank everyone concerned and share what you have seen with the Head.

After the visit

Not all governors are able to visit schools during the day because of their work, so it is important to share experiences of visits with the rest of the governing body. A report to the governing body should preferably be written and circulated to everyone in advance of the next governors' meeting. Don't forget to emphasise the good things you have seen. If you have critical comments, try to express them in a helpful rather than negative way. It is good manners to discuss any report with the Head or teacher concerned, especially if you have criticisms to make.

What to focus on – some examples

Topics:

- Specific curriculum subjects.
- Behaviour.
- Health & Safety.
- School systems e.g. playtime, assembly, organisation.
- Extra curricular activities.
- Accommodation and use of resources.
- Parental involvement.
- The environment e.g. displays, use of the building.
- The use of ICT
- The work of support staff
- Record –keeping, assessment and marking.

Things to look out for

- Are there clear signs of welcome?
- Is some of the pupils' work on show?
- Am I encouraged to see all parts of the school?
- Is behaviour orderly at break times and when moving between classes?
- Am I encouraged to see examples of pupils' work and told about the progress of the class?
- Do all games and sports sessions include all the pupils in the class?
- Are all pupils encouraged to take part in music, drama and dance sessions:
- Are all pupils equally involved in all the activities, including those with special needs?
- How well do pupils get on together in class and around the school?

WIRRAL GOVERNORS' FORUM

THE ROLE OF LINK REPRESENTATIVES

Governing bodies of schools are responsible in all aspects of the education provided in their school. This is achieved through a series of co-ordinated partnerships with teachers, parents, Local Authority officers and other governing bodies through the link with Wirral Governors' Forum.

Hence, as Wirral Governors' Forum is made up of Link Representatives from all governing bodies, it can represent their collective views in discussions with the LA and in periodic meetings with other groups, e.g. teachers and parents.

The Link Representative will seek to:

- be familiar with the education process in their own school;
- obtain the consent and trust of the governing body in relaying, with discretion and as appropriate, the concerns of the school;
- regularly attend Forum meetings to act as a communicator and link between the school and other governing bodies;
- be equipped for the role of Governor/Wirral Governor Forum Link Governor through the training opportunities provided by the LA.

To find out more about the work of the Forum please contact:

Mrs Jane Owens, Chair of the Wirral Governors' Forum, at

jane@cassowens.freeseve.co.uk

or contact the Governor Support Team.

WIRRAL GOVERNORS' FORUM

CONSTITUTION

1. The Wirral Governors' Forum, hereinafter referred to as the 'Forum', shall be an Association of Governing Bodies of Schools within the Wirral Children & Young People's Department.
2. The aims of the Forum are to provide opportunities for Governors to come together for the purpose of:
 - encouraging Governors to:
 - participate fully in the deliberation of their Governing Bodies;
 - be involved more effectively in the life of their schools in the advancement of education across the Borough.
 - establishing links between Governing Bodies in order to:
 - provide a collective voice;
 - encourage co-operation between schools;
 - share knowledge, experience of good practice, and;
 - look at methods for addressing areas of common concern.
 - seeking to form a partnership with other groups in the Education Service both locally and nationally.
3. All Governing Bodies of schools within the LA shall be deemed to be in membership of the Forum and will have the right to elect a Link representative who, with all other Link Representatives, shall constitute the Forum.
4. The management of the Forum will be vested in an Executive of ELEVEN Link Representatives whose appointment will have regard to the variety and geographical spread of schools.
5. The Executive shall appoint from its members a Chairperson, a Vice Chairperson, a Secretary and a Treasurer who shall hold office for two years. Five members of the Executive, one of whom shall be an Officer, shall constitute a quorum.
6. The Annual General Meeting of the Forum shall be open to all governors.
7. Plenary meetings arranged by the Forum shall be open to all governors.
8. The Executive and the LA will agree the level of administrative support to be provided by the Governor Support Section and the level of annual expenditure to be allocated from the LA Standard Fund Budget.
9. A bank account shall be operated in the name of Wirral Governors' Forum, withdrawals being made on the signature of any two officers. The financial year shall begin on the first of April.

10. The Forum shall be independent of the LA and political parties and shall be non-sectarian.
11. The Forum shall maintain Membership of the National Governors' Council.
12. Any matter not provided for in this Constitution shall be dealt with by the Executive whose decision shall be final.
13. An Extraordinary General Meeting of the Forum may be called by the Executive on the demand of 10 per cent of Link Representatives provided 28 days notice in writing has been given to the Secretary.
14. Any proposal to change the Constitution of the Forum shall be made in writing to the Secretary 28 days before an Annual General Meeting or Extraordinary General Meeting and shall be supported by 10 per cent of Link Representatives.
15. The Forum may be dissolved by resolution put to an Extraordinary General Meeting receiving two-thirds of the votes of Link Representatives attending.

The following information booklets/sheets are available both by email and hard copy from the Governor Support Service.

Please contact any member of the team who will be pleased to send whichever one (or more) you request:

- *Committees of the Governing Body & the Role of Nominated Governors*
- *Data Protection for School Governors*
- *Good Practice in Developing an Allowances Policy for Governing Bodies*
- *Guidelines for Chairs of Governors*
- *Induction & Mentoring New Governors*
- *Inspection – A Governors' Guide to the Ofsted Process*
- *Parent and Staff Governor Appointments/Elections*
- *Policies of the Governing Body*
- *Questions for Critical Friends*
- *Role of a Named Governor for Safeguarding Children*
- *The Headteacher's Report*
- *Visiting the School*

I hope you have found this booklet informative and I realise that there seems to be a lot of information to take in at once. My advice would be to use the booklet as a referral point over the coming months.

If you feel something has been omitted that might be useful to other new governors please contact me.

Remember, the Governor Support Service is here to help.

Enjoy your new and challenging role as a school governor.