

Being a school governor is not difficult, but you do need to be committed and interested in doing the best for the governing body, the school and the next generation.

What do school governors do?

Governing bodies play a major role in determining children’s education. Governors are responsible for making sure the school provides a good quality education. Together with the head teacher, governors set the future direction of the school.

What can I offer?

Enthusiasm and commitment, together with a willingness to work as part of a team.

Will I need qualifications?

No. Governors are appointed from all walks of life. You do not need to be an expert in education to become a school governor. In fact, it is important that governing bodies are made up of parents, school staff, and representatives from the local community and the local authority to ensure that schools reflect the community they serve. It often takes those from outside the education profession to ask the most pertinent questions. ‘Are we sure our children are achieving to their full potential?’ ‘How do we know our schools are serving our children’s best interests?’ ‘What more can we do to support improvement?’

Will I receive any help and training?

Yes. All local authorities (LAs) are required to provide training and each school should set aside funds for governor training. The Governor Support and Training Unit (GSTU) provide information and advice, free induction training for new governors and central training and school-based programmes for all governors. The experienced staff of the GSTU provide a day-time helpline service.

May I claim expenses?

Governors may claim for travel, subsistence and expenses to enable them to carry out their governor duties, such as the cost of a carer for dependent relatives while you attend meetings, providing your governing body have decided to pay such allowances for expenses.

Are governors entitled to time off 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 what is reasonable time off, and employers may give time off with pay but do not have to do so.

How do I become a school governor?

There are various types of governor who are selected in different ways. Community governors are chosen by each governing body and may be anyone from the local community who is committed to the good governance and success of the school. Local authority governors are appointed by Haringey Council from local political parties as well as from the community at large. Parent governors are parents (including carers) of registered pupils at the school who have been elected by the parents. Staff governors are elected by both teaching and support staff paid to work at the school. Foundation governors are appointed by the school’s founding body, church or other organisation named in the school’s instrument of government. Partnership governors are appointed by the governing body in a foundation school when there is no foundation or equivalent body. Sponsor governors may be appointed at the discretion of the governing body from among the school’s sponsors. Associate members may be appointed by the governing body to serve on governing body committees. Head teachers may choose whether to be members of the governing body and may always attend governing body meetings.

Governor Support and Training Unit, The Children and Young People’s Service, Haringey Professional Development Centre, Downhills Park Road, London N17 6AR.

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Will becoming a school governor take up a lot of my time?

The amount of time will vary for each governor. It is no use thinking about being a governor if you cannot turn up to meetings or take the time to read the agenda papers. However, it need not be daunting. For only a few hours a month and with help and support from others, both inside the school and elsewhere, being a governor can be very rewarding. Governors get a great deal from the time and work they put in. Serving as a governor can give you the chance to

- make a difference to how well a school functions,
- participate in the raising of your school’s standards,
- do something positive for the next generation,
- serve the local community and
- help you realize your own potential by developing new or underused skills.

As with everyone, you have something to offer your local school. As a governor you can gain a lot as well—meeting new people and making new contacts, gaining new skills and practising little-used ones, having access to a wide range of training and development opportunities—but most important is the knowledge that you are helping to improve the education available to our young people.

I am interested in becoming a school governor

Name _____

Female Male Age group: under 30 31-50
Are you disabled? 51-65 over 65
Yes No

Address _____

Telephone Number _____

Email _____

I am a member of the Labour Party____, the Liberal Democratic Party____, the Conservative Party____, another political group (write in)_____.

References. Please provide contact details for at least one referee (ideally two) who can be business or personal acquaintances (not family) who have known you for at least two years.

Referee 1

Name _____

Contact address_____

Email _____

Telephone _____

Referee 2

Name_____

Contact address _____

Email _____

Telephone _____

Ethnic origin—please write in your specific ethnicity

White _____ Black _____

Asian _____ Mixed _____

Other _____