

The Role of a Parent Governor (under The School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2012) 2017

Contents

1. [Introduction](#)
2. [Categories of college governors](#)
3. [Role of the governing board](#)
4. [Parent Governors](#)
5. [As an effective parent governor you:](#)
6. [Time commitment](#)
7. [Time off from work](#)
8. [Communication and confidentiality](#)
9. [Complaints](#)
10. [Allowances for expenses](#)
11. [Term of office](#)
12. [Nolan principals of public life](#)

1. Introduction

This booklet is part of a series explaining the roles of the different types of governors in Scarborough UTC.

Scarborough UTC values the contribution made by you and all governors to the success of its college and recognises the time, energy and commitment that all governors give to their college.

The Governing board is an integral part of college leadership, setting the ethos of the college, driving continuous improvement, supporting, challenging and holding to account the principal and other members of the college leadership team by negotiating stretching targets for improvements in standards and monitoring progress towards them and overseeing the financial performance of the college and making sure its money is well spent.

Your role as a governor is strategic and will continue to evolve to meet the needs of children in the 21st Century. Increasingly, colleges will need to work in partnership and collaborate and the focus of our governing board will be in delivering outcomes for children in the wider community.

2. Categories of college governors

The current model of governance in schools is a stakeholder model; people who are representative of all those groups which have a vested interest, or a stake, in the effective delivery of education and care in a college have a voice in how their colleges operates. The primary consideration in the appointment and election of new governors should be the skills and experience the governing board needs to be effective.

The Governing board is made up of (under The School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2012):

- Parent governors
- Staff governor
- Co-Opted governors
- Member appointed governors
- Associate members
- Principal

The constitution of the governing board is set out in its Articles of Association. Regulations specify that a college must have:

- 8 Member appointed governors
- 3 Co-opted governors
- At least 2 parents governors
- The principal unless he/she resigns the office of governor, in which case it remains vacant
- 1 staff governor

3. Role of the governing board

The governing board is the strategic leader of the college and has a vital role to play in making sure every child receives the best possible education. This is reflected in the law, which states that the purpose of school governing bodies is to 'conduct the school with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement at the school'. In all types of schools, governing bodies should have a strong focus on three core strategic functions:

- a) Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- b) Holding the principal to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff; and
- c) Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

These functions are reflected in regulations that came into force in September 2013 and in the criteria Ofsted inspectors use to judge the effectiveness of governance in schools.

Key activities of our governing board:

- Understand the college – pupil attainment and progress; pupil behaviour, attendance and safety and teaching quality and staff development
- Set the college’s strategic direction – the vision, ethos and values; set priorities for college improvement and consider governance structure
- Commission action – agree improvement targets and strategies; agree allocation of resources and agree how to monitor and review progress
- Performance manage college leaders – appoint principal and support their leadership; hold college leaders to account for progress and ensure financial probity and efficiency
- Ensure governing board is fit for purpose – clarify role and purpose; review constitution and ways of working and ensure members have the necessary skills

An effective governing body will use the skills of all its members.

4. Parent Governors

Parent governors are elected by other parents at the college. Any parent, or carer, of a registered pupil at the college at the time of election is eligible to stand for election as a parent governor. Parent governors may continue to hold office until the end of their term of office even if their child leaves the college.

Schools must make every reasonable effort to fill parent governor vacancies through elections.

Governing bodies may only appoint as a parent governor a parent who has, in their opinion, the skills to contribute to effective governance and the success of the college.

A parent governor believes that parents should have a say in matters affecting their children’s education.

You should meet the relevant statutory eligibility criteria for school governors as set out in the Regulations and you will have:

- an interest in all the children’s futures
- a desire to make a difference
- a willingness to accept responsibility
- an ability to work in a team, ask questions, listen and learn

As a parent governor you hold the unique position of having a parental viewpoint. Through the children you will have first hand experience of the curriculum and how the college is perceived from the consumers’ point of view. You will be able to bring this perspective to the strategic management of the college.

As a parent governor you do not have to vote in a particular way because you have been pressed to do so by parents. Objectivity, however, is essential. You are not there to promote the interests of your own children but all children. Parent governors are elected by other parents and it is important to establish a rapport with the parental body that elected you, whilst continuing to maintain a strategic approach to college governance.

You are disqualified from being elected or appointed as a parent governor if you are an elected member of the local authority or are paid to work at the college for more than 500 hours in any twelve consecutive months.

5. As an effective parent governor you:

- help to decide the priorities for improving the college
- make yourself available to parents and listen to other parents' opinions and take account of them as you contribute to governors' decisions
- work in partnership with the principal, senior leadership team and cooperatively with other governors to raise standards and improve outcomes for all children
- prepare for meetings by reading papers beforehand
- take responsibility for your own learning and development as a governor including attending training
- attend full governing board and relevant committee meetings promptly, regularly, and for the full time
- read briefings and newsletters for governors; present a balanced view of issues representing different sections of the community
- promote the interests of the college in the wider community
- be loyal to the decisions made by the governing board
- respect the confidentiality of governing board affairs
- never promise to 'solve a problem' on your own
- never press your own child's case at the expense of others
- declare an interest and withdraw from any meeting where you, a partner or close relative or associate stands to gain, or where you are so close to a matter discussed it is difficult to be impartial.
- have regard to the broader responsibilities as a governor of a public institution in regard to promoting accountability for the actions and performance of the governing board

6. Time commitment

Governors are expected to attend all full governing board meetings and committee meetings as appropriate.

Autumn First Half Term	
Wednesday 30 th September 2020	Curriculum & Standards Committee Meeting
Wednesday 7 th October 2020	Resources Management Committee Meeting
Wednesday 21 st October 2020	Full Governing Board Meeting
Autumn Second Half Term	
Wednesday 25 th November 2020	Curriculum & Standards Committee Meeting

Wednesday 2 nd December 2020	Resources Management Committee Meeting
Wednesday 16 th December 2020	Full Governing Board Meeting
Spring Second Half Term	
Wednesday 3 rd March 2021	Curriculum & Standards Committee Meeting
Wednesday 10 th March 2021	Resources Management Committee Meeting
Wednesday 24 th March 2021	Full Governing Board Meeting
Summer Second Half Term	
Wednesday 9 th June 2021	Governing Board Review Meeting
Wednesday 23 rd June 2021	Curriculum & Standards Committee Meeting
Wednesday 30 th June 2021	Resources Management Committee Meeting
Wednesday 14 th July 2021	Full Governing Board Meeting

In addition to meetings, you will also be expected to visit the college in action.

Although you will have a good knowledge of the college through your child's experience, formal visits as a governor are an essential part of your role, particularly in relation to monitoring and evaluating.

Note: a governor is disqualified from holding office if they fail to attend governing board meetings without the consent of the governing board – for a continuous period of six months, beginning with the date of the first meeting missed.

7. Time off from work

Under employment law, employers must give employees who are college governors reasonable time off to carry out their duties. The employee and employer have to agree on what is reasonable. Employers may give time off with pay but do not have to do so.

8. Communication and confidentiality

You have a significant part to play in raising the awareness of the role of governors amongst parents and in enhancing home-college communication in general. There are several ways you could do this which might include, for example:

- contributing to a governors' page on the college website
- playing a part in drafting surveys to seek parents' views and analysing the feedback

You can also help to ensure that the governing board keeps a clear focus on ensuring that the college provides an effective, safe and stimulating environment for all children. If, however,

an issue comes to a vote, you should vote on the basis of what you consider to be in the best interests of the college.

The work of the governing board is recorded in the minutes which should be made available to all parents apart from confidential items.

As a parent governor you are free to report any decision in advance of publication of the minutes if you are sure that you are not breaching a confidence of the governing board and that the information you are presenting is accurate and that it is appropriate for you to report the decision.

Note - you would be breaching the confidence of the governing board if you reported how individuals voted, comments made by individuals or individual discussions. When reporting on decisions taken by the governing board you should use 'we' and not 'they' as you are part of the decision making group. Even if you personally voted against the final decision you must support the corporate decision making process and take ownership of the outcome.

9. Complaints

Parent governors are not there to provide an alternative route to addressing individual parental concerns, although if you do become aware of more widespread disquiet about the college's policy and practice then you should alert the principal and chair. Sometimes a parent governor may be approached with a complaint.

If a parent has a concern or complaint which is very specific to their child, you should, if approached, advise them to follow the college procedure; do not get involved. It is not your role to hear the complaint details. They should try to resolve their concerns by speaking to the appropriate teacher. If the parent remains dissatisfied with the outcome, suggest that they make an appointment to speak to the principal or vice principal. You should guide parents regarding appropriate lines of action, making them aware of the college's complaints policy and procedures. If a parent raises issues of general concern with you, you should suggest that they make these known to the principal.

Being a parent governor does not disqualify you from your usual rights as a parent, including making a complaint.

10. Allowances for expenses

College governors provide a voluntary service, and cannot be paid for their role as a governor. But they can receive out of pocket expenses. This may include reasonable expenses to cover travel costs or child care costs incurred as a result of fulfilling their role as governor - this does not include payments to cover loss of earnings for attending meetings. Where the board has a delegated budget, whether to pay allowances and what allowances might reasonably be paid are matters for the board to decide.

Travel expenses must be at a rate not exceeding the HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) approved mileage rates which are changed annually and are on HMRC website. Other expenses should be paid on provision of a receipt and be limited to the amount shown on the receipt.

11. Term of office

You are appointed as a parent governor for a term of four years. You do not have to stop when your child leaves the college but when your agreed term has expired. You may resign at any time by giving written notice to the Clerk of the Governing Board.

12. Nolan principles of public life

1. **Integrity:** do not allow the influence of bodies outside the college to affect your duties
2. **Accountability:** make choices on merit
3. **Objectivity:** submit to appropriate scrutiny
4. **Openness:** only restrict information when the public interest clearly demands this/ data protection
5. **Honesty:** declare any private interest
6. **Leadership:** promote and support these principles by leadership and example
7. **Selflessness:** act always in the public interest, not for personal gain