

What does a school governor do?

Governors are responsible for overseeing the management side of a school: strategy, policy, budgeting and staffing. They enable their school to run as effectively as possible, working alongside senior leaders and supporting teachers to provide excellent education to children.

Being a school governor is a commitment to attending governing body meetings which consider issues such as setting the school vision, mitigating financial risk and scrutinising educational outcomes. They are also involved in the school community, acting as critical friends to the headteacher and senior leaders.

Governors bring a wide range of skills and expertise from their professional lives to the governing board and schools benefit greatly from working with skilled volunteers, for example anyone with experience of finance, law, premises management or human resources. A governor with business know-how can transform the running of a school.

Core governor responsibilities

Setting the strategic direction Governing bodies are the key strategic decision makers in every school. Along with the Head Teacher, it is the job of a governing body to set the school's aims and objectives around how the school will develop and improve. They set policies, formulate plans and agree targets to help the school achieve these objectives, as well as regularly reviewing their strategic framework in light of that progress.

Creating robust accountability

The governing body is there to support and challenge the school's senior leadership team. They play a crucial role in holding the Head Teacher to account for securing the best possible outcomes for pupils. By challenging key decisions and asking pertinent questions about the school's performance data, governors aim to guarantee high standards in education.

Ensuring financial probity

Governing bodies have a strategic role in the financial management of schools. Their key responsibilities include, setting financial priorities through the school development plan, 3 year financial plan and the annual budget. They also decide on how the school's delegated budget should be spent in accordance with the school improvement plan and statutory curriculum requirement.

How do Governing Bodies work?

Governors work together to provide independent oversight of the management and operation of a school, with the aim of improving the quality of education provided and raising standards. A school's governing body does not run the school on a day-to-day basis; this is the job of the Head Teacher and other senior staff.

Governing body meetings

Full governing body meetings are normally held once a term and whilst there are many important aspects of the role, the most important is the business that takes place at these meetings.

School visits

Governing bodies are responsible for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of a school and its curriculum. School visits will help governors to understand more about their school and the reality of school life. Governor visits to classrooms are not a form of inspection but serve as a clear monitoring function on the implementation of the school's strategic planning.

Committee meetings

A governing body is required to have certain statutory committees but may also wish to establish other committees. Most governors are members of one or two committees, whose work is reported back to the full governing body. This is so all governors are kept informed of matters and working progress. Typical committees include Personnel, Curriculum, Premises, and Finance.

Reading & Agenda

Prior to meetings, you will receive an agenda, a copy of the minutes from the previous meeting and any other relevant papers that are to be discussed. It is recommended that you take time to read and familiarise yourself with these documents prior to the meeting. Make notes of anything you are unsure of so you can ask questions at the meeting if necessary.