

BECOMING A GOVERNOR

Why not join the largest volunteer group in the country, working with others to get the best for our children?

Governance is an excellent form of volunteering and can be a really rewarding and stimulating experience.

Schools need a good mix of people from their local community, from all walks of life and backgrounds, who can bring different viewpoints, experiences, skills and fresh ideas.

An excellent governing body is vital to a school's success – why?

- governors are responsible for the appointment of the headteacher and deputy headteacher
 - governors decisions directly affect the education and wellbeing of pupils
 - governors can really make a difference in improving standards throughout the school

All governing bodies have a core group of governors consisting of:

- parent governors;
- teacher governors;
- staff governors;
- LA governors;
- the headteacher (acting in the capacity of a governor where this is his/her choice).

In addition, governing bodies will also consist of some of the following governors, depending on the type of school:

- community governors;
- additional community governors;
- representative governors;
- foundation governors;
- partnership governors;
- sponsor governors;
- associate pupil governors (secondary schools only).

What is a governor? A governor is someone who:-

- is appointed or elected for a four-year term;
- commits interest, enthusiasm and time to being a governor;

- can attend at least one governing body meeting during each school term and may be asked to attend committee meetings (most meetings usually take place late afternoon or during the evenings);
- familiarises themselves with work of the school, including visiting the school, and keeps up to date with the progress and work of the school;
- works as a team, deciding on things jointly and sharing responsibilities for the decisions they make;
- focuses their contribution to governing body decisions upon what is in the best interests of pupils at the school, helping each pupil to develop their full potential;
- supports the school but also challenges and asks questions about how the school works and the standards it achieves, bearing in mind the governing body's own responsibility to promote high standards of educational achievement;
- is willing to learn and attend training courses (including induction and data training) arranged by the LA, which are free of charge, and which will improve skills and contribute to personal development.

What we hope you will get out of being a governor – what are the benefits?

- having a very real part to play in ensuring the pupils at the school get the best possible education;
- satisfaction of raising standards;
- achieving value for money for the school;
- giving something back to the community;
- a sense of purpose and achievement;
- training and support in order to help you fulfil your duties and responsibilities;
- new skills which may be useful elsewhere - team work, financial and strategic planning, recruitment and interviewing skills - and that's just for starters!

Governing bodies are the strategic planners of schools - in order to do this a governing body:

- works with the headteacher and staff of a school to make sure that schools provide effective teaching and learning for our children to raise standards;
- makes decisions on the overall direction of the school, its aims and values, and works with the headteacher to set policies, targets, development plans and more;
- influences and approves the School Development Plan;
- approves and monitors the allocation and expenditure of the budget of the school, and decides how to make best use of this for the benefit of pupil's education;
- ensures that the national curriculum is taught and that there are sufficient staff to teach it;
- monitors and reviews the school's progress;
- ensures individual pupils' needs are met, including additional learning needs;
- gives parents information about the school;
- produces an action plan for improvement following a school inspection.

And finally ...

- No one governor is expected to know it all.
- The strength of a governing body lies in its ability to attract and rely upon members from a wide variety of backgrounds, share out the duties amongst its members, and be able to take decisions as a group.
- No one governor is responsible for the governing body, not even the chair of governors.
- All governors share the responsibility of making the governing body effective and efficient by setting the remit of the body and its committees, being well-informed and attending the meetings.

Take the next step

If you are interested in being a school governor, or finding out more:

- Contact Governors Cymru Services for more information via support@governors.cymru
- Talk to someone who is a governor
- Contact the headteacher, or chair of governors at your local school
- Contact your local authority.

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