

Being a Parent Governor

Parent governors are in a unique position on a governing body. Not only do parent governors have to work in the best interests of the school, but they have to balance this with their natural desire to see the best outcomes for their own child(ren).

As a parent governor it sometimes feels that you have to know everything about the school, but can't talk about it; they have to be on everyone's side; if they don't do paid work, people imagine that they have loads of free time.....and they have to be able to juggle all these expectations. As a parent you will already be an expert juggler, but if you decide to develop your role as a governor, it will take time. **However you would not be alone!** There is lots of advice, help and support available

Parent governors are:

- Well placed to understand parents' views and to remind the governing body how matters being discussed affect parents;
- individuals! How you vote on any decision is up to you;
- in a good position to help the governing body to communicate effectively with parents;
- equal in status to all other governors

Parent governors are not:

- expected to gather the views of other parents and take them to the governing body;
- simply expected to represent the interests of parents;
- a link between parents and the governing body;
- expected to vote as instructed by other parents.

What are the good bits about being a parent governor?

They have a very privileged and responsible role.

They are able to visit the school during the school day and see it in action!

They have the opportunity to make a difference, not only for their own children, but for children in years to come.

They have the opportunity to make a difference for other parents, and to influence the way in which school works with them.

They will learn a lot and develop new skills.

How a parent governor fulfils the role

Attending governing body meetings regularly and playing an active role in committees and decision-making.
Learning all about the school.

Considering how the governing body communicates with parents? Do the links need to be improved?

Considering how accessible the school is – how easy is it for parents to go into school to discuss things with the headteacher or teachers?

Considering how accessible the governors are – do parents ever get the opportunity to meet with governors; do they know how to get in touch with the chair of governors if they need to?

Being approachable to other parents, but remaining clear about the role.

Always representing the school positively.

Always supporting the decisions of the full governing body. Have your say on decisions in meetings and vote in the way you wish; but then support the outcomes of votes – even if you disagree with them.

Always, always, always observing confidentiality. Governors get to know a lot of highly sensitive and confidential information but don't discuss it with anyone who is not a governor.