



A support booklet for prospective governors



Thank you for your interest in becoming a school governor.

This booklet aims to answer some of the FAQs about the role of governors and the personal development opportunities.

Who are school governors

School governors are volunteers who want to make a positive contribution to children's education. They do not need to be education experts or have formal qualifications.

While the Headteacher manages the school on a day-to-day basis, governors are strategic, focusing in on three core functions:

1. Ensuring that the vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school are clearly defined.
2. Ensuring that the headteacher performs their responsibilities for the educational performance of the school.
3. Ensuring the sound, proper and effective use of the schools financial resources.

It is important that governors know their school so that they can effectively fulfil these strategic functions.

What is the possible commitment on your time?

All governors on a board:

- attend full governing board meetings, usually twice a term
- read reports and background papers before meetings
- visit the school during the working day to monitor an area of specialism they will have been allocated, usually once or twice a year
- attend training as required

Some governors may also:

- attend committee and working party meetings about once or twice a term
- attend school events
- take part in staff appointment panels, pupil exclusion panels, complaints panels and staff discipline and grievance hearings

An employee can get a 'reasonable' amount of time off if they hold specific public offices, one of which is school governor. You can find out more information [here](#).

What are the skills or attributes of an effective governor?

These include:

- listen, think and ask questions
- believe that education is important
- take an interest in the role of schools in the local community
- can work with others and assimilate a wide range of information and data
- have a willingness to learn
- have sound communication skills
- are prepared to give time to doing the job well

Some of the transferrable skills that being a governor can develop.

Depending on the role that you undertake on the governing board many skills can be transferred to other settings and are valued by employers outside the education system. These include:

Leadership (Chair/Vice Chair of whole board or a committee) Motivating and leading others effectively to accomplish objectives and goals.	Teamwork (All governors) Strategically working with others to achieve a common goal.	Questioning (All governors) Using well-crafted questions to explore important issues relating to your school.
Time management (All governors) Balancing your commitments as a governor with other aspects of life.	Personal motivation (All governors) Making a difference to the young people in your local community.	Listening skills (All governors) Actively listening, gaining insight and clarity to drive improvement in your school.
Analytical Skills (All governors) Looking beyond the headlines to analyse and critically evaluate information.	Numeracy skills (All governors) Working with figures, graphs, charts and simple statistics to recognise the importance of patterns and trends.	Personal development (All governors) Evaluating your own performance, recognising personal strengths and exploiting opportunities to develop or gain experience.

How will I be supported and developed in my role as a governor?

New governors

New governors will undertake an induction programme where they will be introduced to their new role. When appropriate, new governors will be offered the opportunity to visit the school during a working day in order to see it in action. In addition, many new governors will be offered a buddy or mentor for their first months in the role.

More experienced governors

Although governing boards differ in their structure, most offer the opportunity to develop expertise and experience in a particular area as a lead governor. In addition, boards are encouraged to undertake an annual self-review to ensure that they are developing and benefitting from an individual's skills and that governors are experiencing satisfaction in their role.

West Sussex Governor Services also provide support and offers a wide range of courses to help governors develop in their role.

How do I find out more?

Further information can be found by clicking on the following:

Governance Guides:

[Maintained School Governance Guide](#)

[Academy Trust Governance Guide](#)

[West Sussex Services for Education - Governor Services page](#)

If you are interested in becoming a school governor you can do one or more of the following

- contact a school directly
- complete the forms available on [West Sussex Services for Education - Governor Services page](#)

Please do not hesitate to contact the Governance Team if you require further information

GovernanceSupport@westsussex.gov.uk