

# BEING A GOVERNOR

*Adapted from the National Governors' Association guide for governors.*

**As part of the governing body team, a governor is expected to:**

1. **Be strategic** by contributing to discussions at governing body meetings which determine:
  - the vision and ethos of the school;
  - clear and ambitious strategic priorities and targets for the school;
  - that all children, including those with special educational needs, have access to a broad and balanced curriculum;
  - the school's budget, including the expenditure of the pupil premium allocation;
  - the school's staffing structure and key staffing policies;
2. **Hold the senior leaders to account** by monitoring the school's performance; this includes:
  - agreeing the outcomes from the school's self-evaluation and ensuring they are used to inform the priorities in the school development plan;
  - considering all relevant data and feedback provided on request by school leaders and external sources on all aspects of school performance;
  - asking challenging questions of school leaders;
  - ensuring senior leaders have arranged for the required audits to be carried out and receiving the results of those audits;
  - ensuring senior leaders have developed the required policies and procedures and the school is operating effectively according to those policies;
  - acting as a link governor on a specific issue, making relevant enquiries of the relevant staff, and reporting to the governing body on the progress on the relevant school priority; and
  - listening to and reporting to the school's stakeholders: pupils, parents, staff, and the wider community, including local employers.
3. **Ensure the school staff have the resources and support they require to do their jobs well.**
4. **When required, serve on panels of governors to:**
  - appoint the headteacher and other senior leaders;
  - appraise the headteacher;
  - set the headteacher's pay and agree the pay recommendations for other staff;
  - hear the second stage of staff grievance and disciplinary matters;
  - hear appeals about pupil exclusions.

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**The role of governor involves reading documents; thinking about key issues; questioning senior leaders in meetings focusing on the school's priorities.**

**The headteacher is responsible for the day to day running of the school.**

**A governor does NOT:**

- write school policies
- fundraise – this is the role of the PTA
- undertake classroom observations to make judgements on the quality of teaching – the governing body monitors the quality of teaching in the school by requiring data from the senior staff and from external sources
- do the job of the school staff

As you become more experienced as a governor, there are other roles you could volunteer for which would increase your degree of involvement and level of responsibility (e.g. as a chair of a committee).

**In order to perform this role well, a governor is expected to:**

- get to know the school, including by visiting the school occasionally during school hours, and gain a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses
- attend induction training and regular relevant training and development events;
- attend meetings (full governing body meetings and committee meetings) and read all the papers before the meeting
- act in the best interest of all the pupils of the school
- behave in a professional manner, as set down in the governing body's code of conduct, including acting in strict confidence.

**Time commitment:** you should expect to spend between 10 and 20 days a year on your governing responsibilities. Initially, we would expect your commitment to be nearer 10 days a year. If you become chair of governors, chair of a committee or take on other key roles, you might spend more time.

However, there may be periods when the time commitment may increase, for example when recruiting a headteacher.

Under Section 50 of the Employment Rights Act 1996, if you are employed, then you are entitled to 'reasonable time off' to undertake public duties; this includes school governance. 'Reasonable time off' is not defined in law, and you will need to negotiate with your employer how much time you will be allowed.

**Expenses:** governors may receive out of pocket expenses incurred as a result of fulfilling their role as governor. Payments can cover incidental expenses, such as childcare, but not loss of earnings.