

METHOD OF ELECTION OF PARENT GOVERNORS

The local authority has delegated the responsibility for conducting an election for parent and staff governors to the Headteacher . Elections must be carried out in accordance with these procedures to be valid. Vacancies must be filled as soon as possible after they occur.

The Headteacher acts as returning officer for the elections.

When a vacancy occurs the Headteacher has the choice regarding advertising vacancies in one of two ways:

- A. A significant reduction in workload can be achieved by including the notification in a paragraph in the next Headteacher's newsletter to parents. A closing date must be given of not less than seven days after the parent will receive the letter.

A reminder to parents of vacancies can be sent in subsequent newsletters with a new closing date until vacancies have been filled.

- B. Send a nomination letter out as detailed below

All parents who nominate themselves should be given a copy of the eligibility to be a governor form, the governing body code of conduct and the information for prospective governors (attached).

NOMINATION LETTER TO PARENTS (example attached)

When a vacancy occurs the Headteacher is responsible for carrying out an election. The Headteacher must ensure that the parents of each pupil, including nursery pupils** are sent notification to show:

- a) the name of the school
- b) the number of parent governor vacancies
- c) the return date for nominations

The return date must not be less than seven days after distribution of the letter.

Headteachers should include all nursery parents

Parents who are not living with their child should be sent a nomination form if that parent has given the school a contact address. Headteachers are not expected to go to great lengths to contact parents who have not given contact details to the school.

The Headteacher may include a statement as to whether the school will type personal statements or not. Some schools may decide to offer typing particularly for parents who do not have access to a computer.

RECEIPT OF NOMINATION LETTERS

On the day following the closing date for receipt of nominations, the Headteacher checks that all nominations are valid. If the number of nominations is less than or equal to the vacant places those parents are automatically elected.

If the number is not sufficient to fill all vacancies a further request for nominations can be

made. Should this still result in no one coming forward then the governing body can **appoint** to the remaining vacancies. Governors can appoint as follows: a parent of a registered pupil at the school, or if that is not possible; a parent of a former pupil at the school, or if this is not possible; a parent of a child of or under compulsory school age. Such an appointment must be agreed by the governing body.

In the case of more nominations than vacancies being received a secret ballot of parents must be held. Voting is on the basis of one vote per parent vacancy irrespective of how many of their children attend the school. The election method is first past the post until all vacancies have been filled.

BALLOT PAPERS (example attached)

Ballot forms, should be prepared by the school. A ballot form must list the names of the candidates and include personal statements received from the candidates. **TWO BALLOT FORMS should be distributed to each household by pupil post.**

The forms should indicate the latest time and date for return to the school, **which must be not less than ten days following distribution.**

Only parents or legal guardians can vote (N.B. see the paragraph on “definition of a parent” for further clarification about this rule).

If there are ‘X’ parent governor vacancies on the governing body each parent has ‘X’ votes. e.g. if there are 3 vacancies a parent has three votes.

SECRET BALLOT VOTING SYSTEM

In order to meet the requirements of a secret ballot and the option of postal voting, the system of double enveloping for the return of completed ballot forms should be adopted. Parents should seal their ballot papers in an inner, unmarked envelope which should then be sealed in an outer envelope signed on the back by the voter or voters. Voters should also **PRINT** their names below the signatures. This procedure is used in order that the school can identify which parents have voted and therefore a parent does not vote twice. If the school can identify which family the ballot form is from then it can be accepted.

A two-stage system of recording votes cast and opening of ballot forms is required. The Headteacher, as presiding officer should:

1. Check the name(s) on the outer envelope for entitlement to vote;
2. Note the return of the paper(s);
3. Mark the inner envelope containing the ballot paper(s) with a number indicating the number of signatories on the outer envelope and hence the number of ballot papers contained in it;
4. Place the envelope in the ballot box for counting at the appointed date and time.

COUNTING OF VOTES

Counting of votes should take place at the school at the date and time specified on the ballot paper. The candidates should be invited to attend the count. It is suggested that a local Ward Councillor, Chair of Governors or another governor who does not work at the school be invited to attend the count. The Clerk to the Governors is not required to attend the count.

The candidates with the highest number of votes are declared elected, such as to fill all

vacancies.

RECOUNTS

In the event of a tie for a vacancy, the votes for the tied candidate should be recounted. If there is still a tie following a recount, the issue is to be determined by the drawing of lots or tossing of a coin.

NOTIFICATION OF RESULTS OF ELECTION

The results of the election should be notified to the Governor Support Service, all parents at the school (via the next newsletter) and other members of the governing body.

RETENTION OF BALLOT PAPERS

All ballot papers must be retained for a period of six months after the count.

DEFINITION OF A PARENT

A parent is someone who has assumed all the rights, duties, powers, responsibility and authority which a parent of a child has by law - this person, or people have parental responsibility for a child. More than two people may have parental responsibility for a child - a full definition can be found on the [Gov.UK website](#)

Under the School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2003, a parent who is also a member of the school staff working for more than one-third of a school year (i.e. more than 500 hours in total) is not eligible to stand for election as a parent governor. A parent governor who subsequently becomes a member of staff working more than 500 hours may serve out their term of office.

POSTAL ARRANGEMENTS

If you have been given instructions stating that pupil post should be delivered to two addresses you should send nomination and ballot forms to both addresses.

The Headteacher is not expected to spend a great deal of time trying to find out the addresses of absent spouses or partners if addresses have not been given to the school.

TERM OF OFFICE

Please note that a parent governor serves a four year term of office irrespective of whether their child(ren) leave the school during this time. A parent governor can resign at any time.

FURTHER RESIGNATION OF A PARENT GOVERNOR

Should a further resignation occur for another parent governor representative after an election has already been carried out in the **same term**, the school does not need to re-run another election. The parent with the next highest number of votes from the previous election can be elected into the new vacancy.

EXAMPLE NOMINATION REQUEST LETTER

Dear Parent

ELECTION OF PARENT GOVERNOR(S)

I am writing to inform you that parent governors are required to fill**X**..... parent governor place(s) on the governing body of the school As a parent of a child at the school you are entitled to stand as a candidate and vote in any election. A nomination slip is attached. If you wish to offer yourself as a candidate to become a parent governor you should contact the school to request the information for prospective governors information and complete the slip and return it to the headteacher by **x**.

Although any eligible parent can stand for election, the governing body has identified that the following skills and experience would be desirable in order for the governing body to improve its effectiveness:

-
-
-

Please note that you are not eligible to be a parent governor if you work at the school for more than 500 hours per year. You are also not eligible to be governor if you fulfil any of the disqualification criteria listed on the eligibility form (*see page 7*). *If you become a governor you are expected to sign up to the Governors' Code of Conduct.*

If the required number of nominations is received then those persons will be automatically declared as parent governors. If there are more nominations than places then a ballot of all parents will be held to select the parent governors. For this purpose nominees are invited to prepare a short statement which will be circulated with the ballot forms. Space for this is included below the nomination slip. The length of the statement should not be more than 200 words. (*The Headteacher has the right to reduce any statements over and above this limit*).

Parent governors can participate positively in the running of the school. The other governors will include staff representatives, local authority governors and other representatives appointed because of their skills and experience. All governors share in the important job of running the school. All governors are expected to attend full governing body meetings and the meetings of at least one committee. In order to carry out your role effectively you will also be expected to attend relevant training. Please note that elected governors will be asked to complete a self-declaration proforma to confirm that they are eligible to serve as a governor. (See page 7 for more explanation).

If you would like more information before deciding whether to stand either contact the Headteacher at the school or the Governor Support Service on Leeds 0113 247 5564. Parent governors serve a four year term of office irrespective of whether their child leaves the school during the term of office.

Please do give some thought to standing as a parent governor.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

SCHOOL NAME: _____

INSTRUCTIONS

EACH PARENT OR GUARDIAN SHOULD COMPLETE ONLY **ONE** BALLOT FORM

1. You may vote for no more than _____ candidate(s).

2. Please mark an **X** against the candidate(s) you wish to vote for

3. Parents/guardians should seal their ballot papers in an inner, unmarked envelope which should then be sealed in an outer envelope signed on the back by the voter or voters. Voters should also PRINT their names below the signatures. This procedure is used in order that the school can identify which parents have voted and therefore a parent does not vote twice. If the school can identify which family the ballot form is from then it can be accepted.

4. Ballot papers should be returned to the school by _____

5. The counting of votes will be held at the school on _____

Put a cross in this box against the candidate(s) you are voting for

Candidate 1	
Candidate 2	
Candidate 3	
Candidate 4	
Candidate 5	
Candidate 6	

Are you eligible to be a governor or an associate member?

Dear Governor/Associate Member

All governors and associate members are asked to sign a self-declaration proforma to confirm that they are eligible to be a governor or associate member. Please see the list below which details when a person is not eligible to serve as a school governor as laid down by School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2003 (regulation 20 and Schedule 6). Please read these carefully. If you are happy that none of the criteria apply to you, please sign and date the form and **return it directly to the Headteacher at your school**. If you are unsure whether you are eligible or not please contact Governor Support Service on 0113 247 5564 for clarification.

People may not serve as school governors who:

is the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or an interim order, debt relief restrictions order, an interim debt relief restrictions order or their estate has been sequestrated and the sequestration has not been discharged, annulled or reduced is subject to a disqualification order or disqualification undertaking under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986, a disqualification order under Part 2 of the Companies (Northern Ireland) Order 1989, a disqualification undertaking accepted under the Company Directors Disqualification (Northern Ireland) Order 2002, or an order made under section 429(2)(b) of the Insolvency Act 1986 (failure to pay under county court administration order)

- has been removed from the office of charity trustee or trustee for a charity by the Charity Commission or Commissioners or High Court on grounds of any misconduct or mismanagement, or under section 34 of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 from being concerned in the management or control of any body
- is included in the list of teachers or workers considered by the Secretary of State as unsuitable to work with children or young people
- is barred from any regulated activity relating to children
- is subject to a direction of the Secretary of State under section 128 of the Education and Skills Act 2008
- is disqualified from working with children or from registering for child-minding or providing day care
- is disqualified from being an independent school proprietor, teacher or employee by the Secretary of State
- has been sentenced to three months or more in prison (without the option of a fine) in the five years before becoming a governor or since becoming a governor
- has received a prison sentence of two years or more in the 20 years before becoming a governor
- has at any time received a prison sentence of five years or more
- has been fined for causing a nuisance or disturbance on school premises during the five years prior to or since appointment or election as a governor
- refuses a request by the clerk to make an application to the Criminal Records Bureau for a criminal records certificate.

Anyone proposed or serving as a governor who is disqualified for one of these reasons

I confirm that I am eligible to be a school governor. I do not fulfill any of the above disqualification criteria.

Signature Date

Name.....Governing Body

FURTHER GUIDANCE ON THE ELECTION AND APPOINTMENT OF PARENT GOVERNORS

This guidance is to be read in conjunction with the Governor Support Service procedures for the election of parent governors

Some governing bodies have difficulty finding parent governors. A few helpful hints and advice follow to assist you in recruiting parent governors.

- ❖ Parents of children in the nursery should be included in the process
- ❖ Step-parents, relatives, co-habitees, foster parents may be eligible to nominate themselves also natural parents who do not live with the pupil
- ❖ Advertise the vacancy as widely and as often as possible e.g. school newsletters, parents evening or any other school event, parents' notice board and parents' room
- ❖ Invite a member of the governing body to speak to a group of parents e.g. PTA meeting
- ❖ Send parents some basic information about being a governor with the nomination form ,
- ❖ Approach individual parents in the school playground or at a school event
- ❖ If a parent governor resigns after an election has been carried out in **the same term**, the school does not need to hold another election. The parent with the next highest number of votes from the previous election can be invited to take up the vacancy
- ❖ The school does not have to provide the envelopes in order for parents to return their ballot forms
- ❖ If the school can identify which family the ballot form is from then it can be accepted
- ❖ If the number of nominations is less than or equal to the vacant places those parents are automatically elected.
- ❖ The return date for nomination forms must not be less than **seven** days after distribution of the letter
- ❖ Parents should be given not less than **ten** days following distribution to return the ballot forms

Important reminder

If the school has made every reasonable effort to fill parent governor vacancies they can then approach a parent of a registered pupil at the school, or if that is not possible, a parent of a former pupil at the school or if that is not possible, a parent of a child of or under compulsory school age. The governing body then can appoint this person to fill the vacancy. There are some restrictions on who can be an appointed parent governor (see the Governors' Handbook for further details).

If you become a governor you are expected to sign up to the following Code.

A CODE OF CONDUCT FOR THE GOVERNING BODY

SCHOOL NAME:

Introduction

The following is not a definitive statement of responsibilities but is concerned with the common understanding of broad principles by which the Governing Body and individual governors will operate.

The Governing Body accepts the following principles and procedures:

General

1. We have responsibility for determining, monitoring and keeping under review the broad policies, plans and procedures within which the school operates.
2. We recognise that the Headteacher is responsible for the implementation of policy and internal organisation and management of the school, and the implementation and operation of the curriculum.
3. We accept that all governors have equal status, and although appointed by different groups (i.e., parents, staff, Diocese) and that every governor's role is to govern the school; in the best interest of pupils, not to represent the interests of the constituency from which they were elected or appointed.
4. We have no legal authority to act individually, except when the Governing Body has given us delegated authority to do so.
5. We have a duty to act fairly and without prejudice, and in so far as we have responsibility for staff, we will fulfil all the legal expectations as, or on behalf of, the employer.
6. We will encourage open government and shall be seen to be doing so.
7. We will consider carefully, how our decisions may affect other schools.
8. The following details for each governor are published on the school's website

- * name
- * category of governor
- * which body appointed them
- * term of office
- * names of committees the governor serves on
- * details of any responsibility, e.g. chair or vice chair.

Commitment

9. We acknowledge that accepting office as a governor involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy.
10. We will each involve ourselves actively in the work of the Governing Body, attend meetings regularly, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, including membership of committees or working groups.
11. We will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
12. Every member of the governing body will actively contribute relevant skills and experience

13. We uphold an ethos of professionalism and have high expectations of the governors' role, including an expectation that they undertake whatever training or development activity is need to fill any gaps in the skills they have to contribute to effective governance. If a governor fails persistently to do this they will be in breach of the code of conduct and may bring the governing body or the office of a governor into disrepute – and as such provide grounds for the governing body to consider suspension.

Relationships

14. We will strive to work as a team.
15. We will seek to develop effective working relationships with our Head, staff, parents, the Local Authority, and other relevant agencies (including the Diocesan Authorities where appropriate), and the community.

Confidentiality

16. We will observe confidentiality regarding proceedings of the Governing Body in meetings and from our visits to school as governors.
17. We will observe complete confidentiality when required or asked to do so by the Governing Body, especially regarding matters concerning individual staff or students.
18. We will exercise the greatest prudence if a discussion of a potentially contentious issue affecting the school arises outside the Governing Body.

Conduct

19. We will encourage the open expression of views at meetings, but accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the Governing Body or its delegated agents.
20. We will only speak or act on behalf of the Governing Body when we have been specifically authorised to do so.
21. In making or responding to criticism or complaints affecting the school we will follow the procedures established by the Governing Body.
22. Our visits to school will be undertaken within the framework established by the Governing Body, in agreement with the Head and staff.
23. In discharging our duties we will always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of our school.

Suspension

24. If the need arises to use the sanction of suspending a governor, we will do so by following legal requirements so as to ensure a fair and objective process.

Removal

25. We recognise that removing a governor from office is a last resort, and that it is the appointing bodies which have the power to remove those they appoint.
26. If the need arises to use the sanction of removing a governor or removing the Chair, we will do so by following legal requirements so as to ensure a fair and objective process.