

GOVERNOR ROLE – INTRODUCTION AND INFORMATION

This handbook helps to explain the roles and responsibilities of being a governor and how governing bodies carry out their duties.

Fixby Junior & Infant School believes it is essential that all new governors receive a comprehensive induction pack covering a broad range of issues that we believe will assist you and provide you with confidence in your new role.

New governors should expect to receive a number of documents from their school. These can be obtained from the school and include:

- *induction pack*
- *a Governor details form, which should be completed and returned to the School Business Manager*
- *the governing body code of conduct (this is the one issued by the National Governance Association(N.G.A))*
- *the governing body committee structure, terms of reference and membership*
- *details of forthcoming training courses available to all Governors*
- *a copy of the school prospectus*
- *a copy of the school improvement plan (SIP)*
- *a copy of the school's latest OfSTED report*
- *copies of key policy statements including the school visits policy*
- *papers from the last full governing body meeting*

Joining an existing well established team can be a daunting prospect even for the most self-confident. Many new governors have confessed to being quite bemused during their first meetings and some feel unprepared for the barrage of papers with which they were greeted.

New governors come from varying backgrounds; some have knowledge of the school and of educational matters in general whilst others know less. In order to be effective, every governor needs some basic knowledge about their school and needs to be able to set this against a wider understanding of education.

For both new and experienced governors there are training courses run by Kirklees. All governors are encouraged to take advantage of the training on offer. These courses are free of charge to governors.

The School Business Manager will email details of forthcoming courses out to all Governors, if you would like to attend any of these events please email back and you will then be booked onto the relevant training.

There is also some 'SGOSS' training for new Governors that will give you an insight into the life of a Governor and you can access this via the School Website, Governor pages.

Why Have Governing Bodies?

To help schools provide the best possible education for their pupils by:

- thinking and working strategically to help raise standards
- monitoring and evaluating progress towards priorities and targets
- supporting the Head Teacher and staff as well as challenging their expectations
- accounting to all stakeholders for the school's performance and for the decisions they make

Why Become a School Governor?

There are many benefits to becoming a school governor. As a school governor, you will have the opportunity to:

- develop new skills and to strengthen existing ones. Free training is offered to all governors.
- work with a wide range of people from a variety of social, cultural and religious backgrounds
- gain an idea of how schools are run and how the education system works
- enjoy the personal satisfaction and sense of achievement of working to improve the school
- enjoy using your skills to the good of the local community

The Composition of a Governing Body

The instrument of government states the composition of your governing body. Governing bodies now have considerable latitude in determining size and membership. There are 12 governors on our school's governing body.

There are differences in the composition of governing bodies in accordance with the type of school. The following types of governors can be found on our Governing Body:

The governing body consists of Parent, Staff, Local Authority and Co-opted governors.

What School Governors Do

A school governing body has a strategic role in the development of the school but does not become involved in day-to-day management issues – that is the role of the Head Teacher.

You are there to:

- **provide a strategic view** - help to set and maintain the broad framework within which the Head Teacher and the staff should run the school
- **act as a critical friend** - provide the Head Teacher with support and offer advice and information but also to provide some challenge. The governing body is there to monitor and evaluate the school's effectiveness and governors should therefore be prepared to ask challenging questions
- **to ensure accountability** - the Head Teacher and staff report to the governing body on the school's performance. In turn the governing body is accountable to all stakeholders on the school's overall performance

Governing Bodies Do:

- set the overall budget for the school
- decide on the number of staff
- decide on the level of pay for teachers
- help to decide the priorities for the school when the school improvement plan is being developed
- ensure the national curriculum is taught to all pupils
- set targets for pupil achievement
- publish national test and exam results
- compare the performance of their school to similar schools
- receive information about the quality of teaching in the school
- have a published strategy for dealing with parental complaints and concerns
- ensure health and safety issues are addressed
- set the times of school sessions
- consult the Head Teacher when making decisions
- ask challenging questions
- help develop school policies and procedures
- consider the repair and maintenance of school buildings
- consider the use of school premises outside school hours
- appoint committees of governors to look at specific issues such as finance, staffing, curriculum and premises

Governing Bodies Don't:

- inspect the school
- report on the quality of teaching after visiting the school
- authorise all expenditure
- share concerns about staff capability
- decide on how pupils are taught different subjects
- have the right to exclude a pupil
- write the school's policies on their own
- rubberstamp recommendations from the Head Teacher
- automatically approve all apologies for absence for meetings sent by governors
- need to be aware of the performance objectives which had been set for individual teachers
- write the OfSTED action plan

The Head Teacher is responsible for:

- the internal organisation, management and control of the school
- formulating aims, objectives and policies for the governing body to consider adopting
- advising on and implementing the governing body strategic framework
- giving governors the information they needed to help the school raise its standards
- reporting on progress at least once every school year