



# Your Personal Development and Involvement in Governance.



**The West Sussex Governor Services team welcomes and thanks you for your interest in becoming a school governor.**

**In this booklet we aim to answer some of the FAQs people have about the role. It will explore some of the transferable skills that being involved in school governance can help to develop, and provide practical evidence of their impact.**

### **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 and staff manage a school on a day-to-day basis, governors are strategic, focusing in on three core areas:

1. Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction.
2. Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the effective and efficient of performance management of staff.
3. Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent.



Some people are nervous of the role because they are under the impression that they will be personally held to account at difficult times, however, individual governors have no power or responsibility. It is the full governing board that has legal duties and powers; all governors share in that corporate responsibility.

### **What is the commitment on your time?**

Because the role is so important to the success of a school, anyone considering becoming a school governor needs to understand the commitment that is required so that they and the school can have an effective and fulfilling partnership.

#### **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 choose to become more involved:**

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

## What are the skills or attributes that an effective governor holds?

Effective governors:

- 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 schools and employers outside the education system. These include:

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

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

### *New governors*

Governing boards will undertake an induction where you will be introduced to the role and processes that are followed by members of the board. 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 opportunities to develop expertise and experience in a particular area, allowing an individual to demonstrate the impact of their work. Leadership roles are also available. In addition, boards 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 Governance Services is also available to provide support and offers a wide range of courses (both online and face to face when permitted) to help you develop in the role.

## How do I find out more?

Further information can be found at:

### **Governance Handbook:**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-handbook>

### **West Sussex Services for Schools:**

<http://schools.westsussex.gov.uk/Services/3164>

If you are interested in becoming a school governor you could either contact a school directly or please email: [governor.services@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:governor.services@westsussex.gov.uk) or phone the West Sussex governance team on 0330 222 8887.

### **Contact details for further information**

Jackie Gatenby/Ruth Marsella  
School Support Officers

#### **Email:**

[GovernanceSupport@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:GovernanceSupport@westsussex.gov.uk)

Tel. 033022 24080/24205

Please note that the details within this booklet were correct at date of publication.