



Department of
Education

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Becoming a

SCHOOL GOVERNOR

Could you be a school governor?

Existing Boards of Governors of schools are due to be reconstituted from September 2009 onwards.

Schools need enthusiastic and committed people from a range of backgrounds and with differing experience to become school governors.

The Board of Governors, which includes the principal as an ex officio member, forms the leadership of the school.

The Board of Governors acts and takes decisions in a corporate capacity with all members contributing their individual skills and experience to the work of the Board and the decision making process.

School governors play an important role in securing the delivery of education in the school suitable to the needs, ages and abilities of the pupils in attendance.

Being a school governor can be an attractive and rewarding experience and offers an opportunity to work with others in helping young people to achieve their potential.

Have you considered becoming a school governor?

Please take a few minutes to read through this leaflet to see what's involved.

What do governors do?

The full Board of Governors is responsible for making sure the school provides a good quality education for its pupils and for helping the school to maintain and improve standards.

It has a range of responsibilities; these include:-

- Maintaining and developing the ethos of the school.
- Setting the school's aims and policies in relation to:
 - the curriculum and pupil attainment targets;
 - pupil admissions;
 - pastoral care - ie the arrangements to promote pupil welfare and good behaviour;
 - pupil discipline;
 - special educational needs and disability; and
 - charging for school activities.

- Ensuring that the Revised NI curriculum is delivered and that pupils are achieving success at school.
- Making decisions about the school's budget.
- Selecting teaching and non teaching staff.
- Promoting good relations within the school and with the local community.
- Preparing information for parents including an Annual Report.

Can anyone be a school governor?

Yes, with the exception of those who may be disqualified on the basis of child protection requirements, bankruptcy restrictions or recent criminal convictions. No formal qualifications are required but interest, enthusiasm and commitment are important. You must be over age 18.

Do you have:-

- an interest in children's education;
- energy and commitment;
- a willingness to accept responsibility;
- the ability to work as part of a team?

If so, you may have what it takes to become a governor.

Are there different categories of governors?

Yes, these are as follows:

DE Governors: The Department of Education selects applicants to serve as governors on the basis of their skills and experience and their interest in education in general. The Department will give priority to those applicants with finance, business or personnel management experience.

Education and Library Board Governors:

These are either -

- a. a member of an education and library board; or
- b. someone invited by the education and library board to serve as a governor because of his/her interest in education in general and in the particular school.

The Education & Library Board addresses are overleaf.

Transferors: These are governors nominated by the 3 main Protestant Churches (and a few other private and business interests) which transferred their schools into a system of management/partnership with the local education authority.

Trustees: These are governors nominated by the legal trustees of the school to represent those who own the premises.

Foundation Governors (Grant-Maintained Integrated Schools): These governors represent the founder members of the group of people who sponsor the establishment of the school.

Parent Governors: These governors are elected by the parents of registered pupils at the school. They must have a child attending the school at the time of election. They can complete their period of office even if their child leaves the school in the meantime.

Teacher Governor: These governors must be permanent teachers in the school is elected by their colleagues. If resigning from the school, they must also resign from the Board of Governors.

Principal: The Principal is an ex-officio member of the Board of Governors who provides the other members with advice and information on the professional and non professional issues associated with the management and operation of the school.

Co-opted Members: Any Board of Governors may co-opt up to 3 persons from the local business community. Co opted members do not have a vote.

How long does the job last?

Governors normally serve for a period of 4 years (which is known as one term) but can volunteer to serve for a further term of office. Governors can stand down at any time by notifying both the Department and the school of their date of resignation.

What support is available?

Support and training is available from Education and Library Boards. Each has its own training programme and may be contacted directly to enquire about the training sessions available:

- Belfast Education and Library Board
 - ☎ 028 9056 4000
 - 🖨 <http://www.belb.org.uk/governors>

- North-Eastern Education and Library Board
 - ☎ 028 2565 3333
 - 🖨 <http://www.neelb.org.uk/foryou/fy00001a.htm>

- South-Eastern Education and Library Board
 - ☎ 028 9056 6200
 - 🖨 <http://www.seelb.org.uk> then link to 'School Managers'

- Southern Education and Library Board
 - ☎ 028 3751 2200
 - 🖨 <http://www.selbcass.org/governors>

- Western Education and Library Board
 - ☎ 028 8241 1291
 - 🖨 <http://www.welbni.org>

We propose to review and analyse governors' support and Training needs under the new single Education and Skills Authority, which will supersede the Education and Library Boards in 2010.

What commitments are required of Governors?

Governors meet as often as the school requires. The minimum requirement is to meet once in each school term, but larger schools meet more often ie once a month. Boards of Governors often establish sub-committees to deal with particular issues, eg finance or staffing, etc and this may require members of those committees to meet on a more frequent basis. Governors meet as a group generally in late afternoon or the evenings. Being a governor will mean giving up a certain amount of time.

Occasionally Governors may be required to meet during the day to visit the school, to talk to children and staff and to take part in selecting staff.

Governor vetting

Governors have a statutory duty of care towards pupils in their schools and because their voluntary work affects young people they are required to be vetted before they take up office. This means that you will be required to complete an application form which will initiate a criminal records check to ensure that you have not been convicted of any offences against children and young people.

Still interested?

Being a school governor is a rewarding experience, as most Governors would testify.

If you wish to find out more you can contact your local school via the Principal or the Chair of the Board of Governors.

How can I apply?

If you are interested in becoming a DE school governor, please complete the attached application form and send it to the Department by **20 May 2009** at the latest. The Department may also make your name available to the

other nominating bodies unless you indicate otherwise. You may also obtain further information from these other bodies by contacting them directly as follows:

Category

Contact

Education and Library Board

Your local Education and Library Board - see list on previous page.

Transferors

Your local church, or
 The Transferor Representatives Council
 Education Centre
 Church of Ireland House
 61-67 Donegall Street
 BELFAST
 BT1 2QH
 ☎ 028 9023 1202
 Secretary: Rev Ian Ellis

Trustees

Your local church, or
 The Council for Catholic Maintained Schools
 160 High Street
 HOLYWOOD
 BT18 9HT
 ☎ 028 9042 6972

Parents	School(s) which your child/children attend
Teachers	Elected by colleagues in the school they work
Foundation	Your local Integrated School

If you do not have access to a computer, your local library or school should be able to help (please note, a small charge may be levied).

Your application form should be completed and sent to

School Administration Branch (admin section)
Department of Education
Rathgael House
43 Balloo Road
BANGOR
BT19 7PR

by **20 May 2009**.

Your application will be acknowledged within one week of receipt. If you do not receive an acknowledgement please contact School Administration Branch on (028) 9127 9404 or 9127 9992.