

Nelmes Primary School

The Role of a Parent Governor

The Governing Body consists of 6 parent governors, 3 LEA governors, 4 staff governors and 4 community governors, which makes a total of 17 governors in all. Parent governors are therefore the largest group and have an important part to play in the work of the Governing Body.

Eligibility

Parent Governors are elected to be representative of the parent body. They should keep in touch with those who elected them but make up their own mind on how to vote on any specific issue. No one who works in the school for more than 500 hours in any 12 month period commencing on 1st August and finishing on 31st July is eligible for appointment or election as a parent governor. Similarly, elected members of the local education authority are disqualified.

Frequency of meetings

The minimum requirement of a governor is attendance at the termly full Governing Body meeting. These are generally held on a Tuesday evening commencing at 7pm. The length of the meetings varies but probably averages at around two and a half hours. An agenda and associated paperwork will be sent to you at least two weeks before the meeting and it is advisable to read through this prior to the meeting.

Sub-committee meetings and school visits

Governors who wish to have a greater involvement can do this through membership of sub-committees or by arranging visits to the school. The Finance, Buildings (inc health and safety) and Curriculum sub-committees meet monthly, usually on a weekday morning. Membership of one of these committees allows a greater insight into a particular area of the running of the school and it is a great opportunity for governors to share their own skills, or workplace experience, for the benefit of the school.

The Staff Appointments committee meet as and when there are staff vacancies to be filled. The Staff Dismissal, Pupil Discipline and Disciplinary and Grievance Committees, and the panel to consider complaints concerning the curriculum and RE have not had cause to meet within the last five years but exist should the need ever arise.

Some Governors also have specific responsibilities for areas of the curriculum (e.g. ICT, Special Educational Needs) and this would involve discussions with teaching staff and visits to classrooms.

At Nelves Primary School the Chair of Governors keeps in regular contact with the Headteacher and acts as a 'critical friend' if advice is needed or if quick decisions have to be made.

The time a Governor chooses to devote to the job can vary from as little as six hours per year to as much time as they can spare.

Responsibilities

Although being a school governor may, at first, seem a heavy responsibility, you need to remember that an individual governor has no responsibility or power. The governing body is a corporate body of which you are a part.

Each new governor will receive a copy of a publication entitled 'A Guide to the Law for School Governors'. The Governing Body oversee the work of the school and check that all statutory requirements are met. They monitor the work of the school through reports from the headteacher and discussions with other staff. The Governing Body Support Unit based at the Broxhill Centre ensure that the termly agendas cover major issues.

It is advisable that all new governors attend an induction course held at the Broxhill Centre which will give a clearer picture of the responsibilities involved.

Code of Conduct

Parent governors are representatives of the parent body but the views they express at meetings are their own. There is no need to canvas parental opinion on every issue, or report back to parents on decisions taken; that is the responsibility of the whole governing body.

Governors should take decisions solely in terms of the best interest of Nelves Primary School. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other benefits for themselves, their family or their friends. It is also important that governors realise that many issues they will be involved in require absolute confidentiality.

Being a parent governor can be very rewarding and interesting and all governors have a valuable contribution to make to the on-going development of Nelmes Primary School. One of the strengths identified in our recent OFSTED inspection was the effectiveness of the Governing Body and their involvement in whole-school improvement.

I hope that none of the above has deterred anyone from nomination. Any governor would tell you that the first few meetings may seem rather daunting but you will feel more and more involved as time goes on. Never worry about stopping the meeting and asking for clarification if you are not sure what we are talking about!

V Shooter