

What's good about being a parent governor?

- You have a very privileged and responsible role.
- You have the opportunity to make a difference - not only for your children but for children in years to come.
- You have the chance to make a difference for other parents and to influence the way the school works with them.
- You will learn a lot and develop new skills.

As a parent governor, how can you help individual parents?

You may be approached by other parents seeking your help or wanting to make a complaint about something the school is or isn't doing.

- Make it clear you can't act for the governing body.
- Don't raise expectations that the school will 'put it right' - there may be underlying issues or background that you don't know about.
- Keep an open mind - there are at least two sides to every story!
- You may need to explain why the governors have made a decision in a certain way, so be prepared.



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The Role of Parent Governors



Parent governors are in a unique position on the school governing body. They must work in the best interests of the school and balance this with their natural desire to see the best outcomes for their own children.

Parent governors are:

- well placed to understand parents' views and remind the governors how matters being discussed affect parents.
- in a good position to help the governors communicate well with parents.
- equal in status to all other governors
- individuals - how you vote on any decision is up to you!

Parent governors are not:

- expected to gather the views of other parents and take them to the governors.
- simply expected to represent the interests of parents.
- a link between parents and the governing body.
- expected to vote as instructed by other parents.

How can you best fulfil your role as a parent governor?

- You need to commit to attending governors meetings regularly and play an active role in committees and decision making.
- You must always observe confidentiality. You will receive a lot of highly sensitive and confidential information - don't discuss it with anyone who is not a governor.
- You will need to learn how the school handles complaints and read the complaints policy. If another parent approaches you with a complaint, advise them to speak to the Head.
- You need to be approachable to other parents, but make sure you are clear about your role.
- You must always support the decisions of the full governing body - even if you disagree with them. As a governor you are one of a group and must never act alone.

What if you have a conflict between being a parent and being a governor?

This can happen - especially if you think the governors are making decisions which you feel will adversely affect your children.

- If a difficulty arises, take a step back and think things through as objectively as you can.
- You will need to learn how the school handles complaints and read the complaints policy. If another parent approaches you with a complaint, advise them to follow the school complaints procedure which can be found on the School website.
- Make sure you don't break confidentiality when discussing your concerns outside governing body meetings.

And finally...

- Don't be discouraged if at first everything seems confusing and difficult to get to grips with - most new governors feel this way!
- Don't feel you have to know everything straight away - it can take a year to begin to.
- See how the cycle of governing body meetings and business works.