
How to Become a School Governor

Becoming a school governor is a valuable way of serving the local community in providing an opportunity for individuals to support the continual improvement of the delivery of education in schools in Islington. School governors have three core strategic functions: ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction; holding the Head teacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils and the performance management of the staff; and overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent. Governors usually serve a four year term of office once appointed or elected.

You can learn more about the role of a school governor from the Inspiring Governors Alliance at www.inspiringgovernors.org or Governors for Schools at www.sgoss.org.uk

If you are interested in becoming a parent, staff or foundation governor of a particular school (see below for more detail on types of governor) you should in the first instance contact the school who will be able to inform you if any vacancies are available in those categories and in the case of foundation governor positions be able to provide you with details of the appropriate bodies responsible for foundation governor appointments at the school.

As a school governor you will, on average, be expected to attend three meetings of the full governing body during each school year; one meeting each school term for every committee of the governing body upon which you serve (e.g. finance, curriculum); visit the school once per term by arrangement with the Head teacher; and possibly have involvement with some case work in respect of pupils or staff. School governors are frequently in receipt of confidential information that must be handled with due care prior to decisions being taken and being made publicly available.

Types of School Governor

School governing bodies are comprised of a number of different types of governor with the aim of bringing together a wide range of interests, experiences and skills for the benefit of the whole school. The various types of school governor listed below relate to those appointed to local authority maintained schools. Academy schools are able to institute specific arrangements for the election and appointment of governors which are laid out in the Articles of Association of each individual academy school although many retain the same types of governors as are in place at local authority maintained schools.

Parent Governors - elected by the parents of children attending the school and are eligible to stand for election if they have a child attending the school at the time of the election.

Co-Opted Governors - appointed by the governing body. Applicants are not required to have a child in attendance at the school but are required to have skills that will assist the governing body in being effective in delivering its core responsibilities or being willing to undertake training to develop these.

Staff Governors - working in the school as either a teacher or a member of the school support staff and elected by the whole staff body at the school.

Foundation Governors - appointed by the organisation that supports the school, often a local church parish or diocese but can be a charitable trust and with the skills to assist the governing body to be effective in delivering its core responsibilities.

Local Authority Governors - appointed by the governing body following a nomination from the local authority often from amongst the members and supporters of local political parties but can also be from the wider community and again must have appropriate skills to support the governing body in delivering its core responsibilities.

Associate Members of Committees - those appointed by the governing body from a wide group including school staff and others able to contribute on issues related to their own experience and the area of responsibility of the committee to which they are appointed.