



The role of a Parent Governor July 2022

This guidance should be read in conjunction with information on the core functions of a Governing body and the full role description, which can be found on the East Riding of Yorkshire Council website:

<https://www.eastriding.gov.uk/learning/schools-colleges-and-academies/governors/general-info-school-governors/>

The role

As a parent governor, your role is:

- To bring a **parental perspective** to the issues discussed – you're not there to speak 'on behalf' of the parent body
- No different from other governors

Parents are elected to the board, not appointed.

As a parent governor you hold the unique position of having a parental viewpoint. Through the children you will have first-hand experience of the curriculum and how the school is perceived from the consumers' point of view. You will be able to bring this perspective to the strategic management of the school. As a parent governor you do not have to vote in a particular way because you have been pressed to do so by parents. Objectivity, however, is essential. You are not there to promote the interests of your own children but all children. Parent governors are elected by other parents and it is important to establish a rapport with the parental body that elected you, whilst continuing to maintain a strategic approach to school governance

As an effective parent governor you:

- help to decide the priorities for improving the school

- make yourself available to parents and listen to other parents' opinions and take account of them as you contribute to governors' decisions
- work in partnership with the Head Teacher, senior leadership team and cooperatively with other governors to raise standards and improve outcomes for all children
- prepare for meetings by reading papers beforehand
- take responsibility for your own learning and development as a governor including attending training
- attend full governing body and relevant committee meetings promptly, regularly, and for the duration
- read briefings and newsletters for governors
- present a balanced view of issues representing different sections of the community
- promote the interests of the school in the wider community
- be loyal to the decisions made by the governing body
- respect the confidentiality of governing body affairs
- never promise to 'solve a problem' on your own
- never press your own child's case at the expense of others
- declare an interest and withdraw from any meeting where you, a partner or close relative or associate stands to gain, or where you are so close to a matter discussed it is difficult to be impartial
- have regard to the broader responsibilities as a governor of a public institution in regard to promoting accountability for the actions and performance of the governing body

Communicate a parent's perspective

It's a fine line to tread, but it is important to remember that you're not there to speak on behalf of parents.

You are required to use your perspective to help the board understand a parent's viewpoint. This will help the board make good decisions and maintain a link between governance and the parent community.

You're not there to bring complaints from parents to the board's attention. Rather, you're highlighting how governing board decisions impact the school from a parent's perspective.

Set expectations with other parents

Help other parents understand that you're **not** there to:

- Speak on their behalf

- Bring up their individual issues in meetings
- Solve problems for them

All complaints raised are to be dealt with via the official complaints procedure of the school.

You might see comments about the school from parents on social media, perhaps in parent groups you've joined. It's not your role to get involved.

Separate your role as a governor from your role as a parent

Think about all pupils, not just your child

As a governor, you're responsible for the progress and wellbeing of **all** pupils at the school, so keep this at the forefront of your mind in meetings.

You must rely on a wide range of sources to make decisions and hold the headteacher to account. These include high-quality, objective data and the views of pupils, staff, parents and the community.

Parent governors are reminded that:

- they are acting in the interests of the whole pupil body
- they should not bring up their child, or refer to anecdotal evidence based only on their child's, or a friend's, experience during discussions with the governing board

Follow your school's complaints procedure like any other parent

If you have a complaint concerning your child, you must follow your school's complaints procedure, even as a parent governor.

If possible, ask the other parent to lead the discussion with the school. In all communication during the process, clarify that you're acting as a parent, not a governor.

You could take action as a governor if the complaint affects more children than your own child. For example, if data shows a wider problem with pupil progress in your child's year group, ask questions in the relevant meetings like:

- What support is in place for underperforming members of staff?
- How does the school help all children who are falling behind?

If Parent Governors have a concern, they are expected to:

- raise it in a governing board meeting. Meetings are designed for this purpose: governors can openly discuss decisions the governing board might take, and governors can express disagreement by voting against it
- respect the decision taken by the board if it's been voted on properly, and be united with your fellow governors
- ask for a meeting with the chair to discuss a decision in more detail if you wish
- express your disagreement outside governing board meetings
- not involve other parents or seek to mobilise them in any way

Time commitment

Governors are expected to attend all full governing body meetings and committee meetings as appropriate. Full governing board meetings occur termly (three per year) as do committee meetings. There are two committees at Elloughton Primary School and governors are members of one of these committees - usually based on their skills and experience.

In addition to meetings you will also be expected to visit the school in action. Although you will have a good knowledge of the school through your child's experience, formal visits as a governor are an essential part of your role, particularly in relation to monitoring and evaluating. Often governors are invited to attend school events such as assemblies and sports days. A governor will be disqualified from holding office if they fail to attend governing body meetings without the consent of the governing body – for a continuous period of six months, beginning with the date of the first meeting missed.

Time off from work

Under employment law, employers must give employees who are school governors reasonable time off to carry out their duties. The employee and

employer have to agree on what is reasonable. Employers may give time off with pay but do not have to do so.

For more information, please contact kparsons@epsch.co.uk

Source of Information:

The Key Governor Hub - July 2022

<https://schoolgovernors.thekeysupport.com/the-governing-body/constitution-and-membership/governing-body-constitution/parent-governor-trustee-roles-and-responsibilities/?marker=visited-articles>

National Governors Association website - July 2022

<https://www.nga.org.uk/Home.aspx> (membership access only)