

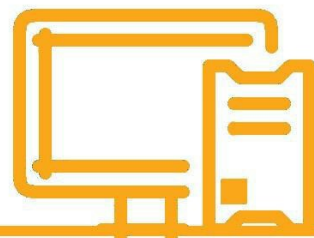
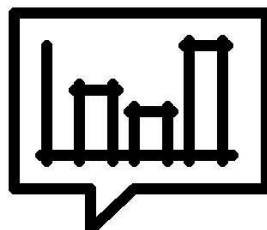
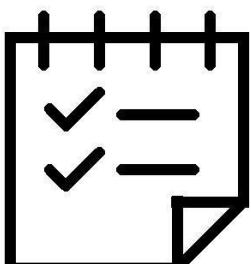
# Briefing Note



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## **Governor Recruitment Pack**

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# School & Governor Support – A Guide to Governor Recruitment

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“The primary consideration in appointment decisions should be acquiring the skills, experience and diversity the board needs to be effective. A board composed of governors and academy trustees who bring a diverse range of skills, experiences, qualifications, characteristics and perspectives and who are from different backgrounds and settings will have a positive impact on setting the strategic direction for the organisation.”

(DfE [Governance Handbook](#))

School governors form the largest volunteer group in the UK, and new vacancies arise with regularity. It can be a challenge to encourage people to take on a new volunteering role but governance, although it can be demanding, offers a genuine opportunity for people to make a difference to the lives of children and young people in their community. This guide provides information to help you recruit and ensure effective recruitment practice.

## Before you recruit

It is best practice for governing boards to **review their size and composition** on an annual basis. A vacancy arising on your board can provide a useful opportunity to do this and ensure that it is still fit for purpose and effective. In the Governance Handbook, the DfE recommend that: “All boards should be tightly focused and no larger than they need to be to have all the necessary skills to carry out their functions effectively, with everyone actively contributing relevant skills and experience.”

When a vacancy arises it is useful to refer to the board’s most recent **skills audit**. This will enable you to review the skills and experience across the board and identify skills or knowledge gaps. The NGA publish a [skills audit](#) and [skills dashboard](#) that can help you do this.

You also want to make every effort to ensure that your board **reflects the diversity of your school community**. The Governance Handbook advises that “diverse boards promote inclusive school environments and provide diverse role models for staff and young people” and boards should include “sufficient diversity of perspectives to enable robust decision making”.

Whilst the whole Board will be responsible for the recruitment of new governors, it can be helpful to appoint a link governor to co-ordinate recruitment activities. School & Governor Support suggest it might be appropriate for the Staff Governor to undertake this role.

Useful guidance to consider before recruiting includes:

- NGA: [The right people around the table](#): A guide to recruiting and retaining school governors and trustees
- Inside Government: [School Governor Recruitment](#): 7 Tips to Help You Find the Right People
- Ninna Makrinov (B’ham CoG): [How I recruited a diverse board and why it was important to me](#)
- DfE: [Constitution of governing bodies of maintained schools](#) statutory guidance
- DfE: [Governance structures and roles](#)

## Identify methods of recruitment

You will need to utilise different methods of recruitment for different governor roles.

For **LA Governor** recruitment, please contact School and Governor Support (S&GS) by emailing [governorrecruitment@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:governorrecruitment@birmingham.gov.uk) and take advantage of our [featured vacancies](#) pages to advertise your role.

For **Parent Governor** recruitment in maintained schools, please refer to our [Guidance on holding parent governor elections](#) as this will ensure that you follow the correct processes for a valid election. Academies should follow their own Parent Governor election protocols. While every parent must be informed of the vacancy and given the opportunity to stand, schools are encouraged to publish clear recruitment literature in which they can detail particular skills and experience that they are looking for. (See Recruitment Literature, below).

Similarly, when recruiting for a **Staff Governor** in a maintained school, please refer to our [Guidance on holding staff governor elections](#) to ensure you follow the correct processes for a valid election. Again, academies will have their own Staff Governor election protocols.

**Foundation Governors** will usually be appointed by the school's founding body, church or other organisation named in the school's Instrument of Government or Articles of Association.

**Partnership Governors** are appointed by the board in foundation and foundation special schools that do not have a foundation. The board is required to seek nominations from the parents of registered pupils at the school, and from such other persons in the community served by the school as they consider appropriate (although boards should note that parents of current pupils, school staff, and LA employees involved in education are not eligible themselves). A person must have “the skills required to contribute to the effective governance and success of the school” to be eligible for nomination and appointment ([Regs](#), Schedule 3).

The DfE defines **Co-opted Governors** as “people who, in the opinion of the governing board, have the skills and experience required to contribute to the effective governance and success of the school”. There are two organisations who can help schools in recruiting Co-opted Governors:

- [Inspiring Governance](#) – funded by the DfE to assist all state-funded educational institutions: a “free online service that connects schools and trusts in England with skilled volunteers in your area who are interested in becoming a school governor”.
- [Governors for Schools](#) – a free service for both maintained and academy schools: “finds, places, and supports skilled volunteers as governors and trustees on school and academy boards”.

However, Co-opted Governors can also provide a way to bring volunteers with knowledge and understanding of the local community onto the governing board. Local recruitment methods could include:

- The board’s own **professional networks**, particularly if the employers of board members have a corporate social responsibility agenda that could encourage those with relevant skills to volunteer.
- Would your local **GP practice / hospital / police station** put your recruitment leaflet on their work noticeboard and/or circulate it in their staff e-newsletter or other staff communication?
- **Places of worship**: could local faith leaders help you identify a new governor amongst their congregations?
- Can you write to **local businesses**, again targeting those with skills that you are looking for and ask them to circulate your recruitment leaflet to staff. (NB: you don’t have to write to an accountancy firm for, e.g. financial skills; you could write to the finance department within a larger organisation.)
- Would your **local supermarket** manager or member of the supermarket staff consider becoming a governor and/or post your recruitment leaflet on the staff noticeboard?
- Do you have a local **university** with PhD students who might be looking to broaden their career experience?
- Would any **local residents** be interested in supporting the school by becoming a governor? Could you post your recruitment leaflet in the post office, local shop, or park noticeboard?
- What other **local places / youth or community groups / organisations** do your children and their families visit and interact with?

## Recruitment Literature

The DfE is clear that schools “should set out clearly in published recruitment literature:

- the **core functions and role of the board**, and the induction and other training and development that will be available to new recruits to help them fulfil it;
- the **expectations** they have of people appointed to the board for example in relation to the term of office, the frequency of meetings, membership of committees and the willingness to undertake appropriate training and development; and
- with reference to the department’s [Competency framework for governance](#), the **specific skills or experience** that would be desirable, including the willingness to learn skills that would help the board improve its effectiveness and address any specific challenges it may be facing.”

Literature should also include reference to the school's **commitment to safeguarding** and promoting the welfare of children, and the need for all governors to be DBS checked.

A sample letter and a template leaflet can be found overleaf.

## Recruitment Events

There will already be ways in which your governors interact with the wider school community – perhaps through parents' evenings, attendance at school events etc. Ensuring your board members are visible and approachable will not only raise awareness of governance but also help build other stakeholders' confidence that this is something they could do too.

You could also organise specific events to promote recruitment:

- An **informal session** where all those interested can come to ask questions, hear more about the role of governors and meet current members of the governing board.
- One or more governors could come to an **assembly** and talk to the children about what they do as a governor and answer questions. They could encourage the children to speak to their parents about becoming a governor.
- Governors could have a stall / table at school events, e.g. parents' evenings, summer fair etc. or at **other local events** where the skills you need might be represented.

## Associate Members

If you have identified a skills gap on the board, governors also have the option to appoint an **Associate Member**. Associate members are usually appointed to committees for a limited period of time in order to assist with a specific project because of their particular expertise and experience. They are **not** governors and do **not** have a vote on governing board decisions but may, on approval from the board, be given a vote on decisions made by committees to which they are appointed.

## New Governor Induction

It is important that new governors are welcomed into the school community and have the necessary information to support them in fulfilling their role with confidence. S&GS provide advice on new governor induction in our [Briefing note](#) and deliver [Induction Training](#) each term. Appointing a Link Governor for Training & Development will also ensure that all governors can benefit from ongoing CPD.

School & Governor Support  
Children & Families Directorate  
Birmingham City Council

Website: [School & Governor Support](#)  
Email: [governors@birmingham.gov.uk](mailto:governors@birmingham.gov.uk)  
Twitter: [@SGSBCC](#)

## Appendices (draft documents editable by the school)

1. **Governor recruitment flyer for use within the school**
2. **Governor recruitment letter and flyer to businesses**

## **Become a school governor and make a real difference to children's lives in Birmingham**

[Insert school logo]

Our school's governing board plays a crucial role in the success of the school and its students. Governors set strategic direction, hold school leaders to account for improving performance and ensure money is well spent.

Being a school governor provides an excellent opportunity for personal development in a unique environment. You can develop skills such as project management, recruitment and selection, budget control and data analysis together with acquiring board-level strategic leadership skills and the experience of working as a senior team.

We are looking for a new governor who:

- has a questioning mind and is able to analyse basic data
- is enthusiastic, willing to learn and be a good team player
- has [insert skills required] skills and experience
- can give us the equivalent of around 10-20 days of their time per year (depending on the governance role)

Our Governing Board meetings usually take place [how often, what day of the week and at what time].

Please get in touch if you would like to know more; we'd love to hear from you.

[Contact details including web address, Twitter, etc.]

**We are committed to safer recruitment, safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, and we expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. All school governors are required to undergo a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.**

[Insert school logo]  
[Insert school motto]

Name [HR Manager or existing contact]  
Address

Date

Dear

Our [primary/secondary/etc.] school is seeking a volunteer Governor with [financial planning/management experience and/or professional leadership ... etc.] skills to join our Governing Board.

We are keen to ensure that our Board includes representatives from the school's local community and would welcome expressions of interest from members of your staff.

I enclose a flyer with more information about the role and wonder if you would be kind enough to share this with staff and/or display it on your staff noticeboards?

Thank you very much indeed for supporting our school.

Yours sincerely

Chair of Governors/HT

[Appropriate contact details]

[Insert school logo]

[Insert school motto]

## **Could you use and develop your business skills on our Governing Board and make a positive difference to children's futures?**

Our [primary/secondary/etc.] school is seeking a volunteer governor with [financial planning/management experience and/or professional leadership ... etc.] skills to join our Governing Board.

Our Board plays a critical role in the school's success and the success of our [children/pupils/students]. Governors set strategic direction, hold school leaders to account for improving performance, and make sure public money is well spent. In short, our Board helps provide the safe, happy environment where our children receive the best possible education.

Governors need to have sufficient levels of literacy and numeracy; good interpersonal skills, a willingness to learn and the inquisitiveness to question and analyse. The role can be demanding but hugely rewarding and the opportunity for personal development cannot be underestimated. Here at [name of school], we ask for the equivalent of around 10-20 days per year of your time (depending on your governance role) in which we hope you can develop a wealth of skills, together with the scope to acquire board-level strategic leadership skills and experience of working as a senior team.

Full training and support for the role is provided. Working governors have the right to reasonable time off to carry out their public duties and some companies allow paid leave.

[Name of school] is committed to safeguarding children and governors are required to undergo a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.

Our Governing Board meetings usually take place [how often, what day of the week and at what time]. Further information about the school including its latest Ofsted report can be found via [insert web link].

To find out more, please just get in touch. We'd love to hear from you.

[Contact information including website link, twitter, etc]

**"Effective governance underpins our continuing efforts to raise standards in our schools" – Baroness Barran, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State, Department for Education**