

Role of a school governor at EMAT

To contribute to the work of the governing board in ensuring high standards of achievement for all children and young people in the school by:

- setting the school's vision, ethos and strategic direction
- holding the Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils
- overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent (when delegated)
- acting as an ambassador for the school in the community

As part of the Local Advisory Board (LAB), a governor is expected to:

1. **Contribute** to the strategic discussions at governing board meetings which determine:
 - the vision and ethos of the school
 - clear and ambitious strategic priorities and targets for the school
 - that all children, including those with special educational needs, have access to a broad and balanced curriculum
 - the school's budget (when delegated), including the expenditure of the pupil premium allocation
 - the school's staffing structure and key staffing policies
 - the principles to be used by school leaders to set other school policies
2. **Hold** the senior leaders to account by monitoring the school's performance; this includes:
 - agreeing the outcomes from the school's self-evaluation and ensuring they are used to inform the priorities in the school development plan
 - considering all relevant data and feedback provided on request by school leaders and external sources on all aspects of school performance
 - asking challenging questions of school leaders
 - ensuring senior leaders have arranged for the required audits to be carried out and receiving the results of those audits
 - ensuring senior leaders have developed the required policies and procedures and the school is operating effectively according to those policies
 - acting as a link governor on a specific issue, making relevant enquiries of the relevant staff, and reporting to the LAB on the progress on the relevant school priority
 - listening to and reporting to the school's stakeholders: pupils, parents, staff, and the wider community, including local employers
3. **Ensure** the school staff have the resources and support they require to do their jobs well, including the necessary expertise on business management, external advice where necessary, effective appraisal and CPD (continuing professional development), and suitable premises, and that the way in which those resources are used has impact.

4. When required, serve on panels of governors to:
- support appointing the Headteacher and other senior leaders
 - hear the second stage of staff grievances and disciplinary matters
 - hear appeals about pupil exclusions
 - hear third stage of complaint process

The role of a governor is largely a thinking and questioning role, not a doing role.

A governor does NOT:

- write school policies
- undertake audits of any sort – whether financial or health and safety – even if the governor has the relevant professional experience
- spend much time with the pupils of the school – if you want to work directly with children, there are many other valuable voluntary roles within the school
- fundraise – this is the role of the PTA, the governing board should consider income streams and the potential for income generation, but not carry out fundraising tasks
- undertake classroom observations to make judgments on the quality of teaching – the governing board monitors the quality of teaching in the school by requiring data from the senior staff and from external sources
- do the job of the school staff – if there is not enough capacity within the paid staff team to carry out the necessary tasks, the governing board needs to consider and rectify this

As you become more experienced as a governor, there are other roles you could volunteer for which would increase your degree of involvement and level of responsibility (eg as a chair of a committee). This role description does not cover the additional roles taken on by the chair, vice chair and chairs of committees.

In order to perform this role well, a governor is expected to:

- get to know the school, including visiting the school occasionally during school hours and gaining a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses
- attend induction training and regular relevant training and development events
- attend meetings (full governing board meetings and committee meetings) and read all the papers before the meeting
- act in the best interests of all the pupils of the school
- behave in a professional manner, as set down in the governing board's code of conduct, including acting in strict confidence

Expenses: Governors may receive out of pocket expenses incurred as result of fulfilling their role as governor. Payments can cover incidental expenses, such as travel and childcare, but not loss of earnings.

Code of Conduct for Local Advisory Boards (LABs)

2020 Version

This Code should be read in conjunction with the relevant law and for academies, their articles of association and agreed scheme of delegation.

The Local board has the following core strategic functions:

Establishing the strategic direction, by:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, values, and objectives for the school(s)/trust
- Agreeing the Academy improvement strategy with priorities and targets
- Meeting statutory duties

Ensuring accountability, by:

- Monitoring the educational performance of the academy and progress towards agreed targets
- Monitoring safeguarding
- Engaging with stakeholders
- Contributing to school self-evaluation

Overseeing financial performance, by:

- Ensuring money is well spent and value for money is obtained
- Ensuring risks to the organisation are managed

As individuals on the board we agree to the following:

Role & Responsibilities

- We understand the purpose of the board and the role of the executive leaders.
- We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the board has given us delegated authority to do so, and therefore we will only speak on behalf of the Local board when we have been specifically authorised to do so.
- We accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the board or its delegated agents. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside the Local board meeting.
- We have a duty to act fairly and without prejudice
- We will encourage open governance and will act appropriately.
- We will consider carefully how our decisions may affect the community and other schools.
- We will always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos and reputation of our school/group of schools. Our actions within the school and the local community will reflect this.
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints we will follow the procedures established by the Local board.
- We will actively support and challenge the executive leaders
- We will accept and respect the difference in roles between the board and staff, ensuring that we work collectively for the benefit of the organisation;
- We will respect the role of the executive leaders and their responsibility for the day to day management of the organisation and avoid any actions that might undermine such arrangements;

- We agree to adhere to the school's rules and policies and the procedures of the Local board as set out by the relevant Local documents and law
- When formally speaking or writing in our Local role we will ensure our comments reflect current organisational policy even if they might be different to our personal views;
- when communicating in our private capacity (including on social media) we will be mindful of and strive to uphold the reputation of the organisation

Commitment

- We acknowledge that accepting office as a governor involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy.
- We will each involve ourselves actively in the work of the Local board, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, including service on committees or working groups.
- We will make full efforts to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend explain in advance why we are unable to.
- We will get to know the school/s well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
- We will visit the school/s, with all visits arranged in advance with the senior executive leader/Headteacher and undertaken within the framework established by the Local board.
- When visiting the school in a personal capacity (i.e. as a parent or carer), we will maintain our underlying responsibility as a governor.
- We will consider seriously our individual and collective needs for induction, training and development, and will undertake relevant training.
- We accept that in the interests of open governance, our full names, date of appointment, terms of office, roles on the Local board, attendance records, relevant business and pecuniary interests, category of governor and the body responsible for appointing us will be published on the school's website.
- In the interests of transparency we accept that information relating to governors will be collected and logged on the DfE's national database of governors (Get Information about Schools).

Relationships

- We will strive to work as a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted.
- We will express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with other governors/trustees/academy committee members, the clerk to the Local board and school and trust staff both in and outside of meetings.
- We will support the Chair in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct both at meetings and at all times.
- We are prepared to answer queries from other board members in relation to delegated functions and take into account any concerns expressed, and we will acknowledge the time, effort and skills that have been committed to the delegated function by those involved.
- We will seek to develop effective working relationships with the executive leaders, staff and parents, the Trust, the local authority and other relevant agencies and the community.

Confidentiality

- We will observe complete confidentiality when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern specific members of staff or pupils, both inside or outside school.
- We will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding school/trust business arise outside a Local board meeting.
- We will not reveal the details of any Local board vote.
- We will ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately.

Conflicts of interest

- We will record any pecuniary or other business interest (including those related to people we are connected with) that we have in connection with the Local board's business in the Register of Business Interests, and if any such conflicted matter arises in a meeting we will offer to leave the meeting for the appropriate length of time.
- We accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on the school/trust's website.
- We will also declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the situation arise.
- We will act in the best interests of the school as a whole and not as a representative of any group, even if elected to the Local board.

Ceasing to be a governor/trustee/academy committee member

- We understand that the requirements relating to confidentiality will continue to apply after a governor/trustee/academy committee member leaves office

Breach of this code of conduct

- If we believe this code has been breached, we will raise this issue with the Chair and the Chair will investigate; the Trust will only use suspension/removal as a last resort after seeking to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways.
- Should it be the Chair that we believe has breached this code, another Local board member, such as the vice Chair will investigate.

The Seven Principles of Public Life

(Originally published by the Nolan Committee: The Committee on Standards in Public Life was established by the then Prime Minister in October 1994, under the Chairmanship of Lord Nolan, to consider standards of conduct in various areas of public life, and to make recommendations).

Selflessness - Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends.

Integrity - Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.

Objectivity - In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

Accountability - Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

Openness - Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

Honesty - Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership - Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.