

Guidelines for the Election of Parent Governors

Who is responsible for arranging the election?

- In community, community special and voluntary controlled schools - the headteacher.
- In voluntary aided, foundation and foundation special schools - the governing board.

Who can stand and vote as a parent governor?

Parent governors are elected by parents of children at the school.

The definition of a parent in education legislation includes:

- all natural parents whether they are married or not;
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person and;
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person.

and

- has a child on roll at the time of election.

Further guidance on the definitions of parent, parental responsibility and care of a child or young person can be obtained from the Governor Services Team on (01452) 427802/427803.

Parent governors generally serve for four years unless stated otherwise in the school's Instrument of Government. If a parent governor ceases to be the parent of a child registered at the school within the period for which they have been elected, he/she may continue to be a governor for the rest of his/her term of office.

The Role of Parent Governors?

- Parent governors should play a full and active part in the governing board but, parent governors, like other governors, do not have the power to act as individuals or as a group, unless specifically authorised to do so by the governing board.
- Parent governors are not on the governing board simply to represent the interest of parents, or to be the only link with parents because all governors must have regard to these issues.
- Parent governors have the same rights, responsibilities and duties as other governors.

Summary of Disqualification Regulations - See page 10

All potential candidates must be made aware of the disqualification criteria.

Seeking Nominations

As soon as a resignation is received from a parent governor, or at the beginning of the term in which a parent governor's term of office expires, the headteacher/clerk shall send a letter to all those believed to have parental responsibility for children at the school, inviting nominations for the post.

Where pupils have more than one person with parental responsibility who are living at different addresses, and the parent has requested that paperwork relating to their child be sent to them, a letter should be sent to each address.

Where a vacancy arises at short notice, the letter should be sent as soon as possible. Where this situation arises near the end of the summer term, this process may be delayed until the beginning of the next term in order to include the parents of new pupils joining the school.

A sample letter and nomination form can be found at Appendix A and Appendix B.

Closing date for nominations

It is recommended that the closing date for nominations should be at least six school working days from the date on which letters are distributed. The actual closing date and time should be clearly stated in the letter.

All nominees must have been shown the disqualification regulations and be made aware that a DBS check is required.

Number of nominations received

If the number of nominations is equal to, or fewer than the number of vacancies to be filled, a ballot need not be held. The nominee(s) is/are automatically elected unopposed. The headteacher/clerk shall notify the successful candidate(s), within three school working days.

The start date is the closing date for nominations. However, where an election is held in advance of a parent governor ending, the start date will be given in the notice of election.

The clerk should arrange for the successful candidate to complete the [Governor Record Form](#) (AOF446), retain the form on a confidential file, and notify Governor Services using the form [Governor Commencing a Term of Office](#) (AOF447).

All governors must hold a DBS certificate. The governing board must apply for a DBS certificate within 21 days after the election or appointment.

The ballot

If more nominations are received than there are vacancies, the headteacher/clerk shall arrange for a secret ballot to be held.

The headteacher/clerk shall issue ballot papers (Appendix C) to all eligible parents as soon as possible after the nomination closing date. At least six school working days should be allowed between the ballot papers being sent out and the last date for their return. The deadline date and time for return should be clearly stated on the ballot paper.

Ballot papers received outside the stated return period are to be treated as invalid.

Voting

The election should be held by secret ballot.

Where parents have more than one child in a school, and bearing in mind that voting is to be on the basis of one vote per parent per vacancy, a system must be devised to ensure that no parent receives more than one ballot paper. Ballot papers themselves should not be signed or the voter identified in any way. It is recommended that they are printed on paper of a distinctive colour.

The School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2012 state: "The arrangements may provide for every person who is entitled to vote to have an opportunity to do so by electronic means".

The headteacher/clerk should arrange to get ballot papers to and from parents by pupil post where possible. Where a pupil does not live with a person who has parental responsibility, or they are absent from school when the ballot papers are issued they will need to be posted or otherwise delivered to the parents.

Ballot papers must be kept unopened and secure until the count. Ballot papers received outside the stated return period are to be treated as invalid.

The count

Candidates have the right to attend the count, and must be advised of the venue, date and time of the count (Appendix D) at the same time as the ballot papers are sent out.

The ballot box shall be opened on the next school working day after the closing date for the return of ballot papers, as notified to the candidates.

The presiding or returning officer shall be the headteacher or clerk, or his/her nominee, who will conduct the count.

If there is a tie in the numbers of votes cast, the first step should be to recount the votes. If the votes are still equal for two or more candidates, the presiding officer shall arrange for those candidates to draw lots or toss a coin.

After the ballot

The headteacher/clerk shall notify the result to all candidates within three school working days (see sample letters in Appendix E). All parents, governors and staff should be notified of the result.

The start date is the closing date of the ballot. However, where an election is held in advance of a parent governor ending, the start date will be given in the notice of election.

The clerk should arrange for the successful candidate to complete the [Governor Record Form](#) (AOF446), retain the form on a confidential file, and notify Governor Services using the form [Governor Commencing a Term of Office](#) (AOF447).

All governors must hold a DBS certificate. The governing board must apply for a DBS certificate within 21 days after the election or appointment.

All material relevant to the election (e.g. correspondence, ballot papers) to be kept for six months before destruction.

Appointment of parent governors

If, after an election process, vacancies for parent governors still remain, the governing board may **appoint** parent governors in accordance with the regulations. It is strongly recommended that two attempts are made at running elections to fill the vacancies before considering appointing parent governors.

The governing board must appoint as a parent governor, in the following order of preference:

- a parent of a registered pupil at the school; or
- a parent of a former registered pupil at the school; or
- a parent of a child of or under compulsory school age;
- a parent of a child under or of under compulsory school age with special educational needs for which the school is approved (special schools only), or
- a parent of a child who has special educational needs and is over compulsory school age (special schools only)

The governing board should make the appointment on the basis of the skills an individual can bring to the governance of the school. Relevant skills may include personal attributes and qualities such as the capacity and willingness to learn and work as part of a team.

All potential appointed parent governors must be shown the disqualification regulations. The appointment of parent governors must be an item on the agenda at a full governing board meeting.

All governors must hold a DBS certificate. The governing board must apply for a DBS certificate within 21 days after the election or appointment.

Unsuccessful candidates

Any unsuccessful candidates should be thanked for their interest.

Mr/Mrs A Parent

Parent Governor Election

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

We have a vacancy for a parent governor which we need to fill as soon as possible. Parent governors are elected by and from the parents of children currently attending our school. They serve a four-year term of office and bring a very important and valued perspective to the work of the governing board.

You might like to look at the information for prospective governors on the Gloucestershire County Council website www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/schoolsnet/governors Further information on the role can also be obtained through the school office.

The governing board has a vital role to play in making sure every child receives the best possible education. This is achieved by ensuring that governors have the necessary skills and commitment to contribute to the effective governance and success of the school. The particular skills that governing boards need will vary and will include personal qualities and capabilities, such as the capacity and willingness to learn and work as part of a team. It is expected that governors will make use of the various training opportunities available to them and play a full part in the work of the governing board.

If you are interested in becoming a governor, contact the school office with your nomination (self nomination is acceptable), which will need to be with the school by 12.00 noon on

If there are more nominations than vacancies, a ballot will be held and you will be sent a voting paper.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher/Chair of Governors

School

Election of Parent Governors
Nomination Form

Name:

Address:

Please tick✓

I declare that I have a child on roll at the school and am eligible and willing to serve as a parent governor

I declare that I have read and understood the disqualification criteria

I understand that the post requires me to hold a DBS certificate

Signature:

Nominated by*: (Signature, name in capitals and address)

Candidate’s statement for inclusion on ballot paper:

Completed nomination must be returned to the school by:

(Time).....

(date).....

*Self nomination is acceptable

Ballot Paper - Election of Parent Governor

Number of vacancies to be filled: (word)

1. Each parent must vote on a separate form
2. Each parent is entitled to a number of votes equal to the number of vacancies e.g. one vacancy one vote; three vacancies three votes but only one vote can be used per candidate.
3. Please vote in ink by placing an X against the candidate(s) of your choice

Papers recording more than the required votes or marked in any other way will be invalid.

CANDIDATES:

Name Candidate's Statement:	
Name Candidate's Statement:	
Name Candidate's Statement:	

Completed ballot papers must be returned to the school by:

(Time).....

(date).....

Dear

Re: Election of Parent Governor at School

Thank you for your offer to become a parent governor at our school.

As there are more nominations than vacancies, there will be an election.

The count will be held at the school on at am/pm, and you are entitled to attend this count. If you wish to attend please let me or the school office know. If you are unable to attend, I will inform you in writing of the result within three school working days.

If you have any queries about the election process I shall be glad to answer them.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

Letter to Parents

Dear

Re: Election of Parent Governor(s) at School

I am pleased to inform you of the result of our election for parent governor(s).

Elected: Name(s) of candidate(s)

We would like to thank those who put their names forward and we are sorry that there were insufficient places for all those interested this time.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

Successful Candidates

I am pleased to inform you that you have been elected unopposed as a parent governor and your 4* year term of office will commence on

OR

I am pleased to inform you that following the recent parent election you have been elected as a parent governor and your 4* year term of office will commence on

AND

You will soon be contacted by the clerk to governors with details of the next meeting. Governors are required to undertake a Disclosure and Barring Service Enhanced Check.

* can be less if Instrument of Government indicates this

Unsuccessful Candidates

I regret to inform you that on this occasion you were unsuccessful in the recent parent governor election.

Details of the actual number of votes cast can be obtained on request from the school office.

If you would like to be considered in another capacity as one of our school governors at a later date, please either contact the chair of governors or let me know. There may also be vacancies in other schools in the area, and if you would like to be considered as a school governor elsewhere, I know Gloucestershire Governor Services will be pleased to hear from you.

Thank you once again for your interest.

Summary of Disqualification Regulations

A governor must be aged 18 or over at the time of his or her election or appointment and cannot be a registered pupil at the school. A person cannot hold more than one governorship at the same school.

A person is disqualified from holding or from continuing to hold office as a governor or associate member if he or she:

- fails to attend the 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 (not applicable to ex officio governors);
- is the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order, an interim bankruptcy restrictions order, a debt relief restrictions order, or an interim debt relief restrictions order;
- has had his or her estate sequestrated and the sequestration has not been discharged, annulled or reduced;
- is subject to:
 - i) a disqualification order or disqualification undertaking under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986;
 - ii) a disqualification order under the Company Directors Disqualification (Northern Ireland) Order 2002;
 - iii) a disqualification undertaking accepted under the Company Directors Disqualification (Northern Ireland) Order 2002;
 - iv) an order made under Section 429(2)(b) of the Insolvency Act 1986 (failure to pay under a County Court administration order);
- has been removed from the office of trustee for a charity by an order made by the Charity Commission or Commissioners or High Court on the grounds of any misconduct or mismanagement in the administration of the charity, or under Section 34 of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 from being concerned in the management or control of any body;
- has been removed from office as an elected governor within the last five years;
- is included in the list of people considered by the Secretary of State as unsuitable to work with children or young people;
- is barred from any regulated activity relating to children;
- is subject to a direction of the Secretary of State under section 142 of the Education Act 2002 or section 128 of the Education and Skills Act 2008;
- is disqualified from working with children or from registering for child-minding or providing day-care;
- is disqualified from being an independent school proprietor, teacher or employee by the Secretary of State;
- has been sentenced to three months or more in prison (without the option of a fine) in the five years before becoming a governor or since becoming a governor;
- has received a prison sentence of two and a half years or more in the 20 years before becoming a governor;
- has at any time received a prison sentence of five years or more;
- has been convicted and fined for causing a nuisance or disturbance on school or educational premises during the five years prior to or since appointment or election as a governor;
- refuses a request by the clerk to make an application to the Disclosure and Barring Service for a criminal records certificate.

A person is disqualified from election or appointment as a parent governor if they are an elected member of the LA or if they work at the school for more than 500 hours in any school year.

Full details of the Regulations covering the disqualification criteria can be found in [The School Governance \(Constitution\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#).