

The Role of a Governor

Governors have a varied and important role...

...helping the college run effectively. They have 3 core functions:

- Planning the strategic direction of the college
- Overseeing financial performance and ensuring money is well spent
- Holding the college leadership to account

As well as

- engaging with learners, staff, parents & carers and the college community to understand their views of the college.

The governor role is strategic rather than operational. Governors don't get involved with the day to day running of a college, instead supporting, and challenging the leadership team to drive improvement. In practice, this means **looking at information and evidence** to have conversations and **ask leaders questions** about the college. They must be prepared to give and take advice and must be loyal to decisions taken by the governing board as a whole.

Being a governor is a commitment and a responsibility but offers you the chance to see first-hand the impact you can make in improving education for young people.

To fulfil the role you will need to:

- attend regular meetings (around 3 each year)
- visit the college occasionally (pre-arranged beforehand)
- do some background reading
- take part in induction training and ongoing development

Being a governor is a **voluntary** role which you'll need to fit in and around your wider commitments, so you need to dedicate the time to attend regular meetings and execute action points where necessary. Don't be afraid to ask for more details on the specific time commitments during the recruitment process, to make sure this role is right for you.

DBS checks that will be required of you for you to take on this role.

All governors should contribute to each meeting. Make sure you prepare by reading the **agenda** circulated in advance and **offer solutions** and opinions to key issues up for discussion. While specific governors may have themes (link governors) they specialise in or lead on, the more board members that can input into the discussion, the better. The board plays a vital role in building relationships, not only within college but also between the college, parents, carers, learners, employers, and the local community.

The Skills Required to Be an Effective School Governor

Governors need an **analytical** eye. You'll need to find out how to measure impact and how to monitor this in the short and long-term. To understand the effects of new initiatives, work with the governing board and senior leadership team to ensure an **evaluation** structure is in

place and agree on how often you and your colleagues will review progress. Regular audits by governors will push leadership, staff, and learners to **strive for better**.

Remember, you're not only examining educational quality for learners but also looking at their wellbeing, behaviour, and attendance. This will require **empathy**, an adequate understanding of different personal contexts and engagement with parents and carers.

Governors must be prepared to **challenge** the senior leadership if the partnership is to be effective. This means questioning decisions, outcomes and identifying where improvements can be made. It might lead to having **tough conversations** which are vital for the college's progress, so you must be comfortable with this.

As a school governor, you'll need to adhere to the [Seven Principles of Public Life](#), including objectivity and accountability.

Who can be a governor?

You don't need to be an experienced professional – it's about attitude as well as expertise

Governing boards need skilled people to help them run effectively, but both hard and soft skills are needed around the table. Regardless of where you are in your career or life, the college needs soft skills such as problem solving or negotiation as much as specific expertise.

You don't need to be a parent or teacher

While parents and those with education experience make great governors, neither are requirements to volunteer. Many schools & colleges want an outside perspective and rely on those with business acumen to bring challenge to the board.

Commit the time to the role

Being a school governor is a responsibility – but it comes with rewards. Governors, as an average spend around 7 hours a month on governing duties.