



Being a Staff Governor/Co-opted Governor

Guidance for Members of School Staff

Fundamentally, your role as a member of staff and a governor is no different to that of other governors. You have equal rights and status with all other governors and you are not restricted in your role to matters of staff interest. Being a staff governor involves achieving a delicate balance of roles. Members of school staff can now join governing bodies by two routes; they can be elected by fellow staff members or be appointed as co-opted governors based on their skills. Whether individuals are elected or appointed to either category they do not carry an obligation to express any views apart from their own and do not represent school staff. However, they should report in good faith any widely held staff views even if, in a vote, they decide to vote differently.

The term “staff governor” is used throughout to refer to both elected staff governors and co-opted governors who are staff members.

Staff governors are:

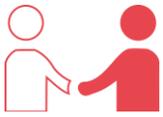
- Representative members of staff rather than representatives of the staff.
- In a position to bring a staff viewpoint and perspective to discussion and debate.
- Individuals who act according to their own conscience. How they vote on any decision is up to them.
- Equal in status to all other governors.
- Expected to follow the appropriate rules of governor protocol and confidentiality.

Staff governors are not:

- Expected to gather the views of other staff and take them to the governing board.
- A go-between or staff delegate, and nor should they act as one.
- Expected to vote as instructed by other members of staff or professional bodies.

How to fulfil your role

- Do not participate in discussions where you have a personal interest in the outcome. Declare an interest if necessary and withdraw from the meeting.
- Do not participate in discussions about colleagues' pay (NB this does not apply to the headteacher who should be involved in discussions about staff pay, but not about his/her own pay).
- Do follow the agreed procedure for putting items on the agenda for governors' meetings.
- Do feel free to express your own personal views, it being recognised that this is not necessarily the view of the majority of staff.
- You do not have a mandate to express any views other than your own; however, you should report in good faith any widely held staff views, even if in a vote you decide to vote differently.
- Try to attend governor training, particularly new governor training.



- Be aware that the headteacher will communicate decisions to staff when appropriate, unless the matter is deemed to be confidential, and that this sharing of information is not your role.
- Comply with the governing board's code of conduct at all times.

Achieving the balance between being an impartial staff governor and regular involvement in day-to-day issues can sometimes be very difficult. Some practical ways to achieve this balance are listed below:

- Never press your own personal agenda at the expense of others.
- Never promise to solve a problem on your own.
- Be wary of bringing an individual issue or grievance to meetings without following agreed procedures.
- Abide by the agreed protocol regarding agenda items, including Any Other Business.
- Keep yourself aware of staff views and concerns.
- Signpost members of staff who raise concerns to the appropriate course of action rather than getting involved in finding a solution.
- Play an active part in governor meetings and attend regularly.
- Share in the wider governor workload.

Conflicts of Interest

All governors have the same rights and responsibilities in respect of attendance at meetings and voting. This includes the obligation to withdraw from a meeting where there is a potential conflict of interest.

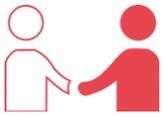
Where one of the following applies, a staff governor must disclose the fact, withdraw from the meeting and not vote on the matter:

- Where there may be a conflict between the staff governor's interests and those of the governing board
- Where a fair hearing is required and there is any reasonable doubt of the ability of the staff governor to act impartially in relation to any matter
- Where a staff governor has a pecuniary interest in any matter to be discussed (see Pecuniary Interest below)

Where there is any dispute as to whether a staff governor should withdraw from a meeting of the school and not vote, this should be determined by the other governors present at the meeting.

A staff governor must not be present during the discussion of or voting on any matter concerned with the pay and appraisal of any staff member, including the headteacher's performance appraisal. A staff governor must always withdraw from any such meeting and this should be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

A staff governor, when exercising their functions, must act with integrity, objectivity and honesty in the best interests of the school, and be open about the decisions they make and the actions they take. In particular they should be prepared to explain their decisions and actions to interested persons.



In common with the other members of the governing board, a staff governor must not disclose material relating to:

- A named teacher or another person employed or engaged, or proposed to be employed or engaged, at the school.
- A named pupil at, or candidate for admission to, the school.
- Any matter which by reason of its nature, the governing board or a committee of the governing board are satisfied should remain confidential.

It is strongly advised that very careful consideration be given to the issue of staff governors being members of the selection panel for a new headteacher or deputy headteacher. Whilst the law does not exclude staff governors from being part of the selection panel, good practice suggests that there are too many instances where a conflict of interest might arise to make participation advisable.

Exceptions to the Rule

There are two restrictions relating to staff governors that result from their status as employees of the school.

- A staff governor or co-opted governor who is a member of staff may not be chair or vice-chair of the governing board.
- A staff governor or co-opted governor who is a member of staff may not be present in a meeting where consideration is being given to the pay or performance of any person employed at the school. The exception to this is the headteacher, but he/she must be excluded during discussion relating to his/her pay or performance.