

18<sup>th</sup> September 2019

Dear Parent/Carer

## **ELECTION OF PARENT GOVERNORS**

There are two vacancies for parent governors on the school's governing body. Governors make extremely valuable contributions in determining school policy. All parents are eligible and we appreciate the varied input they offer, from support in making financial decisions to interviewing candidates for posts within school. If you would like to stand for election please complete and return the attached form to the school office by **9.00am on Monday 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019**.

We have attached some information about being a governor to this letter and also a supporting letter from our Chair of Governors.

You will need to ask another parent/carers of a pupil at the school to sign the form.

Please be aware that regulations require everyone elected or appointed to a governing body to undergo a pre-appointment check which may include a criminal background check. This is to ensure the safety of the pupils. If you are elected and you subsequently decline to undergo such a check, you will disqualify yourself.

Please give brief details about yourself (**not more than 80 words**) on the form. If an election is needed these details will be copied and sent to all parents/carers with the ballot papers. **Please note that the 80 word limit will be strictly enforced. Any statement with more than 80 words will be returned to the candidate for amendment.**

If the number of nominations is the same as or less than the number of vacancies, then the people nominated will be deemed elected unopposed. If there are not enough nominations, the governing body has the duty to appoint parent governors to fill the remaining vacancies.

The governing body has determined that the term of office for a parent governor is four years. If you are elected you may serve the full term of office even if your child leaves the school before your term of office finishes. The governing body has also decided that all governors will be members of the Academy Trust and be involved in all strategic decision making at this level.

If an election is necessary we will send you a ballot paper during the week commencing 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019.

Only parents/carers of children registered at the school are entitled to stand or vote in the election. A parent/carers who is paid to work at the school for more than 500 hours in a school year or is an elected member of the LA may **not stand** for election.

Each parent/carers will be sent one ballot paper regardless of how many children they have at the school, and each parent/carers will have one vote per vacancy. The ballot will be secret and you will be notified of the result as soon as possible afterwards.

In most cases it will be obvious whether you are a parent/carers. For the purpose of the election of a parent governor, a parent is:

- someone who has parental responsibility\* **or**
- someone who looks after the child on a day-to-day basis (but does not have “parental responsibility”).

\*A person has ‘parental responsibility’ if

- a. she is the child’s natural mother; **or**
- b. he is the child’s natural father and **either** was married to the mother on the day of the child’s birth or subsequently **or** has entered into a legal parental responsibility agreement with the mother **or** has been granted a residence order from the court directing the child will live with him **or** registered or re-registered the child's birth after 1 December 2003 **or**
- c. the child lives with that person as the result of a court order. If you have any questions about whether you are eligible to stand or vote in the election or about anything else in this letter, please contact me.

We look forward to receiving your nominations.

Yours sincerely

Ms T Nickson and Mr A Wood  
Co-Headteachers

## GOVERNOR NOMINATION FORM

Your name

(Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Dr)

Address

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Name of child

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I have a child at the school and hereby nominate myself for election as a governor. I understand that if elected I will have to undergo a pre-appointment check. Biographical details (**80 words maximum**) for circulation with the voting paper are given below.

Signature

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Seconded\* by:

(Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms/Dr)

Address

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Name of child

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Signature

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\*The seconder must be a parent/carer of a pupil at the school.

Biographical details (80 words maximum):

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Your completed nomination form must be returned to the school office by:

Date: Monday 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019 Time: 9.00am

## Letter from Chair of Governors

Dear Parents and Carers,

In their application for Academy status the Governing Body of Bishop's Hatfield Girls' School agreed that all governors will be members of the Academy Trust thus ensuring that there was maximum involvement in key strategic decision-making. Parent Governors play an important part on the Governing Body and will also do so on the Trust.

We are looking forward to welcoming new Parent Governors (Trustees) who support the ethos of the school and will work with us to maintain the school's reputation. The Governing Body should reflect the whole school community so your ideas and experience will add to our existing expertise. We value any input you can give us, especially if relevant to one of our two sub-committees – Curriculum & Standards and Finance & Resources. Specific experience is always useful but a genuine interest can be as valuable.

Parent Governors are elected for a four year term. If you feel you have the commitment to attend regular meetings, make visits to school and represent the views of BHGS parents and carers on the Governing Body please put your name forward. To help you make up your mind you can meet with some of our members to find out more about being a BHGS governor; please contact the school if you would like such a meeting.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Susan E. Jones".

Mrs Susan E Jones

Chair of Governors

# Categories and roles of school governors

## Background

School governors are the country's largest voluntary group with around 300,000 contributing to strategic development and raising standards of achievement at more than 30,000 schools.

School governors are members of their school's governing body, which is known as a 'corporate body'. A corporate body has a legal identity that is separate from its members and as a result, individual governors are generally protected from personal liability as a result of the governing body's decisions and actions provided they act honestly, reasonably and in good faith.

Individual governors have no power or right to act on behalf of the governing body except where the whole governing body has delegated a specific function to that individual or where regulations specify a function is to be exercised in a particular way.

School governors are drawn from different parts of the community and can be parents/carers and staff or from the LA, the community and other groups. This helps ensure the governing body has sufficient diversity of views and experience but does not mean governors of a particular category represent that group on the governing body. For example, parent governors do not represent the parents at the school and do not report back to them.

## Responsibilities

The governing body has a range of duties and powers and a general responsibility for the conduct of the school with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement. Its responsibilities include but are not limited to:

- setting targets for pupil achievement
- managing the school's finances
- making sure the curriculum is balanced and broadly based
- appointing staff
- reviewing staff performance and pay.

The governing body has considerable discretion as to how to discharge its responsibilities but is required to constitute itself in line with the regulations and to appoint a chair and vice chair. The governing body may delegate certain of its responsibilities to certain governors or committees of governors, although in general, it is not compelled to do so.

## Roles and actions

There are a range of roles and actions the governing body or individual governors need to consider:

- Constitution of the governing body – the governing body must be constituted in line with the School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2003. These regulations cover the number and type (category) of governors that make up the governing body.
- Terms of reference of the governing body – more information can be found on the Department for Education website or on [www.governor.net.co.uk](http://www.governor.net.co.uk) about the different

categories, roles and committees that can be involved with being a governor. In brief, the different categories are:

1. parent governors: selected by election (or appointment if insufficient people stand for election) and drawn from parents and carers of children at the school
  2. staff governors: selected by election from teaching and support staff paid to work at the school
  3. community governors: appointed by the governing body to represent community interests
  4. associate members (not governors): appointed by the governing body to attend committee meetings and/or full governing body meetings due to their particular skills or experience.
- Roles of governor – the governing body must appoint a chair and vice-chair and may wish to make a number of other specific appointments to lead on certain aspects of the school.
  - Committees of the governing body – the governing body can delegate certain of its responsibilities to committees or individual governors. At BHGS we have two committees:
1. Curriculum & Standards
  2. Finance & Resources

Further information and reading can be found on the National Governors' Association website.

## Specific roles within the governing body

**All of the below guidelines and information can be adapted for other specific roles e.g. curriculum area governor, health and safety governor, inclusion governor etc.**

### Example 1 - What is a training link governor?

Although not a statutory requirement, most governing bodies have a link governor to advise their governing body of training opportunities available and on topical developments within governance. Generally, you may be responsible for:

- helping the governing body identify its training needs;
- encouraging individual governors to attend training courses and report back to the governing body;
- providing relevant information to the governing body about training matters;
- helping new governors settle in and make them aware of training opportunities provided by the LA and others;
- encouraging all governors to become involved in the work of the governing body and the school.

### Example 2 - What is a curriculum area link governor?

The term "link governor" is also used for specific subjects e.g. English, Maths, RS, SEND, etc. Again, these are not statutory requirements, but are good practice.

It is of course, a matter for each governing body and Headteacher to plan its own guidelines on the role that it expects the "specific subject" link governor to undertake. A good working relationship between the subject specialist within the school and the subject link governor will enhance the success of this initiative.

As a model, the subject link governor, in support of the subject co-ordinator or head of subject, could undertake some or all of the following:

- Become informed about relevant documents and legislation; OfSTED criteria for evaluating the subject provision; local and national issues impacting upon the subject;
- Liaise with the subject coordinator or head of subject to become informed about staffing arrangements and training; the condition and availability of resources; curriculum and timetable arrangements; special educational needs and disabilities provision; reference to the school improvement plan; assessment and recording procedures for the subject; which visits and visitors are planned;
- Establish and maintain effective lines of communication between the subject co-ordinator and the governing body; report back to governing body meetings;
- Help to keep parents informed via the school prospectus, newsletter and meetings.

### Example 3 - What could the role of an SEND governor entail?

Being a special educational needs and disabilities governor is about doing your best to make sure pupils with SEND get the help they need to access the curriculum and to participate fully in the life of the school. As an SEND governor, you are the link between the governing body and the school in relation to pupils with SEND. It's your role to help raise awareness of SEND issues at governing body meetings and give up-to-date information on SEND provision within the school. You also help review the school's policy on provision for pupils with SEND and ensure that parents have confidence in this provision.

There's certain basic information that every SEND governor should know:

- how the school identifies children with SEND - make sure you understand how the school identifies a pupil with SEND and what happens once a pupil has been identified;
- the school's SEND policy - you should know your school's policy on SEND and make sure it's reviewed regularly. Regular reviews are vital to ensure that the SEND provision reflects the changing needs of the school, its circumstances, and the law; and
- develop good relationships in the school - developing good relationships with the key people involved in the school is essential. It's particularly important to get to know the head and the SEND coordinator (SENDCO).

### Good practice checklist

- Arrange class visits with the head/SENDCO to gain an understanding of how your school delivers SEND provision.
- Set up regular meetings with the SENDCO.
- Attend governing body meetings and take a central role in discussions about SEND.
- Visit the school as often as you need to, staying informed and attending LA training for SEND governors.
- Find out what links your school has with other local schools, SEND support services and parents.