

INFORMATION FOR PROSPECTIVE GOVERNORS

A copy of this document will be made available to all prospective governors of Dean Valley Community Primary School prior to them agreeing to take up the role. Those identified in this document for dealing with vacancies shall ensure that prospective governors see this document.

Governing Bodies of Schools

All schools have a governing body whose job it is to work with the headteacher, and the local education authority, to ensure that the pupils receive the best possible education at that establishment.

Governing bodies vary in size from 10 - 21 or more depending on the number of pupils in the school and the type of school, but they all have the same requirement - to work together with the headteacher in agreeing the aims and conduct of the school, ensuring that the pupils have a full entitlement to the agreed curriculum and managing the school within its allocated budget.

There are regulations within which the governing body must work. These are laid down by central government (Education Acts and Regulations) and the local authority (Instruments of Government and Schemes of Financial Management).

Principles of Working as a Governor and as a Governing Body

Governors, once elected or appointed, are holders of public office, and should be prepared to work to the same principles as any paid public official. This is true both as an individual and as a whole governing body.

Selflessness

Holders of public office should take decisions 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 obligations to outside individuals or organisations that might 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 this. They must comply with the requirements of the Data Protection Act.

Honesty

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interest 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.

(The Seven Principles of Public Life from the *Second Report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life* - The Nolan Committee CM3270 - 1 May 1996)

Responsibilities of school governors

Governors are appointed or elected to provide:

- strong links between the school and the community it serves;
- a wide experience of the outside world;
- an independent view;
- a visible form of accountability for the headteacher and staff of the school;
- a team focusing on long term development and improvement;
- accountability to the community for the:
 - the overall performance of the school
 - use of resources
 - the standards of teaching and learning in the school;
- support for the headteacher and staff.

Governing bodies are the strategic planners of schools

In order to do this a governing body

- employs others to carry out the work;
- has an operational manager (the headteacher) who is responsible for the day to day management of the school;
- agrees policies and practice which allows the headteacher the necessary tools to carry out his/her responsibilities;
- agrees principles and targets for improvement;
- acts as the critical friend of the school and headteacher;
- receives and reviews reports on the resulting practice and conduct of the school;
- reviews its own working practices.

Decisions of the governing body are made in formal meetings, either with the full governing body, or in committees if their terms of reference allow.

All governing bodies have committees which

- carry out tasks specifically given to them by the governing body
- aid the work of the governing body
- report back to the governing body

The number of committees depends on the governing body and its needs.

All governors share the responsibilities and work as a team

- Individuals are part of the corporate governing body
- Duties are carried out as part of the team
- Governors are not legally liable as individuals.

Qualifications needed to become a governor

There are no formal qualifications required to become a school governor however all governors need to be able to offer the following skills and qualities

- time (see Governors' work-load below)
- commitment
- a willingness to learn
- to communicate efficiently and effectively
- to listen
- the ability to assimilate and evaluate information, make judgements and take decisions
- flexibility
- tact
- ability to work as part of a team

Some prospective governors have skills and expertise that are valuable in running a school e.g. in finance or human resources. They will be encouraged to give the school the benefit of their special expertise once in office by participating in appropriate committees.

There are certain disqualifications from being a school governor and all applicants for appointment or election must sign a declaration stating that they are not disqualified. In addition all governors have to sign a declaration of interests at the beginning of each school year.

Membership of the governing body at Dean Valley Community Primary School

The Dean Valley CP School Instrument of Government became effective on 1 September 2004, it designates that Dean Valley shall have 12 Governors. Details of the structure and membership of the Governing Body and its committees is maintained on the school's web site at

<http://www.deanvalley.school.cheshire.org.uk/staff/governors.htm>

Governing body meetings

The Full Governing Body (FGB) is required to meet at least three times a year – once per term. However additional meetings may be called if considered

necessary. The chairman and deputy are elected by the governors. They can be elected to serve from one to four years.

Regular meeting dates for the full governing body are usually set for each academic year before the start of that year. Minutes for the termly formal meetings are taken by the professional Clerk to the governors. Minutes for the informal meetings are recorded by a governor appointed at the meeting.

The five Committees (Finance, Curriculum, Personnel, Health & Safety / Buildings & Lettings and Marketing) meet on an ad hoc basis as their workload requires. Each committee has terms of reference that are approved by the FGB annually. The committees are responsible for recording meeting minutes themselves.

Governors' work-load

Governors should expect to spend at least 20 hours a term attending meetings, reading papers, visiting school, attending training courses and writing reports. However some of the governors of Dean Valley find that their role takes up much more of their time than this.

All governors are expected to:

- attend the formal and informal meetings of the full governing body;
- attend the regular and special meetings of at least two of the committees;
- work as a member of the governing body (not as an individual) in the best interests of the school;
- show an interest in school activities;
- become well-informed about education in general and about their school in particular;
- become familiar with the rules of school governance;
- attend necessary training courses.

Individual governors will may be involved in some of the following activities:

- staff appointments;
- the financial management of the school;
- pupil & staff discipline;
- child protection and Special Educational Needs;
- performance management of the headteacher;
- the curriculum & policies;
- the training of governors.

Vacancies

Vacancies for:

- Community Governors are dealt with by the Chair of Governors.
- Staff governors are announced to all staff by the headteacher.
- Parent governors are announced to parents via a letter from the headteacher, which is sent home with each child.
- LA governors are dealt with by the local authority.