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**Being a Governor** is a highly rewarding way of making a voluntary contribution to the lives of local young people. Governors work in partnership with the headteacher and Local Authority. Their duties are wide-ranging and include agreeing the School Improvement Plan, deciding how the school budget will be set, monitoring pupil progress and attainment, recruiting teachers and staff and agreeing school policies.

Training is available to support and develop both new and experienced Governors.

**What is a School Governor?**

School governors also known as ‘trustees’ can essentially be defined as overseers of schools. They work alongside the headteacher and senior leaders to ensure that the school is running effectively, and are accountable to parents, the local community, and the local authority for this.

Governors are useful because they are independent from the day to day running of the school, and therefore give an outside perspective on issues. Ideally, the governing board will be as diverse as possible, so that everyone has different skills, knowledge, and experience to contribute to discussions. For this reason, the board usually contains the school’s headteacher, members of the local authority, and parents. Parents often have specialist knowledge of another sector from their full time job. Those working in finance, HR, law, or premises management are often particularly useful governors.

Additionally, teachers can become governors, bringing with them their passion for education and invaluable understanding of the effects that governing board decisions could have on the school.

It is usually preferable for teachers to be on the board of a school other than the one that they work at due to the obligation for governors to be objective at all times but it is possible to join the governing board of your own school.

It is important to note that anyone over the age of 18 can be a governor. There is no Requirement for specialist knowledge, nor knowledge of the education sector you just need to be committed to your role, and to have time to contribute. You will usually commit five to eight hours of your time per month to the role, over a term of four years. However, as a volunteer, you can choose to resign before the term is finished, or to serve multiple terms.

No matter their background, all governors have the same roles and responsibilities once they join the board.

**What Do School Governors Do?**

As a governor, your responsibilities would be split into four main categories:

**Finance.**

The governing board has to set the annual budget for the school and determine how it will be spent, as well as the three year financial plan. This means that you should be able to prioritise where the money should go first, as well as in the long term.

**Educational performance.**

You would be responsible for ensuring that the school’s agreed curriculum is being taught well, and deciding how the school could encourage students’ spiritual, moral, and cultural development. Besides this, you will hold the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the students. Any education issues for example, ensuring that the school provides adequate support for disadvantaged students or those with special needs should be addressed in your meetings.

**Strategy.**

The board sets the aims and objectives for the school, and works out how the school will achieve them for example, by setting targets to be hit. These aims are determined as a group, and everyone should agree with them, so that everyone is motivated to work together to achieve them.

**Management.**

One of your most important responsibilities would be to look after the wellbeing of the headteacher, providing support to them (such as ensuring that their workload is manageable, and defending their decisions when necessary), but also challenging them if they are not performing as they should be, not being transparent, or are making questionable decisions. You would also help to appoint senior leaders in the school (including the headteacher), performance review them, and make decisions about pay. In cases of staff disciplinary action or student exclusions, you would sit on a panel to come to a conclusion.

Overall, the role of a governor can be described as monitoring and evaluating the progress of the school. This involves being curious, critical, and confident in asking difficult questions. As a governor, you should be good at problem solving, and prepared to give and take advice. You must also be professional many of your decisions will be made in strict confidence.