

Information for Prospective Governors

This document gives an overview of governor's responsibilities, what governors are expected to do, what Parsonage Farm hopes you will get from being a governor, and what we hope you will be able to offer. The end of the document provides key information of how the Governors work at Parsonage Farm.

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 head teacher) who is responsible for the day to day management of the school
- agrees policies and practice which allows the head teacher the necessary tools to carry out his/her responsibilities
- agrees principles and targets for improvement
- acts as the critical friend of the school and head teacher
- receives and discusses 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 Focus Groups within their terms of reference

Responsibilities: Governors are appointed to provide

- a further focus on ensuring the best possible support is provided by the school to all of its pupils
- 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 head teacher and staff of the school
- a team focusing on long term development and improvement
- accountability to the community for the use of resources and the standards of teaching and learning in the school
- support for the head teacher and staff.

School governors are expected to

- attend the regular and special meetings of the governing body - this must be at least one meeting each term
- 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.

What we hope you will get out of being a governor

- the knowledge that you are helping schools and pupils.
- the satisfaction of giving something back to the community
- a sense of purpose and achievement
- new skills which may be useful elsewhere
- broader horizons

- new friends and workmates
- training and support in order to help you fulfil your duties and responsibilities

What we hope you will be able to offer

- time (research shows that most governors give about 20 hours per term to meetings, reading documents, visiting the school and attending training)
- commitment
- a willingness to learn
- a listening ear
- the ability to assimilate information, make judgements and take decisions
- flexibility
- tact
- ability to work as part of a team

How Governing Bodies work

Parsonage Farm Focus groups carry out tasks specifically given to them by the governing body, to aid the work of the governing body and report back to the governing body.

At Parsonage Farm

- The Governing team are enthusiastic and have an understanding of their shared duties and responsibilities, while ensuring that the experience is enjoyable.
- You do not require any previous experience of the education system to make a valuable contribution to the team
- We operate a policy of “there is no such thing as a silly question”. It is essential that as a Governing Body we achieve consensus with the decisions being made and the reason behind them.
- The content of our meetings is confidential. Decisions are reached by consensus and in terms of the public interest. This is critical to the working and accountability of the Governing team, and should be applied to all matters arising in your role as a Governor.
- In terms of meetings we have:
 - Full Governor Body meetings – 2 per term, (evening)
 - Focus Group meetings – 2 per term for each (evening) – there are three Focus Groups
- Agendas and relevant documents are sent out well before the meetings so that all attendees can read and digest them prior to the meeting.
- Decisions made by the group should be abided by and supported, even if you disagreed with the final approach during the discussion part of the decision making process. In this case, majority rules apply.
- In addition, to support your learning and monitoring of standards about the school, and the role of governing, there are opportunities to
 - undertake at least one Governor school visit per year
 - attend Governor training courses
 - attend at least one school event in as a Governor (play, assembly, etc)

Don't worry, you are not expected to attend all focus groups and if for some reason you cannot attend a particular meeting or event - that is fine. We work as a team to cover all of the things we need to do and understand that we all have busy lives outside of being Governors.