

### What does a school governor do?

Governors are responsible for overseeing the management side of a school: strategy, policy, budgeting and staffing. They enable their school to run as effectively as possible, working alongside senior leaders and supporting teachers to provide excellent education to children.

Being a school governor is a commitment to attending governing body meetings which consider issues such as setting the school vision, mitigating financial risk and scrutinising educational outcomes. They are also involved in the school community, acting as critical friends to the headteacher and senior leaders.

Governors bring a wide range of skills and expertise from their professional lives to the governing board and schools benefit greatly from working with skilled volunteers, for example anyone with experience of finance, law, premises management or human resources. A governor with business know-how can transform the running of a school.

### Role purpose

Governors work together to carry out their core functions:

1. ensuring there is clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
2. holding senior leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils and the performance management of staff
3. overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent

The BUC Education Department also recognises the following as the fourth core function of governance:

4. ensuring the voices of stakeholders are heard.

Governors must also ensure that the governing body complies with all legal and statutory requirements. Governors should seek the advice of the clerk to the governing board and other professional advice as appropriate.

### Governing body strategic responsibilities

Governing bodies work closely with headteachers and senior leaders. Headteachers are responsible for day-to-day management whereas the role of the governing body is strategic. As such, governors are responsible for:

- ensuring that the Seventh-day Adventist ethos of the school is maintained and observed, both on a day-to-day basis; is integrated into the school curriculum, policies and operations (including all appropriate Christian festivals/celebrations/weeks of emphasis).
- determining the mission, values and long-term ambitious vision for the school
- deciding the principles that guide school policies and approving key policies
- working with senior leaders to develop a strategy for achieving the vision

- ensuring that RE and Collective worship is delivered in accordance with the Education Reform Act 1988 and the school's Instrument of Government.
- ensuring that parents, pupils, staff and the wider community are involved, consulted and informed as appropriate
- ensuring that all pupils have access to a broad and balanced curriculum such that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education and adult life
- setting the school's budget and ensuring it is managed effectively together with premises and other resources
- agreeing the school's staffing structure and keeping it under review to ensure it supports delivery of the strategy
- ensuring robust risk management procedures are in place and that risk control measures are appropriate and effective

### **Monitoring and evaluating school performance**

Governors must monitor the priorities that have been set to ensure progress is being made by:

- measuring the school's impact and progress towards its strategic objectives
- ensuring the required policies and procedures are in place and the school is operating effectively in line with these policies
- evaluating relevant data and feedback provided by school leaders and external reporting on all aspects of school performance
- asking challenging questions of school leaders in order to hold them to account
- holding the headteacher to account for standards, financial probity and compliance with agreed policies
- visiting the school to monitor implementation of the strategy and reporting back to the board (this could be in a link governor capacity)
- ensuring that there are policies and procedures in place to deal with complaints effectively

### **Panels and committees**

When required, governors are expected to serve on panels or committees in order to:

- appoint the headteacher and other senior leaders
- appraise the headteacher and make pay recommendations
- hear staff grievances and disciplinary matters
- review decisions to exclude pupils
- deal with formal complaints

### **Contribution to the governing body**

Governors should ensure that they are making a positive and meaningful contribution to the governing body by:

- attending meetings (a minimum of 3 full governing board meetings and a number of committee meetings each year), reading papers and preparing questions for senior leaders in advance
- establishing and maintaining professional relationships with senior leaders and colleagues on the board
- getting to know the school, including visiting the school occasionally during school hours
- undertaking induction training and developing knowledge and skills on an ongoing basis

## Commitment involved

### Term of Office

Most governor appointments are for a term of four years.

### Travel

You decide the time period you are prepared to travel to and from the school. This could be up to 30 or 60 minutes, or more on occasion. Some committee meetings may be held virtually.

### Liability

Governors are not individually liable. Liability is collective and held by the governing body as a whole.

### Time per month

Governors are expected to attend 3 full governing body and 3 committee meetings per year at a minimum. The preparation, participation and travel for these meetings, and training, will comprise 4-5 hours a month for 9 months of the year, mainly in the evenings. Other involvement such as ad hoc panels and learning walks are not compulsory to attend, but we would strongly recommend you attend as many as possible to maximise your impact as a school governor.

### Training

All our schools have membership to **The Key for School Governors**. This is an online service that provides access to high-quality, context-rich practical guidance, resources and CPD for all governors.