

THE ROLE OF A Parent Governor

The role of a parent governor is to bring a valuable parental perspective to the governing board, ensuring the school provides the best possible education for all pupils. By serving as a parent governor, you can make a meaningful impact on the school's success and contribute to the well-being and development of the entire school community.

Parents play an essential role on governing boards, offering diverse viewpoints and experiences that enrich discussions. Having a child at the school provides unique knowledge and insights that others without this experience may not possess, making their contributions especially impactful.

Qualities Of Effective Parent Governors

Effective parent governors excel by demonstrating the following qualities:

- **Dedication:** Displaying strong commitment to the role by actively engaging and investing time and effort to benefit the school and its community.
- **Effective Communication:** Communicating clearly, respectfully, and constructively to build trust and collaboration with governors, staff, and parents.
- **Understanding of the School:** Gaining insight into the school's culture, strengths, and areas for improvement to contribute meaningfully to its development.
- **Impartiality and Objectivity:** Maintaining a balanced and fair approach to provide constructive challenge and support to school leaders, always acting in the best interest of the entire school community.
- **Teamwork:** Collaborating effectively with others to foster a unified approach to school improvement.
- **Critical Thinking and Problem-Solving:** Analysing situations, asking thoughtful questions, and proposing practical solutions to address challenges within the school.
- **Advocacy for All Students:** Representing and prioritising the needs of all pupils, ensuring that decisions are inclusive and equitable.

Additional Considerations For Parent Governors

- **Handling Complaints:** While parents may approach you with concerns, it is not the role of a parent governor to resolve individual issues or bring them to the Board. Direct parents to the school's complaints procedure and refrain from making promises to investigate matters personally. Additionally, avoid raising issues related to your own child or personal experiences, as this may conflict with your role as a governor.
- **Conflicts of Interest:** Parent governors should declare any potential conflict of interest and recuse themselves from discussions where outcomes might directly affect them or their child, such as changes to after-school provisions they currently use.
- **Advocating for the School:** As a member of the school's leadership, parent governors are expected to act in alignment with leadership responsibilities, reflecting professionalism and advocacy for the school.

- **Use of social media:** Being part of the school's leadership extends to conduct outside of school, including social media. Parent governors are expected to maintain professionalism and act as leaders in their online presence

How To Challenge Constructively

Challenging school leaders requires a balance of tact, respect, and a shared focus on the school's best interests. Here are key strategies to approach this effectively:

1. **Use Data and Evidence:** Ground your challenges in reliable data, such as specific statistics, inspection reports, or performance trends. Evidence-based concerns lend credibility and objectivity to your input.
2. **Ask Open-Ended Questions:** Foster discussion by framing your questions to encourage reflection. For instance, replace "Why did this fail?" with "Can you explain the factors that contributed to this outcome?" This approach invites collaboration.
3. **Be Specific and Clear:** Articulate your concerns with precision, focusing on specific issues. Avoid generalizations or vague remarks to prevent misunderstandings or defensiveness.
4. **Stay Focused on the Issue:** Keep the conversation professional by addressing the matter at hand, avoiding personal remarks. This ensures discussions remain constructive and goal-oriented.
5. **Provide Constructive Feedback:** Frame feedback positively and suggest actionable solutions. For example, "Our reading scores have dropped. What strategies could we explore to address this?" demonstrates a collaborative mindset.
6. **Seek Understanding:** Strive to understand the context behind decisions by listening to the headteacher's perspective. A balanced approach fosters productive exchanges and mutual respect.
7. **Offer Support:** Highlight your willingness to contribute to solutions. Frame your input as a collaborative effort aimed at supporting school improvement, which helps build trust and teamwork.

Example Questions To Challenge School Leaders

1. "Can you walk us through the reasoning behind this decision and the expected outcomes?"
2. "What measures are being put in place to address the recent dip in student performance?"
3. "How are we ensuring that our policies are being implemented effectively across all departments?"
4. "Can you provide an update on the progress of our school improvement plan and any areas of concern?"
5. "What steps are being taken to address disparities in student achievement across different groups?"
6. "How are staff being supported and developed to improve teaching and learning outcomes?"
7. "How do we measure the impact of new initiatives, and how often are these evaluations conducted?"
8. "What provisions are in place to support the mental health and well-being of both students and staff?"

Training Resources

[The Thinking Schools Academy Trust, what is a Thinking School – Stuart Gardner](#)

[The parent governor role | National Governance Association](#)

[Parent governor/trustee | GovernorHub](#)

Useful Resources

[Diversity and Inclusion in Schools](#)

[DFE: Governance of the Trust](#)

[TSAT Scheme of Delegation](#)

If you would like independent advice on how to effectively raise an issue in a meeting or navigate the responsibilities of a parent governor, you are encouraged to contact the Governance team:

- South Region- Jen Coates- Jennifer.Coates@tsatrust.org.uk
- South East Region- Kirsty Hughes Kirsty.Hughes@tsatrust.org.uk
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This guidance should be read in conjunction with the Governors Handbook for comprehensive support in your role.