

# The parent governor role

## Guidance for governing boards in schools and trusts

Becoming a parent governor is a rewarding opportunity to give back to your local community and use your skills and experience to ensure that pupils get the best possible education.

### Who can be a parent governor?

#### In maintained schools:

- Maintained school governing bodies have at least two parent governors who are [elected](#) by other parents.
- Parents cannot stand for election as a governor if they are an elected member of the local authority or have been paid to work at the school for more than 500 hours in the last year.

#### In academy trusts:

- Academy trust articles require at least two parent trustees or at least two parent governors on each local academy committee.
- In most cases, multi academy trusts choose to elect parent governors at local academy level (rather than parent trustees), helping to support the [local tier's](#) stakeholder engagement function.
- Eligibility criteria are set out in the trust's articles of association.

### Parent governor responsibilities

The role of a parent governor is no different to any other governor. Governing boards make strategic decisions and work together to:

- develop a vision and strategy for the school
- oversee financial performance and make sure money is well spent
- hold the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school
- engage with pupils, staff, parents and the wider school community to understand their views

Once elected, parent governors should make use of the induction training on offer as this will explain parent governor duties, responsibilities and expectations in detail.

[NCA members](#) also have unlimited access to our guidance, tools and resources to support effective governance. We provide [model role descriptions](#) for governors, trustees and local governors.

## Offering a parent’s perspective

Parent governors offer a parental perspective to issues being discussed; however, they are **not expected to represent the parent body or act as a spokesperson**.

Bringing a parent’s perspective to the board is important but should not be confused with the board’s overall responsibility to engage with parents as a collective. Our [parental engagement guidance](#) explains this responsibility and sets out mechanisms for meaningful engagement.

## Providing effective support and challenge

Parent governors need to remain impartial, especially when posing [challenging questions](#) to school leaders.

For example, if school uniform is discussed at a governing board meeting, parent governors may have opinions based on personal experience but should ensure their questions remain objective.

Rather than stating:

***“I’ve spoken to other parents, and we all agree that the uniform policy shouldn’t change”.***

A parent governor might instead ask:

***“Have parents been consulted on proposed uniform changes?”***

***“What opportunities are there to minimise the cost of this change to parents?”***

While all parents are concerned with their own child’s best interests, governors must make strategic decisions that are in the best interests of the whole school community – governing boards work as a team to make collective decisions.

For example, if data indicates that pupil progress is falling behind expectations in a specific year group, it is appropriate to raise this in board meetings.

Ask: ***“What support is in place to ensure all pupils make good progress?”***

Avoid asking: ***“What are you going to do to support my child to catch up?”***

It is important to keep governing board matters confidential. Parent governors should avoid sharing concerns away from the board meeting or discussing with other parents. Instead, it may be helpful to discuss any issues with the [governing board’s chair](#).

## Managing complaints

Governors may be approached by parents wishing to raise a complaint. However, it is not the parent governor's role to attempt to resolve individual issues. Instead, they should direct parents to the school's [complaints procedure](#) and avoid making promises to investigate the issue.

Similarly, if parent governors have concerns relating to their own child, they should use the school communication channels available to all parents and follow the complaints procedure where appropriate. Parent governors should not attempt to bring individual cases to the board.

View our guidance on [managing complaints](#).

## Dealing with conflicts of interest

All governors must [declare business or personal interests](#) that might affect their ability to make impartial decisions.

Parent governors may need to declare an interest and remove themselves from a meeting where the outcome of a decision could **directly** affect them or their child – for example, changes to after-school provision that the parent currently uses.

### New to governance?

- Find out more about [becoming a governor or trustee](#) and the work of governing boards.
- [Explore NGA membership](#) and the support we offer governors and trustees.
- Access [induction training and resources](#) for your governance role.