

Guidelines for the Election of Parent Governors

The appropriate authority

Gloucestershire County Council is the appropriate authority with regard to the election arrangements for parent governors in community, community special and voluntary controlled schools. The County Council has delegated that responsibility to the head teacher. In voluntary aided, foundation and foundation special schools, the appropriate authority is the governing body.

Who can stand as and vote for parent governors?

The definition of a parent in education legislation includes:

- all natural parents whether they are married or not;
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person and;
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person.

And

- has a child on roll at the time of election.

Further guidance on the definitions of parent, parental responsibility and care of a child or young person can be obtained from the Governor Services Team on (01452) 425313/425846/425113.

Parent governors generally serve for four years unless the governing body has registered a variation to this in an Instrument of Government under the School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2003.

Summary of Disqualification Regulations

A person is disqualified from becoming a governor if he or she:

- is detained under the [Mental Health Act 1983](#) during his or her period of office;
- fails to attend the governing body meetings – without the consent of the governing body – for a continuous period of six months, beginning with the date of the first meeting missed (not applicable to ex officio governors);
- is subject to a bankruptcy restriction order or an interim order;
- has had their estate sequestrated and the sequestration order has not been discharged, annulled or reduced;
- is subject to:
 - i) a disqualification order or disqualification undertaking under the Company Directors Act 1986
 - ii) a disqualification order under Part 2 of the [Companies \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1989](#)
 - iii) a disqualification undertaking accepted under the [Company Directors Disqualification \(Northern Ireland\) Order 2002](#)
 - iv) an order made under Section 492(2)(b) of the [Insolvency Act 1986](#) (failure to pay under a County Court administration order);
- has been removed from the office of charity trustee or trustee for a charity by the Charity Commissioners or High Court on grounds of any misconduct or mismanagement, or under [Section 34 of the Charities and Trustees Investment \(Scotland\) Act 2005](#) from participating in the management or control of any body;
- is included in the list of people considered by the Secretary of State as unsuitable to work with children;
- is disqualified from working with children or subject to a direction under [Section 142 of the Education Act 2002](#);
- is disqualified from registration for childminding or providing day care;
- is disqualified from registration under Part 3 of the [Childcare Act 2006](#);

- has received a sentence of imprisonment (whether suspended or not) for a period of not less than three months (without the option of a fine) in the five years before becoming a governor or since becoming a governor;
- has received a prison sentence of two-and-a-half years or more in the 20 years before becoming a governor;
- has at any time received a prison sentence of five years or more;
- has been fined for causing a nuisance or disturbance on school premises during the five years prior to or since appointment or election as a governor;
- refuses to allow an application to the Criminal Records Bureau for a criminal records certificate.

A person is disqualified from election or appointment as a parent governor if they are an elected member of the LA or if they work at the school for more than 500 hours in any school year. In addition a person may not be **appointed** as a parent governor unless they are:

- a parent of a registered pupil at the school, or
- a parent of a former pupil of the school, or
- a parent of a child of or under compulsory school age, (Special Schools only - and with special educational needs for which the school is approved), or
- a parent with experience of educating a child with special education needs - Special Schools only

Full details of the Regulations covering the disqualification criteria can be found in **A Guide to the Law for School Governors 2010**.

Seeking Nominations

As soon as a resignation is received from a parent governor, or at the beginning of the term in which a parent governor's term of office expires, the head teacher shall send a letter to parents inviting nominations for the post. The standard letter (**Appendix A**) covers the information which must be sent to all those believed to have parental responsibility for children at the school.

Where pupils have more than one person with parental responsibility who are living at different addresses, a letter should be sent to each address.

A copy of these notes must be displayed on the school notice board and drawn to the attention of parents in the letter.

Where a vacancy arises at short notice, the letter should be sent as soon as possible. Where this situation arises near the end of the summer term, this process should be delayed until the beginning of the next term.* It is important that all those interested in standing as governors, are aware of the disqualification information (**Appendix B**). If elected it is essential that the necessary information is collected to enable the successful applicant to undergo the vetting process. (**Appendix C**).

**Where an election will take place at the end of the summer term for a start date in the autumn term, parents of pupils entering the school for the first time in the autumn term should also have letters sent to them seeking nominations and parents of pupils due to leave at the end of the term should be excluded.*

Closing date for nominations

The closing date for nominations should be at least six school working days from the date on which letters are distributed. The actual closing date and time should be clearly stated in the letter, as should the date of the proposed ballot (if required).

Number of nominations received

If the number of nominations is equal to, or fewer than the number of vacancies to be filled, a ballot need not be held. The nominee(s) is/are automatically elected unopposed. The head teacher shall notify the successful candidate(s), within three school working days. The head teacher should ensure the successful candidate completes a declaration form (**AOF266**) and should verify his/her identity. The completed form should be passed to the clerk to governors for forwarding to Gloucestershire Governor Services who will ensure a List 99 check is undertaken.

If there are more nominations than there are vacancies, the head teacher shall arrange for a secret ballot to be held.

Appointment of parent governors

If, after seeking nominations from parents of current pupils, vacancies for parent governors still remain, the governing body in accordance with the regulations shall fill these through an appointment process. It is strongly recommended that two attempts are made at running elections to fill the vacancies before looking at appointing parent governors. An alternative standard letter **Appendix D** can be used for this.

All potential appointed parent governors must be shown the disqualification regulations and asked to complete a declaration form. Potential appointed governors should be considered at a full governing body meeting as an item on the agenda. The declaration form will need to be completed by the new governor and given to the clerk who will verify the candidate's identity.

The ballot

The head teacher shall issue ballot papers (**Appendix E**) to all eligible parents as soon as possible after the closing date for the receipt of nominations. At least six school working days should be allowed between the ballot papers being sent out and the last date for their return. The return deadline date and time should be clearly stated on the ballot papers.

The election should be held by secret ballot. Ballot papers themselves should not be signed or the voter identified in any way. They should be printed on paper of a distinctive colour.

Voting

Where parents have more than one child in a school, and bearing in mind that voting is to be on the basis of one vote per parent per vacancy, some system will need to be devised to ensure that no parent receives more than one ballot paper.

The head teacher should arrange to get ballot papers to and from parents by pupil post where possible. Where a pupil does not live with a person who has parental responsibility, or they are absent from school when the ballot papers are issued they will need to be posted or otherwise delivered to the parents.

Ballot papers must be kept unopened and secure until the count.

Candidates have the right to attend the count, and must be advised of the venue, date and time of the count (**see letter in Appendix F**) at the same time as the ballot papers are sent out.

The count

The ballot box shall be opened on the next school working day after the closing date for the return of ballot papers, as notified to the candidates.

The presiding or returning officer shall be the head teacher, or his/her nominee, who will conduct the count.

If there is a tie in the numbers of votes cast, the first step should be to recount the votes. If the votes are still equal for two or more candidates, the presiding officer shall arrange for those candidates to draw lots or toss a coin.

After the election

The head teacher shall notify the result to any candidate not at the count within three school working days (**see letter in Appendix G**). The head teacher should arrange for the successful candidate to complete a declaration form and should also verify the identity of the new governor. This form should be forwarded to the clerk who will inform governor services of the new appointment. All parents shall be notified of the result. An entry in the next school Newsletter or other standard communication will be sufficient. Governors and all members of staff should also be notified.

On receipt of the completed declaration form the County Council will arrange for a List 99 check to be undertaken.

Unsuccessful candidates

Any unsuccessful candidates should be thanked for their interest and encouraged to consider other categories of governorship or vacancies at other schools.

Mr/Mrs A Parent

Parent Governor Vacancies

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

We have a vacancy for a parent governor which we need to fill as soon as possible.

..... School has always aimed for a partnership with parents which undoubtedly brings great benefits to the children. One of the most significant ways you can help in promoting this aim is to volunteer to be a parent governor. The governing body's main tasks are to support the school, ensure that pupils receive high quality education and plan for future development and improvement.

Parent governors are welcomed as valued members of the team and play a vital role in ensuring the governing body is aware of the views of parents and the local community.

We feel sure that there are parents prepared to take on this important role and give their time and commitment to helping us to continue to improve the school's performance.

If you interested on becoming a governor, contact the school office with your nomination (Self nomination is acceptable), which will need to be with the school by 12.00 noon on

The guidelines giving full details about how vacancies are filled, can be seen on the school notice board. You might also like to look at the information for prospective governors on the Gloucestershire County Council website www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/schoolsnet/governors. Please note that for the protection of children all governor appointments are subject to a vetting process and identity check.

If there are more nominations than vacancies, an election will be held on and you will be sent a voting paper. You may return the ballot paper either via your child or by post.

Yours sincerely

Head teacher/Chair of Governors

School

Election of Parent Governors

Nomination Form

Name:

Address:

The above-named has a child at the school, is willing to serve if elected and is hereby nominated to stand for election.

Nominated by*: (Signature, name in capitals and address)

Signature of nominee:

Biographical details for inclusion in ballot paper (maximum 30 words):

N.B. Completed nomination must be returned to the school by

(date).....

***Self nomination is acceptable**

Disqualification Information

Name:
Address:
.....
Postcode:
Telephone Number (Home)
(Work)
School

A governor must be aged 18 or over at the time of their election or appointment and cannot be a registered pupil at the school. A person cannot hold more than one governorship at the same school.

A person is disqualified from holding or from continuing to hold office as a governor if he or she:

- is detained under the [Mental Health Act 1983](#) during his or her period of office;
- fails to attend the governing body meetings – without the consent of the governing body – for a continuous period of six months, beginning with the date of the first meeting missed (not applicable to ex officio governors);
- is subject to a bankruptcy restriction order or an interim order;
- has had their estate sequestrated and the sequestration order has not been discharged, annulled or reduced;
- is subject to:
 - v) a disqualification order or disqualification undertaking under the Company Directors Act 1986
 - vi) a disqualification order under Part 2 of the [Companies \(Northern Ireland\) Order 1989](#)
 - vii) a disqualification undertaking accepted under the [Company Directors Disqualification \(Northern Ireland\) Order 2002](#)
 - viii) an order made under Section 492(2)(b) of the [Insolvency Act 1986](#) (failure to pay under a County Court administration order);
- has been removed from the office of charity trustee or trustee for a charity by the Charity Commissioners or High Court on grounds of any misconduct or mismanagement, or under [Section 34 of the Charities and Trustees Investment \(Scotland\) Act 2005](#) from participating in the management or control of any body;
- is included in the list of people considered by the Secretary of State as unsuitable to work with children;
- is disqualified from working with children or subject to a direction under [Section 142 of the Education Act 2002](#);
- is disqualified from registration for childminding or providing day care;
- is disqualified from registration under Part 3 of the [Childcare Act 2006](#);
- has received a sentence of imprisonment (whether suspended or not) for a period of not less than three months (without the option of a fine) in the five years before becoming a governor or since becoming a governor;
- has received a prison sentence of two-and-a-half years or more in the 20 years before becoming a governor;
- has at any time received a prison sentence of five years or more;
- has been fined for causing a nuisance or disturbance on school premises during the five years prior to or since appointment or election as a governor;
- refuses to allow an application to the Criminal Records Bureau for a criminal records certificate.

I declare that I have read the above disqualification information and that I am not disqualified from serving as a school governor.

Signed Date

Signed . Dated

Print Name

Once completed, this form should be kept at the school

Governor Commencing a Term of Office

GOVERNING BODY:**Personal details: (*Block capitals please*)**

Title: First Name:

Surname:

Address:

.....

Post Code:

Ethnic Background:

Governor Category:

Start Date: End Date:

Replacing (Governor/Vacancy):

Declarations:

I confirm that the above named person has declared their eligibility to serve as a governor and their identity has been confirmed.

Form AOF266 (Declaration of Criminal Offences, Bind-Overs and Cautions) has been issued to be completed and submitted to Gloucestershire Governor Services (*not required for Staff Governors or Governors appointed by Gloucester Diocesan Board of Education or Clifton Diocese*).

Signed: **(Clerk to the Governing Body)**

Date:

After completion, this form should be sent to:

Governor Services Team
Gloucestershire County Council
Shire Hall
Westgate Street
Gloucester GL1 2TP

Tel: (01452) 425313 or 425846

Fax: (01452) 427297

Parent Governor Vacancies

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

We have a vacancy for a parent governor which we need to fill as soon as possible.

We know parents are interested in the education of their children and keen to see that the school provides a challenging education for all the pupils who come here.

We have been disappointed in the past that we have failed to secure sufficient applications from parents to fill our parent vacancies on the governing body. We think this is because many of you have believed there would be others coming forward who are better equipped for the job. We need enthusiasm and a willingness to work as a member of the team far more than any specific knowledge or expertise! Please do not leave it to others.

The governing body of a school is responsible for ensuring that pupils receive high quality education and that the conduct of the school reflects this aim. The governors work as a team with the head teacher in the whole strategic planning and management of the school. Their responsibilities include consideration and agreement of the aims and policies of the school, discussion and approval of the targets for improvement, appointment of staff, setting and monitoring the budget, monitoring the performance of the school and reporting to the parents and community on how they have accomplished their tasks. Governors are the link between the school and the community and representatives of all those with an interest in the well-being and reputation of the school are needed. Parents are very important in keeping the governing body aware of the views of parents and the local community. They are a vital part of our team.

There is first class advice and support available to you and training for your new role at no cost to you.

The chair of the governing body is happy to talk to you if you are interested in being nominated and/or want further information. You might also like to look at the information for prospective governors on the Gloucestershire County Council website www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/schoolsnet/governors. Please note that for the protection of children all governor appointments are subject to a vetting process and identity check.

If you feel you interested in becoming a governor please contact the school office with your nomination (Self nomination is acceptable), which will need to be with the school by 12.00 noon on If there are more nominations than vacancies, we will hold an election and you will be sent a voting paper. You may return the ballot paper either via your child or by post.

The guidelines giving full details about how vacancies are filled, can be seen on the school notice board.

Yours sincerely

Head teacher/Chair of Governor

September 2011

Ballot Paper - Election of Parent Governor

Number of vacancies to be filled (word) at
 School.

1. Each parent must vote on a separate form
2. Each parent is entitled to a number of votes equal to the number of vacancies e.g. one vacancy one vote; three vacancies three votes but only one vote can be used per candidate.
3. Please vote in ink by placing an X against the candidate(s) of your choice

Papers recording more than the required votes or marked in any other way will be invalid.

CANDIDATES

Maximum of 30 words per candidate	

All voting forms must be returned to the school by

Dear

Re: Election of Parent Governor at School

Thank you for your offer to become a parent governor at our school.

As there are more applications than vacancies, there will be an election.

The count will be held at the school on at am/pm, and you are entitled to attend this count. If you wish to attend, I would be obliged if you would tell me, or the school administrative officer. If you do not attend, I will inform you in writing of the result within three school working days.

If you have any queries about the election process I shall be glad to answer them.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

Letter to Parents

Dear

Re: Election of Parent Governor(s) at School

I am pleased to inform you of the result of our election for parent governor(s).

Elected: Name(s) of candidate(s)

We would like to thank those who put their names forward and we are sorry that there were insufficient places for all those interested this time. Details of the actual number of votes cast can be obtained on request from the school office.

If you would like to be considered in another capacity as one of our school governors at a later date, please either contact the chair of governors or let me know. There may also be vacancies in other schools in the area, and if you would like to be considered as a school governor elsewhere, I know Gloucestershire Governor Services will be pleased to hear from you.

Thank you once again for your interest.

Yours sincerely

Head Teacher

Successful Candidates

I am pleased to inform you that you have been elected unopposed as a parent governor and your 4* year term of office will commence on

OR

I am pleased to inform you that following the recent parent election you have been elected as a parent governor and your 4* year term of office will commence on

AND

The governing body meeting will be held on..... and you will soon be contacted by the chair of governors, and receive an agenda fromclerk to governors. I look forward to working with you.

*** can be less if Instrument of Government indicates this**

Unsuccessful Candidates

I regret to inform you that on this occasion you were unsuccessful in the recent parent governor election.

Details of the actual number of votes cast can be obtained on request from the school office.

If you would like to be considered in another capacity as one of our school governors at a later date, please either contact the chair of governors or let me know. There may also be vacancies in other schools in the area, and if you would like to be considered as a school governor elsewhere, I know Gloucestershire Governor Services will be pleased to hear from you.

Thank you once again for your interest.