



Governor Guidance Notes

for school governors and clerks in Cambridgeshire Maintained Schools

Please note that legislation in this Governor Guidance Note applies to Cambridgeshire Maintained Schools but the principles may be useful for Academies and Free Schools

Guidance Note 8a

PROCEDURES FOR THE ELECTION OF PARENT GOVERNORS

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Further Information and References

Regulations relating to governor elections can be found in

Schedule 1 of The School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2012

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2012/1034/contents/made>

Information about Parent Governor Elections

1. The persons who shall be eligible to be elected as parent governors on the governing body of a school and to vote in an election shall be:
 - any parent of a registered pupil at the school at the time of the election; or a person who is not a parent, but who has parental responsibility for the child; or who has care of the child where such a person is an individual.
 - and if they are paid to work at the school, they work less than 500 hours per year. If they work more than 500 hours per year they can only stand in the staff category.
 - they are not an elected member of the local authority.
 - all parents/carers are eligible to vote in an election.
2. The Headteacher of the school shall be responsible for conducting the election on behalf of the Service Director: Learning.
3. All timescales should be reasonable to allow full participation and should normally seek to fill the vacancy as soon as practically possible.
4. When a vacancy for a parent governor has been anticipated by the end of the term of office or arises due to resignation, the Headteacher shall invite self-nominations by distributing to each eligible person a letter notifying the vacancy, specifying the term of office and fixing the closing date for receipt which shall be not less than seven days from the date of the letter. The letter should also inform parents that the successful candidate will need to be eligible to be a governor. A nomination shall not be valid unless the nominee has signed the nomination form and the declaration of eligibility to be a governor. Nominees should be invited to supply, with the nomination a short personal statement for circulation to parents. All communications regarding the election shall be made available in English, and other languages and formats on request.
5. If the number of nominations exceeds the number of vacancies, a secret ballot shall be conducted in accordance with these rules. Otherwise, nominees shall be deemed to be elected unopposed. Where there are two or more vacancies, only one ballot will be held, in which the eligible voters may vote for a number of candidates equal to the number of vacancies.
6. All ballots must ensure only eligible people can vote and must have a secret ballot, be that paper or electronic.
7. *For Electronic.* The software being used must be able to ensure that parents cannot register duplicate votes and that all voting is secret. Schools may want to seek specialised advice on these matters. If using the electronic system the school must provide paper information and voting on request.
8. *For Postal System:* The Headteacher shall arrange for the distribution to each eligible voter of a ballot paper and two envelopes. The double envelope system ensures the ballot is secret. The parent must be instructed to put the completed ballot slip inside an unmarked envelope. The unmarked envelope is then put inside the second envelope with the child's name marked on it. When the school receives the envelope, they can mark off that the parent has voted, and remove and destroy the outer envelope. The unmarked envelopes are kept securely by the Headteacher until the day of the vote.

9. Marked ballot papers shall be sorted and counted in the presence of the candidates (if they wish to be present) on the next working day after the day fixed by the Headteacher for the return of the ballot papers.
10. The Headteacher shall notify the result of the ballot to parents by letter, indicating the names of the candidate(s) and the outcome. The candidate(s) with the highest number of votes will be declared elected. If there is equality of votes, the votes should be recounted. If the votes are then still equal the method of deciding who is to become the governor shall be by the tossing of a coin.
11. The Headteacher shall send the result of the ballot to the School Governance Team and to their clerk to governors who will send to the person elected a letter confirming his or her election to join the governing body.
12. The period of office for a parent governor is specified on the school's Instrument of Government (in most schools this will be four years). The period of office begins immediately after the parent governor's election.
13. Schools must make every reasonable effort to fill parent governor vacancies through elections. Only, if insufficient parents stand for election can the governing body appoint:
 - a parent of a registered pupil at the school, or if that is not possible;
 - a parent of a former pupil at the school, or if that is not possible;
 - a parent of a child of or under compulsory school age.

This also applies to community special schools, but for these schools the appointment criteria are as follows:

- a parent of a registered pupil at the school, or if that is not possible;
 - a parent of a former pupil at the school, or if that is not possible;
 - a parent of a child of or under compulsory school age with special educational needs for which the school is approved, or if that is not possible;
 - a parent with experience of educating a child with special educational needs.
14. Parent governors continue to serve out their term of office when their child leaves the school. It is their decision if they wish to resign. However, at the end of that term of office, they are no longer eligible to stand for election for a further term as a parent governor, if they no longer have a child at the school.
 15. The School Governance Team can offer on loan governor recruitment resources for use by your governing body. We also have a variety of information leaflets that can be used to describe the role of a school governor and help you to recruit new governors. If you would like further information please contact the School Governance Team:
Tel: 01223 715324 or Email: schoolgovernance@cambridgeshire.gov.uk.

Appendix 1: Possible Timetable for Parent Governor Elections

Decision	Postal or Electronic system to be used.
Day 1	Letter sent to parents inviting nominations and notification of details about the election to be posted on the school noticeboard. (Ensure the letter is made available in languages other than English where appropriate or in large print on request).
Day 10	Nominations returned to headteacher Personal Statements and/or application form to headteacher
Day 13	If there are more nominations than vacancies an election will have to take place. If so: Notice of Poll – issue of ballot papers to all parents/carers including the personal statements, or application form of those standing. Either by pupil post or electronic system.
Day 19, 20 and 21	Return of ballot papers to school or deadline for electronic voting
Day 22	Count votes and inform parents/carers of the successful candidate(s) (ensure appropriate pre-appointment checks take place)
Day 22 – 25	Display election results on school notice board, letter home and update school website.

Please note the timescales above are a *guide*, they can be adjusted to fit around school holidays.

The important principle is the timescales are reasonable and allow parents to be informed and to participate.

Appendix 2: Sample Letter to Parents

This can also serve as notice of election and can be posted on the school notice board alongside a copy of this Governor Guidance Note outlining the rules for an election.

Dear Parents

(School Name) School Election of Parent Governors

The governing body of **(School Name)** School has **(number)** parent governor vacancies. We are writing to you to ask if you would be interested in becoming a school governor.

Governors are responsible for ensuring the strategic direction of the school, its performance and the use of resources to support learning. They help to ensure that our school provides the best education it can for children, parents and our local community. Our parent governors are very valuable members of the governing body and we rely on them to help us to give a parent's view. They are on the governing body as representative parents, but they are not delegates and other parents cannot mandate them on how they should vote.

Governors do not need to be experts to tackle the range of responsibilities expected of them. Help, advice and training are available from various sources. If you are interested in being part of the team and have time to commit to this role we would like you to consider becoming a parent governor. If you would like more information please contact the school and we can put you in touch with a member of our governing body for an informal chat.

Anyone who has parental responsibility for a pupil on the school roll at the time of the election can self-nominate, stand for election and can vote in the election. A parent who works for the school for 500 hours or more or a parent who is an elected member of the local authority (County Councillor) is not eligible to stand for election but they are permitted to vote. If insufficient parents stand for election the governing body can appoint nominated parents to the governing body. The term of office for a parent governor is **(number)** years.

All nominations should be sent in to the school office by **(date and time)**. We also need a few words about the candidate and why they would like to be a governor. If you would like extra copies of the nomination forms please contact the school office.

On **(date)** we will inform parents about the details of parent governor nominations. If an election is necessary we will send ballot forms home with the children with the names of the candidates and their details. Each parent will have **(number)** votes as there are **(number)** vacancies. The ballot is secret and you can send or post the ballot paper back using a double envelope system. (The ballot paper should be sealed in an inner unmarked envelope, which would be sealed in an outer envelope with the name of the voter printed on the back.) The ballot paper can be placed in the ballot box outside the school office. All votes must be in by **(date and time)** when they will be counted.

A copy of the rules guiding the election of parent governors and further copies of the nomination form can be obtained from the school office. If you require a copy of this letter in a language other than English or in large print format please contact the school.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

Chair

Appendix 3: Sample Self-Nomination Form

Election for a Parent Governor for *(SCHOOL NAME)* School

Name:

Child(ren) in Year(s):

I am willing and eligible to stand for election as a parent governor at *(SCHOOL NAME)*

Name of Candidate:	
Signature:	

Date:

Appendix 4: Sample Ballot Paper

Parent Governor Election.....(School Name)

BALLOT PAPER

There are (number) vacancies for (number) parent governors on the governing body. You may vote for up to (number) candidates. Please put an 'X' in the box next to your preferred candidate(s). If you vote for more than (number) candidates your votes will be invalidated and will not be counted.

VOTE FOR UP TO *(number)* CANDIDATES ONLY

1	Ms Helpful	
2	Mr Somebody	
3	Mrs Volunteer	

(NB Candidates should be listed in alphabetical order of surname)

Below/attached is a brief note of not more than 200 words prepared by each candidate about themselves.

When you have chosen your preferred candidates, please fold the ballot paper. Do not write your name on the ballot paper. Return ballot papers using a double envelope system. The ballot paper should be sealed in an inner unmarked envelope, which would be sealed in an outer envelope with the name of the voter printed on the back. Ballot papers may be returned via a pupil, by post or by the voter in person. A ballot box will be available between *(time)* and in *(place)*.

All ballot papers must be received by *(time and date)*. Ballot papers received after this date, for whatever reason, will not be counted.

Appendix 5: Sample Application and Pre-Appointment Check Form

The application form can be adapted for use with all categories of governor.

The information you give on this form will enable your eligibility to serve as a governor to be established. If you are elected as a governor you will need to undertake a DBS enhanced check. This measure is to ensure the safety of children.

Application and Pre-Appointment Check Form

Full name:

Home address:

Postcode:

Home tel:

Work tel:

Email address:

Proof of Identity (please tick)

Driving licence ☐

Passport ☐

Birth certificate ☐

Please set out why you would like to become a school governor (in not more than 200 words). You can include details or relevant experience such as involvement in the local community, experience within an educational setting or in business.

Sample Application and Pre-Appointment Check Form (continued)

The School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2012

DECLARATION OF ELIGIBILITY AS A SCHOOL GOVERNOR

I declare that I am not disqualified from serving as a school governor and that:

- **I am** aged 18 or over at the time of this election or appointment
- **I do not** already hold a governorship of the same school **
- **I am not** the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or an interim order, debt relief restrictions order, an interim debt relief restrictions order or their estate has been sequestrated and the sequestration has not been discharged, annulled or reduced is subject to a disqualification order or disqualification undertaking under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986, a disqualification order under Part 2 of the Companies (Northern Ireland) Order 1989, a disqualification undertaking accepted under the Company Directors Disqualification (Northern Ireland) Order 2002, or an order made under section 429(2)(b) of the Insolvency Act 1986 (failure to pay under county court administration order)
- **I have not** been removed from the office of charity trustee or trustee for a charity by the Charity Commission or Commissioners or High Court on grounds of any misconduct or mismanagement, or under section 34 of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 from being concerned in the management or control of any body
- **I am not** included in the list of teachers or workers considered by the Secretary of State as unsuitable to work with children or young people
- **I am not** barred from any regulated activity relating to children
- **I am not** subject to a direction of the Secretary of State under section 128 of the Education and Skills Act 2008
- **I am not** disqualified from working with children or from registering for child-minding or providing day care
- **I am not** disqualified from being an independent school proprietor, teacher or employee by the Secretary of State
- **I have not** been sentenced to three months or more in prison (without the option of a fine) in the five years before becoming a governor or since becoming a governor
- **I have not** received a prison sentence of two years or more in the 20 years before becoming a governor
- **I have not** at any time received a prison sentence of five years or more
- **I have not** 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
- **I have not** refused a request by the clerk to make an application to the Criminal Records Bureau for a criminal records certificate.

**** This does not apply to governors being considered for re-appointment or standing for re-election.**

Signature _____

Date _____