



Becoming a School Governor

What's it all about?

Newham Partnership Working (NPW)
works in partnership with school governing bodies and Newham Council to provide
the support that they need to raise achievement.

This partnership has been very successful and
Newham has been one of the fastest improving LAs in England and Wales.

You can become a school governor and join our success story.

Being a Newham School Governor

School governors are people like you. Your contribution can make a difference to the future of children and young people in our schools.

Governing bodies are responsible for taking important decisions that enable schools to improve and develop. Governing bodies work closely with their head teachers, who are responsible for the day to day management of their schools.

What qualities do I need?

Commitment and common sense are the important qualities that governors bring to their schools - you do not have to have formal qualifications or experience in education, finance or management, although these skills will always be welcome.

To be an effective governor you need to:

- Have an interest in education, schools and young people;
- Be able to listen to other people's views, to discuss them and then to form your own judgements;
- Be willing to support the decisions taken by the whole governing body;
- Have time to play your full part in the work of the governing body;
- Be willing to learn.

If you have any of these qualities, you will almost certainly enjoy being a school governor.

Governors are drawn from across the whole community. They are people with an interest in education from all walks of life who simply want to make a contribution.

What do governors do?

Governors are volunteers who work together with the head teacher of the school and the LA to improve the quality of education in our schools. The governing body works as a team, individually governors have no powers or responsibility.

Governing is about opening doors to education opportunities. It is challenging and rewarding work.

The main work of the governing body is to *meet, discuss and decide*. Apart from governing body meetings, which are held at the school, usually in the evening or late afternoon, governors also need to set aside time for reading papers, visiting the school and attending training.

What will I get from being a governor?

Most people who become governors find they get a great deal of satisfaction from it. They feel they are making a contribution that has a real effect on the education of local children and young people, they meet a lot of new people and learn new skills which are useful in other aspects of their lives.

Governing bodies make decisions about:

- Setting the schools aims and policies
- Raising standards of achievement
- Making sure the money is spent wisely
- Appointing senior staff
- Improving the school environment
- Making sure all pupils receive rights to all education opportunities

Governors also:

- Support school activities
- Visit the school on behalf of the governing body
- Promote their school in the community

What it involves?

Meetings

Every governing body meets at least once a term. Many also hold a second meeting each term to make sure they can deal with all their business thoroughly. On average meetings last between 2 and 3 hours. Most governing bodies also have committees to deal with important issues such as finance and the curriculum. These meet separately from governing body meetings. It is expected that all governors get involved on at least one committee, - . Dates of all governing body meetings for an academic year are arranged well in advance and are rarely changed.

Reading the papers

At least a week before the meeting, governors receive an agenda and papers setting out information about the items to be discussed. It is expected that all governors will have read and thought about the issues before the meeting.

Visiting the School

All governors need to get to know their school so they make decisions based on first hand knowledge. You will probably need to set aside about a half-day a year for a visit.

Who sits on governing bodies?

Every school has a governing body, which includes:

- **Parent Governors** elected by parents of children at the school;
- **Community Governors** appointed by the school governing body for their particular interests or experience, or to represent a section of the community, such as local employers;
- **Authority Governors** appointed by the Newham Local Authority;
- **Staff Governors** elected by the school staff and includes the head teacher;
- **Foundation Governors** at church schools only, appointed by the Diocese.

The size of the governing body generally ranges from 9 to 20 people depending on the school. Once on the governing body, all governors have the same powers and responsibilities and they work collectively to support the school.

How do I become a governor?

- Parent Governor:** As a parent or legal carer, your school will tell you when an election will be held.
- Community Governor:** Contact the Head Teacher of the school you are interested in or **contact us**. We will send you an application form with a vacancy list. The governing body appoints community governors and we will make sure that your nomination form will be submitted for consideration at their next meeting.
- Authority Governor:** **Contact us**. We will send you an application form with a vacancy list. Once you are appointed, the LA expect you to support the LA's principles of raising achievement, inclusive education, equal opportunities and non-selective education.

******Adding Value**** Supporting Our Schools to Support Children******

Staff Governor: Put your name forward in your school when a vacancy arises and an election is held.

Foundation Governor: Contact the school or Diocese to register your interest, the head teachers of church schools can tell you who to contact.

How much help will I get?

From School

Your first source of help and advice will be the school. The head teacher may be able to arrange for you to visit the school before your first meeting and put you in touch with an experienced governor who will act as your mentor.

Governor Training

All governors need to do some training, even people who already work in education. Training is free for all governors. New governors need to learn about their responsibilities, experienced governors need to find about changes in education and all governors need to consider how to make their governing body more effective.

Most sessions last two hours. They are run in the morning and evening and venues are fully accessible and a carers allowance is available. Braille and signing services are available.

Governing Bodies Support Services

The Governing Bodies Support Service provides a comprehensive range of support services to governors, head teachers and clerks. The aim of the service is to enable governors to carry out their legal functions to manage schools in partnership with head teachers and the LA. A helpline provides advice and support on all major issues including School Governance Regulations.

[Please contact us for an application form or any further enquiries:](#)

NPW Governor Services

Francis House, 760 Barking Road, London E13 9PJ

Tel: 020 82496932

Email: irfan.mustafa@npw.so

Our Website:

<http://www.newham.gov.uk/Services/SchoolGovernors>