

FAQ: School governor and parent governor roles

Q. What does the Governing Board do?

Governors operate at a strategic and policy-making level. They do not get involved in the day-to-day running of the school.

The Department for Education (DfE) sets out the responsibilities of a school's Governing Board (GB) as:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- Holding the school's executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the effective and efficient performance management of staff; and
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

Q. When does the Governing Board meet?

The full Governing Board meets four times a year, usually twice in the Autumn term and then once in each of the Spring and Summer terms.

The board operates two committees that meet each term: Finance & Resources; and Learning & Student Support (LSS). All governors are expected to serve on at least one committee.

There is also the Pay committee which meets once in the Autumn term and the Futures Thinking committee which meets as needed to discuss strategic developments for the school's future.

Meetings take place outside school hours, from 5:30 and run for up to two hours.

You will need to set aside time to be able to be an effective governor: time to prepare for meetings, for visiting the school or meeting colleagues on behalf of the governing body, as well as undertaking training and updating.

Q. Who can be a parent governor?

The parent or carer of any Wilmslow High School student can be a parent governor.

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.

There are other criteria which apply to all governors. These are set out in the separate guidance: School Governor Eligibility Criteria.

All governors are also subject to a DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check.

Q. What are the responsibilities of a parent governor?

They share equally with other governors the responsibility for carrying out the GB's wide range of responsibilities.

A parent governor is not there to represent the interests of their own children: governors have a responsibility to serve the needs of all the school's students fairly and impartially.

Neither is a parent governor there to represent all parents: the school engages with parents and parent groups in a number of ways, both formal and informal.

A parent governor will bring a particular insight and perspective to the GB, but they must operate in the strategic interests of the school and the whole school community.

Q. How long is a parent governor's term of office?

If you join the GB, you will serve a four year term. If your child leaves the school during this time, you would still be able to complete your term as a parent governor.

Q. How can I find out more about the role of a governor?

Full details of the roles and responsibilities of a GB and its governors are set out in the DfE Governance Handbook, which can be found at this link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-handbook>

Chair of Governors Jim Caulkett and Clerk to the Governors Gary Pugh will be pleased to answer any questions you may have. Jim was himself one of the former parent governors and the other, Tom Murray, will also be pleased to answer your questions.

They can all be contacted via school email:

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