New Members of the Governing Body

Come back .... and make a difference

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GOVERNOR SERVICES
New Members of the Governing Body

As experienced governors are aware, the role of the governing body is one that seems to be ever increasing in complexity and, as the government introduce new powers of innovation, carrying increasing levels of responsibility. So new governors are always welcome as they bring new skills and expertise and help share the load.

The following examples of good practice may form part of the process:

- On joining a governing body the headteacher arranges a visit to the school. This may be conducted by the headteacher, another staff member or another governor
- The Chair of the governing body should contact the new governor in advance of the first meeting to welcome him or her, giving a brief overview of current issues
- There is essential reading that a new governor should receive e.g. School Prospectus, School Development Plan, Guide to the Law. Other material may also be included, but avoid ‘overload’ (another governor may be assigned to talk the new governor through it – see below)
- The appointment of a ‘mentor’ governor helps new governors settle in and can advise on terminology, protocol issues, etc
- New governors are provided with details of the next induction course and are encouraged to attend
- The governor is assigned to a particular class/department/year group to form a link within school
- At the first meeting, the new governor is welcomed and all governors introduce themselves
- Where possible, agenda items are put in context for the new governor
- At the end of the first meeting time is made available for any new governors to ask questions in an informal setting – e.g. between new governor and Chair or ‘mentor’
- Ensure that your Governing Body Support Officer has been notified of the newly appointed governor

But do we always greet newcomers to the governing body in a welcoming and supportive way?

If governing bodies are to encourage new governors to stay and play their part, the existing governors have a responsibility to help them settle into the role.

Although the main responsibility may fall to the Chair, Headteacher and Link Governor, it is incumbent on everyone to play his or her part.

Although these points seem obvious, it is surprising how often the desire to ‘get on with the business’ prevents even the basic courtesy of introductions from taking place!

Some schools have difficulty in filling vacancies so it is vital to nurture the interest shown.

A full complement of governors will encourage the effective sharing of duties and responsibilities as well as providing a well-balanced governing body.