

The Role of the Staff Governor

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GOVERNOR SERVICES

Luton

The Role of the Staff Governor

Staff governors consist of the headteacher, non-teaching staff and teaching staff – the position of the headteacher being ‘ring-fenced’ (ie should the headteacher choose not to be a governor, no-one else can fill the vacancy). The role is unique in that, by definition, staff are involved in the day to day running of the school and yet are asked as governors to put this to one side and be ‘strategic managers’. This is not always easy to do! However, the role of the staff governor offers an opportunity to make a real contribution to the strategic management of the school, providing an interesting and rewarding dimension to work.

It is important for staff governors to establish a rapport with the body which elected him/her, whilst continuing to maintain the strategic approach to school governance. Although being available to advise staff on appropriate routes of action is a very important aspect of the role, it is vital that staff governors do not personally become involved in individual concerns. Apart from the possibility of this jeopardising appropriate complaints and appeals procedures, no governor has the authority to act individually on behalf of the school.



Staff governors are representative staff members rather than representatives of staff, bringing a staff viewpoint and perspective to discussion and debate. They should not be seen as a ‘go-between’ or staff delegate. They act according to their own conscience and should follow the appropriate rules of governor protocol and confidentiality.

To effectively fulfil the role, staff governors:

- have equal rights with all other governors
- should not participate in discussions where they have a personal interest in the outcome
- should not participate in discussions about colleagues’ pay (NB this does not apply to the headteacher who should be involved in discussions about staff pay, but not about his/her own pay)

- follow the agreed procedure for putting items on the agenda
- should feel free to express their own personal views, it being recognised that this is not necessarily the view of the majority of staff
- do not have a mandate to express any views other than their own. However, they should report in good faith any widely held staff views, even if in a vote they decide to vote differently
- try to attend in-service training sessions
- should agree with the rest of the governing body how decisions can be shared with staff (not what was actually said) unless the matter is deemed confidential
- should be aware of the sensitivity of governing body meeting discussions and clarify after such discussions which items can be reported and which items the governing body wish to remain unreported until the minutes of the meeting have been confirmed

Achieving a balance between being an impartial representative member of staff and regular involvement in day to day issues, can sometimes be very difficult. Some practical ways to achieve this balance include:

- never press your own personal agenda at the expense of others
- always be clear about what information can be reported back to colleagues
- never promise to ‘solve a problem’ on your own

- be wary of bringing an individual issue to meetings without following the agreed procedures
- abide by the agreed protocol regarding agenda items and Any Other Business
- keep yourself aware of staff views and concerns
- play an active part in governor meetings
- help to prepare the report for the annual parents’ meeting

Although this is a very delicate role, there is ample support and training available. Effective staff governors will find working alongside the other members of the governing body both interesting and rewarding in that their efforts will ensure that the work of the governing body fulfils its duties to all children.

