

Election of Parent Governors

1. THE PARENT GOVERNOR

1.1 The number of parent governors is specified in the school's Instrument of Government.

1.2 Parent governors

- are elected by and from among the parents of registered pupils at the school;
- should be parents of pupils attending the school at the time of their election.

The term 'parent', in relation to any child or young person, includes any person who has parental responsibility for or who has care for the child or young person. Schools should make reasonable attempts to discover the appropriate information about known absent or estranged parents, but the law does not require these attempts to be exhaustive.

1.3 The term of office of a parent governor is specified in the Instrument of Government and is usually four years from the date on which the result of the election is announced. A parent governor may complete this term of office even if his/her child should leave the school within that period.

1.4 If it is impossible to fill vacancies for parent governors by election because no or insufficient nominations are received, the governing body has to appoint the parent governors required. If that becomes necessary they should appoint:

- a parent of a pupil registered at the school,
- a parent of a former registered pupil at the school; or
- a parent of a child of or under compulsory school age.

But in any event, the person appointed must, in the opinion of the governing body, have the skills necessary to contribute to the effective governance and success of the school.

1.5 There is a lengthy list of disqualification rules which can be found further on in this document. This list must be distributed to parents with the nomination papers. Please note especially the disqualification terms for individuals who are paid to work at the school.

2. PROCEDURE FOR THE ELECTION OF PARENT GOVERNORS

2.1 Elections for parent governors arise when:-

- a parent governor has served his/her term of office.
- a parent governor resigns or is disqualified. Parent governors who resign are asked to inform the clerk to the governors.

2.2 In carrying out recruitment and election activities the headteacher is required to have due regard to the general duty of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000; to eliminate unlawful discrimination, to promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups. In practice this means the headteacher should provide information to parents in the appropriate mode and language.

- 2.3 When there is a vacancy the head should inform parents of the need to hold an election and the related arrangements by letter using pupil post. The draft for this letter (PG1) is attached. If, for any reason, the use of pupil post is not possible, the head should make reasonable efforts to ensure that parents receive the letter and can participate in the election. If the postal service is used the cost will have to be met from the school's budget.
- 2.4 Letter PG1 also seeks nominations. Heads will need to include a date for the return of nominations in the appropriate space. All parents must be given the opportunity to make nominations.
- 2.5 The day on which letter PG1 is sent out a copy should also be posted on the school notice board or other prominent place.

When nominations close and a ballot is not necessary

- 2.6 If by the closing date the nominations received match the number of vacancies no election is necessary, and the persons nominated are declared to be parent governors from that date.
- 2.7 If by the closing date insufficient nominations have been received to fill the vacancies, those received (if any) are declared to be parent governors and the head must inform the parents of this result. To fill the remaining vacancies the governing body will need to appoint parent governors (see paragraph 1.4).

When nominations close and a ballot is necessary

- 2.8 If on receipt of nominations you have received more nominations than there are spaces, a ballot is required. The head should prepare the ballot paper (see PG2), listing the candidates and including any personal statements they wish to make. There have been instances where statements exceeding 100 words have led to complaints from other candidates. Any statement which exceeds 100 words should be referred back to the author as should any wording which indicates that they are supported or endorsed by any group or association. The dates for the return of completed papers must also be included.
- 2.9 As an aid to security the ballot papers should be individually numbered from 1 upwards and counted back in to ensure that only those issued by the school are counted in the election. As an alternative ballot papers could be produced on coloured paper which could be difficult to reproduce.
- 2.10 Ballot papers must be distributed to all parents eligible to vote. On the same day a copy of the ballot paper should also be posted on the school notice board or other prominent place.
- 2.11 The ballot must be secret.
- 2.12 Each parent is allowed one vote for each vacancy irrespective of the number of children he/she has at the school. Therefore, two ballot papers should be sent to the home unless the school knows positively otherwise.
- 2.13 Schools may make provision for parents to vote electronically.
- 2.14 The head must ensure that all candidates are told where and when the votes will be counted so that they can attend should they wish.

What to do when voting closes

- 2.15 On receipt of the completed ballot papers, which should be checked to ensure their authenticity, the head must organise and supervise the count. This should be done (in the presence of the candidates, or nominated representative, if they chose to attend) on the next school day following the closing date for the return of ballot papers. The head is responsible for deciding the validity of dubious or spoilt ballot papers. In difficult cases Governor Services should be consulted. Ballot papers should be retained for a period of six months after the election in case of any dispute.
- 2.16 The candidate, or candidates where there is more than one vacancy, who poll(s) the most votes is/are elected parent governors immediately the result of the election is announced.
- 2.17 In the event of a tie, the votes must be recounted. If the votes are still equal, the candidate with the youngest child at the school shall be elected.

3. PROCEDURE AFTER THE ELECTION

- 3.1 The head should notify all parents and members of the governing body of the outcome of the election on Form PG3 as soon as possible after the announcement of the result (or at the earliest stage should a ballot be unnecessary). Form PG3 can be used to notify parents and governors of the appointment of parent governors by the governing body.
- 3.2 You will send to the new parent governor(s) formal confirmation of their appointment, a copy of the Instrument of Government and other relevant information. A copy of this letter of confirmation can also be sent to the chair of governors.
- 3.3 New or re-appointed/elected governors are asked to confirm that they do not fall foul of the disqualification rules and provide proof of their identity. Appropriate paperwork will be sent to the governor with their appointment letter.

4. PROXY VOTING

- 4.1 In normal circumstances proxy voting should not be necessary, particularly as arrangements for postal voting must be made where appropriate. There may be situations, however, where one or both parents are abroad for long periods and where postal arrangements cannot easily be made.
- 4.2 In such circumstances proxy voting is allowed subject to the following rules:
 - The parents concerned must tell the school in writing who is to vote on their behalf;
 - Where only one parent is not available to vote, the proxy vote will be exercised by the other parent;
 - The responsibility for ending such an arrangement for voting by proxy lies with the parent and must be done in writing to the head.

5. TIMETABLE FOR THE CONDUCT OF ELECTIONS

- 5.1 Notes on Letter PG1 and PG2 are also attached.
- 5.2 A notional schedule of timings is attached as an example.

Example of Schedule of Timings

(NOTE: You are advised to plan the dates of the various stages of the election prior to the distribution of any letters.

The example schedule given below uses Monday to Friday timings and assumes that the first date in the process is the 1st of the month. It is suggested that wherever possible this pattern of timings be used as clear school weeks are the easiest basis to follow. Other timings (e.g. mid-week to mid-week, etc) can be used when and where necessary but care must be taken to ensure that you always allow 5 school days for the nominating process and the same for voting.

- | | | |
|----|--|---|
| 1. | Friday 1st
(date 1) | Notice of parent governor elections (PG1 form) to be distributed to parents and posted on the school notice board |
| 2. | Friday 8th
(date 2) | Receipt of Nominations and Statements (PG1 tear off slip) by the end of the school day |
-

The election stops here if nominations received equal or are less than the vacancies to be filled

- | | | |
|----|--------------------------------|---|
| 3. | Friday 15th
(date 3) | Ballot papers (PG2) to be distributed to parents and a copy posted on the school notice board |
| 4. | Friday 22nd
(date 4) | Voting slips to be returned by end of school day |
| 5. | Monday 25th
(date 5) | Count takes place |

Notes

The period between stage 2 and 3 above may be shortened. If shortening is done care needs to be taken to ensure that **at least 5 school days** are given for parents to return their nomination papers and to vote.

The dates for receipt of nominations or ballot papers may need to be extended where parents live away from the local area, e.g. schools with boarders or with a parent(s) living abroad. Again, all following dates will need to be correspondingly amended.

How to Complete and Distribute the Notice of Election/Request for Nominations (Letter PG1) and Ballot Paper (PG2)

1. The letter shall be prepared on school headed paper.
2. The format and wording shall not be altered in any way without discussing a proposed alteration with Governor Services first.
3. This should be completed in accordance with the Instrument of Government.
4. The number of vacancies to be filled through this election process must be clearly stated as it has a bearing on both the submission of nominations by parents and voting that will take place at a later stage in the procedure.
5. The date to be included here is the date on which the election result is to be announced (date 5 in the schedule of timings).
6. The date to be included here is the closing date for nominations (date 2 in the schedule of timings).
7. The term of office will be four years unless the Instrument of Government states a different period of office.
8. This section of the voting slip should be completed by the school.
9. A copy of this letter (complete) shall be posted on the school notice board or other prominent place on the same day as it is distributed.
10. The date to be included here is the last date for return of ballot papers (date 4 in Schedule of Timings).
11. Each individual ballot paper must be numbered or reproduced on a colour of paper which could be difficult to reproduce. Authenticity is to be established on return.

To: All Parents of Pupils Registered

PG1

at _____ School

Date: _____

Dear Parent

Notice about Parent Governor Election Arrangements/Request for Nominations

The Constitution of the School's Governing Body allows for the appointment of _____ (see note 3) parent governors. This/these appointment(s) is/are made by election. The number of vacancies to be filled on this occasion is _____ (see note 4).

I should be pleased to receive nominations for this/these vacancy(ies) on the tear off slip provided and in accordance with the following notes:-

1. Only parents who have/will have children registered at the school on _____ (see note 10) are eligible to stand for election or make a nomination.

The other eligibility rules, which should be read carefully, are printed overleaf.

2. Candidates may nominate themselves.
3. Candidates are entitled and encouraged to submit a brief personal statement (not more than 100 words; anything more than 100 words may give rise to complaints from other candidates and so will not be accepted) giving autobiographical details and information regarding their suitability to be an effective governor, except information indicating that they are endorsed or supported by any group or association.
4. Each parent may submit a nomination for each of the vacancies to be filled. Nominations and statements, where made, must be returned to me by _____ (see note 6) at the latest. Any received after this date cannot be included in the election.
5. Candidates must sign the form to indicate their willingness to stand.
6. The term of office of a parent governor is _____ years (see note 7) from the date of appointment. Parent governors are not disqualified if their children leave the school before the end of this period.
7. The definition of a "parent", in relation to any child or young person, includes any person who is not a parent but who has parental responsibility for or who has care for the child or young person.

The timescale for this election is as follows:-

- a) Nominations on PG1 to be returned to school by the end of the school day on (insert date 2 from schedule of timings).
- b) Ballot papers will be distributed on (insert date 3 from schedule of timings).
- c) Voting closes at the end of the school day on (insert date 4 from schedule of timings).
- d) Votes will be counted and result announced on (insert date 5 from schedule of timings).

Yours sincerely

Head

Disqualification Rules for being a school governor

A person is disqualified from holding or continuing to hold office as a governor of a school if, in summary, that person:

- is the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order; an interim bankruptcy restrictions 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 the Companies (Northern Ireland) Order 2002; 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)
- has been removed from the office of trustee for a charity by an order made by the Charity Commission or Commissioners or High Court on grounds of any misconduct or mismanagement in the administration of the charity, or under section 34 of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 from being concerned in the management or control of any body.
- has been removed from office as an elected governor within the last five years.
- is included in the list of people considered by the Secretary of State as unsuitable to work with children or young people
- is barred from any regulated activity relating to children
- is subject to a direction of the Secretary of State under section 142 of the Education Act 2002 or section 128 of the Education and Skills Act 2008
- is disqualified from working with children or from registering for child-minding or providing day care
- is disqualified from being an independent school proprietor, teacher or employee by the Secretary of State
- subject to certain exceptions for overseas offences that do not correlate with a UK offence, has been sentenced to three months or more in prison (without the option of a fine) in the five years ending with the date preceding the date of appointment/election as a governor or since becoming a governor
- subject to certain exceptions for overseas offences that do not correlate with a UK offence, has received a prison sentence of two and a half years or more in the 20 years ending with the date preceding the date of appointment/election as a governor
- subject to certain exceptions for overseas offences that do not correlate with a UK offence, has at any time received a prison sentence of five years or more
- has been convicted and fined for causing a nuisance or disturbance on school or educational premises during the five years ending with the date immediately preceding appointment/election or since appointment or election as a governor
- refuses a request by the clerk to make an application to the Disclosure and Barring Service for a criminal records certificate.

General grounds for disqualification:

- Registered pupils cannot be governors.
- A governor must be aged 18 or over at the time of election or appointment.
- A person cannot hold more than one governor post at the same school at the same time.

Grounds that apply to particular categories of governor:

Parent governors - a person is disqualified from being a parent governor if they are an elected member of the LA or paid to work at the school for more than 500 hours (i.e. for more than one-third of the hours of a full-time equivalent) in any consecutive twelve-month period at the time of election or appointment.

All new or re-appointed/elected governors are now required to confirm that they do not fall foul of the disqualification rules as listed and provide proof of their identity to the Headteacher. This is arranged once the election has taken place.

Please return to the Head, _____ School by
_____ at the latest (see note 6).

I wish to nominate:

<u>Nomination</u>	<u>Full Name</u>	<u>Address</u>
1.	_____	_____
2.	_____	_____
3.	_____	_____
4.	_____	_____
5.	_____	_____

for election as a parent governor.

To be signed by the nominee(s) and nominator if different.

Signed: _____
(Nominator if you are not nominating yourself)

Signed: _____
(Nominee i.e. the person standing as parent governor)

Date: _____

A brief personal statement written by the candidate(s) is/are attached/not provided.

(delete as appropriate)

at _____ School

Date: _____

Parent Governor Election: Ballot Paper

The parents nominated for election are listed on the ballot paper below on the “tear off” part of this letter. Personal statements made by any of the candidates have been reproduced under the candidate’s name (or on a separate sheet if this is more convenient).

The number of parent governors to be elected on this occasion is _____ (see note 4). You should cast your vote by marking X in the box provided against the candidate(s) of your choice. You may cast one vote for the number of candidates equal to the number of vacancies to be filled, eg if five vacancies are to be filled you may cast one vote for each of five separate candidates. You may not cast more than one vote for the same candidate.

The ballot paper should be returned to me via your child or by any other means you may prefer (including electronically) not later than end of school on *(Friday), _____ (see note 10). Any ballot papers received after this latest date will not be counted.

Your voting rights are as follows:

Each parent has one vote for each vacancy irrespective of the number of children he/she has at the school.

(“Parent” includes a guardian and every person who has parental responsibility for the child.)

Yours sincerely

Head

Parent Governor Election: Ballot Paper

(see note 11)

Candidates

Full Name (Surname first)

1. (Name) (see note 8)
(Any statement made to be produced here or on an attached sheet)
2. (Ditto)
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

To: Members of the Governing Body
All Parents

Dear Colleague

Parent Governor Election

School: _____

The following parent governor(s) has/have been duly elected* by the parents of this school:-

Name

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

The announcement of the result of the election* was made on _____ (date 5 in Schedule of Timings).

Or:

If governors have made the appointment/s due to a shortfall of nominations on the due date, please indicate above and include the date on which the appointment was made (this is the date of the governors' meeting).

Yours sincerely

Head

*election can happen in one of two ways:

- *If the same number or fewer nominations are received, the process will stop before a vote takes place and the person becomes a governor at that point;*
- *A vote takes place if there are more nominations received than there are parent governor vacancies.*