

Becoming a School Governor - Guidance from WSCC

School governors are volunteers who want to make a positive contribution to children's education. They do not need to be education experts or have formal qualifications. The most effective governors are those who:

- listen, think and ask questions;
- believe that education is important;
- take an interest in the role of schools in the community;
- can work with others and assimilate a wide range of information and data;
- have a willingness to learn;
- have sound communication skills;
- are prepared to give time to doing the job well. A governor performs a vital strategic role as part of a governing body. Governors need to make time to:
 - attend full governing board meetings;
 - attend committee and working party meetings about once or twice a term;
 - attend school events;
 - read reports and background papers before meetings;
 - visit the school during the working day;
 - take part, if necessary, in staff appointment panels, pupil exclusion panels, complaints panels and staff discipline and grievance hearings;
 - attend training.

The governing board:

- Individual governors have no power or responsibility. It is only the full governing board that has legal duties and powers. However, all governors share in that corporate responsibility;
- The school's direction is agreed by the governing board, headteacher and senior leadership team, who also make sure the school is meeting its targets;
- The headteacher and staff manage the school on a day-to-day basis.

The rules: in summary

- Governors are legally entitled to reasonable time off work to attend meetings, and many employers are keen to support opportunities that strengthen links with the local community and help develop valuable skills.
- The employee and employer must agree on what is 'reasonable time off'
- Employers may give time off with pay but they don't have to
- Time off is in addition to your usual holiday entitlement The legislation and the Governance Handbook only say that maintained school governors have the right to time off, but the ESFA confirmed to us that academy governors also have this right.

You don't have the right to time off if you are:

- An agency worker
- A member of the police service
- A member of the armed forces
- Employed on a gas or oil rig at sea
- Employed on a fishing vessel
- A merchant seaman
- A civil servant whose public duties are connected to political activities restricted under the terms of your employment Agree what is 'reasonable' time off A specific amount of time off is not laid down in law. Decide what is 'reasonable' with your employer based on:
 - How long the duties might take
 - The amount of time you have already had off for public duties
 - How the time off will affect the business Your employer can refuse a request for time off if they think it's unreasonable.