

Information for Potential Governors of Downlands School



Downlands Governing Board is made up of 15 governors:

- 4 Parent Governors
- 1 Local Authority Governor
- 1 Staff Governor
- 8 Co-opted Governors
- 1 Headteacher

All governors are elected/co-opted or appointed for a 4-year term of office.

There are two meetings of the full Governing Board each term.

Our Chair and Vice-Chair are elected annually.

The majority of governors' work is done by various committees who have delegated powers and report back to all governors at the full business meetings. These committees co-opt other members of staff who have the relevant responsibilities within school (e.g. Members of the Senior Leadership Team).

Downlands Governing Board has 3 committees, each of which meets termly:
Finance and Buildings Committee, Pupils Outcomes and Wellbeing Committee and the Staff, Learning and Leadership Committee.

The Chairs of these committees together with the Chair and Vice-Chair of Governors, meet with the Leadership Team as the Challenge and Development Group to monitor the School Development Plan and other aspects of the School's development.

All Governors are members of at least 1 committee. The Full Governing Board and Committees currently meet at 15.30 on Wednesdays. Please also see the School governors' right to time off work – statutory guidance which is attached.

Committees for the following purposes are formed, when needed, from members of the Governing Board: Staff Dismissal Appeal; Pupil Discipline; Staff Discipline and Grievance and Pay Appeals; Headteacher's Appraisal

Each governor (other than the Staff Governor) is also linked to a subject department and they liaise with the Head of Department to get to know the work of the Department and have responsibility for the monitoring and quality assurance of those Departments by joining meetings with the Head of Department and their line manager. These meetings take place during the school day.

Governors with appropriate experience and skills are given responsibility for the monitoring of some areas such as Safeguarding, Health and Safety, Pupil Premium and SEND.

Responsibilities of a Governor

All Governors, whether elected, co-opted or appointed, share an equal responsibility to contribute to the work of the Governing Board in raising standards of achievement for all pupils which involves providing a strategic view for the school, acting as a critical friend and ensuring accountability. In whatever context, the role of the governor is strategic and not operational.

As a parent governor, your role would be:

To bring a parental perspective to the issues discussed – you are not there to speak 'on behalf' of the parent body but to use your perspective as a parent to help the board understand a parent's viewpoint. This will help the board make good decisions and maintain a link between governance and the parent community.

Commitment, Contribution, Skills and Experience of a Governor

In order to act cohesively to fulfil these responsibilities it is necessary for all governors to actively contribute to the work of the Governing Board. The commitment and ability to attend meetings is extremely important. A governor disqualifies themselves if they do not attend full governing board meetings over a 6-month period.

All Governors need to be good team workers and understand the responsibility to handle confidential information when needed.

The skills and experience of Governors are audited to ensure that there is balance of skills covering areas such as school governance, finance, commerce, law, property, employment and personnel and management as well as a good working knowledge of the School.

Anyone that has a commitment to supporting the School to achieve the best possible outcome for its students could contribute. It should be stressed that experience gained in any walk of life: family, work, volunteering etc. is of equal value.

Among the skills we would welcome at present are: financial management, building development and personnel.

Main Duties of the Governing Board are:

- appointing the Headteacher and other senior staff and ensuring the implementation of a range of personnel procedures
- oversight of the school budget
- determining aims, policies and priorities of the school
- monitoring and evaluating the work of the school
- setting statutory and non-statutory targets
- securing high levels of attendance and good standards of pupil behaviour
- setting the curriculum offer and ensuring it meets the needs of all learners ensuring the health, safety and well-being of pupils and staff.
- commitment and support of the full like of the school community

Each year, members of the Governing Board sign the National Governors' Association's Code of Practice for School Governors pledging to the commitments of a governor and the principles of public life.

Tasks Include

- to work as a member of a team.
- to attend meetings (full governing board, committees and working groups).
- to speak, act and vote in the best interests of the school as one perceives them.
- to represent the perspectives of constituents, where appropriate.
- to respect all Governing Board decisions and to support them in public.
- to act within the framework of the policies of the Governing Board and legal requirements.
- to commit to training and development opportunities.
- to attend governor briefing sessions and ensure you have an up to date knowledge of current issues and policies.
- to get to know the school: its needs, strengths and weaknesses.

There are some circumstances that disqualify a person from becoming a school governor. Before being elected, prospective governors must sign and return a declaration to confirm they are not disqualified from being a Governor.

Please also see Becoming a School Governor – Guidance from WSCC, which is also attached.

Mrs Diana Hunt
Chair of Governors