

Guide to being a school governor

The Greenshaw Learning Trust is governed by its Board of Trustees, which is responsible for the operation and performance of all schools in the Trust.

Each school in the Trust has its own governing body – formally called a ‘local governing body’, and legally a committee of the Board of Trustees.

The Trustees have delegated the management and oversight of each school to its headteacher and senior leadership team and its governing body.

The governing body is responsible for the strategic leadership of the school, for the school’s financial and academic performance, and for holding the headteacher to account. The governing body reports to the Board of Trustees.

Governors act collectively with other governors in the governing body and take equal responsibility for the decisions it takes. They exercise their powers in a primarily strategic leadership role, and should not get involved in the day-to-day running of the school. They must put the interests of the whole school first, regardless of the route by which they became a governor.

The Department for Education (DfE) identifies three core strategic functions for the governing body:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- Holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff; and
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

The governing body is responsible for ensuring that high standards of corporate governance are maintained. Governors should act at all times with honesty and integrity, in accordance with the Nolan principles of public life and the Trust Code of Conduct. They must respect confidentiality and recognise potential conflicts of interest and be ready to explain their actions and decisions to staff, pupils, parents and anyone with a legitimate interest in the school.

Governors must act in accordance with, and ensure that the school is managed in accordance with, the Articles of Association and the Funding Agreement of the Greenshaw Learning Trust, the Trust and governing body Procedures and any other rules and policies determined by the Board of Trustees, and with all relevant legislation and regulations.

All governors are under a duty to act in the interests of the school, to protect the assets, property and good name of the school and the Trust, and to ensure that their resources are used solely for the achievement or promotion of the Object of the Greenshaw Learning Trust; that is ‘to advance education for the public benefit, by establishing, maintaining, carrying on, managing and developing schools offering a broad and balanced curriculum’.

All governors except the headteacher serve for a term of office of four years, but can be reappointed. A governor may resign before their term of office ends.

Governors do not need to have any specific qualifications, and support and training is provided.

Requirements for being a school governor

To be a school governor a person must be over 18 and cannot be a current student of any school in the Greenshaw Learning Trust.

Any candidate to become a school governor must state if they are an employee of the Trust or a parent of a pupil at any school in the Trust (or about to join or considering joining the Trust), or a 'local authority influenced person' (see below) – which do not prevent the person becoming a governor. Before their appointment can be confirmed a governor must provide certain information we are required by the DfE to hold, undergo a criminal records check through the Disclosure and Barring Service, register any relevant business and personal interests as required by the DfE and the Trust's Funding Agreement (certain relevant interests will be made available to the public), and agree to abide by the Trust's Code of Conduct.

Further details may be obtained from the Clerk to the Governing Body.

You are a 'local authority influenced person' if any of the following apply:

- You are, or have been in the last 4 years, an elected member of any local authority;
- You are an officer or employee of any local authority; or
- You are both an employee and either a director, manager, secretary or other similar officer of a company which is under the control of any local authority.

Disqualifications to serve as a school governor

A governor may be removed from office if he/she is absent without the permission of the governing body from all the meetings of the governing body held within a period of six months and the governing body resolves that his/her office be vacated.

A person is disqualified from holding or continuing to hold office as a governor if he or she:

- becomes incapable by reason of illness or injury of managing or administering his/her own affairs.
- has been declared bankrupt and/or his estate has been seized from his possession for the benefit of his creditors and the declaration or seizure has not been discharged, annulled or reduced.
- is the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or an interim order.
- is subject to a disqualification order or a disqualification undertaking under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986 or to an order made under section 429(2)(b) of the Insolvency Act 1986 (failure to pay under county court administration order).
- is disqualified from acting as a trustee by virtue of any provision in the Companies Act 2006 or of section 178 of the Charities Act 2011 or is otherwise found to be unsuitable by the Secretary of State under the provisions of the Relevant Funding Agreements.
- has been removed from the office of charity trustee or trustee for a charity by an order made by the Charity Commission or the High Court on the grounds of any misconduct or mismanagement in the administration of the charity for which he was responsible or to which he was privy, or which he/she by his/her conduct contributed to or facilitated.
- has, at any time, been convicted of any criminal offence, excluding any that have been spent under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 as amended, and excluding any offence for which the maximum sentence is a fine or a lesser sentence except where a person has been convicted of any offence which falls under section 178 of the Charities Act 2011.
- has not provided to the chairman of the Trustees a criminal records certificate at an enhanced disclosure level under section 113B of the Police Act 1997, or if the certificate discloses any information which would in the opinion of either the chairman or the Chief Executive Officer of the Trust confirm their unsuitability to work with children.