

Why do schools have governors?

The short answer is, "because the law says so." In England and Wales state education is provided by a partnership between central government, local government, voluntary interests (e.g. churches), and school governing bodies, Headteachers and staff.

The law requires each school to have a governing body. The governing body is made up of people who represent many interested parties, including parents, teachers, the local authority and the community. Its task is to oversee the running of the school. The law also states what governing bodies are required to do and the rules by which they must work. Each local authority translates those rules into working instructions which relate to different types of schools in its area. These instructions are called the 'Instrument of Government'.

What do school governors do?

Governors are people who have an interest in the role of schools in society and wish to make a positive contribution to their communities. They will contribute to the effective day-to-day running of the school and the educational achievements of its pupils.

The main task for governing bodies is to promote high standards of educational achievement. The three key roles that governors fulfill in order to achieve that goal are defined by the [DCSF \(Department for Children, Schools and Families\)](#) as:

- to contribute to strategic planning
- to be a critical friend to the school (i.e to support and challenge the school)
- to ensure accountability.

Governors are required to attend meetings. There must be at least three full governing body meetings per year and failure to attend for any six-month period could result in disqualification.

Governors work as members of the governing body for the best interests of the school. This involves asking questions on a range of matters, perhaps when visiting the school, attending an open evening or during a meeting. It also means contributing opinions to the discussions of the governing body and accepting the majority view, which may not always reflect personal opinions.

Governors must show an interest in school activities, the everyday work of the school as well as special events. Governors are encouraged to visit during working hours.