

The Role of a Governor

The Trust has appointed Committees in each of their schools – known as Local Governing Bodies or Board of Governors. The Trust states that each school should have at least 8-12 local governors.

All Governors share the same powers and responsibilities whatever their category, but their authority is limited to acting as a Board; in other words, they as individuals have no authority. There is a Clerk to the Governors, who holds responsibility for ensuring that the business of the Board is properly conducted.

The Local Governing Body holds meetings twice a term (6 times a year). There are a number of statutory committees such as pay committee, staff pay appeals committee, staff discipline committee, staff discipline appeals committee and student discipline committee which meet as and when required, in addition to the twice termly local governing bodies.

The governors at James Hornsby meet at 4pm and where possible the meeting time is restricted to two hours.

A Governor would be expected to serve on at least one of the statutory committee and membership is usually agreed at the autumn term meeting. The commitment will therefore be seen to be at least two evenings a term. Governors are expected to link to a department/faculty within the school to monitor its progress. Therefore Governors are encouraged to visit the school during the day to carry out monitoring visits with their link department and report back to the local governing bodies at the next opportune meeting.

In conjunction with the Headteacher, the Governors are responsible for setting the school's budget, and for monitoring financial progress during the year. They decide the school's staffing structure, sit on appointment panels for senior staff, and approve promotions and salary increases. With advice from the Leadership Group, they approve the curriculum and the school's official policies. They appoint professional advisers; legal, accountancy, personnel, technology systems, and architectural. They submit bids for capital funding for building projects and maintenance, and oversee the work. They approve the school's code of conduct, and form the panels before which pupils and their parents or carers, are invited to attend, when the Governors are considering the exclusion of a student. All with the approval of the Trust Board.

Overall, then, the Governors' duty is to determine the aims and conduct of the school with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement. Perhaps the most important responsibilities are the strategic planning for the future of the school, and the monitoring and evaluation, via reports from the Headteacher and others, of what has been achieved. Governors have a strategic and questioning role. They do not manage the school on a day-to-day basis. The best analogy is, in commercial terms, that the Governors comprise the non-executive Board of Directors, and the Headteacher is the Executive Managing Director.

There is nothing to be feared in becoming a Governor. These points may help you to decide:-

1. The school carries insurance to cover Governors' liability. As long as Governors behave within the law, and are not negligent, they have no personal liability.

2. Governors may, if they wish, attend an externally run training course at the school's expense.
3. The minimum time commitment has been outlined above, but we encourage Governors to spend more time in school if they can. The more knowledge a Governor can acquire of how the school works the better he or she can contribute to Governors' meetings.
4. We are not isolated. We belong to a number of organisations, such as the NGA which keep us in touch with what is happening in the world of education.
5. In making our decisions, we have access to professional advice from our appointed professional advisers in each field, from the Local Authority, and from the Government's Department for Education (DfE) and the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).