

Gateshead Governor Support Service

The Role of the Link Governor



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School Improvement



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The Role of the Link Governor

Why Have a Link Governor?

To help the governing body and its individual members recognise, develop and use the knowledge and skills they need to function effectively.

Training

The Link Governor:

- Leads discussions on the Governor Support Programme and the impact of training within the governing body.
- Keeps governors up to date on the training courses available.
- Encourages all new governors to attend the induction course as soon as possible.
- Directs governors towards courses appropriate to the responsibilities they are taking on and the skills they need to develop.
- Helps governors book training.
- Uses feedback from training courses to share knowledge and skills and motivate other governors to train.
- Encourages governors to work for an award, and supports them when they do.

Knowledge and Skills Base

The Link Governor:

- Helps the governing body identify the skills, knowledge and experience needed to fulfil its responsibilities.
- Helps the governing body identify the skills, knowledge and experience members already have.
- Encourages governors to share what they have learned on training courses or through their own reading and research.
- Can establish a library for governors with books, training materials, policies, meeting papers, downloads from the internet, newspaper articles etc.

Strategic Development

The Link Governor:

- Ensures that the School Improvement Plan includes a section on governor development.
- Uses the School Improvement Plan to establish a prioritised register of skills and knowledge the governing body need to develop over the next few years.
- Works with the governing body on succession planning by encouraging potential chairs of committees and chair of the governing body to attend the Taking the Chair training programme.
- Ensures governor development regularly features on meeting agendas.

Team Building

The Link Governor:

- Welcomes new governors and helps them to quickly get up to speed.

Governors' Library

Governors need information if they are to carry out their role effectively and with confidence. Establishing and maintaining a resource library where useful material is organised and stored is something that a link governor might arrange. Whether it is primary or secondary, large or small, this may well be done in collaboration with the school library.

Suggested materials available in your library could include:

- Books on governance
- Guide to the Law for School Governors CD
- A collection of all school policies
- Materials from training sessions attended by governors
- Material from the LA, DCSF, OfSTED etc.
- Governor publications from NGA etc, or organisations of which you may be a member or from whom you can purchase some items
- A copy of the School Improvement Plan.
- A copy of the most recent OfSTED report
- Governing body meeting papers.
- Newspaper articles

In consultation with the head teacher you will need to find a space for the library. It could be in an accessible parents' area near the entrance, in the school library, or in a resources room. Ideally it should be somewhere governors can get to without disrupting the business of the school, and where they can spend some time browsing without being in anyone's way. Many of the materials will be used without being taken away. Some will need to be borrowed, and you will need to devise a simple and checkable way of recording who has them. You may like to update governors regularly on new items placed in the collection.

New Governors

You can help new governors become active and enthusiastic members of the team. Some will need more help than others and each governor may need help in a different area – a staff governor will know the school well but may not have experience of committee procedures, a new community governor may be an expert at meetings but unfamiliar with the school and its ethos.

All new governors will need briefing on the working practices of your school and governing body, such as how to suggest items for the agenda, procedures to visit the school, and what contribution is expected from them. Give them a call before their first meeting to make sure they are prepared and know where to go, when and what to expect.

At the first meeting make sure the new governor is introduced and gets to meet the other governors and the clerk.

Be aware during the meeting of how the new member is coping, and offer help if it is needed, particularly with abbreviations and acronyms.

After the first meeting you could talk to them about where to go to find out more information, suggest some reading material and encourage them to book on the induction course. Just to make sure, you could offer to book it for them!

Audit to Help with the Strategic Development of Your Governing Body

The document on the last two pages offers a way of assessing the skills, knowledge and development needs of the governing body and individual governors. This can be used to lead a discussion, completed individually or filled in as part of a short development session. Please feel free to adapt it to meet the needs of your own governing body.

Not all governors are comfortable completing forms like this. If you meet resistance, you will need to be patient! Given time, an effective Link Governor can help to raise the importance of training and development within the governing body. You can make a real contribution to developing an ethos where learning is a priority for governors and where governors recognise that in order to effectively improve learning for children they need to develop their own knowledge and skills.

Annual Training Report

Each year, at the end of the Summer term, Gateshead Governor Support Service produces a governing body annual training report. This lists all the courses governors have attended and is a useful way of checking whether your plans for training are being carried out.

Governors' Training and Development Needs Analysis

Name: _____

Why did you join this governing body?

From your background, experience and interests, what are the particular skills you bring?

How confident do you feel about the following roles?
 Please add any comments you wish.

Roles	Confident	Fairly Confident	Unsure	Very Unsure
Strategic Planning				
Monitoring the implementation of the School Improvement Plan				
Contributing to the review and approval of school policies				
Planning, setting and monitoring the budget				
Appointments, pay and employment issues				
Appeals				
Prepare the School Prospectus				
Work as part of a team				
Contributing to meetings				
What training and support do you currently feel you would like provided?				

Governor Skills, Experience and Interests Audit

Name:	
Subject	Pointers
<p>What courses or subjects have you studied for work or pleasure?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Languages ● Night classes ● Presentation/facilitating skills ● Book-keeping ● Hygiene/Food handling ● Sport ● Management and supervisory skills ● Customer care ● Child minding ● Art ● Music ● ICT
<p>What work experience (paid, voluntary, full and part-time) do you have?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Catering ● Labouring ● Industry sectors ● Clubs and hobbies (Drama, allotments, local history etc) ● Planning family events, parties, holidays etc ● Supervisory and management experience ● Report writing ● Journalism ● Fund raising ● Lottery bids ● Finance ● Recruitment
<p>What were your main responsibilities in each role?</p>	
<p>What subjects/areas particularly interest you?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Travel/Geography ● History ● Reading ● Childcare ● Legal Matters ● Personal Development ● Politics ● Music ● Arts ● Gardening ● Food ● Sport

Further Information

If you require any further information regarding the role of the Link Governor please contact your governing body support officer:

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Gateshead Raising Achievement Service, Learning & Children