

St Gregory's Catholic Comprehensive School Governing Body

Becoming a School Governor

"Governors are the bridge between the school and the community"

There are about 370,000 governor places in England, making them the largest volunteer force in the country. At any one time around 10 per cent of these places are vacant.

As a governor you can make a big contribution to raising standards in school. You don't need any special qualifications – in fact anyone with an interest in education can be a governor. All you need is enthusiasm and the commitment to be able to give up a few hours each month attending meetings and working to improve life at your school.

Governors can, and do, make a difference to children's future



What do governors do?

Together with the headteacher they set the future direction for the school and decide how the school's budget should be spent. Governing bodies make decisions collectively on matters such as performance targets, school policies and the school's improvement plan.

Governors monitor the impact of policies and oversee the use of the school's budget. They report to parents on the school's achievements and respond to inspection recommendations. They hear appeals from students and staff and consider complaints.

Governors provide the headteacher with support and advice, drawing on their knowledge and experience. They ask searching questions and respect the headteacher's position as professional leader of the school.

What are the benefits of being a governor?

The quality of the education we provide for today's children directly affects the quality of society in the future – and so being part of the team responsible for managing our schools offers a challenging and rewarding experience.

Many governors also feel that the role helps with their personal development and self-confidence.

Are there different types of governors?

The Governing Body at St Gregory's is made up of 20 Governors. There are several types of governor each bringing different areas of knowledge and experience to the governing body.

Foundation – Foundation governors are appointed by the school's founding body, the Archdiocese of Southwark. Foundation governors are appointed to preserve and develop the Catholic ethos of the school. They must also ensure compliance with the trust deed.

Local Authority – LA Governors are appointed by the Local Authority. A member of staff may not be an LA Governor.

Staff – Staff governors, like all governors, work on a voluntary basis and are elected by their colleagues. Staff governors must be employed at St Gregory's at the time of the election, and must resign once they cease to be employed by the school. The period of office is four years.

Parent – parents, including registered carers, of students at the school are eligible to stand for election. Parent Governors must have a child on roll at St Gregory's at the time of the election, but do not have to stand down if the child leaves the school before the term of office has finished. The period of office is four years

Do I need qualifications to be a school governor?

No. Schools need volunteers (whether parents or not) with experience of life, although some governors may have qualifications or professional skills that come in useful. There are no special qualifications necessary to be a governor except interest in, and commitment to, St Gregory's and a willingness to learn.

• **Commitment**

The commitment to be available and willing to attend governing body and other Committee meetings regularly and to undertake necessary preparation for meetings / events. Both individual governors and the full governing body itself shall at all times act with integrity, objectivity and honesty in the best interests of all the students and staff at the school.

• **Attitude**

- ✓ Desire to work for the good of students and the interests of the school
- ✓ Confidence in personal ability to do the job and play a full and active role
- ✓ Humility- a willingness to seek training and improve personal skills
- ✓ Co-operativeness and the desire and willingness to work as a member of a team
- ✓ Openness - to innovation and criticism
- ✓ The ability to see the school as part of the broader community and of the community of schools
- ✓ To have a view of education as a continuing process

• **Abilities**

- ✓ Observation e.g. the ethos of the school, the state of the school buildings, the internal and external expressions of opinion
- ✓ The ability to ask appropriate and searching questions at Governing Body meetings but always with the aim of improving standards of education for all students
- ✓ To read and evaluate minutes and reports effectively
- ✓ To take an active and informed part in the debate in meetings
- ✓ To be prepared to take part in appointments or appeals on occasions, to listen effectively and evaluate evidence
- ✓ To support the school in the wider community
- ✓ By arrangement with the Headteacher to make regular purposeful visits to the school within the agreed protocol for governor's link visits
- ✓ To use the appropriate and proper channels of communication
- ✓ To act for the good of the school and its students at all times
- ✓ To put the school's interests above personal preferences
- ✓ To respect others with whom you may not agree
- ✓ To be willing to support the decisions taken by the whole governing body



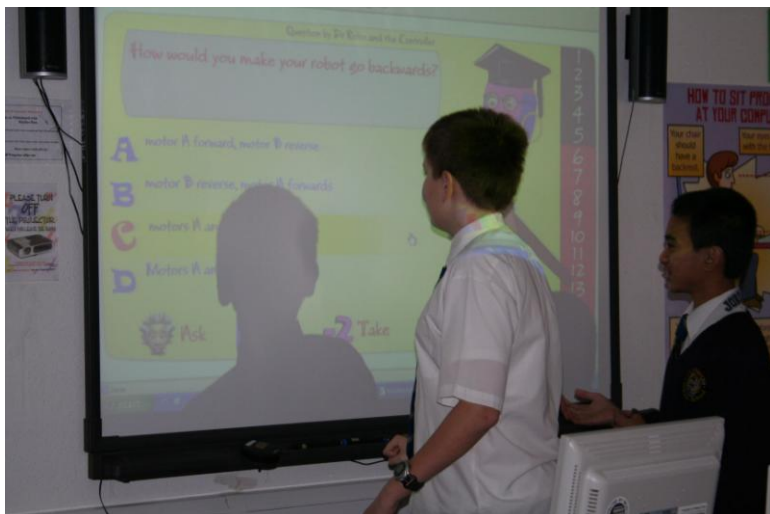
Please note this is not intended to be an exhaustive list.

If you have specific skills or experience in education or business this could be a great asset to the governing body, but such a background is not essential. Interest, enthusiasm, selflessness and commitment are the prime qualities needed, together with a willingness to learn.

How much time will it take up?

Governors serve for four years and can be re-appointed at the end of their term if they still qualify. The amount of time each person gives to the role will vary. However you will need to be willing to:

- prepare for meetings – there will be papers that need reading
- attend meetings – the Full Governing Body meets once a term, but you will be asked to serve on at least one committee.
- get to meetings – the Full Governing Body meetings and all Committee meetings are held in the evening between 4.30-6.30pm, however working group meetings are occasionally held during the day.



I work full-time. Will I still have time to be a school governor?

Many governors are in full-time work and all committee meetings take place in the evening (4.30 – 6.30pm). However, you would need to check carefully the number of meetings you would be expected to attend and when they usually take place (a schedule of meetings is set at the start of the academic year). Also bear in mind that you might want to spend time getting to know the school in other ways and joining in its activities, which may take place during the daytime.

What sort of committees are there and what do they do?

Admissions Committee

The Admissions Committee meets in January each year to consider the applications for places in Year 7 for the following September and to set the admissions policy for the following year (ensuring that the school co-operates and complies with the Local Authority Admissions Forum within the specified timescales). They also advise the headteacher on casual admissions throughout the year and ensure that the Admissions Appeals process is followed correctly in accordance with DCSF guidelines.

Learning and Teaching Committee

The Learning and Teaching Committee meets four times each year to approve, monitor and review the school curriculum policy, to set targets and to monitor examination performance, to monitor Additional Educational Needs (AEN) provision and equal opportunities within the curriculum, to manage any curriculum complaints and to monitor the Religious Education curriculum.

Finance, Environment and General Purposes Committee

The FEGP Committee meets three times each year to ensure the school policies on finance, health, safety, security and environment are regularly reviewed, implemented and monitored. The FEGP Committee monitors the financial administration of the school and ensures compliance with all financial instructions from the DCSF and the Local Authority. They ensure that all school funds are audited annually and ensure compliance with the external auditors' management letter following the annual audit.

The FEGP Committee has a budget working group to propose the requisite budgets for expenditure in the forthcoming financial years and to keep under review the school's actual financial performance compared with the budgeted performance and to take remedial action as necessary.

The FEGP also reports on the safety, security, maintenance, refurbishment and development of the school site

Staff Committee

The Staff Committee meets four times each year to ensure the school policies on staff appointment, pay, conditions and development are regularly reviewed, implemented and monitored and to make appropriate recommendations to the FEGP Committee. The Staff Committee monitors equal opportunities and ensures that development and training is available for all staff. Staff appeals panels are set up, when required, to consider representations from staff on matters of pay and conditions, complains and grievances, and for disciplinary and competency procedures.

Catholicity, Care and Community Committee

The CCC Committee meets three times each year in order to support the implementation of the school aims and mission statement by:

- encouraging and supporting strong links with parishes
- working with staff to further develop the Catholicity of the school
- promoting good relationships with parents and the wider community
- reviewing the School Profile annually
- reviewing the school dress code
- reviewing and monitoring governors' policies on Behaviour, Collective Worship, Equal Opportunities and Racial Equality, Pastoral Care and Child Protection, Primary/Secondary School Liaison and Visits and Journeys
- monitoring the Equal Opportunities and Racial Equality Policy
- supporting and administering a discipline panel as required



All Committees report to the Full Governing Body termly.



What support will I get as a governor?

- An induction course for newly appointed governors covering every main responsibility is provided by Kent County Council
- Subsequent training on a wide range of subjects is provided by Kent County Council, plus in-house Governor training
- The governing body has a clerk to organise arrangements for meetings and to make sure you have all the information you need
- The Governors' Manual is a comprehensive guide to the school and its policies
- Specific advice is available over the telephone from the Kent School Governance Helpline (01622 605160)
- The headteacher and experienced Governors on the governing body provide a major source of advice, plus an experienced governor will support you for your first year.

Are there any regulations covering who can be a Governor?

Anyone wishing to become a school governor must be aged 18 or over, beyond that there are very few restrictions! Governors are subject to a CRB check.

Full details of the regulations are available from Kent Governor Support 01622 605160 or email:schoolgovernor@kent.gov.uk.

What do I do next?

Contact the Headteacher or one of the Governors for a chat. Speak to your Parish Priest to support your application if you are interested in becoming a Foundation Governor.