

You can be a School Governor

Enriching Education in Essex



Essex schools need people like you.

Being a school governor is very rewarding. It's a way of helping to make sure that all our children have the very best opportunities available. This is an opportunity to put something back into your community, to make a difference.

Here's what some of our governors have said about being a school governor:

'I like being part of a team, feeling that I am helping the school to improve and make a difference for the children in the community.'

'Sharing the valuable experience I have gained over the years to help make a school in my area a fantastic place to learn'

'Retirement can bring a sense of isolation - I am now an active member of a new community with new and valued friends. I can again contribute in a meaningful way'

**Volunteer and make a
real difference in
your community.**

Who are school governors?

Did you know that school governors are the largest volunteer force in the county? There are over 8,500 governors in Essex!

You don't have to have children at the school to be a governor. You do have to be over 18, and pass a formal check for your suitability to be within a school.

Schools need a good mix of people from their local community, from all walks of life, who can bring different viewpoints, experience, skills and fresh ideas with them. They can be parents, staff at the school, resident in the locality or representatives of local churches and businesses.

You don't need to be an expert. What's really important is that you have energy, enthusiasm, time and **a real desire to help provide children with the best possible education.**

Some governors are elected by parents, some are appointed by the governing body itself, the local authority or the local churches. This is to help governing bodies reflect the communities they serve. What really matters is working together as a governing body to do the best for the school.

What do governors do?

The governing body works with the headteacher and the staff at the school to make sure the school provides good quality education for all its pupils, and constantly strives to improve. Governors don't need specialist skills, just an ability to listen, think through new ideas, and decide what's best for the school as part of a team. They need to set high expectations and ask challenging questions, but are not expected to make day to day decisions about how the school is run. That's the job of the headteacher and senior staff.

The 3 key roles of a governing body are to:

- provide strategic direction for the school;
- support the headteacher, but constantly look to raise standards;
- ensure accountability.

This means that as a governor, you may get involved in:

- deciding how the budget should be spent and ensuring good value for money;
- making sure the curriculum provides for and stretches all pupils;
- making sure the school buildings are welcoming, safe and well used;
- setting and monitoring the school's values, aims and policies;
- appointing staff and making sure the right development and reward arrangements are in place.

How much time does it take?

The term of office for a school governor is normally four years. You'll need to be able to give some time to go to meetings and read the paperwork. Most schools have a Full Governing Body meeting once a term (about 2 hours) and you may also join a committee(s) which usually meet once a term. It all depends on the amount of committee work that you choose to do.

Governors are strongly encouraged to visit the school to help them get to know and understand how the school works, and to monitor school improvement. You may be invited to special occasions such as assemblies, sports days, plays and presentations.

Being a school governor is a real opportunity to use your experience and to learn new skills. Your school and Essex Governor Services will give you all the support and training you'll need.

New governors receive a welcome pack, and are expected to attend a one day Induction course – essential to help them understand their role. These sessions are run across Essex, and tutors do their best to make them simple, rewarding and fun.

How do I become a school governor?

If you would like to be a governor at your child's school either contact the school direct or talk to Diane on **01245 437599** (email: **diane.jefferies@essex.gov.uk**). Diane can tell you where there are vacancies and help you decide what type of school you'd like to be a governor in.

This booklet is issued by

Essex County Council - Schools, Children and Families Directorate

You can contact us in the following ways:

By post:

Essex County Council, Governor Services,
PO Box 47, County Hall, Chelmsford Essex CM2 6WN

By telephone:

01245 437599 or 01245 436669

By email:

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Visit our website:

www.essex.gov.uk/governors

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