

Parent governor elections

Information sheet

Eligibility

Every parent of a registered student at the academy, whether or not he/she lives with the child, is entitled to be nominated as a parent governor and to vote in a parent governor election. Someone who has parental responsibility or day-to-day care of a child is also eligible to serve as a parent governor and to vote in an election. They should be a parent or a carer of a student at the academy at the time of election.

Academy staff who work at the academy for an average of more than one-third of an academy year (i.e. more than 500 hours in total) are only eligible to serve in the staff governor category at that academy and cannot be elected or appointed as a parent governor. However, if they are parents of registered students at the academy, they can vote in parent governor elections. (This does not affect the right of staff to serve as a governor in a different category at another academy). A parent governor does not have to stand down when his/her child leaves the academy and may complete his/her full term of office.

County Councillors are not eligible to serve as parent governors.

Nominations

When it is known that a parent governor is resigning or is due to complete his/her term of office, all parents of registered students should be informed of the vacancy and applications invited by a given date and time. An existing parent governor can stand again for election provided he/she still has a child at the academy. It is important to stress that support and training are available to help the successful candidate carry out his/her role.

Nominees need to be proposed and seconded by parents of registered students in the academy other than their own husband/wife or partner.

Elections

Where there are more applications received than the number of vacancies, an election needs to be held. It is recommended that a returning officer is appointed and this is normally the principal or chair of governors.

Candidates need to be aware that their reasons for becoming a governor as completed on the application form can be sent out to parents with the ballot papers. One ballot paper, showing the names of all the candidates and the number of votes to be cast, should be sent out to each parent (as defined above) giving a date and time for its return.

Ballot papers should be posted direct to any parents who do not live with the child and who have requested that academy information be sent to them by post.

Ballot papers will usually be returned by student post but parents must be given the opportunity to return the ballot papers by mail if they wish. It is, therefore, recommended that not less than a week is allowed for the return of the ballot papers.

The ballot must be secret and an envelope may be provided for the return of the voting slips. If there is a concern that voting papers may be duplicated, then it is possible to authenticate the ballot by stamping the voting slips or the envelopes with the Academy stamp or by using coloured paper. Parents should not sign the voting slips **or** the envelopes.

Counting of votes

The returning officer will count the votes at the end of the election period. Candidates should be informed of the time and place of the count so that they may attend as observers if they wish.

The candidate with the most votes is elected to fill the vacancy. In the event of a tie, the votes should be recounted. If the votes are still equal, the returning officer advises the candidates that the ballot is to be decided by the toss of a coin or the drawing of lots.

After the election is over, it is recommended that the ballot papers, including any spoilt papers, are kept for at least six weeks in case the result is challenged. All parents should be notified of the outcome of the election as soon as possible.

Parent governors appointed by the local governing body

Academies will make every reasonable effort to fill parent governor vacancies through elections. If too few parents are nominated to fill all the vacancies available, then the local governing body may decide to appoint one of the following to fill a parent governor vacancy:

- a parent of a registered student at the academy, or if that is not possible.
- a parent of a former student at the academy, or if that is not possible.
- a parent of any child under or of compulsory academy age.