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## Chair of Governors – Role Description

The role of the chair is complex, demanding, multi-faceted and very rewarding. The chair leads the governing board (board) to ensure that it fulfils its functions and responsibilities effectively, and delivers the school's ethos and vision. They are the key contact between the board and the headteacher.

An effective chair will work well with school leaders to advise and shape proposals to be discussed at the full governing board meetings. They ensure that governors are working as a team to challenge, support and contribute to the strategic leadership of the school. As well as leader of the governing board, the chair will be at times a confidante, a manager, a critical friend, an ambassador, an arbitrator, and a role model. The balance of these roles will depend on the situation at hand, the experience of the headteacher and expectations of the school's stakeholders.

The expected time commitment is likely to be around 30 days per year. This is made up of preparation and participation in full governing board and sub-committee meetings, regular contact with the headteacher, school visits / events, and ad hoc meetings with parents and external parties, such as Herts Improvement Partners and community stakeholders. The chair will also be expected to attend governor training.

All governors are expected to have a commitment to diversity and equal opportunities. This is to ensure that the board fully represents the community that they serve.

## Role purpose

### The chair will lead and develop the governing board of the school

- Provide leadership and direction to the governing board, keeping it focused on its core educational, financial, and safeguarding responsibilities.
- Be responsible for ensuring that governors work as part of an effective team and fulfil their functions to achieve effective governance of the school.
- Ensure that school improvement is the focus of all policy and strategy and that governor scrutiny, monitoring and challenge reflect school improvement priorities.
- hold the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its students, and for the performance management of staff.
- ensure oversight of the financial and operational performance of the school so that the school's leadership team are making the most effective use of the school's human, financial, and physical resources.
- Ensure that all statutory and regulatory requirements are fully met, in its use of resources.
- Make governing board members feel valued and motivated to give of their best.
- Ensure the governing board has the required skills to perform its role effectively, and where skills gaps are identified, that suitable training and development activities are carried out.
- Promote a culture of self-development, mutual support and mentoring within the governing board.
- Ensure members of the governing board act appropriately, in line with the governor code of conduct.
- The chair will work with the vice-chair to:
  - Ensure an efficient and effective committee structure, with clear terms of reference that allow the governing board to execute its governance responsibilities.
  - Ensure there is a clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of all governors
  - Delegate tasks and responsibilities to them as appropriate

- Ensure a proactive succession plan is in place, and regularly reviewed, in order to maintain the capabilities of the governing board, identify successors for the chair, vice-chairs, and committee chairs, and create a positive mix of new and experienced governors from diverse backgrounds.
- Conduct annual performance reviews with each governor.
- Prepare the annual governor development plan and review the distribution of governors across committees and link governor roles.

### **Leading school improvement**

- Ensure that the board provides input at both the strategic and operational level in the school's self-evaluation processes, the development and execution of the School Development Plan (SDP), and that this feeds directly into the key priorities for the governing board and its committees.
- Lead governors in monitoring the headteacher's implementation of the school's strategy (SDP).
- Ensure that governing board business is appropriately balanced between strategic priorities, operational goals, opportunities, challenges and risks.

Represent the governing board at relevant external meetings with agencies such as the local authority.

- Ensure the governing board has mechanisms in place to obtain and listen to the views of parents, students and staff.

### **Working together**

#### ***The Chair and the governing board***

- With the headteacher, vice-chair and clerk, plan the content of the board meetings to ensure that agendas are relevant and focused on key responsibilities and strategic priorities.
- Ensure that board meetings are chaired effectively, promoting a culture of open and honest discussion, that allows ideas and discussion to thrive whilst ensuring clear decisions are reached as quickly as possible.
- Ensure that governors and the headteacher have a shared sense of purpose.

#### ***The Chair and headteacher***

- Build a professional relationship with the headteacher which allows for honest and open conversations, act as a sounding board and offer guidance, advice and direction where required.
- Meet with the headteacher, at least monthly, to review progress, discuss challenges and opportunities and identify and address risk issues.
- Ensure appropriate governor involvement in the recruitment of the school's senior leaders.
- Oversee and participate in the headteacher's performance review, ensuring that appropriate CPD (continuing professional development) is provided.
- Ensure that the headteacher provides staff with an understanding of the role of the governing board and that staff support and engage with the governing board as required, in a positive manner.
- If required, play a lead role in any decision to discipline, suspend or remove the headteacher.

#### ***The Chair and other stakeholders***

- Ensure the board implements initiatives that embed the school in the local community in a positive manner, and finding opportunities to facilitate community cohesion.
- Where required, represent the governing board and be an advocate for the school in its relationships with its stakeholders
- Represent the governing board at school activities and functions (plays, sports days, prize giving, special assemblies) and encourage other governors to do so.
- Ensure that any formal complaints, disciplinary appeals and other statutory responsibilities are dealt with in a timely, fair and open manner. Where appropriate, meet directly with complainants and where possible attempt to resolve issues in an informal manner.

## Training and development

- Attend relevant training as required
- Keep up to date with changes and trends in the educational landscape especially political, regulatory and financial trends.
- Seek a suitable mentor to support personal development.
- Develop vice-chairs' capabilities.

## Outcomes for success

At the end of their initial one-year term, the new chair of governors should have:

- Established their position as the leader of the governing board, championing governor colleagues to support and challenge the delivery of the school development plan and improve academic and wellbeing outcomes for students.
- Built a strong, open, honest and mutually respectful relationship with the headteacher, acting as a supporter and critical friend and providing constructive challenge.
- Supported the school to navigate the current economic and political environment and the related challenges and constraints.
- Acted as an advocate for and representative of the governing board, both internally and externally, establishing mutually respectful relationships with key stakeholders.

## Person Specification

- Excellent leadership skills.
- Strong personal ethic and integrity.
- Committed to the school.
- Excellent communication and organisational skills.
- People skills and emotionally resilient.
- Good understanding of the environment in which the school is operating and wider education policy.
- Negotiation and diplomacy skills plus the ability to have courageous conversations and make courageous decisions.
- Good understanding of the legal responsibilities of the governing board as both individuals and a corporate entity.
- Ability to think strategically.
- Good time management.
- Capacity to process information quickly and understand relevant data.
- Basic financial knowledge/experience.
- Knowing where to find information and advice.
- Asking for support early when problems or issues emerge, to prevent further difficulties.

## How to apply

If you are interested in this role it would be great to hear from you. Please contact [admin@yorkroad.herts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@yorkroad.herts.sch.uk) to arrange a time to speak to the head.