

## **APAT Local Parent Governors Frequently Asked Questions**

### **What do governors do?**

This is explained in our associated document - 'The Role of the APAT Local Governor'.

### **What skills and experience do you need to be a Parent Governor?**

The main requirement is that you are a Parent or Carer of a young person in the School and are able to give the necessary time to work with the Local Governing Body (LGB). Parent Governors bring a unique perspective and invaluable life experience to the LGB. In this document, the word 'Parent' should be taken to include anyone who has the legal 'care and control' of a child in the School.

### **As a Parent Governor, would I be expected to consult other parents and put their views forward to the Governing Body?**

No, Parent Governors are not parent representatives. They are **representative parents** who are free to put their own views forward. Parent Governors always have a good idea about general issues that affect parents, but you are not there to champion individual causes.

### **Do I need to know a lot about the education system to become a Parent Governor?**

No, you do not need to be an educational expert as all new Governors are provided with induction training on joining the Governing Body. A very wide range of online training is also available from Educare, one of our training partners. Experienced members of the Local Governing Body are always happy to support new Governors.

### **What time commitment is involved?**

This will vary according to your level of involvement and availability. As a minimum, we would expect you to attend every Full Governing Body meeting (FGB, two in the autumn term and one each in the spring and summer terms) These are usually held in the late afternoon and if you cannot get to the school, a Zoom link is often available. You may also be asked to join a second Committee (usually Finance and Resources, F&R) but some of our LGBs have already combined the agenda with the FGB meeting. Meetings usually last about 2- hours. You will also need to commit to undertaking compulsory training (eg Safeguarding) within and outside school hours, and it is always good to see Parent Governors at school events.

### **Will I need to take time off work to fulfil the duties of a Governor?**

Not necessarily since some of our meetings and the events take place after normal working hours. However, a Governor's role is more fulfilling and you will work more effectively within the Governing Body if you can make the time to meet with staff and attend school events which take place during the school day.

### **What if my employer is not willing to release me?**

Under employment law, employers must give employees who are school Governors 'reasonable time off' to carry out their responsibilities as Governors, but you should check this with your employer before to apply to be a Parent Governor. Although employers are not bound to do so, enlightened employers give time off with pay in recognition of the personal development benefits to the employee and, ultimately, to the employer's business, but some employers may not. Again, you would need to check this.

### **What benefits will there be for me?**

Becoming a Governor can bring you great personal and professional benefits, particularly if you have taken a career break to focus on your family. Being a Governor is a valuable addition to your CV, and shows future employers that you have remained committed to your own development despite taking time out of the working world. At work, It can also enhance your experience and skills within your existing job.

### **Will becoming a Parent Governor give me greater access to the School so that I can be more involved in my child's education or the education of another child?**

No, this would not be appropriate . If you have concerns about a particular child's education and hope to pursue this through the Governing Body, the role of Parent Governor is not for you. The Governing Body works at a strategic, not an operational level. If you do have concerns about your daughter or son, the correct procedure is to contact the School in the normal way and follow the appropriate policies and procedures.

### **Will there have to be an election if I put myself forward as a Parent Governor?**

Parent Governors are always elected by the Parent body. APAT schools each have two Parent Governors on their LGB and, if there is a vacancy, the School will start a process whereby a letter will go to all Parents inviting them to apply. Where more than one person applies, an election by the Parents will be held. Even if you are the only applicant, you will then need to complete a formal Trust application form so that the Trust can confirm your suitability.

### **Will I have to undergo any checks to become a Parent Governor?**

Yes. You will appreciate that checks have to be made on anyone fulfilling a voluntary role which brings them into contact with children and young people. New Governors are required to undertake a DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check before they are appointed. The check is conducted through the School and is very straightforward.

Finally, if you have any further questions, you should speak to the school Principal in the first place, who may put you in touch with the Trust HR team.