

DIOCESE OF WESTMINSTER EDUCATION SERVICE

The Role of the Staff Governor

Guidance September 2018

Each school's Instrument of Government sets out the composition of the governing body. For Academies this will be set out in the Articles of Association. The School Governance (Constitution) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 and subsequent 2017 Regulations provide details of many areas of procedure for governors. Elected governors, whether staff or parent, as full members of the governing body are subject to the provisions of these documents.

In voluntary aided schools it is the governors (not the LA) who are responsible, directly or by delegation, for the correct conduct of the election of staff governors in accordance with the provisions of Schedule 2 to the SGR 2012.

Instruments of Government allow for there to be at least one staff governor, plus the Headteacher, but these should form no more than a third of the total governing body. Only those in paid employment as teachers or support staff (full or part-time) at the school may stand for and vote in staff governors elections. Further information on staff governor election procedures may be found in '**Guidance on the Election of Staff and Parent Governors**' on the Diocese of Westminster website.

Elected staff governors hold office for four years but cease to be governors when no longer employed to work at the school. Headteachers may remain governors for as long as they remain in post.

Once elected, staff governors serve in a personal, rather than a representative capacity. As members of staff in a Catholic school they should have a clear vision of the school's mission and be able to contribute a professional perspective to the educational issues of concern to the governors. The role of a staff governor is quite distinct from that of a representative from a professional association. It is not, and must not be seen by staff and governors as a conduit between staff and governors, which bypasses the headteacher.

Matters which concern staff must be communicated in the first instance to the headteacher before referral to the governing body. Regular and open communication between headteacher and staff governors is clearly desirable.

Staff governors share in the governing body's corporate responsibility for the school's well-being and ensure that the school's aims are carried out. In company with their fellow governors they must exercise prudence in discussing governors' matters outside of meetings and observe strict confidentiality on issues identified by

governors as confidential. They are bound, as are all; to withdraw from meetings in the circumstances described in Regulation 26 and in Schedule 6 to The School Governance (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) (England) Regulations 2013. Staff governors should also consider the desirability of voluntary withdrawal in situations which are acknowledged to be unusually sensitive.

Elected staff governors should not sit on a panel considering the admission or exclusion of a pupil in the School. Like the headteacher and any governor employed at the school the staff governor may not be Chairperson or Vice Chairperson of the governing body or any of its committees.

Finally, in this context, it will be appreciated that circumstances also arise, for example when the treatment or conduct of a pupil or an employee is being investigated and an appeal situation may follow, recommended procedures will not, in the interests of fairness and natural justice, involve every member of the governing body at the outset. So information on pupil exclusion or personnel issues will not be released to the full governing body, only to those members who form the panel. This ensures that governors will ultimately be able to offer opinions and give decisions from an objective and unprejudiced position i.e. without involvement prior to the hearing. Governors must therefore respect the position of the chairperson and Headteacher or others of their number charged with the task of carrying out an investigation on a confidential basis at a stage before governors themselves are called upon as a body or committee to hear the matter.

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