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# ELECTION PROCEDURES FOR PARENT GOVERNORS IN LA MAINTAINED SCHOOLS

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JULY 1, 2020  
LONDON BOROUGH OF ENFIELD

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### ELECTION PROCEDURES FOR PARENT GOVERNORS

*In Voluntary Aided Schools the Governing Body agrees the election procedure. However, they are welcome to use this procedure.*

The election of Parent Governors for schools is conducted by the Headteacher acting as the Returning Officer on behalf of the Director of Schools and Children's Services.

#### **WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO STAND FOR ELECTION?**

Any parent (including carers) of a registered pupil at the school at the time of the election except if they are:

- an elected member of the Council (i.e. Councillor);
- paid to work at the School for more than 500 hours in a 12-month period (staff can however vote in parent governor elections if they are parents of a registered pupil at the School).

As well as the biological parents of a pupil Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 defines "parent" to include:

- all-natural parents, whether they are married or not;
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has "parental responsibility" for the child or young person;
- any person who, although not a natural parent, "has care" of a child or young person.

Section 3 of the Children Act 1989 defines "parental responsibility" (P.R.) as all the rights, duties, powers, responsibilities and authority which by law a parent has in relation to a child and his/her property. This means that a child can easily have three or four "parents".

If you have any queries concerning eligibility please contact Governor Support Service, on [Governor.Support.Service@enfield.gov.uk](mailto:Governor.Support.Service@enfield.gov.uk).

#### **WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO VOTE?**

**Every "parent"** (see above definition) with a registered pupil at the school, including nursery, both full time and part time pupils, at the time of the election is entitled to **one vote for each parent governor vacancy**, irrespective of the number of children they have registered at the school.

#### **ELECTION PROCEDURE**

- Inform "parents" (taking into consideration the definition above) of the current/forthcoming vacancy/ies (the term before the terms of office of current Governors will end) and invite nominations: by letter, or via the Newsletter, or via the Website.
- At least **7 clear days** should be allowed for receipt of nominations.
- On contacting the School, the Declaration of Eligibility form should be sent to each prospective candidate for them to read and sign and return to the School. **Candidates should confirm (on the 'Declaration of Eligibility Form') that they have no reasons that would disqualify them from standing before a ballot is held.**
- If the number of eligible candidates is the same or less than the number of vacancies then these candidates will be elected unopposed.
- If a ballot is necessary (the number of nominations is greater than the number of vacancies), the required papers should be sent to all parents eligible to vote (please note this should be a secret ballot and there should be no means of identifying the voter). In the letter inviting parents to vote for candidates a date and time for closure of the ballot must be given. This should be at least **7 clear days** from receipt of the ballot papers.

- Electronic voting is permitted, e.g. via the link on the School website and [Survey monkey](#) or [Google Forms](#) or Smart Survey (needs subscription). The returning officer and governing body will need to ensure that any electronic process is secure, that voters can only vote once and that individual voters, or how they have cast their votes, cannot be identified. If an electronic process is adopted the school must provide an alternative paper ballot and means of submitting the ballot paper for parents who request it. Suggested measures for security include:

➤ Sending individual links

To guarantee that only eligible people vote, and that they only do so once, schools can provide each voter with an individual link to a voting website.

or

➤ Using one link and asking for identification

An alternative option is to send the same link to all voters but require some form of identification before they vote. This method would ensure that only eligible people vote, although there may be concerns about the anonymity of their votes.

- Candidates should be given the opportunity to provide a brief description of themselves (approximately 200 words or less) for circulation with the ballot papers.
- Some schools choose to use the double envelope system for extra security:
  1. send two envelopes with each ballot paper
  2. the voter seals their completed ballot paper in an unmarked envelope
  3. the voter should seal the unmarked envelope inside the outer envelope. They should write their name clearly on the outer envelope.
  4. the voter should return the double envelope to the school
  5. on receipt of the ballot paper the HT or their nominee should check the name on the outer envelope against the list of those entitled to vote and tick it off
  6. the outer envelope is removed and the inner placed in the ballot box
- The counting of ballot papers should be supervised by the Headteacher and at least one other person not directly involved in the election.
- The Headteacher as Returning Officer determines whether ballot papers are valid. Votes should be allowed where the voters intention is clear.
- The election should be decided by a simple majority of votes cast.
- If there is an equal number of votes cast for two or more candidates then the successful candidate shall be chosen by drawing lots.
- Candidates should be notified of the result of the election by the school as soon as possible. Parents should be notified of the result by letter or by the chosen means of communication a school has with parents. i.e. newsletter. The results should also be displayed on the School notice board. Any unsuccessful candidates should be thanked for their interest and encouraged to consider vacancies in the future or at other schools.
- The date of appointment is either the closing date for nominations, where a candidate is elected unopposed, or the closing date of the ballot if more candidates than vacancies were received.
- The ballot papers should be kept by the school for at least six months in case the election result is challenged.
- In any dispute the Director of Schools and Children's Services will act as arbitrator and their decision will be final.

### TIMETABLE FOR ELECTION OF PARENT GOVERNOR

Day 1	Day 8	Day 10	Day 17	Day 18
Letter to be sent out detailing the election as soon as possible after a vacancy occurs.	<p>Closing date for return of nominations</p> <p>If only one nomination is received and there is only one place, parent is automatically appointed.</p>	Ballot papers (indicating return date) and election statements to be provided to every parent eligible to vote	Closing date for return of ballot papers	<p>Ballot papers counted. In the event of a tie, the result will be decided by the toss of a coin.</p> <p>Candidate/s informed of the outcome of the election.</p>

PARENT GOVERNOR ELECTIONS  
**MODEL FIRST LETTER REQUESTING NOMINATIONS**

Date:

Dear Parent

**ELECTION OF PARENTS TO THE SCHOOL'S GOVERNING BODY**

The Governing Body of the School currently has a \* vacancy/ies for Parent Governors.

I am writing to invite nominations of parents interested in standing for election to fill this/these vacancy/ies.

**The Role of the Governing Body**

The Governing Body is responsible for both the conduct of the School and for promoting high standards. The Governing Body undertakes its role by setting the vision for the School and then ensuring that the School works efficiently and effectively towards achieving its vision. It does this by building a thorough knowledge of the School and its community, by both supporting and constructively challenging the School, and by ensuring accountability and compliance.

Before you decide to put your name forward, you may wish to know a little more about what is involved. Governors' responsibilities include consideration and agreement of the aims and policies of the school, discussion and approval of the targets for improvement, appointment of senior members of staff, setting and monitoring the budget, monitoring the performance of the school and reporting to the parents and community on how they have accomplished their tasks.

**Expectations from a governor**

Governors are expected to attend termly Governing Body meetings, regularly visit the School for monitoring purposes and undertake relevant identified training. Governors need not be experts in the field of education. They need to have an interest in the School and in the welfare of the pupils and the time and willingness to become involved.

The skills you have can be very useful to the Governing Body.

At present the Governing Body is lacking Governors who have expertise in xxxxxxxxx. If you have the required experience, please consider applying.

If you wish to stand for election could you please let me know in writing by give 7 clear days' notice

If the number of candidates is greater than the number of parent governor vacancies then a ballot will be necessary. In this instance you will be sent details of the candidates and a ballot paper on which to record your vote/s. Should a ballot be necessary, the candidate may if s/he wishes write a brief description of themselves, in not more than 200 words, for circulation with the ballot papers.

**Who can stand for election?**

Every parent of a registered pupil at the School is entitled to stand for election **except** someone who is

- an elected member of the Council;
- paid to work at the School for more than 500 hours in a 12-month period.

**All prospective candidates should contact the School to request the 'Declaration of Eligibility Form' which**

**they should read, sign and return to the School to state that none of the information applies to them.**

The successful candidate will be required to have a DBS check. As this position is exempt from The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 you will be required to declare all unspent and spent cautions and criminal offences, including any pending convictions. The disclosure of a criminal record or other information will not necessarily debar you from volunteering as a Governor. This will depend on the nature of the position and the circumstances, nature and background of your offence(s).

Parent Governors are representative parents but not parent representatives and bring a parental perspective to the GB discussion. I hope that you will take advantage of this opportunity to become involved in the School.

If you would like to find out more about how you can contribute to governance at the School, please forward your contact details and I will arrange for a Governor to contact you.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

PARENT GOVERNOR ELECTIONS  
**MODEL LETTER - SENDING OUT BALLOT PAPERS**

Dear Parent

**ELECTION OF PARENTS TO THE SCHOOL'S GOVERNING BODY**

Following my recent letter, I am pleased to report that we have \* candidates standing for the position/s of parent governor.

Please find attached brief descriptions provided by the candidates about themselves, a ballot paper and an envelope for its return to the School. Every parent has the right to vote once for up to \* candidate(s), regardless of the number of children you have at the School. Each parent should therefore receive and return only one ballot paper.

The ballot paper must be returned to the School in the envelope provided by the end of the school day on \* .  
(*Note to Headteacher : give at least 7 clear days notice*). I hope that you will take advantage of this opportunity to take part in this parent governor election.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

Candidate Name	
Candidate Address	
Candidate Statement	
Candidate Photo	
<p>I confirm that I am the parent/carer of a registered pupil at the school and am not :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an elected member of the local authority</li> <li>• paid to work at the school for more than 500 hours in any consecutive 12-month period</li> <li>• I have signed the declaration of eligibility form</li> </ul> <p><b>Signature</b>_____ <b>Date</b>_____</p>	

## ELIGIBILITY FORM FOR PRIMARY/SECONDARY AND SPECIAL MAINTAINED SCHOOLS

### To confirm your eligibility to be a school governor you need to:

1. Sign this form to confirm that none of the enclosed rules apply to you;
2. Provide us with your full name and date of birth. This information is used to check your details with the DBS. Governors are required to agree to an enhanced DBS check for children within 21 days of appointment.
3. Take this form to the school reception along with proof of your identity such as – Passport, Driving Licence, Birth Certificate (original documents only please).

**Please read the following statement and sign below to confirm that you have read and understood the statements and that they do not apply to you.** The information below is taken from Schedule 4 of the Constitution Regulations which covers the qualifications and disqualifications of governors.

- A governor must be aged 18 or over at the time of his or her election or appointment and cannot be a registered pupil at the school. A person cannot hold more than one governorship at the same school.
- A person is disqualified from holding or from continuing to hold office as a governor or associate member if they:
  - are subject to a bankruptcy restriction order, an interim bankruptcy restriction order, a debt relief order or an interim debt relief order;
  - have had their estate sequestrated and the sequestration order has not been discharged, annulled or reduced;
  - are subject to:
    - i) a disqualification order or disqualification undertaking under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986;
    - ii) a disqualification order under Part 2 of the Companies (Northern Ireland) Order 2002;
    - iii) a disqualification undertaking accepted under the Company Directors Disqualification (Northern Ireland) Order 2002;
    - iv) an order made under Section 429(2)(b) of the Insolvency Act 1986 (failure to pay under a County Court administration order);
- have been removed from the office of charity trustee or trustee for a charity by the Charity Commissioners or High Court on grounds of any misconduct or mismanagement, or under Section 34 of the Charities and Trustees Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 from participating in the management or control of anybody;
- are included in the list of people kept under section 1 of the Protection of Children Act 1999(a), which the Secretary of State considers unsuitable to work with children;
- are disqualified from working with children or subject to a direction under Section 142 of the Education Act 2002;
- are subject to a direction of the Secretary of State under section 128 of the Education and Skills Act 2008;
- barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006(c);
- disqualified from working with children under sections 28, 29 or 29A of the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000(d);
- disqualified from registration under Part 2 of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010(e) for child minding or providing day care; or
- disqualified from registration under Part 3 of the Childcare Act 2006(f).
- have received a sentence of imprisonment (whether suspended or not) for a period of not less than three months (without the option of a fine) in the five years before becoming a governor or since becoming a governor;
- have received a prison sentence of two-and-a-half years or more in the 20 years before becoming a governor;
- have at any time received a prison sentence of five years or more;
- have been fined for causing a nuisance or disturbance on school premises during the five years prior to or since appointment or election as a governor;
- refuse to allow an application to the Disclosure and Barring Service for a criminal record certificate.
- I hereby certify that none of the above applies to my Governorship at this school.

Signature\_\_\_\_\_

Date\_\_\_\_\_

**INSERT NAME SCHOOL**

**ELECTION OF PARENT GOVERNORS**

**BALLOT PAPER**

- You should vote for *insert number candidate(s)*.
- Vote by placing an **X** in the box opposite the name of the candidate(s) you wish to be elected.
- Fold the completed paper, place it in the envelope provided and return it to the School as soon as possible and at the latest by the end of the School day on *insert date*

PARENT GOVERNOR BALLOT PAPER	
Mr A.	
Mrs B.	
Ms C.	

## Template letter to successful candidate(s)

Dear [insert name]

I am pleased to inform you that you've been elected as parent governor and your term of office will commence on [insert date] for [insert number of years].

Your first governing board meeting will be held on [insert date and time]. You'll receive an induction pack and a copy of the agenda ahead of the meeting.

To prepare for your first meeting, we recommend that you:

- Take a look at the school website and read our latest Ofsted report
- Read the Governance Handbook which sets out the duties of the governing board ([www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-handbook](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-handbook))
- Complete an induction e-learning module for new governors ([www.governorinduction.thekeysupport.com](http://www.governorinduction.thekeysupport.com)). This will help you to gain a better understanding of your role
- Insert any other relevant preparations

I look forward to working with you.

Yours sincerely,

## Template letter announcing the results to parents

Dear parents/carers

I am writing to inform you of the result of our election for parent governor(s).

**Elected:** [insert name(s)]

We would like to thank all those who put their name forward and took the time to complete candidate statements and for those of you who voted. Details of the number of votes cast can be obtained on request from [insert location].

If you would like to be considered in another capacity as one of our governors at a later date, please contact [insert name/role].

Alternatively, do consider looking for vacancies in other schools in the area. For further support with this, register your interest with [governor.support.service@enfield.gov.uk](mailto:governor.support.service@enfield.gov.uk).

Yours sincerely,