



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

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Induction training for school governors in Wales

Requirements for local authorities on what to include in training for new school governors.

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Contents

Overview

The different and complementary roles of governors

Key roles and responsibilities of governing bodies

How to be an effective governor

Background information and related links

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Overview

This document sets out the scope and content of the governor induction training.

All school governors in Wales must have induction training within one year of their appointment or election and will be expected to undertake induction training as contained in this document. Local authorities and other training providers may wish to expand on the content contained in this document and use it for refresher training on key areas.

The training will help ensure that governors:

- have the required knowledge and understanding to begin to fulfil their role effectively as a governor to support their school in raising standards
- are aware of national and local educational issues and their impact on governing bodies
- recognise the importance of training and the need to develop their skills and take advantage of other training opportunities available to them

The training will reflect the current legislative framework for school governance in Wales and will define clearly what should be expected from the role of governors, focusing on:

- raising standards and school improvement
- the strategic role
- the range of powers and duties of governing bodies
- how the governing body supports and challenges the work of the school
- their role in monitoring and evaluating progress within the school
- how and to whom governing bodies are accountable

The information provided in the induction training will help support new governors to develop a range of key skills and attributes which add value to a

governing body, such as self-confidence, team working, problem solving, time management, analysis and evaluation of information.

The training will allow for governors to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding of governance and provide an overview of school governance and will be set out in four inter-related areas as follows:

- the different and complementary roles of governors
- key roles and responsibilities of governing bodies
- how to be an effective governor
- where to access further support and training

Each key area provides a summary of the key points which local authorities and other training providers should cover in the induction training. The summaries are not meant to be exhaustive, but are meant to give an overview to help with planning training courses. Local educational issues and processes, as well as new and changed national policies should be borne in mind at each section. Links to where information on national policies can be found are provided in the final section of this document.

The different and complementary roles of governors

This key area focuses on:

- the composition of governing bodies and how governing bodies are made up in accordance with the category of the school in which they serve
- different types of governor, and how they represent the various stakeholders associated with the school – headteacher, parent, local authority, teacher staff, community, additional community, foundation, sponsor governors, associate pupil (in secondary and middle schools)

- how each category is appointed or elected, the length of the term of office, for example 4 years or 2 years depending on the type and school category
- what commitment is expected of a governor – tenure of office, attendance and behaviour at governing body meetings, committees and events, visits to school, attendance at governor training sessions, time to read relevant paperwork
- the **Seven Principles of Public Life** and how they influence governing body practice; governors need to understand what is expected of them and how they can be held to account to be good role models
- the process for annual election of the chair and vice chair

The role of the chair

- Providing a clear lead in organising the governing body's work.
- Ensuring all governors are fully informed and involved in meetings.
- Ensuring that the governing body works as a team.
- Making good use of the skills and expertise of members.
- Managing meetings effectively.
- Maintaining an effective relationship with the headteacher.
- Providing support and strategic challenge to the headteacher.
- Acting as a spokesperson on behalf of the governing body.

The chair of the governing body should form a productive and respectful professional relationship with the headteacher, whereby the governing body feels empowered to ask questions and hold the headteacher and senior leadership team to account.

The role of the clerk

- Convening governing body meetings.
- Distributing papers.

- Taking and distributing governing body meeting minutes.
- Maintaining membership, including instruments of government, and attendance registers.
- Offering procedural advice and guidance during and between meetings.
- Ensuring any follow up action has been taken.

The clerk is accountable to the governing body and should work closely with the chair, the headteacher and other governors on identified tasks. The clerk will often provide a close link between the governing body and the local authority and is therefore perfectly placed to provide advice on procedural matters.

Some members of the governing body will take on additional responsibilities, such as being the nominated governor or champion for specific roles, for example additional learning needs, child protection, equity and diversity, areas of learning and experience in the Curriculum for Wales.

Key roles and responsibilities of governing bodies

This key area focuses on the purpose of governance – to help provide the best possible education for learners – and how individual governors contribute to the work of the governing body in school improvement.

Powers and duties of the governing body

- Providing a strategic view: setting the framework within which the headteacher and staff run the school, setting the aims and objectives, agreeing policies, targets and priorities for achieving these objectives, and monitoring and evaluating.
- Acting as a critical friend: providing support and challenge to the

headteacher and staff, seeking information and clarification.

- Ensuring accountability: explaining the decisions and actions of the governing body to anyone who has a legitimate interest.

Core responsibilities

- Standards: ensuring the school promotes high standards of educational achievement, and attendance and behaviour, including the rigorous review of published performance data, the school development plan and robust self-evaluation.
- Targets: setting targets by which progress for learner achievement and outcomes can be measured.
- Curriculum for Wales: ensuring that all learners access a broad and balanced curriculum that meets statutory requirements, as well as supports and challenges them to progress in their learning.
- Determining the aims, policies and priorities of the school, renewal and approval of statutory policies, curriculum summaries and documents.
- Finance: determining and monitoring the effective use of the school's budget.
- Staffing: covers the difference between governing bodies' responsibilities for staff and those of local authorities as the employer (where appropriate) in deciding the number of staff, the pay policy and making decisions on staff pay, staff appointments, suspension, disciplinary issues and dismissal, grievances, performance management and matters affecting the work-life balance of the headteacher and staff, all with due regard to the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions (Wales) Document (STPC(W)D).
- Support community engagement for the benefit of learners, their families and the wider community.
- Ensure that learners with additional learning needs (ALN) are benefitting from the education provision and are achieving, attaining and showing appropriate progress.

- Ensure that learners with ALN are fully included in all aspects of school life.
- Providing parents and carers with information regarding the school, for example via the annual report to parents, curriculum summaries and statutorily required meetings with parents and carers.
- inspection preparation and follow up, including producing an action plan and monitoring progress following an inspection by Estyn.
- Ensuring the wellbeing of learners and staff through a whole-school approach.
- Ensuring effective policies and procedures are in place to safeguard and promote the wellbeing of children in accordance with **Keeping learners safe** guidance, and for monitoring compliance with them.
- Take action to promote healthy eating and drinking, including information on action taken in the annual report.
- Ensure that every learner who is entitled to receive free school lunches and free school milk receives them, taking reasonable steps to ensure that learners who receive free school lunches cannot be identified.
- Promoting a fully inclusive school environment, with a zero-tolerance approach to bullying and discrimination in all its forms, with a particular focus on anti-racism.
- Awareness of governors' responsibilities in equality matters and where to seek advice.
- Evaluation of the performance of the governing body as and when required.

How to be an effective governor

This key area focuses on the difference between governance and management, defining the respective roles as follows.

- The headteacher is responsible for internal organisation, management and control of the school, advising on and implementing the governing body's strategic framework and policies.

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- The governing body provides strategic leadership, challenging and supporting the headteacher, by acting as a critical friend with regards to strategic planning and monitoring and evaluation.

Governors should understand:

- what functions can be and have been delegated to the headteacher
- the importance of effective relationships with the headteacher, staff, local authority, diocesan authority, learners, and the local community
- the need for excellent communication with stakeholders, such as parents and carers, the local authority or the community
- the roles and responsibilities of the local authority and diocesan authority, where applicable
- the personal attributes of a governor regarding diplomacy and taking account of other governors' views in decision-making, principles of conduct, working collectively, and not acting individually
- how governing body meetings work and what is discussed, such as agendas, papers, minutes, voting, quorums (50% of the governing body membership), apologies, governing body acceptance, delegation of functions, frequency, notice and duration of meetings, schedule of meetings, calendar of work for the year
- what to expect at their first governing body meeting, and how to prepare effectively for, and be effective at, governing body meetings
- the structure of governing bodies and the role of committees, membership and terms of reference agreed and reviewed annually, specifying powers and responsibilities, effective communication between committees and the governing body
- the requirement for confidentiality regarding the proceedings of meetings, sensitive matters, and how individual members vote
- how to deal with conflicts of interest and register pecuniary interests, withdrawing from meetings where there is a personal conflict of interest
- how decisions are made in the governing body
- the corporate responsibility of the governing body, which could include

collective responsibility for the outcomes agreed, the benefits of effective team work, the extent of and limitations on the liability of governors

- how collaboration or federation could potentially benefit the school and its learners
- the importance of working strategically, monitoring and evaluating school performance through use of the school development plan, self-evaluation, performance data and the headteacher's report

There are a number of statutory governing body committees, including:

- staff disciplinary and dismissal committee
- staff disciplinary and dismissal appeals committee
- pupil discipline and exclusions committee
- admissions committee (voluntary aided and foundation schools and any school where the local authority has delegated authority for admissions to governing bodies)

Statutory procedures must be put in place by governing bodies for the following:

- headteacher and deputy headteacher selection panel
- headteacher performance management appraisers and appeal appraisers
- pay review and pay review appeals
- grievance and grievance appeals
- capability and capability appeals
- complaints

Governing bodies should also consider putting in place policies and procedures for the following:

- whistleblowing
- school toilets
- sustainable development

Governors must have:

- training in understanding the role of school data in supporting self-evaluation and improvement in schools
- understanding of the characteristics of an effective school, through involvement in discussions on the school development plan and school self-evaluation on at least a termly basis
- visits to the school, to become familiar with and learn about the school, while respecting the protocol for visits and outlining the purpose
- continuous training and development; this training should be reviewed regularly, with skills and experience analysis undertaken by the whole governing body

Background information and related links

- [The school governors' guide to the law](#)
- [Training for school governors: understanding school data](#)
- [Training for chairs of governors](#)
- [Training for school governing body clerks: guidance](#)
- [School improvement guidance: framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability](#)
- [Pupil inclusion, wellbeing, behaviour and attendance](#)
- [Parent meetings: guidance for governing bodies](#)
- [School complaints procedures: guidance](#)
- [Whistleblowing in schools: guidance](#)
- [Handling allegations of abuse against teachers and staff](#)
- [Disciplinary and dismissal procedures for school staff](#)
- [Federation process of maintained schools: guidance for governing bodies and local authorities](#)
- [School toilets: good practice guidance](#)
- [Healthy eating in maintained schools: statutory guidance](#)

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