



Vanguard Learning Trust

Information sheet for prospective parent governors, Autumn 2025

What does the local governing body do?

The key function of the local governing body (LGB) is to ensure accountability, and to be responsible for monitoring and evaluation to promote school improvement in order to raise standards and achievement. The LGB focuses on safeguarding, the curriculum, educational provision and performance, community engagement, health and safety, as well as risk identification and management at the school.

What is the difference between a local governing body and the board of trustees?

Legal accountability for the operation of Vanguard Learning Trust rests with the board of trustees. The board agrees on the overall Trust strategy, including in relation to educational improvement, human resources, finance and overall governance. The board is responsible for reviewing recruitment, pay progression and performance management arrangements for senior leaders within the Trust.

Why are parents/carers needed on the LGB?

The LGB is made up of governors who represent the community served by the school, especially the families who use it, as well as the wider public who pay for it and whose quality of life is affected by it. To achieve the right balance on a LGB, there are different categories of governors representing different groups of the school's community and each category is either appointed or elected onto the LGB. Parent governors are needed on all school governing bodies as parents play a major part in the schools' communities.

Other members of the LGB are:

- The headteacher
- Community governors (recommended by the LGB from the local community and appointed by the board of trustees)

The role of a parent governor

The role of a parent governor is no different to that of the other governors. They have the same equal status and role to fulfil for all pupils at the school. The VLT local governor role description sets out the requirements to be a governor of a school in the Trust and applies to a single school or joint school LGB. It details the general, day-to-day requirements of a governor and the key responsibilities of the LGB along with the key functions or activities that are undertaken to fulfil the role. The examples provided are not exhaustive but provide an overview of governance requirements at the school level in the Trust.

What does being a governor involve?

- Time

The LGB meets three times each year. Some governors will also sit on one or two of the governing body's committees: the education and standards committee and the pay committee. The time spent on governors' activities varies but as an estimate it is approximately five to ten hours per month. Additionally, governors would be asked (with others) to sit on panels, represent the governing body at school events and also board of trustees committee/forum meetings as required by a link governor role.

- **Training**

Training and development opportunities are offered to support school governors in their role and there is an expectation that they will participate in such events to keep their skills and knowledge up to date. To ensure that they are equipped to take on the role, new governors must attend mandatory induction training. Information on the induction training will be provided by the Trust's governance professional.

- **Visiting the school**

All governors are encouraged to visit the school by prior arrangement with the headteacher. Some governors will take the lead on particular areas of the school and in this lead/link governor role will be expected to make termly visits to the school during the school day. It is important that governors with family members registered as pupils within the school are clear about the purpose of each visit they make. If the visit relates to a personal matter, rather than being connected with their role as a governor, the school's normal communication processes should be followed.

- **Governance days**

In addition to the training offered to governors and the individual visits to school, the Trust asks governors to attend a half day governance day in November and a full day governance day in June each year. The November day is school-based and provides governors with the opportunity to focus on a key area of school life or performance. June's governance day is split into two, with the morning spent in school meeting staff and pupils and then, in the afternoon, meeting governors from other schools for lunch, the sharing of best practice and for a review of the year.

Eligibility to stand as a parent governor

The following individuals are able to stand or vote in an election for parent governors:

- All natural (biological) parents, whether married or not;
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a pupil registered at the school (eg. step parents, guardians or other relative);
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has full time care of a pupil registered at the school.

There are some other criteria that exclude anybody from qualifying as a governor. These are outlined in the nomination form in this pack.

Qualifications and skills required

No special qualifications are required although enthusiasm, commitment and an interest in education are helpful qualities to bring to a governor role. It is useful to have a spread of skills and experience on each LGB and, in line with the Trust's current needs, applications would be particularly welcomed from individuals with experience in an educational setting of safeguarding and/or inclusion. It also helps to be a good listener, taking time to understand the views of different people.

How to apply to be a parent governor

- **Nomination form**

Parents/carers who would like to stand for election should complete a nomination form and return it either electronically to Emma Jordan, governance professional, at vltgovernance@vlt.org.uk or to the school, marked for the attention of Emma Jordan. Paper copies of the nomination form are also available from the school's reception. Nomination forms may be typed or handwritten. Another parent of a child at the school must sign the form in support of the nomination. If an election is needed, the details supplied on page 3 of the form will be copied and sent to all parents/carers with the ballot papers. Nomination papers must be signed and unsigned forms will be returned to the candidates. All nominations should be received by the closing date and time stated in the invitation letter.

- **Procedure following the closing date for receipt of nominations**

Where there are fewer candidates than the number of vacancies at the end of the closing date for nominations, parents will be informed that the closing date for receipt of nominations will be extended by five working days. If the final number of nominations is the same as, or smaller than, the number of positions

to be filled, then the people nominated will be deemed elected unopposed. If there are more nominations than vacancies an election will be held by secret ballot. Voting papers will be sent to all parents together with details of the ballot procedure. Page 3 of the nomination form will be used so that those voting can find out more about the candidates and why they wish to be elected. This will be sent out with the ballot papers.

Term of office

The term of office for a parent governor is four years. If elected, a governor may serve the full four years even if their child leaves the school before their term of office finishes. As with any type of governor, they can resign from the role at any time within their term of office.

More information about the role of a school governor

There are a number of sources of information about becoming a school governor. These include:

- The National Governance Association ([click here](#))
- Inspiring governance (funded by the Department for Education) - ([click here](#))
- Stories from governors on 'Governors for Schools' website ([click here](#))