



Knowsley Council

Knowsley Charter for Local Authority Governors



Knowsley – A place where every family belongs and children thrive

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Introduction

Knowsley Council believes every child should be able to attend a good school in Knowsley, with good teachers and achieve good outcomes. School governors make a valuable contribution to the success of our schools and we recognise and appreciate the time, energy and commitment that our governors make.

Being a school governor is very rewarding. It's a great way to contribute to your local community and make a difference and improve the life chances of all Knowsley children and ensure they have the very best educational opportunities.

We have high ambitions for our children and young people. We want to be a place where every family belongs and children thrive. As a local authority governor we expect you to share this ambition and appreciate that raising achievement is at the heart of your strategic role.

Governing boards are an integral part of school leadership. We recognise that governors' responsibilities are wide ranging and to this end we are committed to supporting you with the training, guidance and support you need in order to develop your skills and expertise and make a real and lasting impact on school improvement.

In addition to an informative welcome pack and Induction workshop to help you begin to make a positive difference to your governing board, we will commit to follow up six months after your appointment to see how you are settling into your new role and see what further support we can offer you.

We will keep you up to date on key local and national educational developments and good practice through a termly update which will be either an e-mailshot or communication meeting.

We would like to thank you for the energy and commitment that you bring to your governing board. We hope you embrace the challenges ahead and find the experience rewarding.



Cllr Gary See
Cabinet Member for
Children's Services



Paul Boyce
Executive Director (Children)
Director of Children's Services

The Role of Governors in Knowsley

School governors provide strategic leadership and accountability in schools including the appointment of the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher. No one governor can act on his or her own without the proper authority from the full governing board. Each individual governor is a member of a governing body, which is established in law as a corporate body. Decisions are the joint responsibility of the governing body.

The role of the governing body is a strategic one; its key functions are to:

- set the aims and objectives for the school
- set the policies for achieving those aims and objectives
- set the targets for achieving those aims and objectives
- monitor and evaluate the progress the school is making towards achievement of its aims and objectives
- be a source of challenge and support to the headteacher (a critical friend)

Role of the Local Authority Governor

Local authority governors work as part of the governing board team to promote high standards of educational achievement for all children and young people.

As a local authority governor, you are a representative of the local authority. You are expected to behave with integrity and to never bring the reputation of the school or the Council into disrepute.

Although you are not expected to represent any one political view, an awareness and understanding of Knowsley Council's priorities and policies will enable you to be appropriately informed when debating priorities at school level. The perspective you bring is about how the school fits into the wider provision of education in Knowsley and you play a key role in 'linking' the governing board to information about educational developments and Council priorities.

We expect all local authority governors to:

- Attend full governing board and relevant committee meetings, prepare for meetings beforehand so they are well informed and able to play an full and active part in the boards work;
- Get to know the school and visit the school in action;
- Recognise the corporate status of the governing board and the concept of collective responsibility.
- Uphold the seven principles of public life (page 6)

Our Commitment to Supporting Local Authority Governors

As a local authority governor, whether at a maintained school or academy, the role you play in school improvement is highly valued.

Thank you for the commitment, time and energy you bring to ensuring that all children and young people in Knowsley have the very best opportunities to reach their potential.

In order to raise educational standards for the children and young people of Knowsley it is essential that you have the skills, knowledge and expertise to challenge underperformance and raise standards. It is also important that you are kept up to date with the changing educational environment and the opportunity to reflect on good practice here and elsewhere.

To help you in your role as local authority governor, we are committed to giving you access to the support, guidance and advice you need through the following:

- A welcome pack for new governors and Induction workshop for new governors to help you understand and engage with your role quickly in order that you can make a positive impact to your governing board
- Follow up after six months with new governors to ensure you have received an effective school based induction and to discuss any further support you may need
- A comprehensive programme of training provided through a school service level agreement which includes access to online learning www.elc-gel.org
- Refresher workshop for established local authority governors who have been in post for some time
- Termly updates on key local and national educational developments delivered via e-mailshots and/or communication meetings (2 hours maximum)

Local Authority Governor Person Specification

Commitment

Local authority governors must be able to demonstrate a commitment to their ongoing training and development and to getting to know their school well.

A thorough and comprehensive induction is essential if new governors are to understand their role and make an effective contribution to their governing board, and local authority governors who are new to school governance are expected to attend the Induction for New Governors workshop within their first six months of appointment. Local authority governors are also expected to familiarise themselves with the local authority priorities and be willing to keep their knowledge and skills up to date.

Experience

Local authority governors should have expertise or life experience which will contribute to the success of the school including:

- Business or professional expertise
- Experience as a school governor, trustee or other voluntary role
- Experience of working with children, young people or families

Skills and Attributes

Local authority governors will be able to demonstrate the following:

- A passion and commitment to school improvement and raising standards to enable every child and young person to achieve their potential
- Commitment to working as part of a team
- An enquiring mind with the ability to support and appropriately challenge the Headteacher and school leadership team
- Commitment to fulfilling the role of local authority governor e.g. attending meetings, reading paperwork and visiting the school

Values and Behaviours

Local authority governors must agree to:

- Working as part of a team, expressing their views openly, courteously and respectfully
- Respecting confidentiality and the need to act with caution including using social networking sites responsibly
- Record any business interest in connection with the governing board's business and declare any conflict of interest
- Uphold the Seven Principles of Public Life

Local authority governors are expected to sign the Code of Conduct for their governing board on an annual basis.

The Seven Principles of Public Life

The following seven principles were originally published by the Nolan Committee which commissioned in 1994 to consider standards of conduct in various areas of public life which includes school governance

Selflessness

Holders of the public office should act solely in terms of the public interest. They should not do so in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family or their friends.

Integrity

Holders of public office should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might seek to influence them in the performance of their official duties.

Objectivity

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, holders of public office should make choices on merit.

Accountability

Holders of public office are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office.

Openness

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

Honesty

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

Leadership

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.