

# PROCEDURE AND GUIDANCE FOR THE ELECTION OF PARENT GOVERNORS

## Introduction

Blackburn with Darwen is the 'appropriate authority' with regard to the election arrangements for parent governors in community, community special and voluntary controlled schools. The Council has delegated that responsibility to the Headteacher; as the Returning Officer, the Headteacher is responsible for the conduct of the election. It is essential that whenever a vacancy occurs, an election is conducted even though it may be uncontested.

In voluntary aided, foundation and foundation special schools, the appropriate authority is the governing body. Governing bodies of voluntary aided and foundation schools may decide to adopt this guidance for parent governor elections.

## Who can stand as and vote for parent governors?

The definition of a parent in education legislation includes:

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

## Who is disqualified from standing for election as a parent governor?

All parents and carers aged 18 or over are eligible to stand for election, except

- Persons liable to be detained under the Mental Health Act 1983
- Undischarged bankrupts
- Persons recently convicted of a serious offence
- A former governor at the school who has been disqualified on the grounds of non-attendance at meetings for a continuous period of six months without the consent of the governing body
- Persons disqualified under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986
- Persons subject to disqualification as a Charity Trustee
- Persons whose employment is prohibited or restricted
- Persons disqualified from being proprietors of independent schools
- Persons disqualified from registration for providing child minding or providing day care under the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 or under Part 3 of the Childcare Act 2006?
- Persons appearing on DfE List 99 (this is a list of people banned from working with children)
- Persons employed to work at the school or on a contract for services at the school and work for more than 500 hours a year

## And

- has a child on roll at the time of election.

Parents and carers standing for election are asked to complete the School Governor Eligibility Self Declaration Form (Appendix B); this is sent with the Notice of Election (Appendix A).

Parent governors generally serve for four years unless the governing body has registered a variation to this in the school's Instrument of Government.

## Appointment of parent governors

If, after seeking nominations from parents of current pupils, vacancies for parent governors still remain, the governing body in accordance with the regulations may fill these through an appointment process.

## Procedure for the Election of Parent Governor

1. A vacancy for a parent governor exists when an existing parent governor resigns, comes to the end of a term of office or is disqualified. The vacancy should be filled as soon as possible.
2. A copy of the Notice of Election (Appendix A), Nomination Form (Appendix B) and Eligibility Self Declaration form (Appendix C) are prepared and mailed or distributed through pupils to all parents, one letter/form for each parent or carer. Where pupils have more than one person with parental responsibility living at a different address, both should be sent a letter.
3. Where an election will take place at the end of the summer term for a start date in the autumn term, parents of pupils entering the school for the first time in the autumn term should also have letters sent to them seeking nominations and parents of pupils due to leave at the end of the summer term should be excluded. The date for return of nominations on the tear-off slip should normally be two school weeks.
4. When the closing date for nominations is reached, check the nomination forms received.
  - Are all candidates eligible?
  - Have all candidates provided a personal statement?If the number of candidates is equal to or less than the vacancy/ies, those persons nominated are elected unopposed to the governing body and no ballot is necessary. Parents and the School Governance and Liaison team should be informed.
5. If there are more nominations than vacancies the Headteacher should arrange a secret ballot and advise candidates of the arrangements for elections (Appendix D). There is no restriction on the number of candidates in any election.
6. Ballot papers (Appendix E) should be prepared with the names of the candidates entered in alphabetical order. Candidates' personal statements should be typed in a standard format, organised into the same order as the names on the ballot paper and attached.
7. The ballot papers should be sent to each parent or carer by mail or pupil post, together with the candidates' statements and a return envelope. The papers must be distributed for only one child in each family. The return date should normally be one school week after the date of despatch.
8. Each parent or carer is entitled to cast one vote per vacancy i.e. if there are two vacancies, the voter selects two candidates. This entitlement applies regardless of the number of children of the parent or carer who are registered pupils.
9. Returned envelopes must be locked away unopened until after the closing date for nominations.
10. The count should take normally place on the date by which completed ballot papers are to be returned.
  - The Headteacher opens the envelopes in the presence of the candidates, should they wish to be there, or their representatives. The Headteacher or their nominee should agree with the candidates or their representatives whether a ballot paper has been spoilt (i.e., if it is not clear for whom the vote was intended). If the candidates and representatives are not present, the Headteacher will decide which papers are spoilt. These decisions should be made before the count.
  - The votes are counted and the Headteacher declares the results. If there is a tie in the number of votes cast, a decision must be reached by drawing lots. The candidates or representatives decide the method they want to use.

11. The procedure should be completed by informing the candidates whether or not they have been successful (Appendices F/G) and by informing parents of the result (Appendix H).
12. The Returning Officer must ensure that all ballot papers are stored securely for three months, after which time they should be destroyed.

Mr/Mrs A Parent

School Name:

Address:

**Parent Governor Vacancies**

Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s)

We have a vacancy for a parent governor which we need to fill as soon as possible.

We know parents are interested in the education of their children and keen to see that the school provides a challenging education for all the pupils who come here. Please do not assume that there will be others coming forward who are better equipped for the job; we need enthusiasm and a willingness to work as a member of the team far more than any specific knowledge or expertise!

The governing body of a school is responsible for ensuring that pupils receive high quality education and that the conduct of the school reflects this aim. The governors work as a team with the head teacher in the whole strategic planning and management of the school. Their responsibilities include consideration and agreement of the aims and policies of the school, discussion and approval of the targets for improvement, appointment 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. Governors are the link between the school and the community and representatives of all those with an interest in the well-being and reputation of the school are needed. Parents are very important in keeping the governing body aware of the views of parents and the local community. They are a vital part of our team.

There is first class advice and support available to you and training for your new role at no cost to you.

The chair of the governing body or Headteacher will be happy to talk to you if you are interested in being nominated and/or want further information. You may also wish to contact Blackburn with Darwen Governance and Liaison team on (01254) 666507 or visit the Council's website at: [www.blackburn.gov.uk](http://www.blackburn.gov.uk) - School Governors.

If you would like to take the opportunity to put yourself forward as a candidate, please complete and return the attached documents to me by << *INSERT CLOSING DATE FOR NOMINATIONS* >>. If it is necessary for there to be an election, I will contact you to let you know about the arrangements.

If there are more nominations than vacancies, an election will be held on ..... and you will be sent a voting paper. You may return the ballot paper either via your child or by post.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher/Chair of Governors

Enclosed: Nomination form, Eligibility Self Declaration Form





# SCHOOL GOVERNOR ELIGIBILITY SELF DECLARATION FORM. Appendix C

Please answer each question by ticking in the relevant column on the right hand side

	YES	NO
<b>Are you</b> aged 18 or over at the date of this election or appointment?		
<b>Have you</b> been disqualified as a governor at this school for failing to attend governing body meetings for a continuous period of six months, beginning with the date of the first meeting missed, without the consent of the governing body? <i>Note: This does not apply to Headteachers</i>		
<b>Has your</b> estate been sequestrated (temporarily repossessed) and the sequestration not been discharged, annulled or reduced?		
<b>Are you</b> the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or an interim order: debt relief restrictions order or interim order?		
<b>Are you</b> subject to: a disqualification order or disqualification undertaking under the Company Directors Act 1986; a disqualification order under the Companies (Northern Ireland) Order 2002; a disqualification undertaking accepted under the Company Directors Disqualification (Northern Ireland) Order 2002 or an order made under Section 492(2)(b) of the Insolvency Act 1986 (failure to pay under a County Court administration order)?		
<b>Have you</b> been removed from the office of a trustee for a charity by an order made by the Charity Commission or Commissioners or the High Court on the grounds of any misconduct or mismanagement in the administration of the charity for which you were responsible or to which you were privy or to which you contributed or to which you facilitated by your conduct?		
<b>Have you</b> been removed, under section 34 of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005, from being concerned in the management or control of any body?		
<b>Are you</b> included in the list kept under section 1 of the protection of Children Act 1999 (list of those considered by the Secretary of State as unsuitable to work with children)?		
<b>Are you</b> subject to a direction of the Secretary of State under section 142 of EA 2002(or any other disqualification, prohibition or restriction which takes effect as if contained in such a direction)?		
<b>Are you</b> barred from regulated activity relating to children in accordance with section 3(2) of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006?		
<b>Are you</b> disqualified from working with children under sections 28, 29 or 29A of the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000?		
<b>Are you</b> disqualified from registration under Part 2 of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 for child minding or providing day care or disqualified from registration under Part 3 of the Childcare Act 2006?		
<b>Have you</b> , in the five years prior to becoming a governor, or since becoming a governor been sentenced to three months or more in prison (whether suspended or not) without the option of a fine?		
<b>Have you</b> , in the twenty years prior to becoming a governor, received a prison sentence of two and a half years or more?		
<b>Have you</b> , at any time, received a prison sentence of five years or more?		
<b>Have you</b> been fined, in the five years prior to becoming a governor or since becoming a governor, for causing a nuisance or disturbance on school or education premises?		
<b>Are you</b> employed to work at the school or on a contract for services at the school and work for more than 500 hours a year?		

**I declare that I am not disqualified from serving as a school governor.**

Name:

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**This form should be returned to the Headteacher at the school by << INSERT CLOSING DATE FOR NOMINATIONS >>**

NOTE: if there are any parts of this form that you cannot answer, cannot sign or which you have questions about, please contact << FILL IN CONTACT NAME >> who will be willing to advise you.

Dear

**Re: Election of Parent Governor at ..... School**

Thank you for your offer to become a parent governor at our school.

As there are more applications than vacancies, there will be an election.

The count will be held at the school on ..... at ..... am/pm, and you are entitled to attend this count. If you wish to attend, I would be obliged if you would tell me, or << *INSERT NAME OF ALTERNATIVE CONTACT* >>

If you do not attend, I will inform you in writing of the result within three school working days.

If you have any queries about the election process I shall be glad to answer them.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher





**Letter to Successful Candidates**

Dear

I am pleased to inform you that you have been elected unopposed as a parent governor and your 4\* year term of office will commence on .....

*OR*

I am pleased to inform you that following the recent parent election you have been elected as a parent governor and your 4\* year term of office will commence on .....

**AND**

The governing body meeting will be held on..... and you will soon be contacted by the chair of governors, and receive an agenda from .....clerk to governors. I look forward to working with you.

**\* can be less if Instrument of Government indicates this**

### Letter to Unsuccessful Candidates

I regret to inform you that on this occasion you were unsuccessful in the recent parent governor election.

Details of the actual number of votes cast can be obtained on request from the school office.

If you would like to be considered in another capacity as one of our school governors at a later date, please either contact the chair of governors or let me know. There may also be vacancies in other schools in the area, and if you would like to be considered as a school governor elsewhere, I know the Blackburn with Darwen School Governance and Liaison team will be pleased to hear from you.

Thank you once again for your interest.

### Letter to Parents

Dear

**Re: Election of Parent Governor(s) at ..... School**

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

Elected: Name(s) of candidate(s)

We would like to thank those who put their names forward and we are sorry that there were insufficient places for all those interested this time. .

If you would like to be considered in another capacity as one of our school governors at a later date, please either contact the chair of governors or let me know. There may also be vacancies in other schools in the area, and if you would like to be considered as a school governor elsewhere, I know the Blackburn with Darwen School Governance and Liaison team will be pleased to hear from you.

Thank you once again for your interest.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher