



SARACENS
MULTI-ACADEMY
TRUST

PROCEDURE FOR ELECTING PARENT AND STAFF GOVERNORS

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1 Introduction

The Trust's responsibility for conducting parent governor elections is delegated to the Executive Principal/Principal of each school who acts as 'returning officer' in accordance with the procedures outlined below. Neither governing bodies, nor clerks have any part to play in the election process for parent and staff governors.

Each local governing body will have two parent governors and one staff governor. The term of office for each position is 4 years, unless an elected staff or parent governors stands down before their 4-year term expires, in which case their replacement will be elected for the remainder of the original 4-year term of office.

If a parent or staff governor resigns during the 12-month period following their election, then the candidate with the next highest number of votes in that election may be substituted for the original successful candidate without a further election being held.

2 Election of parent governors

2.1 Who Is Eligible to Stand as A Parent Governor and Vote in The Elections?

All 'parents', as defined in the School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2007 and the School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2012, who make themselves known to the school, may stand as parent governors, providing they are not disqualified from holding office as a governor under Schedule 6 of the School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2007 or Schedule 4 of the School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2012.

Parents include:

- the parents (natural or adoptive);
- any individual who has or has had 'parental responsibility for, or cares or has cared for, a child or young person under the age of 18' who attend the school;
- a person who the child lives with and who looks after the child, irrespective of
- what their relationship is with the child - e.g. step-father, grandparents, other relatives, cohabitantes and foster parents. NB This must be someone involved in the full-time care of the child on a settled basis.

No parent (or carer) in paid employment at the school can stand for election / appointment as a parent governor at the same school which their child attends. If a serving parent governor subsequently starts to work at the school, they would serve out their term of office.

2.2 Election Procedures

2.2.1 When there is a vacancy or prospective vacancy for a parent governor, every eligible parent (or carer) who has made him/herself known to the school must be given the opportunity to participate in the elections, but there is no obligation on the school to track down such persons.

2.2.2 The first step is for the Principal to write to all parents

- to invite nominations, enclosing a sheet setting out the qualifications and disqualifications (Appendix B) to serve as a governor and a nomination form (Appendix C). The letter should indicate the closing date for receipt of nominations, which must be not less than 14 days. Letters and enclosures may be sent either via the pupils or through electronic communications.

2.2.3 Candidates for election must at the time of election be involved in the full-time care of a child on the register of the school, on a settled basis. Self-nomination is acceptable provided that the principal is satisfied that the nominee is not disqualified under the regulations to be a governor.

2.2.4 The nomination form invites candidates to submit a short personal statement for circulation to parents with the ballot papers; there is a limit of 60 words.

2.2.5 Where the number of candidates nominated is the same as, or fewer than, the number of vacancies then all those nominated will be elected unopposed. If there are more candidates than vacancies it will be necessary to arrange a ballot.

2.2.6 Ballots, when required, must be secret. To ensure confidentiality a 'double envelope system' is used. Each parent should be sent two envelopes with a ballot paper – one blank and one printed envelope (Appendix D), the latter being for the parent to complete to allow the principal to check eligibility to vote. The parent is asked first to seal the completed ballot paper in the unmarked envelope and then to seal that envelope in the printed envelope, which the voter should then complete and sign.

2.2.7 It is quite acceptable for the pupils to be asked to deliver and return the ballot papers. However, the law requires that parents must be given the opportunity to vote by post if they so wish. Ballot papers will need to be posted, or otherwise delivered, to any parents whose child is absent from school when the ballot papers are issued.

2.2.8 A single ballot paper (irrespective of the number of children the parent has in attendance at the school) must be sent to each known parent (Appendix E). The letter which must accompany the ballot paper (Appendix F) explains the voting procedure and should also give the date by which the ballot papers must be returned - at least 14 days must be allowed.

2.2.9 Parents are allowed one vote each. If a ballot paper is inadvertently spoiled, or lost by a pupil, a duplicate may be issued.

2.2.10 No arrangements may be made for proxy voting.

2.2.11 A two-stage system of opening ballot papers and recording votes cast must be used. As and when the envelopes are returned, the Principal should, in the presence of at least one witness, check the name on each outer envelope for entitlement to vote and make a record of the return of the ballot paper. The inner envelope containing the ballot paper should be removed from the outer envelope and placed in the ballot box for counting at the appointed time. (If a voter chooses not to maintain confidentiality in this way, the ballot paper is to be counted as valid so long as it is clear from the ballot paper or the single envelope that the person is entitled to vote.)

2.2.12 When the ballot has closed, the Principal should open the ballot box and count the ballot papers in the presence of at least two witnesses. (The candidates should be invited to the count but their presence is not essential.) The Principal is responsible for determining whether a 'spoiled' ballot paper should be counted.

2.2.13 The outcome of the ballot is determined by the simple majority vote system.

2.2.14 In the event of an equal number of votes being cast there should be a recount. If this does not produce a clear result the Principal should, in the presence of the witnesses (and any candidates who attended the count), draw lots.

2.2.15 When the result is known, a notice must be posted on the school notice board or a prominent place for one month. Where candidates have been elected unopposed, the results should be posted similarly. Alternatively the Principal can write to all parents to let them know the outcome, giving details of the number of votes cast for each candidate.

2.2.16 Where a substantial number of parents have a language other than English as their main language the school will seek to provide assistance.

2.2.17 The ballot papers should be retained securely for six months in case the election result is challenged. The number of ballot papers issued and returned at each election should be recorded.

2.2.18 Details of the successful candidate(s) should be sent to Clerk. The Clerk must inform the successful candidate of their appointment and ensure they complete the relevant documentation to register as a governor. A welcome pack for new governors will then be sent out, and they will be able to book onto Induction training.

2.2.19 Schools must make every reasonable effort to fill parent governor vacancies through elections. If insufficient parents stand for election the governing body can appoint:

- (a) a parent of a registered pupil at the school; or if that is not possible;
- (b) a parent of a former registered pupil at the school; or if that is not possible;
- (c) a parent of a child of or under compulsory school age.

A person is disqualified from election or appointment as a parent governor of a school or if they work at the school.

3 Election of Staff Governors

Each local governing body must have one staff governor, in addition to the Principal. The position of staff governor can be held by either full or part time teaching staff or support staff. Governors can be drawn from staff holding a very wide range of posts, as this category includes staff employed at the school, as well as staff on a contract for services.

Supply teachers employed on a daily basis are not eligible to stand as candidates for staff governor or vote in any election for such a position.

The election of staff governors involves all staff in the voting process. All staff will be invited to vote in the election of teacher and support staff governor elections.

3.1 Election Procedures

3.1.1 When there is a vacancy or prospective vacancy for a staff governor, every teacher or support staff member employed to work at the school must be given the opportunity of participating in the appropriate elections.

3.1.2 The first step is for the Principal to write to all relevant staff to invite nominations, enclosing a sheet setting out the qualifications to serve as a governor and a nomination form (Appendix C). The letter should indicate the closing date for receipt of nominations, which must be not less than 14 days.

3.1.3 Staff who are nominated for election must be employed to work at the school either as teachers or support staff on the closing date for nominations.

3.1.4 The nomination form invites candidates to give brief biographical details to go out with the ballot forms; there is a word limit of 60 words.

3.1.5 Where the number of nominations received is the same as or less than the number of vacancies, candidates will be elected unopposed. If there are more nominations than vacancies, it will be necessary to arrange a ballot. (Note that the legislation does not provide, as it does where not enough parents stand for election, for the governing body to appoint a staff governor).

3.1.6 The ballot will be secret and the Principal should ensure that each ballot paper (Appendix F) - is stamped with a distinguishing mark and that a record is kept of the number of ballot papers issued.

3.1.7 A ballot paper, which must make it clear that all staff may vote for one candidate, must be sent to all members of the staff – teaching and non-teaching – who are eligible to vote.

3.1.8 Staff should vote in person wherever possible. However, the facility for postal voting should be made available to any eligible member of staff who finds this more convenient or is temporarily absent from the school.

3.1.9 No arrangements may be made for proxy voting.

3.1.10 The Principal should open and count the ballot papers in the presence of the candidates or their nominated representatives and will be responsible for determining whether a 'spoiled' ballot paper should be counted.

3.1.11 The outcome of the ballot is determined by the simple majority vote system.

3.1.12 In the event of an equal number of votes being cast there should be a recount and if this does not produce a clear result the Principal should draw lots in the presence of the candidates or their representatives.

3.1.13 The Principal must ensure that the staff are notified of the outcome and the number of votes cast for each candidate after when the result is known.

3.1.14 The ballot papers should be retained securely for six months in case the election result is challenged. The number of ballot papers issued and returned at each election should be recorded.

3.1.15 Details of the successful candidate should be sent to Clerk. The Clerk must inform the successful candidate of their appointment and ensure they complete the relevant documentation to register as a governor. A welcome pack for new governors will then be sent out, and they will be able to book onto Induction training.

3.1.16 Should the staff governor cease to be employed at the school the appointment ends immediately.

4 Appendix A

4.1 Parent Governors

We are looking for parent Governors to join our governing body. This pack provides information about the role of parent governors, the role of the governing body and also about Saracens Multi-Academy Trust.

The Trust sets the vision and over-arching strategy for the education provided by the schools within the Trust. The Trust Board includes the Principals and chair of governors from the local governing bodies.

4.1.1 The local governing bodies

Each of the schools has its own governing body which includes two parent governors and one staff governor. The local governing bodies are responsible for the local strategic leadership of each school and for holding the schools to account for their performance.

Parent governors are important members of the governing body bringing the parent and community perspective to the group. A briefing about the role of parent governors is included in this pack along with an application to become a parent governor (which is also available online at the school website).

4.2 Being A Parent Governor

Parent governors are in a unique position on a governing body. Not only do parent governors have to work in the best interests of the school, but they have to balance this with their natural desire to see the best outcomes for their own child(ren). The aim of this briefing paper is to offer advice to new parent governors on their specific role and suggest ways of handling some of the tricky situations which may arise.

Developing your role and experience as a governor will take time. There is advice, help and support available.

4.2.1 Parent governors are:

- well placed to understand parents' views and to remind the governing body how matters being discussed affect parents;
- individuals - how you vote on any decision is up to you;
- in a good position to help the governing body to communicate effectively with parents;
- equal in status to all other governors.

4.2.2 Parent governors are not:

- expected to gather views of other parents and take them to the governing body;
- simply expected to represent the interests of parents;
- an official link between parents and the governing body;
- expected to vote as instructed by other parents.

4.2.3 What are the benefits of being a parent governor?

- you have the opportunity to make a difference, not only for your children, but all the children in the school;
- you have the opportunity to make a difference for other parents, and to influence the way in which the school works with them;
- you will learn a lot and develop new skills.

4.2.4 How to fulfil your role?

- attend governing body meetings regularly and play an active role in committees and decision-making;
- learn all you can about the school;
- consider how the governing body communicates with parents - could you help them to improve links?
- consider how accessible is the school – how easy is it for parents to go into school to discuss things with the Principal or teachers?

- providing feedback to help the school to be more open and welcoming;
- providing feedback on the accessibility of the governors – do parents ever get the opportunity to meet with governors; do they know how to get in touch with the chair of governors if they need to?
- encouraging the governing body to be more visible
- learning how the school handles complaints and reading the complaints policy. - if a parent approaches you with a complaint, advising them to speak to the Principal;
- being approachable to other parents while making sure you are clear about your role;
- always representing the school positively;
- as a governor you are one of a group and must never act alone;
- always supporting the decisions of the full governing body. - have your say on decisions in meetings and vote in the way you wish; but then support the outcomes of votes – even if you disagree with them.
- always, always, always observe confidentiality -you will get to know a lot of highly sensitive and confidential information – don't discuss it with anyone who is not a governor. - remember, a governor can be suspended for serious breaches of confidentiality.

4.2.5 How you can help individual parents^[SEP]

From time to time you may be approached by other parents asking for help, or wanting to make a complaint about something the school is, or isn't doing.

- make it clear you can't act for the governing body.
- inform them that they need to raise the issue with the school or formally in writing to the governing body.

4.2.6 What to do if you experience a conflict between being a parent and being a governor

This can happen – especially if you think the governing body is making decisions which you feel will adversely affect your child(ren).

- If a difficulty arises, take a step back and think things through as objectively as you can.
- If you are concerned, talk to the Principal or to the chair of governors.
- Make sure you don't break confidentiality when discussing your concerns outside governing body meetings.

4.2.7 Where to get help, advice and support

- other Governors
- the Principal
- the Chair of governors
- the Clerk to the Governing Body.
- your governor mentor or “buddy” appointed to help you through the first few months.
- attend the induction and other training offered

5 Appendix B

Qualifications to serve as a governor as per the SGCR 2007 and SGCR 2012

A governor must be aged 18 or over at the time of his/her election or appointment and cannot hold more than one governorship at the same school.

A person is disqualified from holding or continuing to hold office as a governor or associate member if he or she:

- is subject to a bankruptcy restriction order, an interim bankruptcy restrictions order, a debt relief restrictions order or an interim debt relief restrictions order;
- has had his/her estate sequestrated and the sequestration has not been discharged, annulled or reduced;
- is subject to:
- a disqualification order or disqualification undertaking under the Company Directors Act 1986
- a disqualification undertaking accepted under the Company Directors Disqualification (Northern Ireland) Order 2002
- an order made under section 429(2)(b) of the Insolvency Act 1986 (failure to pay under a county court administration order);
- has been removed from the office of charity trustee or trustee for a charity by an order made by the Charity Commission or Commissioners or High Court on the grounds of any misconduct or mismanagement in the administration of the charity, or under section 34 of the Charities and Trustees Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 from being concerned in the management or control of any body;
- is included in the list of people considered by the Secretary of State as unsuitable to work with children;
- is disqualified from working with children or subject to a direction under section 142 of the Education Act 2002;
- is disqualified from working with children under sections 28,29, or 29A of the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000;
- is disqualified from registration under Part 2 of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 for child minding or providing day care;
- is disqualified from registration under Part 3 of the Childcare Act 2006;
- has received a sentence of imprisonment (whether suspended or not) for a period of not less than 3 months (without the option of a fine) in the 5 years before or since becoming a governor;
- has received a prison sentence of 2½ years or more in the 20 years before becoming a governor;
- has at any time received a prison sentence of 5 years or more;
- has been convicted under section 547 of EA 1996 (nuisance or disturbance on school premises) or under section 85A of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 (nuisance or disturbance on educational premise) during the 5 years prior to or since appointment or election as a governor;
- has refused a request by the Clerk to the governing body to make an application under section 113B of the Police Act 1997 for a DBS check
- has been disqualified from holding office as a governor of this school due to failure to attend governing body meetings for a continuous period of six months.

6 Appendix C - Nomination form for election of parent/staff governor(s)

Name:

Address:

Telephone:

Pen Portrait (maximum 60 words)

I wish to submit my nomination for the election of Parent/Staff Governor

I confirm

- (i) that I am willing to stand as a candidate for election as a parent/staff governor and
- (ii) that I am not disqualified from holding office for any of the reasons set out in the School Governance Regulations.

Signature (Date)

Completed nomination forms must be returned to the school by <insert date>

7 Appendix D - Model Ballot Envelope

ELECTION OF PARENT GOVERNOR

atSchool

Voting form returned by:

Name

Signature

Parent of

Form

8 Appendix E – Letter to parents where a vote is required

Dear Parent,

I am writing to advise you that there were more nominations than vacancies for the recently advertised post of parent governor.

Therefore, a ballot will take place.

Overleaf you will find a ballot paper (one per parent).

How to vote:

Place an X in the right hand column against the candidate(s) of your choice. No other distinguishing marks of any kind should be made on the ballot paper.

- You have one vote.
- Only parents/guardians of registered pupils at the school are eligible to vote.
- No parent/guardian is entitled to complete more than one ballot paper (irrespective of the number of children at the school).
- Please return the ballot paper by **time** on **date**

Ballot papers should be placed in a sealed envelope and should not contain the name of the sender.

The results of the ballot will be publicised immediately after the count.

Yours sincerely

Principal/Executive Principal

9 Appendix F

OFFICIAL BALLOT PAPER ELECTION OF PARENT GOVERNOR(S)

1 vote

Name of Candidate	Supporting Statement	Place Your X Here

How to vote:

Place an X in the right hand column against the candidate of your choice. No other distinguishing marks of any kind should be made on the ballot paper.

- You have one vote.
- Only parents/guardians of registered pupils at the school are eligible to vote.
- No parent/guardian is entitled to complete more than one ballot paper (irrespective of the number of children at the school).

The ballot paper must be returned to the Executive Principal, in a sealed envelope, no later than **time** on **date**. The name of the voter must not be written on the envelope. All envelopes will be placed in a sealed ballot box.