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Reach For The Stars

Guidance for Parent Governors

Our Motto

Reach For The Stars

Our Vision Statement

Our vision is to develop an inclusive school, which promotes and achieves excellence, and continues to nurture the values, confidence and skills of pupils, staff and the community, in order to meet the emerging opportunities of the 21st century.

Our vision and values support **Articles 2, 12, 15, 19, 24, 27, 28, 29, 31** of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of a Child.

Our Rights

- ★ **Article 19:** We have the right to be safe.
- ★ **Article 28:** We have the right to quality education.
- ★ **Article 12:** We have the right to give our opinion and listen to others.
- ★ **Article 15/31:** We have the right to join in and be part of a team.
- ★ **Article 29:** We have the right to develop our personalities, talents and abilities.
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Our Values

★ **Striving** **T**eamwork **A**ll Included **R**esponsibility **S**uccess ★

★ Striving

Our aim is that we are a school that:

- uses our **Growth Mind-set** (learning from mistakes and always willing to have a go)
- never gives up and always find ways of improving
- enjoys challenges and aims high

★ Teamwork

Our aim is that we are a school that:

- encourages and supports each other to be the best we can be
- learns from each other
- listens to and respects each other's ideas

★ All Included

Our aim is that we are a school that:

- has high expectations of everyone
- encourages everyone to take an active part in learning and life of our school
- nurtures and celebrates what makes each and every one of us unique
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★ Responsibility

Our aim is that we are a school that:

- takes ownership of the choices we make
- takes ownership/charge of our own learning
- looks after each other and our school

★ Success

Our aim is that we are a school that:

- provides an education that encompasses academic, creative, social, emotional, physical and cultural development.
- celebrates our efforts and achievements

Equal Opportunities and the Single Equality Scheme

We believe that all those who work in Osmani - children and adults - have the right to be treated fairly and with respect by everyone connected with the school.

We aim for Osmani to be a safe, supportive place, where all children and adults feel valued as individuals, whatever their ability, age, disability, gender identity, marriage or civil partnership, pregnancy & maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The school aims to foster the social and personal skills of cooperation, sharing and mutual respect.

This policy supports the school in addressing Article 16: of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Learn how to separate your role as a governor from your role as a parent, so you can manage your relationship with other parents and do your job well.

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1. The role: summary
2. Communicate a parent's perspective
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The role: summary

As a parent governor, your role is:

- To bring a parental perspective to the issues discussed – **you're not there to speak 'on behalf' of the parent body**
- No different from other governors

Note: parents are elected to the board, not appointed (unless there are fewer candidates than vacancies).

Take a look at our governor and trustee role descriptions to see all of your responsibilities and duties.

Communicate a parent's perspective

It's a fine line to tread, but remember that you're not there to speak on behalf of parents.

Use your perspective to help the board understand a parent's viewpoint. This will help the board make good decisions and maintain a link between governance and the parent community.

You can read more about this in:

- [The Governance Handbook](#) (page 20)
- [Guidance from the Department for Education](#) (DfE) – page 14 for maintained schools, and page 21 for academies.

Parental perspective in practice

You're not bringing complaints from parents to the board's attention. Rather, you're highlighting how governing board decisions impact the school from a parent's perspective.

Example	Do ask	Don't say
School uniform change	'Has the school consulted parents on the proposed uniform changes? If not, why not?'	'As a parent, I've spoken to other parents in the playground and we all think the uniform shouldn't change.'
	'How has the school explained the proposed changes to parents?'	
	'Has the school considered the cost of this change to parents?'	
Canteen menu change	'How have parents been consulted on the new menu?'	'Parents have come up to me asking why the menu has changed. They say they prefer the old one.'
	'Has the school explained to parents the reasons behind the change?'	
	'What alternative provision is available for pupils whose parents disagree with the menu changes?'	
	'How will this change impact parents?'	

Curriculum change	'How has the school communicated the curriculum change to parents?'	'Parents want me to express to you that they disagree with the changes. They don't feel the changes reflect what they want their children to be taught.'
	'Have parents been given the opportunity to ask questions and get further clarity?'	'A number of parents have told me they're confused about why the curriculum has changed.'

Set expectations with other parents

Help other parents understand that you're not there to:

- Speak on their behalf
- Bring up their individual issues in meetings
- Solve problems for them

Be polite but firm, and tell them to stick to the official channels.

Get up to speed with your school's complaints procedure and staff list, so you can quickly direct parents to how/where they can raise their issue.

If another parent approaches you at the school gate with a grievance:

- Do ask the parent to put it in writing and follow the school's complaints procedure. Tell them how/where they can raise their issue. This helps to separate genuine complaints from the customary grumbles
- Do explain what the role of parent governor actually is. Learn a one-liner such as: "Parent governors don't speak 'on behalf' of the parent body, instead we bring a parental perspective to the strategic decisions the governors make"
- Don't agree to raise it at the meeting or look into it for them – this will set a bad precedent and will cause problems later down the line as the right procedure hasn't been followed

Don't respond to comments on social media or parents group in your governor role

You might see comments about the school from parents on social media, perhaps in parent groups you've joined. It's not your role to get involved.

For advice on how to respond in these situations, read our Facebook 'cheat sheet' for governors.

Separate your role as a governor from your role as a parent

Think about all pupils, not just your child

As a governor, you're responsible for the progress and wellbeing of all pupils at the school, so keep this at the forefront of your mind in meetings.

You must rely on a wide range of sources to make decisions and hold the headteacher to account. These include high-quality, objective data and the views of pupils, staff, parents and the community. This is set out in the Governance Handbook (page 13).

When discussing issues in meetings:

- Do remember that you're acting in the interests of the whole pupil body
- Don't bring up your child, or refer to anecdotal evidence based only on your child's, or a friend's, experience

Follow your school's complaints procedure like any other parent

If you have a complaint concerning your child, you must follow your school's complaints procedure, even as a parent governor.

If possible, ask the other parent to lead the discussion with the school. In all communication during the process, clarify that you're acting as a parent, not a governor.

You could take action as a governor if the complaint affects more children than your own child. For example, if data shows a wider problem with pupil progress in your child's year group, ask questions in the relevant meetings like:

- What support is in place for underperforming members of staff?

- How does the school help all children who are falling behind?

Avoid conflicts of interest

Most of the time, you won't need to declare a personal interest in all agenda items that could have an impact on your child. You should do this where:

- The matter would affect your child individually (an exclusions panel where your child was the victim of a behaviour incident, for example)
- You feel too close to the matter to be impartial

Where there is a dispute about whether you should withdraw, the other governors may make this decision.

Read our parent governor conflict of interest scenario to be clear on what conflicts of interest can look like in practice.

If you have concerns over a governing board decision

Again, remember to keep your role as a parent separate from your role as a governor.

If you have a concern:

- Do raise it in a governing board meeting. Meetings are designed for this purpose: governors can openly discuss decisions the governing board might take, and governors can express disagreement by voting against it
- Do respect the decision taken by the board if it's been voted on properly, and be united with your fellow governors
- Do ask for a meeting with the chair to discuss a decision in more detail if you wish
- Don't express your disagreement outside governing board meetings
- Don't involve other parents or seek to mobilise them in any way