

Roles and Responsibilities of the Board of Governors



St. Colmcille's Primary School

The role of the Board of Governors is to manage the school with a view to providing the best possible education and educational opportunities for all of the pupils. This involves

- setting the strategic direction for the school.
- taking corporate decisions in relation to the statutory functions of the Board of Governors.

The Board of Governors has an important strategic role to play in the management of the school. This is to help the school principal and staff provide the best possible education for all of the pupils. Governors bring their experience, life skills and common sense to this task. In everything they do, they aim to raise expectations of what can be achieved by all pupils and strengthen the involvement of parents and the community. This involves

- setting the school's vision and aims
- establishing and maintaining the school's ethos
- monitoring and evaluating school performance
- promoting self-evaluation to sustain school improvement.

Setting the school's vision and aims

The school Board of Governors and the principal know the school and its community and have a vision of how they want the school to develop in the future. This vision reflects the educational goals and targets set for the pupils. It motivates pupils and staff, builds on core educational values and beliefs and moral purpose, is inclusive of stakeholders' values and beliefs and is informed by the most innovative practice on teaching and learning.

Establishing and maintaining the school's ethos

The governors and the principal will maintain an ethos for the school that promotes the moral, spiritual, intellectual, social and personal development of all its pupils.

The school's ethos will contribute to the wider goals of the school and be clearly defined and understood by parents, pupils, staff, governors and the local community.

Setting the school's plans and policies

The school development plan includes the school's financial plan, education plans and assessments. This provides the strategic framework within which the governors, the principal and staff can monitor, evaluate and improve the nature of the school's curricular and other provision and the standards achieved by pupils making efficient use of all the school's available resources.

Monitoring and evaluating school performance

There are many useful ways of measuring performance which take account of the school's circumstances and seek to measure the value added dimension. The governors, working with the principal, must decide which key indicators they wish to monitor. The findings of ETI reports also need to be taken into account.

Promoting self-evaluation to sustain school improvement

School improvement is most likely to be sustained over time, when a school establishes a positive culture and commitment to professional growth. Self-evaluation is a process through which:

- an individual teacher, groups of staff, the staff as a whole and senior management reflect on their current practice.
- identify and celebrate the strengths of the school.
- identify and address areas for improvement in their work.

The Board of Governors has many varied statutory functions in relation to the local management of schools. In fulfilling these functions, the Board of Governors should support the aims and objectives of the school and act in its best interests. In practical terms this will normally involve:

- approving the school development plan and its priorities and targets for promoting improvement in standards of performance
- setting performance objectives for the principal under Performance Review and Staff Development.
- managing the school's finances.

Curriculum planning

- agreeing a learning and teaching policy.
- facilitating the implementation of the curriculum.
- ensuring proper provision for pupils with special educational needs.

Employment issues

- determining the school's staff complement.
- selecting and appointing staff with regard to costs and curriculum needs.
- managing employment issues including a staff code of conduct policy and discipline and grievance procedures.

Pupil pastoral care and protection issues

- safeguarding and promoting the welfare and protection of pupils.
- setting general principles on good behaviour and pupil conduct.
- participating in pupil disciplinary procedures.

Publication of information regarding the school and its pupils

- providing information for parents about the school and their children.
- agreeing and applying criteria for pupil admissions.

Managing the school premises and relations with the community

- controlling the use of premises, inspecting the premises and equipment annually and ensuring the school estate is properly maintained.
- promoting good relations between the school and the community.

To do this governors, are expected to:

- prepare for, attend and participate in Board and Committee meetings.
- undertake training.
- attend school functions where possible.
- support the principal to enable him to control the day to day internal management of the school.
- encourage good communications within the school.

Promoting good governance

In conducting all of its business, the Board of Governors should

- give proper weight to the advice and guidance from the principal.
- support majority decisions of the Board of Governors.
- ensure that the position of governor is not used for personal gain.
- declare all potential conflicts of interest.

- protect the confidential nature of school business.
- work within the school's scheme of management.

The responsibility for governing the school must be shared by the whole Board of Governors. Only the Board of Governors, acting together after discussion within a strong framework of rules and good practice by consensus or majority vote, has the power to question, to challenge or to change things. A governor will not incur personal liability in respect of any action taken in good faith in the exercise of the school Board's delegated duties and responsibilities.

Every Board of Governors has a role in promoting good governance, and in supporting pupils, staff and parents and the role of the school in the community. The governors and the principal should have a good understanding of and respect for their separate but complementary roles. Also, the governors should have as a priority both staff and governor development. The principal and the staff should have trust and confidence in the governors' integrity to act in the best interests of the whole school with the pupils at its heart.

Supporting pupils, parents and staff

School Boards of Governors who are seen to support the pupils, send out a clear message that the pupils are valued and are an encouragement to the pupils as well as to the school staff, parents and the local community. The involvement of parents in children's education contributes significantly to pupils' educational achievements and in recognition of this, many schools have established effective partnerships between home and school.

It is important that Boards of Governors

- engage parents in their children's education and the work of the school.
- support parents in fulfilling these responsibilities.
- respond appropriately to parents' concerns or formal complaints relating to their children as pupils of the school.

Parents have considerable rights and responsibilities when it comes to their child's schooling. Boards of Governors need to have a clear understanding of parental rights and responsibilities and take proper account of them in their dealings with parents. The teaching and non-teaching staff are often required to implement decisions made by the Board of Governors or are affected by its decisions. It is important, therefore, that all governors are seen to support the staff and to offer them as much encouragement as possible.

The role of the parent and teacher Governor

The main focus of these roles are to examine decisions that the Governors make with regards to the impact for all other parents and staff. These Governors are not a conduit for complaints or concerns. If you have a complaint you should, in the first instance, contact the principal or the Chairperson of the Board of Governors.