

# Charter for Local Authority Governors



## **Mission Statement**

We believe that every school in Essex should be at least Good. Local Authority governors play a key role in contributing to effective governance and the success of the school; we will offer professional development and guidance to support you.

## Dear local authority governor,

Essex County Council values the contribution made by you and all governors in the success of its schools and recognises the time, energy and commitment that you give to your school.

Being a school governor is very rewarding. It's a way of helping to make sure that Essex children have the very best opportunities available. This is an opportunity to put something back into your local community, to make a difference.

In Essex we are ambitious for our children and young people. This is the authority's vision for the next five years:

- every school in Essex to be at least a good school
- to ensure outcomes for children and young people are in the top quartile nationally
- to reduce the gap in achievement between pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds and their peers

As a local authority governor we expect you to share this ambition and understand that raising achievement is at the heart of your strategic role.

National research indicates that a school is unlikely to succeed without an effective governing board. Strong governance is key to ensuring successful educational outcomes since governors, although volunteers, play a vital strategic role in holding school leaders to account through support and challenge to drive school improvement.

Effective governing bodies ensure continuity of leadership through growing leaders within the governing board and the school. This includes enabling everyone to play an active part by making good use of their skills and giving opportunities to lead on specific areas of responsibility.

We recognise that governors' responsibilities are wide ranging, and are committed to supporting you with the training and guidance you need to develop your skills and make a real impact on school improvement. As well as an informative welcome pack and Induction workshop to help you begin to make a positive difference to your governing board, we will follow up with you six months after appointment to make sure you are settling into your role and to offer further support. We will also keep you up to date on key educational developments and good practice through a termly mailing.

Thank you for the energy and commitment that you bring to your governing board. I hope that you will enjoy the challenge and find it a rewarding experience.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ray Gooding'.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Clare Kershaw'.

**Cllr Ray Gooding**  
Cabinet Member for Education

**Clare Kershaw**  
Director for Education

# Role of Governors

## Role of all governors

No governor can act on his/her own without proper authority from the full governing board. As a local authority governor, you are a member of the governing board, a corporate body which:

- sets the strategic direction for the school by setting the school's vision and values and ensuring it meets all its statutory duties
- monitors, challenges and reviews progress towards targets and the school improvement strategy
- constantly seeks to promote high standards of educational achievement for all pupils by setting high expectations and asking challenging questions
- supports the headteacher and senior leadership team but challenges their expectations and holds them to account for the performance of the school
- ensures accountability including consultation with key stakeholders as appropriate and making information available to the community
- ensures financial probity including value for money and risk management

## Role of local authority governors

Local authority governors work as part of the governing board team to promote high standards of educational achievement for every child. As a local authority governor, you are a representative of the local authority; expected to behave with integrity and to never bring the reputation of the school or the Council into disrepute. Governors must always operate in the best interests of pupils.

Although you are not expected to represent any one political view, awareness and understanding of Essex County Council priorities and policies will enable you to be appropriately informed when debating priorities at school level and reflect on the impact of decisions on the local community.

The perspective you bring is about how the school fits into the wider provision of education, and you play a key role in 'linking' the governing board to information about educational developments and Council priorities.

### We expect local authority governors to:

- get to know the school and visit the school in action
- attend meetings regularly, preparing for meetings beforehand so they are well informed and play an active part in driving school effectiveness
- recognise the corporate status of the governing board and the concept of collective responsibility.



Appendices 1 and 2 provide more detail about the qualities and behaviours we expect to see in a local authority governor.

# Our Commitment to Supporting Local Authority Governors

**As a local authority governor, whether at a maintained school, academy or free school, the role you play in school improvement is highly valued. Thank you for the commitment, time and energy you bring to ensuring that all the children and young people of Essex have the very best opportunities to reach their potential.**

In order to raise educational standards for Essex children, it is vital that you have the skills and knowledge 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.

To help you carry out your role as a local authority governor in Essex, you will receive a termly mailing on key educational developments and information about Essex County Council priorities. If you are a governor at a school subscribing to EES for Schools Governance Support, you will also have access to the the following support, guidance and advice:

- a useful welcome pack for new governors which includes a jargon buster and a summary of your role and responsibilities
- follow up after six months with new governors to ensure you have received an effective school induction and to discuss further support
- access to the governors' website and useful online resources **EESforschools.org/governors**
- access to a dedicated working hours helpline **033301 139833**

Induction is essential if new governors are to understand their role and responsibilities. If you are a governor at a school subscribing to EES for Schools Governor Training, you will have access to an extensive training programme, including:

- Induction for New Governors workshop to help you understand your role and quickly make a difference to your governing board
- access to online learning through Learning Link (previously GEL)
- Update for Experienced Governors workshop (for those who are not new to school governance)

To book: **EEScpdportal.org**



For support from EES for Schools Governor Services team:

E: **enquiries.governorservices@EESforschools.org**

T: **033301 39833**

## Local Authority Governor: Person Specification

### Commitment

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

Induction is essential if new governors are to understand their role and make an effective contribution to the governing board, and local authority governors who are new to school governance are expected to complete an induction programme within six months of appointment.

Local authority governors are also expected to familiarise themselves with local authority priorities and be willing to keep their knowledge up-to-date.

### Experience

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

- business or professional expertise
- experience as a school governor or other voluntary role
- experience of working with children or young people

### Skills and Attributes

Local authority governors must have the skills to contribute to effective governance and the success of the school, including:

- a passion for school improvement and raising standards to enable every child to achieve their potential
- commitment to playing an active part whilst working as part of a team
- commitment to fulfilling the role responsibly, eg. time to attend meetings regularly, read the paperwork and visit the school

### Values and Behaviours

Local authority governors must agree to:

- respect confidentiality and the need to act with circumspection, including always using social networking sites responsibly
- work as part of a team and express their views openly, courteously and respectfully
- record any business interest in connection with the governing board's business in the school's Register of Business Interests and declare any potential conflict of interest. This will be published on the school's website.



**Local authority governors are expected to sign the Code of Conduct for the governing board on an annual basis and uphold The Seven Principles of Public Life (see Appendix 2)**

# The Seven Principles of Public Life

*(originally published by the Nolan Committee)*

### 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.



**The Committee of Standards in Public Life was established by the then Prime Minister in 1994, under the Chairmanship of Lord Nolan, to consider standards of conduct in various areas of public life, and to make recommendations.**

You can contact us in the following ways:

**By email:**

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[EESforschools.org/governors](https://EESforschools.org/governors)

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