



## Guidance for the Staff Governors

This document should be read alongside two related guidance documents: *The Role of Link Governor* and *Guidance for Governors on Visiting the School*.

The first of these tries to capture the *generic* function of any link governor role. Although the exact operation of link roles will vary according to the nature of the appointment, in general a link governor role involves some of/all the following tasks:

- Keeping up to date with the area of interest, and attending relevant training
- Making focused visits to the school
- Acting as a link between a relevant staff member and the governing body, by meeting regularly to discuss the area of interest
- Monitoring and discussing the impact of relevant policies with the staff member
- Regularly reporting to the governing body, either verbally and/or in writing, and making recommendations where appropriate.

The second guidance document referred to above sets out our agreed protocol for governors' visits to school. It covers the things to consider before, during and after the visits that governors may make to school, including those undertaken when fulfilling a link role.

When we published those two guidance documents, we promised that we would also produce more specific guidance on the conduct of particular link roles. Hence this document on the *staff governor* link role which is the result of collaborative work with our staff governors, who have also taken steps to consult with school staff regarding how the role might operate most effectively.

## Background to the drafting of the guidance document

Bright Futures Educational Trust determines the composition of local governing bodies within its schools. These arrangements allow for two elected staff governors, one from the teaching staff team and one from the support staff team.

We have drafted this guidance document taking into account the following materials:

- Department for Education (DfE) advice on governance
- Extensive documentation drawn from *The Key for Governors* which includes examples of good practice around the role of staff governor in different schools
- Research into what different local authorities (LAs) offer as advice to the governing bodies of their schools with regard to operational practice for staff governors.

The DfE regulations regarding staff governors make an important point:

*It is important that prospective staff governors understand the nature of the role of a governor – and specifically that their role will not be to represent staff, nor to stand alongside the headteacher in being held to account by the governing body, but to operate as part of the governing body to provide strategic leadership and to hold the headteacher to account. It is advised that clear expectations of role and conduct are communicated and agreed upfront.*

Advice from Luton Metropolitan Borough Council comments on the unique nature of the staff governor role:

*The role is unique in that, by definition, staff are involved in the day to day running of the school and yet are asked as governors to put this to one side and be ‘strategic managers’. This is not always easy to do. However, the role of the staff governor offers an opportunity to make a real contribution to the strategic management of the school, providing an interesting and rewarding dimension to work.*

The staff governors have equal status to any other governor and are expected to share in the wider government responsibilities and work load, for example playing a productive part in governor working groups.

## Intent – What do want to achieve through this link role?

The main intent of the role is to:

- Provide a staff perspective to help shape the work of the governing body
- Support the governing body in developing strategies for gathering staff views which help the governors keep informed about staff well-being, including any issues around work loads

- Help develop strategies which enable the staff to understand the role of governors and to engage with them

## Implementation – How will the role operate?

There is no prescribed formula for implementation of the role. Possible ways in which the staff governors will fulfil the intended remit include:

- Active participation in governor working groups
- Support for drafting of staff surveys commissioned by governors and analysis and presentation of findings to the governing body
- Inputs to staff with regard to governance in the school
- Helping keep the governance section of the school website under review
- Input into the governance self-evaluation statement and into the governance action plan
- Work with student leaders in terms of their engagement with governors, their views around governors and governance and their inputs into governing body meetings

Staff governors will seek to ‘keep their finger on the pulse’ of staff views – remaining mindful that it is not the job of staff governor in any way to represent or promote such views. This will include gathering staff feedback on how the role of staff governor might operate most productively. In this sense, the pattern of implementation will always remain flexible, taking account of ‘what works’ and adapting operational practice accordingly.

## Impact – How will we assess what difference the role makes?

The role will be deemed to have had positive impact if:

- Staff understanding of governor roles and responsibilities shows improvement over time
- In their engagement with the staff governors, staff demonstrate sound understanding of the function of the staff governor role
- Students’ understanding, as appropriate, of governor roles and responsibilities shows improvement over time.
- Governors benefit from a clearer picture of staff and student perspectives, as a good basis for making informed decisions, through the work of staff governors
- The implementation and impact of the governance action plan are enhanced by the value added by the work of the staff governors
- The fulfilment of the role adds to the professional development of the staff governors