

Being a Parent Governor at Tanbridge House School

Think you might be interested in being a parent governor but not sure.

Here are some questions and answers prepared by a recently appointed parent governor which may help you to decide.

Q What qualifications do I need?

There are no pre-requisite formal qualifications.

The main attributes needed are:

- Being prepared to give time to doing the job well
- A belief that education is important
- A willingness to learn
- An ability to work with others
- Being discreet, open-minded and fair
- Sound communication skills
- An ability to assimilate a wide range of information and data
- An interest in the role of schools in the community

Q How much time will it take? Will I need to take time off work?

You will be required to attend the meetings of the Full Governing Body, which are four times a year and last about 3 hours. You will also be a member of at least one sub committee which meets once a term for about 2 hours. Meetings are usually early morning, with some sub-committees at the end of the school day. You will also need to allow some time for document reading before each meeting.

Governors at Tanbridge House are also enthusiastic about supporting the school in other ways throughout the year. Examples include attending school events such as concerts and awards evenings, school visits and interviews for new staff. Participation in school life is very rewarding.

Section 50 of the Employment Rights Act 1996 says that employers must give employees who are school governors 'reasonable time off' to carry out their duties – but they do not have to give time off with pay. You would need to agree with your employer on what is 'reasonable time off'.

Q What are the responsibilities of being a governor?

Governors do not have any powers as individuals. The governing body exercises its authority collectively. So you will never be required to take any responsibility alone nor should you. The governors at Tanbridge House School support one another in developing their experience as governors. There are specific governor training courses available locally which you are recommended to attend. Some are day time sessions and others are in the evenings.

Q Do I need to have experience in education?

You do not need to be an education expert. The most effective governors - listen, think and ask questions.

Q What if another parent wants to complain to me about something they're concerned about?

The school has systems in place to deal with any concerns or queries from parents. You would not be required to deal with any issues as an individual nor should you. The training you receive will answer this kind of question.

Q What is the make-up of the governing body?

There are 18 governors at THS. They include Community governors, Local Education Authority Governors, Parent Governors and Staff Governors.

Q My child has fewer than 4 years left at the school? Can I still be a parent governor?

Yes, you can still complete your term of office after your child has left.

Q What will I take away from the experience?

Schools are fascinating places. Being a governor can be very rewarding because you are:

- Investing in the next generation
- Using your personal qualities and expertise to help the school, its pupils and staff
- Developing new skills
- Acquiring new knowledge
- Making new friends
- Developing a sense of partnership and involvement in the community