

Role of Parent Local School Board Members

The role and responsibilities of parent local school board members are no different from those of other LSB members. Parent local school board members are not delegates and do not speak 'on behalf' of the parent body, but bring a parental perspective to the issues discussed. The main difference is that parents are elected to the board, not appointed (unless there are fewer candidates than vacancies).

As a parent board member it will sometimes feel that you have to know everything about the school, but cannot talk about it; you have to be on everyone's side; people imagine that you have loads of free time and you have to be able to juggle all these expectations.

As a parent you will already be an expert juggler, but developing your role as a board member will take time. You are not alone. There is advice, help and support you can tap into and reading this guidance note is the first step.

Parent board members are:	Parent board members are not:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Well placed to understand parents' views and to remind the Local School Board how matters being discussed affect parents.● Individuals. How you make decisions on any matters is up to you.● In a good position to help the Local School Board to communicate effectively with parents.● Equal in status to all other board members.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Expected to gather the views of other parents and take them to the Local School Board;● Simply expected to represent the interests of parents● A link between parents and the Local School Board● Expected to vote as instructed by other parents.

What are the good bits about being a parent board member?

You have a very privileged and responsible role. You have the opportunity to make a difference, not only for your children, but for children in years to come. You have the opportunity to make a difference for other parents, and to influence the way in which school works with them. You will learn a lot and develop new skills

How can you fulfil your role?

Attend Local School Board meetings regularly and play an active role in committees and decision-making. Learn all you can about the school. Consider how the Local School Board communicates with parents? Could you help them to improve links? How accessible is the school – how easy is it for parents to go into school to discuss things with the Headteacher or teachers? Could you give feedback to help the school to be more open and welcoming? How accessible are the governors – do parents ever get the opportunity to meet with board members; do they know how to get in touch with the Chair of the Local School Board if they need to? Could you encourage the Local School Board to be more visible? Learn how the school handles complaints and read the complaints policy. If another parent approaches you with a complaint, advise them to speak to the Headteacher. Be approachable to other parents, but make sure you are clear about your role. Always represent the school positively.

As a local school board member you are one of a group and must never act alone. Always support the decisions of the full Local School Board. Have your say on decisions in meetings and vote in the way you wish; but then support the outcomes of votes – even if you disagree with them. Always, observe confidentiality. You will get to know a lot of highly sensitive and confidential information – do not discuss it with anyone who is not a board member. Remember, a governor can be suspended for serious breaches of confidentiality