



London Borough of Tower Hamlets Governor Application Form

Why do schools need Governors?

For some time now local people like you have been making important decisions about the way Tower Hamlets schools are run. Our schools need more committed and enthusiastic people to come forward to serve as governors.

Governing bodies have many responsibilities and recent legislation has made it explicit that governing bodies have a statutory duty to conduct the school with a view to promoting high standards. They do this by:

- Setting the strategic direction of the school
- Acting as a critical friend to the head
- Ensuring accountability

Being a governor is an opportunity to have your voice heard and help us improve education for the children in our Borough.

Who can become a Governor?

Every school has a governing body, primarily volunteers, who usually serve for four years. They work together and all decisions are shared – there is no individual liability.

Each governing body includes:

- Parents elected by parents of children at the school
- Teachers and support staff elected by their colleagues

- Representatives appointed by Tower Hamlets
- The Headteacher
- Voluntary schools will also have representatives of the foundations or charitable trusts

How much time is involved?

Being a governor is not difficult but will require a high level of commitment from you.

Governing bodies usually meet in the evening at least once per term, but more often twice. Most also have committees which will meet in between these meetings. In addition to all of this there will be papers to read, training sessions, conferences etc.

What help will I get?

Tower Hamlets Council provides information and advice for all governors as well as induction courses specifically for new governors. Don't worry – it isn't like going back to school! Training is informal and involves small groups discussing practical examples. You will find that some of these courses are run centrally for the benefit of the whole Borough whilst others will be for your specific governing body on a topic of its choice.

What do Governors actually do?

The governors are responsible for making sure the school provides a good quality education for all of its pupils. In conjunction with the head they set the school aims and policies. They are not responsible for the day-to-day management of the school; that is the sole responsibility of the head.

The Governing Body:

- Decides the aims and objectives of the school
- Selects the headteacher
- Approves the school's budget
- Ensures the National Curriculum is taught
- Decides how staff will be selected
- Decides on a sex education policy
- Makes sure that children with special needs have access to the curriculum
- Acts as a link between the school and the local community
- Hears complaints
- Considers pupil exclusions
- Ensures that Health and Safety requirements are met.

School Governor Person Specification

Tower Hamlets are looking for Governors that:

General

- Recognise that the purpose of each governing body is to help the school provide the best possible education for its pupils
- Are determined to raise aspirations, expectations and achievement in Tower Hamlets
- Are willing to act at all times fairly, without prejudice and in accordance with the principles laid down by the Committee on Standards in Public Life, i.e. selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership
- Have a commitment to promote and support equal opportunities for all members of the school community
- Act in a positive and supportive manner
- Understand and respect the confidentiality of meetings
- Are prepared to work with other governors to increase knowledge and understanding of school improvement

Experience/Training

- Commit to attending the basic induction for new governors courses held termly at the PDC. If they are not able to attend these, arrange for an individual induction session with their clerk to governors, if their school buys into the LEA's Clerking Service, or with a member of Governor Services, if the school does not
- Attend additional training as appropriate
- Demonstrate an understanding of the wider world and how it impacts on the lives of young people and their families

Skills/Knowledge

- Have good communication and interpersonal skills
- Demonstrate an ability and willingness to work as a team member and recognise the collective responsibility of the governing body
- Demonstrate a good knowledge of the local area and community
- Have the ability to act as a link between the school and the community it serves
- Commitment
- Are able to attend two full governing body meetings per term, usually held in the evening
- Are willing to join at least one governing body committee
- Are able to visit the school during working hours on occasion