

# **RULES AND PROCEDURES FOR PARENT GOVERNOR ELECTIONS**

## **Incorporating e-nomination and e-voting**

**A copy of this document should be made clearly available on the school website during parent governor elections.**

### **Table of contents**

General .....	2
Timeline for Parent Governor Elections .....	3
Stage 1: Notice of Election .....	4
Nominations for Election .....	4
Uncontested Election .....	4
Stage 2: Notice of Ballot (in the case of a contested election) .....	5
Issue of Ballot Papers and Voting .....	5
Secrecy of the Ballot .....	6
Counting of Votes .....	6
Publication of the Results.....	6
Resignation and Termination of Office .....	6
Publication of Rules .....	7
Interpretation and Rulings .....	7
Appendix 1: Notice of Election – email template .....	8
Appendix 2: Notice of Election – paper template .....	10
Appendix 3: Nomination Form – paper template.....	12
Appendix 4: Eligibility - Qualifications and Disqualifications.....	13
Appendix 5: Notice of Ballot – email template.....	14
Appendix 6: Notice of Ballot – paper template .....	15
Appendix 7: Ballot Paper – paper template.....	16

**Note:** Throughout this document, the term "parent" includes foster parents, guardians and carers with parental responsibility, as well as the child's natural parents.

## General

- 1) A parent governor election has two stages:

### **Stage 1: Notice of Election**

All parents are advised of the parent governor vacancy or vacancies and asked to nominate themselves for the position(s), should they wish, and provide a brief personal statement. If the number of candidates does not exceed the number of vacancies the candidate(s) are duly elected unopposed and there is no need to go to stage 2.

### **Stage 2: Notice of Ballot**

If the number of candidates nominated exceeds the number of vacancies, a Notice of Ballot is sent to parents asking them to vote in a ballot. The Notice of Ballot will include the names and personal statements of all candidates.

- 2) The school will make every reasonable effort to fill parent governor vacancies through parent ballots. If insufficient parents stand for election the governing body can appoint:
  - a. a parent of a registered pupil at the school, or if that is not possible;
  - b. a parent of a former pupil at the school, or if that is not possible;
  - c. a parent of a child of or under compulsory school age.
- 3) The headteacher is responsible for supervising the whole election process and shall act as the Returning Officer.
- 4) The election will normally be held within twenty five school days of a vacancy occurring or the beginning of the autumn term, but may be held at any time at the discretion of the headteacher.
- 5) Any parent who has a child registered at the school on the first day of the election can stand for election and vote in the ballot. The first day of the election is defined as the day when the Notice of Election is sent out.
- 6) The school will make every reasonable effort to give adequate notice to parents of how and when they can nominate themselves for election, and how and when they can vote in a ballot.
- 7) A person is disqualified from election or appointment as a parent governor if they do not meet the 'Eligibility - Qualifications and Disqualifications' criteria (see Appendix 4).
- 8) The period of office for a parent governor is currently 4 years. The period of office begins immediately after the parent governor's election.
- 9) Parent governors may continue to serve out their term of office when their child leaves the school, if they so wish.

# Timeline for Parent Governor Elections

## Suggested timeline

### Stage 1

Day 1 Notice of Election (inc. call for nominations)

Day 10 Closing date for nominations

If there are more nominations than vacancies, go to Stage 2

### Stage 2

Day 13 Notice of Ballot (inc. call for votes)

Day 20 Closing date for voting.

Day 23 Circulation of election results

*(When counting on this system, do not include Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays and if possible avoid school holidays)*

## Stage 1: Notice of Election

- 1) The Notice of Election, stating the number of vacancies and inviting nominations, will be published to parents at least 10 school days before the nomination closing date.
- 2) The Notice of Election will be given electronically (via email). Where the school does not have an email address for a pupil's parents, the Notice of Election will be given by paper letter.
  - **By email:** The email Notice of Election will include instructions on how to self-nominate using the online self-nomination form, brief details of the procedures, the timetable for the election, a copy of 'Eligibility – Disqualifications and Qualifications', and a hyperlink to find these Rules and Procedures on the school website. *See Appendix 1 for a template email Notice of Election.*
  - **By paper:** The paper Notice of Election will include instructions on how to self-nominate using the paper self-nomination form, brief details of the procedures, the timetable for the election, a copy of 'Eligibility – Disqualifications and Qualifications', and a note as to the availability of these Rules and Procedures on the school website. *See Appendix 2 for a template paper Notice of Election.*

## Nominations for Election

*See Appendix 3 for a template paper self-nomination form.*

- 1) Nominations need to reach the headteacher by the closing time and date stated in the Notice of Election. Late nominations will be excluded from the election.
- 2) A proposer and a seconder are not required. A nomination must be completed by the candidate.
- 3) Nominations must include a brief personal statement of no more than 200 words, giving autobiographical details and such other relevant information and views as the candidate wishes. Candidates should be aware that personal statements are not confidential and will be visible to all parents in the event of a ballot and may be published on the school website during the ballot.
- 4) The headteacher may, at their absolute discretion, exclude material from a personal statement if they deem it inappropriate or for reasons of data protection.

## Uncontested Election

If the number of candidate nominations does not exceed the number of vacancies, the candidate(s) is/are duly elected unopposed. The headteacher will notify the parents, school community, chair of governors and clerk within 3 school days.

## Stage 2: Notice of Ballot (in the case of a contested election)

- 1) If the number of candidate nominations exceeds the number of vacancies, a Notice of Ballot will be sent to parents within 3 schools days of the closing date for nominations.
- 2) The Notice of Ballot will be sent electronically (via email). Where the school does not have an email address for a pupil's parent(s), reasonable efforts will be made to provide the Notice of Ballot in paper form.
  - **By email:** The email Notice of Ballot will state the number of vacancies, the names and personal statements of the nominated candidates, the deadline for voting, brief details of the procedures, and provide a hyperlink to vote using the online voting form. *See Appendix 5 for a template for an email Notice of Ballot*
  - **By paper:** The paper Notice of Ballot will state the number of vacancies, the names and personal statements of the nominated candidates, the deadline for voting, brief details of the procedures and instructions on to how to vote in person at the school. *See Appendix 6 for a template for a paper Notice of Ballot*

## Issue of Ballot Papers and Voting

- 1) The preferred method of ballot will be online.
- 2) Each parent will be sent instructions with a link to the online voting form, using the parents' email addresses held by the school
- 3) The names of the candidates will be clearly stated, in alphabetical order of surname, on the online voting form.
- 4) Parents will have an equal number of votes to vacancies i.e., one vacancy allows one vote and two vacancies allows two votes.
- 5) Each parent has one vote for each vacancy to be filled, irrespective of the number of children they have at the school; no parent can cast more than one vote for any one candidate.
- 6) For the avoidance of doubt, where a child has two registered parents both are eligible to vote (e.g., the mother and the father of a child have one vote each for each vacancy).
- 7) A period of not less than 7 school days will be allowed for the completion of online and paper voting.
- 8) The school will take all reasonable measures to ensure online voting is secure and anonymous.
- 9) For those parents who can't or don't want to vote online, the school will make a paper based system available for voting in person at the school. In this case parent's votes will be anonymous, but the names of who has voted will be recorded to allow the detection of double-voting via on-line and in person (if this happens, the person's on-line vote will be discounted). *See Appendix 7 for a template ballot paper for use in-school.*

- 10) The headteacher will keep a record of the return of the online votes and ballot papers.
- 11) The school may choose to use a paper voting system for conducting the ballot, in which case the above rules relating to electronic ballots will be modified as appropriate for a paper-based system.
- 12) The headteacher shall be free to introduce other security precautions, as is considered reasonable.

## **Secrecy of the Ballot**

All persons concerned in the administration of the ballot will maintain the secrecy of the ballot and will not disclose details of how individual parents have voted.

## **Counting of Votes**

- 1) All votes will be kept secret and held in a secure place until the counting of the votes.
- 2) The headteacher will supervise the counting of all the votes, being the aggregate of the online and any paper votes. As supervisor, they may appoint such persons (excluding candidates), as they consider necessary to assist in the counting of the votes.
- 3) The headteacher, as supervisor of the count, will decide upon the admissibility of any questionable paper votes.
- 4) In the case of electronic voting, the headteacher will satisfy themselves as to the integrity of the electronic vote count.
- 5) The candidate(s) with the highest number(s) of votes will be declared to be elected i.e. the decision will be by a simple majority of the votes cast.
- 6) In the event of equality of votes, the headteacher, as supervisor, will hold a recount. If the equality is still maintained the headteacher will decide the result by the toss of a coin.

## **Publication of the Results**

- 1) At the earliest opportunity after the count, the headteacher will inform the winning candidate(s), the losing candidate(s), the chair of governors and the clerk, and publish the result of the election via email to parents and on the school website.
- 2) All papers and electronic files concerning the election will be kept in a safe place by the headteacher for a period of one month after the election.
- 3) The headteacher is responsible for ensuring an enhanced DBS check is completed for the new governor as soon as possible after the election.

## **Resignation and Termination of Office**

- 1) Where a parent governor resigns during the term of office, at the discretion of the headteacher an election will normally be held within twenty five school days of that resignation or, where the resignation occurs within twenty five school days prior to the end of a school term, within twenty five school days following the beginning of the next

term.

- 2) Any governor elected to take the place of another governor who has resigned early is elected for a full term of office.

## **Publication of Rules**

- 1) A copy of these Rules and Procedures will be published on the school website.
- 2) Parents will be informed in the Notice of Election where to find these Rules and Procedures.

## **Interpretation and Rulings**

Any matter relating to the election of parent governors not covered in these procedures and rules will be decided by the headteacher with reference, if necessary, to the chair of governors. If there is a breach of these procedures and rules in conducting the election, the headteacher will decide, in conjunction with the chair of governors, if the overall integrity and fairness of the process is compromised and whether the result should stand.

# Appendix 1: Notice of Election – email template

*This can also be posted on the school website alongside these Rules and Procedures.*

Dear Parents/Carers

## **(name of school) Election of Parent Governor(s)**

The Local Governing Body (LGB) of the school has **[number]** parent governor vacancies. We are writing to ask you if you would be interested in becoming a parent governor.

Becoming a governor is a very rewarding and worthwhile experience. Effective governors do not need expertise in education but do need to be committed to their school, willing to ask questions and offer appropriate challenge and support.

All governors are expected to:

- attend termly (roughly) evening meetings of the LGB
- attend development sessions which are usually once a term
- visit the school formally for monitoring purposes

Governors also need to be able to work as an enthusiastic member of the governing body team with the aim of raising and maintaining high educational standards for all children. Governors are asked to act with integrity, honesty and objectivity and at all times in the best interests of the school.

The prime focus of the LGB is to develop the strategic direction of the school, be accountable to stakeholders and to ensure that financial resources are spent appropriately.

Governors also have a number of opportunities to access training to develop and enhance their knowledge and skills.

It is important to note that governors are elected to bring the experience of that individual as a member of the LGB. Once elected, parent governors are a representative parent but not a delegate. This means they are not expected to report back to parents on any matters relating to the school or LGB without prior consent from the governing body.

The LGB welcomes nominations from individuals with the following skills or experience:

\* governance experience / data analysis / finance management / human resource management / local community knowledge / community services / premises & buildings management / commercial / special needs awareness / health and safety / leadership and management / marketing and PR

**(\*suggestions, delete as appropriate)**

Anyone who has parental responsibility for a pupil on the school roll at the time of the election can nominate themselves, stand for election and vote in the election. The term of office for a parent governor is four years.

Nominations should be made online via this link **(insert link to nomination form)**, and must be submitted before noon on **[day/date]**.

Nomination requires that each candidate provide a brief personal statement of up to 200 words in length, covering a little information about the candidate and why they would like to be a governor. Should there be more than one nomination for the vacancy, there will be a parent ballot and all personal statements will be shared with parents, to help them decide how to vote.

If you cannot nominate using the online form, you can instead complete the attached nomination form, which must arrive at the school no later than the nomination closing time and date stated above.

Within a few days of the closing date for nominations we will inform parents whether we need to hold a ballot. If there is a ballot, we will run this using an online voting form, via the email address we have registered for parents in the school database (please contact us if you want to check or update this



information). If you cannot vote online, you will still be able participate by coming into school and voting in person.

We will send more details to you about how to vote online or in person if and when voting is about to start.

A copy of the Rules and Procedures guiding the election of parent governors and further copies of the nomination form can be obtained from the school website or by asking at reception.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

Chair

Attachments:

- Eligibility – Qualifications and Disqualifications Criteria
- Nomination Form

## Appendix 2: Notice of Election – paper template

*This can also be posted on the school noticeboard alongside these Rules for Election.*

Dear Parents/Carers

### **(name of school) Election of Parent Governors – Nominations by (day, date)**

The Local Governing Body (LGB) of the school has [number] parent governor vacancies. We are writing to ask if you would be interested in becoming a parent governor.

Becoming a governor is very rewarding and worthwhile experience. Effective governors do not need expertise in education but do need to be committed to their school, willing to ask questions and offer appropriate challenge and support.

All governors are expected to:

- attend termly (roughly) evening meetings of the LGB
- attend development sessions which are usually once a term
- visit the school formally for monitoring purposes

Governors also need to be able to work as an enthusiastic member of the governing body team with the aim of raising and maintaining high educational standards for all children. Governors are asked to act with integrity, honesty and objectivity and at all times in the best interests of the school.

The prime focus of the LGB is to develop the strategic direction of the school, be accountable to stakeholders and to ensure that financial resources are spent appropriately.

Governors also have a number of opportunities to access training to develop and enhance their knowledge and skills.

It is important to note that governors are elected to bring the experience of that individual as a member of the LGB. Once elected, parent governors are a representative parent but not a delegate. This means they are not expected to report back to parents on any matters relating to the school or LGB without prior consent from the governing body.

The LGB welcomes nominations from individuals with the following skills or experience:

\* governance experience / data analysis / finance management / human resource management / local community knowledge / community services / premises & buildings management / commercial / special needs awareness / health and safety / leadership and management / marketing and PR

**(\*suggestions, delete as appropriate)**

Anyone who has parental responsibility for a pupil on the school roll at the time of the election can nominate themselves, stand for election and vote in the election. The term of office for a parent governor is four years.

Nominations should be made online using a link sent to you by the school via email. If you have not received the email and would like to self-nominate online, please ask the school office to send you an email with the link. If you prefer not to use the online form, please use the nomination form enclosed with this letter.

Nomination requires that each candidate provide a brief personal statement of up to 200 words in length, covering a little information about the candidate and why they would like to be a governor. Should there be more than one nomination for the vacancy, there will be a parent ballot and all personal statements will be shared with parents, to help them decide how to vote.

On (date) we will inform parents about the details of parent governor nominations and whether we need to have an election.

If there is an election, we will run this using an online voting form, via the email address we have registered for parents in the school database (please contact us if you want to check or update this information). If you cannot vote online, you can still participate by coming into school and voting in person at reception.

We will send more details to you about how to vote online or in person if and when voting is about to start.

A copy of the Rules and Procedures guiding the election of parent governors and further copies of the nomination form can be obtained from the school website or by asking at reception.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

Chair

Enclosures:

- Eligibility – Qualifications and Disqualifications Criteria
- Nomination Form

## Appendix 3: Nomination Form – paper template

Election for a Parent Governor for **(school)**

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Name & Year(s) of Child(ren): \_\_\_\_\_

**Why I would like to be a parent governor:**

(please provide a brief statement of no more than 200 words continuing on a separate sheet if necessary). Please note, your personal statement will be shared with all parents in the event of an election.

**Declaration: I have read and understood the Eligibility – Qualifications and Disqualifications criteria, and confirm that I am eligible and able to stand for election as a parent governor. I also confirm that I am able to fulfill the role, including attending meetings as required and by contributing to governance work outside formal meetings.**

<b>Signature:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	

(if you could also email this form to **(school email)** it would be helpful)

## Appendix 4: Eligibility - Qualifications and Disqualifications

Regulation requires that all governors have to be eligible and the criteria is listed below. You must read, understand and confirm your eligibility before becoming a governor.

### Qualifications and disqualifications to serve as a Parent Governor:

- A person must be aged 18 or over at the date of their election or appointment.
- No current pupil of the school, or of any school in the Vale Academy Trust, shall be a local governing body member.
- A governor must not also be a clerk to the local governing body at which they are a governor.
- A parent/carer cannot stand for election if they work at the school for more than 500 hours in a twelve month period.
- A person cannot hold more than one governor post at the same school at the same time.
- A person shall be disqualified from holding office or continuing to hold office as a governor if:
  - s/he becomes incapable by reason of illness or injury of managing or administering his/her own affairs;
  - s/he is absent without the permission of the local governing body from all their meetings held within a period of six months, and the governors resolve that his/her office be vacated;
  - s/he has been declared bankrupt and/or his estate has been seized from his/her possession for the benefit of his creditors and the declaration or seizure has not been discharged, annulled or reduced; or
  - s/he is the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order or an interim order;
  - s/he is subject to a disqualification order or a disqualification undertaking under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986; or
  - s/he is subject to an order made under section 429(2)(b) of the Insolvency Act 1986 (failure to pay under county court administration order);
  - s/he ceases to be a trustee/governor by virtue of any provision in the Companies Act 2006;
  - s/he is disqualified from acting as a trustee/governor by virtue of section 178 of the Charities Act 2011 (or any statutory re-enactment or modification of that provision); or
  - s/he is otherwise found to be unsuitable by the Secretary of State;
  - s/he has been removed from the office of charity trustee or trustee for a charity by an order made by the Charity Commission or the High Court on the grounds of any misconduct or mismanagement in the administration of the charity for which (s)he was responsible; or to which (s)he was privy; or which (s)he, by his/her conduct, contributed to or facilitated;
  - s/he has, at any time, been convicted of any criminal offence, excluding any that have been spent under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 as amended, and excluding any offence for which the maximum sentence is a fine or a lesser sentence except where a person has been convicted of any offence which falls under section 178 of the Charities Act 2011;
  - -s/he has not completed an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service check (organised by the school shortly after someone joins as a governor)

## Appendix 5: Notice of Ballot – email template

Dear Parents/Carers

### Local Governing Body of **(School)** Parent Governor Election - Ballot

As you may be aware, I wrote to all parents and carers recently regarding the parent governor election and invited nominations for the position **(s)** to be returned by **(date)**.

The following nominations have been received and are listed below:

#### **(NAMES)**

The personal statements from these candidates are attached to this email, and also available from the school office.

As the number of nominations received exceeds the number of vacancies, it is now necessary to hold a ballot.

**Please vote online by no later than midday on **(day/date)**: **(hyperlink to online voting form)****

If you cannot vote online, you can still participate by coming into school and voting in person at reception, but you must do this before the closing date above.

To be clear, all parents/carers of a child currently registered at the school are entitled to vote. This means, for example, that the father and mother of a registered child are entitled to a vote each, for each vacancy.

The candidates with the highest number of votes will be declared elected. In the case of a tie there will be a recount, and if there is still a tie a coin will be tossed by the Headteacher to determine the result.

If you require any assistance with the voting process, please do not hesitate to contact me

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

Attachments:

- Candidate personal statements

## Appendix 6: Notice of Ballot – paper template

Dear Parents/Carers

### Local Governing Body of **(School)** Parent Governor Election - Ballot

As you may be aware, I wrote to all parents and carers recently regarding the parent governor election and invited nominations for the position **(s)** to be returned by **(date)**.

The following nominations have been received and are listed below:

#### **(NAMES)**

The personal statements from these candidates are enclosed with this letter, and also available from the school office.

As the number of nominations received exceeds the number of vacancies, it is now necessary to hold a ballot.

#### **Please vote by no later than midday on **(day/date)****

Voting should be made online using a link sent to you by the school via email. If you have not received the email and would like to vote online, please ask the school office to send you an email with the link. If you prefer not to use online voting, you can still participate by coming into school and voting in person at reception, but you must do this before the closing date.

To be clear, all parents/carers of a child currently registered at the school are entitled to vote. This means, for example, that the father and mother of a registered child are entitled to a vote each, for each vacancy.

The candidates with the highest number of votes will be declared elected. In the case of a tie there will be a recount, and if there is still a tie a coin will be tossed by the Headteacher to determine the result.

If you require any assistance with the voting process, please do not hesitate to contact me

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

Enclosure:

- Candidate personal statements

# Appendix 7: Ballot Paper – paper template

Voting in person at the school - parent governor election

**(school)**

## **BALLOT PAPER**

If you have already voted online (or intend to) please disregard this ballot paper.

There are **[number]** post(s) open for this election. Please put an 'X' in the box next to your preferred candidate(s).

**YOU CAN VOTE FOR UP TO **[number]** CANDIDATES ONLY**

1	<b>First Name and Last Name</b>	
2	<b>First Name and Last Name</b>	
3	<b>First Name and Last Name</b>	

*(NB Candidates should be listed in alphabetical order of last name)*

**Below/attached** is the personal statement for each candidate.

When you have voted above:

- 1 Fold the ballot paper (do not write your name on it)
- 2 Seal the ballot paper in an envelope and write your full name and your child's full name and year group on the front.
- 3 Deposit in ballot box