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## The Role of the Governing Body

### Governing Bodies

- Schools Governing bodies have existed in one form or another for many years.
- Membership now encompasses to a wide range of people drawn from the school community and beyond.
- Every school is required by law to have a Governing body and the school's Instrument of Government sets out the size and composition of that body.
- Typically, the Governing body is made up of people who represent a variety of interests and hold a variety of skills and expertise that they offer freely to a school for the benefit of all.
- The one thing all Governors share is that their sole purpose in being a member of the Governing body is to ensure that all the children in our schools receive the best possible education. They are not there to gain personally or financially from their involvement in schools.
- The Government recognizes school Governors as the largest group of volunteers in the country and holds them in high esteem for the valuable role they play in society.

*One of them could be you!*

### The Governor Role at Chessington Community College (CCC)

Chessington Community College values its Governors' breadth of experience and skills and recognises the contribution that Governors make to the success of the school. It also wants its Governors to feel that the job they do is rewarding and satisfying. The following description has been developed to help ensure that potential Governors have a better understanding of the role of our Governors and the type of person who may be suitable. The role of a Governor is voluntary and unpaid, although external training and justified related travel will be paid for.

#### Who becomes a school Governor?

People who have an interest in children's futures and want to help them reach their full potential.

You don't need to have children or be a parent of a child at the school to become a school Governor but you do need to be over the age of 18.

#### What are we are looking for in a school Governor?

People who have time and energy and a desire to make a difference by bringing experience and fresh ideas.

Governors should have a readiness to accept responsibility, be happy to ask questions, listen and learn and be able to work as part of a team.

Governors are not required to act as educators nor do they need to be specialists in education. What is needed is the commitment to the well-being of the school, common sense, readiness to learn and personal qualities necessary to work with others and to take corporate decisions conscientiously with the help of professional advice.

### **What is the role of a Governor?**

Essentially, the role of a Governor is a strategic one, offering support and challenge to the school in its role as a public provider of high quality, comprehensive 11-16 education.

Please refer to the National Governors' Association information leaflet, "*What does a Governor do?*" which is attached to this document, which provides a useful overview to the role, duties and expectations of Governors.

### **What is the composition of the Governing Body at CCC?**

The membership of Governing Body of Chessington Community College is as follows: 16 members, drawn from the staff, parents and the local community, all of whom give a commitment of their time and skills freely in the interest of the school and its community.

- Headteacher - 1
- Staff Governor – 1
- Parent Governors – 5
- Local Authority appointed Governors – 1 Governor nominated by the local authority
- Co-opted external skills based Governors - 8 Governors drawn from the wider community for their skills and expertise.

You can find out more about our current Governing body members by following the link to Governor Profiles under the About Us/Governors tab on the school website.

### **How are Governors appointed?**

The staff at the school elects the staff Governor. The parent body elects parent Governors. The local authority nominates one Governor on recommendation to the Governing Body. The Headteacher remains a Governor throughout his/her tenure.

Co-opted external Governors are generally recruited by open competition, following advertisements on the school website and in the Newsletter, through the local volunteer centres and the School Governors One Stop Shop (SGOSS) service.

### **How do I become a Parent Governor?**

Vacancies for parent Governors are advertised on the school website, in our Newsletters and by letter to parents of children registered at the school. Parents including carers and step-parents, of registered pupils at the school are eligible to stand for election for parent Governorship at their school. If insufficient parents stand for election, the Governing body can appoint parent Governors. As a parent Governor you are a "representative" and not a delegate and therefore vote according to your own views.

## **How long would I expect to serve as a Governor?**

All Governors serve a four-year term of office. Governors are eligible to stand again at the end of their term of office providing they continue to meet the relevant criteria applicable to their role. Parent Governors may serve out their term of office, even if their child has left the school.

## **How many meetings are held each year?**

### **FULL GOVERNING BODY [FGB]**

The Full Governing Body must meet at least three times, and normally no more than 4 times a year; twice in the autumn term, and once each in the spring and summer terms.

### **COMMITTEES**

Governors usually serve at least one Committee, each of which normally meets at least once a term.

In exceptional circumstances the FGB or a Committee may arrange an extraordinary meeting to debate an important issue; Governors will be given as much notice as possible in such circumstances.

Committee meetings normally take place on a Wednesday evening from 6pm for up to two hours. FGB meetings are scheduled in the same way, starting at 6:30pm and on occasion can last for up to two and a half hours. Hot and cold drinks are available.

An annual calendar of meeting dates is agreed and published in draft each July for the year ahead.

The Governing Body Committees are:

- ACHIEVEMENT TEACHING and LEARNING
- FINANCE MANAGEMENT
- PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT, BEHAVIOUR, WELFARE AND COMMUNITY
- HEALTH, SAFETY & ASSET MANAGEMENT (reports directly to FGB).

A number of special appeal Panels can be convened to hear dismissals or notice of dismissal appeals, final grievance procedure appeals and student exclusion appeals. Appeal Governors are drawn from the members of the FGB and must have no vested interest in the matter under discussion.

There may also be a linked Governor role with specific responsibilities to a curriculum area, a non-curriculum area, Key Stage Group or key monitoring area.

## **Do I need to attend every meeting?**

Governors should attend all FGB Meetings and meetings of the Committee to which they are assigned. Meetings cannot take place if less than a certain number of the current membership is present (i.e. they are not quorate) so it is important to attend if you can. You do not need to attend Committee meetings if you are not a member, although you may choose to do so as an observer, at the discretion of the Chair.

The Clerk keeps a record of Governors' attendance. Apologies for absence and the consent of the meeting for the absence must be recorded in the Minutes. If any Governor does not attend any full

Governing Body meeting or designated Committee meeting for 6 months without the permission of the Chair of Governors, their membership of the FGB will be deemed to have automatically lapsed and they will be informed in writing of the situation by the Clerk.

### **Will I receive any training?**

Yes. Training plays an important part in helping Governors become effective members of the Governing Body. All new Governors receive an induction programme, which includes an information pack, arrangements for a tour of the school and a meeting with the Headteacher and Chair of Governors. They will also be assigned a mentor, who can act as a point of reference as they develop in their role. The Chairs of Committees and Clerk are also on hand to offer advice and guidance. Training is offered periodically through presentations at FGB meetings, external courses, and mentoring, reading and online resources. Resources are made available through the school website. The school meets the costs of any training.

An annual audit determines the range and level of Governors' skills and experience available to the FGB, as well as identifying any areas for development. The audit is also used as the basis of determining individual training needs. The Chair of Governors and the Clerk will discuss this with Governors on an individual basis.

### **Will I be paid as a Governor?**

School Governors work on a voluntary basis – they are expected to offer their professional or life skills *pro bono* (that is, free for the common good) so they do not get paid. However, you may be paid for any reasonable expenses incurred while carrying out your duties, for example, travel to external courses or to meet child care costs.

You may be entitled to 'reasonable time' off work to go to meetings or to carry out your duties if you are an employee and work in a qualifying occupation. The time must be agreed with your employer beforehand and your employer can refuse your request if it is unreasonable. A specific amount of time off is not laid down in law.

Your employer doesn't have to pay you while you take time off for public duties, although many do. Your employment contract will normally say whether you are paid for this time off.

### **How are meetings run?**

Each Committee has its own Terms of Reference, which are reviewed every two years. Membership of each Committee is agreed by the FGB, which seeks to strike a balance between Governors' status, gender, skills and interests.

Each meeting follows an agenda, and is supported by discussion papers and regular reports originating from the school. The Clerk sends these out at least seven working days in advance of the meeting by email. If a Governor wishes to put an item on the agenda, they must notify the Clerk and Chair in order that the issue be included.

The Chair of the Committee leads the meeting through the business, with contributions to the meeting made through the Chair. Every Governor should feel able to contribute and seek clarification on any issue they are uncertain about. Decisions are reached through discussion and mutual agreement; a simple voting procedure determines the outcome of motions requiring approval.

The Clerk takes minutes and offers advice on procedural matters.

## How do you become the Chair of the FGB or Committee?

The FGB elects a Chair and currently, one Vice Chair to lead its meetings, who are chosen from amongst those Governors who are not employed at the school. They normally hold office for four years, with the arrangements confirmed by the first FGB meeting of each academic year within the period of tenure.

The Chair and Vice-Chair hold office for one year, as do committee Chairs, and are eligible for reappointment at the end of their period of office, as the FGB decides. Normally, this would not exceed three consecutive terms of office, except where the FGB deems it appropriate.

The FGB determines committee membership and the appointment of the Committee Chair. As with the Chair of Governors, Committee Chairs normally hold office for four years, and are eligible for reappointment along similar lines, normally for no more than three consecutive terms of office, except where the FGB deems it appropriate.

## What type of skills are the Governing Body at CCC looking for?

School Governors are drawn from all walks of life. No specific educational qualifications are required. Enthusiasm, commitment and an interest in education are the most important qualities. The ability to act as a “critical friend” – someone who can offer both support and friendly challenge - is a key skill.

The school has an inclusive approach and welcomes enquiries from all parents, professions and sectors of the community. It would particularly encourage applications from under-represented groups, including those with a background or interest in minority communities.

The school endeavours to maintain a balance of skills and experience amongst its membership. From time to time, as membership and priorities change, the Governing Body will assess the range of skills and expertise it has at its disposal and where there are evident gaps for which a particular skills set is required, it may actively seek these and will set these requirements out in the advertisement. We are currently interested in hearing from those with the following expertise:

- Financial Skills (Accountancy / Audit)
- Marketing
- Community Engagement

If you have skills and experience drawn from your employment and/or community activities, which you feel would be relevant and beneficial to the school we would be delighted to hear from you.

The following generic skills are a guide to the qualities that are helpful when wishing to work as a team member on Governing bodies, although it is recognised that no candidate will possess the full range of skills listed.

Key skills	Details
Commitment to education	Able to demonstrate a commitment to lifelong learning and the role and mission of Chessington Community College in improving the community's (and by implication the nation's) skills base.
Commitment to Governance	Ability to demonstrate or acquire a full understanding and appreciation of the principles of Governance, including the seven principles of public life*

Interpersonal and team work	Able to work positively with others and debate whilst maintaining a constructive atmosphere.
Confidentiality	Governors must honour their privileged position and not discuss any matters outside of the Governors' meeting without the prior agreement of the Governing body
Communication	Able to listen actively to other views and express ideas/plans in a clear manner. Able to communicate effectively.
Planning and organisation	Able to establish quickly an effective course of action for self and others to achieve goals that can be monitored by realistic performance targets. To be visionary for the future plans of the school.
Determination	Able to create the required energy/enthusiasm and commitment necessary to be effective and have the tenacity to overcome obstacles.
Strategic perspective	Able to develop a broad-based view of issues and events and perceive their long-term impact.
Ability and willingness to learn	Able to absorb sometimes complex information and rationalise appropriately. Able to think laterally and arrive at a pragmatic solution. Willingness to listen and learn and committed to continuous improvement
Leadership	Able to demonstrate behaviour and skills that motivate others to achieve, inspire confidence in others to achieve objectives, and respect the views of others.
Experience Potential Governors should be able to offer <u>some</u> of the following attributes:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a keen interest in the education sector and/or an understanding of the national context in which education operates</li> <li>• experience of working in commerce, industry or public service at board or senior management level</li> <li>• specialist expertise such as business planning, human resources management, estates management, community development, finance or law</li> </ul>
Availability	Available to attend scheduled meetings of the Governing Body and Committees and other panels, visits and monitoring duties as required.
Equal opportunities and legislative requirements	Committed to ensuring that legislative requirements are fulfilled, such as equal opportunities, disability, safeguarding, and health and safety.
Eligibility	<p>A person is not eligible to be a Governor if they have been declared bankrupt within the last 3 years or served a sentence for a conviction within the last 5 years or been removed from office as a member of a Governing Body within the last 10 years.</p> <p>All Governors are required to agree to enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks on appointment and on reappointment.</p>

### What standards would I be expected to follow?

The detailed duties of the FGB, Committees, senior post-holders and Governing Body members are enshrined in statute law.

The key structures and business processes are summarised in the Governing Body's Standing Orders, which are reviewed periodically.

All members are expected to sign up to the Governor's Code of Conduct, which requires Governors to place the interests of the school and its students ahead of their own interests or those of any other group with which they are involved. The Code provides a framework for Governors to work together co-operatively and share accountability for decisions made.

Governors are required to declare any general personal interests and record them annually in a Register of Interests, updating them through the Clerk. At the beginning of each meeting they will be asked to declare if they have an interest in any items on the agenda and may take no part in those proceedings.

### The Seven Principles of Public Life

As a Governor, you will have a major impact on children's life chances. You will also control significant resources. Underpinning all activities are the Nolan Committee's **Seven Principles of Public Life**, which are as pertinent to Governors as to others in public life.

1	Integrity	Not allow the influence of bodies outside the school to affect your duties
2	Accountability	Submit to appropriate scrutiny
3	Objectivity	Make choices on merit
4	Openness	Only restrict information when public interest clearly demands this / data protection
5	Honesty	Declare any private interest
6	Leadership	Promote & support these principles by leadership and example
7	Selflessness	Act always in the public interest, not for personal gain

From the 'Second Report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life', Nolan Committee 1996

### The golden rules

- Governors have a legal duty to help the school set and achieve high standards
- Governors must ensure that the school is accountable
- A Governing body is a corporate body. Individual Governors are bound by the corporate decisions their Governing body takes. Individual Governors have no power, unless delegated to them by the full Governing body
- Governors do not intervene in day-to-day management. The Chair may do this only in exceptional circumstances
- If you don't understand something - ask
- If you have a concern about your child, you must pursue that concern as a parent, not as a Governor
- Observe confidentiality

## How do I apply to be a Governor?

If you wish to find out more about becoming a Governor at CCC or apply for a vacancy, please contact Ms Kim Cottrell on **020 8974 1156** or email your CV to [cccclerk@rbksch.org](mailto:cccclerk@rbksch.org) to arrange an appointment.

You can also register your interest via the School Governor One Stop Shop Service <http://www.sgooss.org.uk/volunteers/volunteers-apply.html>

## Where can I find out more?

### DirectGov website:

[http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/parents/schoolslearninganddevelopment/schoollife/dg\\_10038366](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/parents/schoolslearninganddevelopment/schoollife/dg_10038366)

**SGOSS:** [http://www.nga.org.uk/Be-a-Governor/SGOSS-\(1\).aspx](http://www.nga.org.uk/Be-a-Governor/SGOSS-(1).aspx)

**National Governors' Association:** <http://www.nga.org.uk/Be-a-Governor.aspx>

**ambition  
endeavour  
resilience**

the key to **achievement**