

Inspiring Governance Guidance for Volunteers



With Inspiring Governance, you can:

- Connect with local schools and colleges via our easy-to-use website.
- Use our innovative mapping tool to view opportunities near you and express an interest.
- Once appointed, receive free expert support and training from the National Governance Association (NGA).

Applying to be a governor

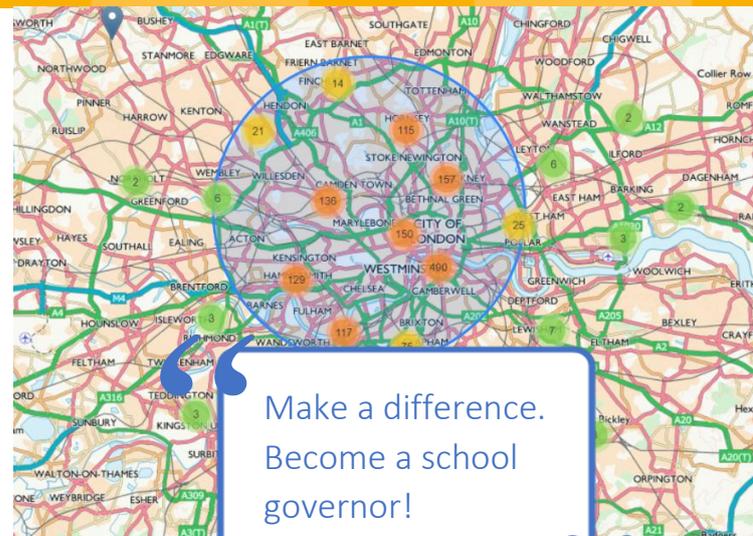
Who can apply?

Anyone over the age of 18 can become a school governor: no specific knowledge or experience is required and there is no requirement to be a parent. Inspiring Governance works with state-funded schools in England. If you are interested in volunteering in Northern Ireland, Scotland or Wales, or in an independent school [see here](#).

What is the time commitment?

The average time commitment is 5-8 hours per month, although it will vary depending on the needs of the school and the role. This includes meetings, background reading and school visits. Most governing boards hold their meetings in the evenings.

Like magistrates or members of a jury, school governors and trustees have a right to reasonable time off of work for their public duties, although this may be unpaid. Your company's HR department will be able to tell you about its policy. Each school sets a term of office for its governors/trustees, normally 2-4



Make a difference.
Become a school
governor!

years, and many serve multiple terms. However, as a volunteer you can resign before your term is finished if your circumstances change.

Will I need a DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check?

Yes. When you accept a position the school or trust will require an [Enhanced DBS check](#). They will normally organise this for you. Volunteers may also be asked by the school or trust to supply references. We take safeguarding very seriously and have robust procedures to address safeguarding issues.

Will I need training?

You don't need any specific training to be a governor, and most schools will have an induction process to help you get up to speed.

There is a lot to take in, however, so through Inspiring Governance you will have access to online resources, publications, support and a telephone helpline from the National Governance Association (NGA). When you're placed with a school, NGA will be in touch to explain the services you can access. This includes:

- dedicated telephone and email support to walk you through your first year;
- a copy of NGA's Welcome to Governance induction guide;
- access to NGA's online guidance centre containing a wealth of resources;
- access to free training through NGA's e-learning induction programme;
- membership of the Young Governors' Network for volunteers under the age of 40.

The NGA training has been designed to be complimentary to any other training that may be offered. For example your school or local authority may also provide support and training for new governors. See all the benefits [here](#).

Are there any factors that mean you couldn't be a governor?

Bankruptcy can also disqualify someone from being a governor. Disqualification applies to anyone who is subject to a bankruptcy restriction order, interim bankruptcy restriction order, debt relief restrictions order, or interim debt relief restrictions order; or whose estate has been sequestered and the sequestration has not been discharged, annulled or reduced.

Is there any kind of payment?

Governance is a voluntary role and therefore it is not paid. Some schools and trusts may pay travel and other expenses, but this will vary.

It is worth noting that serving as a governor is a great way to gain experience of professional skills such as chairing, strategic planning, budgeting and team work that are valued by employers. Plus, governors can have a huge impact on the education of young people in their communities, and there's no greater feeling than knowing you've made a difference! See more benefits of becoming a governor [here](#).

What is the difference between a governor and a trustee?

In general terms, governors and trustees carry out the same role. The difference in name indicates the kind of organisation they are part of. Governing boards of individual schools usually call their members governors, while multi-academy trusts (MATs) have trustee boards made up of trustees (also known as directors). Therefore governors usually have responsibility for one school, where trustees may be looking after a group of schools. Confused? See our description of [different types of governor roles](#).

What is a multi-academy trust?

Multi-academy trusts (MATs), are organisations or entities that are responsible for a number of schools. They have trust boards made up of trustees, also called directors.

Trust boards will be overseeing several schools and therefore will be dealing with larger budgets and more complex governing arrangements. Within the trust, each school usually retains its own local governing board, but some of their responsibilities may be delegated to the trust board, for instance approving the budget and appointing the head.

Can I apply to be a parent governor?

Parent governors are elected by the parent body; anyone who has a child of school age (under 16) can be a parent governor – they do not have to have a child on role at the school at which they govern. You may express an interest in parent governor opportunity provided you have a school age child.

We recognise that some schools do struggle to get parent governors and it is possible that some recruiting schools may post a parent governor vacancy though they must make this clear in their communications to volunteers.

Finding a match

I've registered, now what happens?

Once you've registered, you can go to "Search Opportunities" to view vacancies that have been made public in your area and express an interest to receive more information. Schools can also search for local volunteers and invite you for an information conversation about the vacancy.

A school has messaged but I'm not sure it's the right school for me.

It can take time to find the right match. When you find a vacancy you're interested in, the next step should be a phone call with the headteacher or Chair of governors to find out more. All we ask is that you respond to every invitation, even if it is to decline, so that schools can keep looking if they need to. Schools really appreciate hearing from you, even if it's to let them know that the vacancy not for you.

It's easy to reply to a message, just tick one of the boxes at the bottom of the email to accept, decline or request more information. If you have not received/responded to an invite notification, please login to [edit your status](#) by selecting either accept, decline or request more information.

I registered several weeks ago, but I still haven't received an invitation.

Please be patient, and don't take it personally! In some areas of the country we have lots of schools looking for governors, in other areas, there are far fewer. It can take several weeks for the right match to come along.

New vacancies are being posted all the time, so do login to your account to check whether you have received any messages and to see what's new in your area. If you really get stuck please email us at enquiries@inspiringgovernance.org and we will try to help.

How do I express an interest in a governor vacancy that has been made public?

Once you have [logged into your account](#), go to "Manage Opportunities", and select "Search Opportunities". Use the filters on the left hand side to search for a suitable opportunity. When you select the "pins" you can view more information about the opportunity i.e. vacancy. If the opportunity suits your needs "add to shortlist". The shortlist will show the number of vacancies you have expressed interest in.

Once you have finished adding to your shortlist select "Review shortlist and invite" below the map. Once you wish to continue, click "Next", you will then see the "Success" message when it has been sent. When you receive a message back from the school just select "Chat" on the Home page and you can send further messages and attachments if required.

I'm still receiving invitations from schools, even though I've already accepted a position.

If you're still receiving invites, please let us know you've accepted a role by emailing enquiries@inspiringgovernance.org. As an independent charity, it's important that we can show the impact of what we do, so by letting us know the outcome, you'll be helping to continue our work.

General FAQs

My employer isn't keen. What can I do?

There are many benefits for you, your employer and the community. You will gain professional experience that will help you at work and in your whole career. Your employer will benefit from you further developing your skills, such as strategic planning, teamwork, influencing, communication, financial management, and more. Here are a [few resources](#) that make the case for employee volunteering.

I haven't received the email containing my temporary password.

Please don't forget to add enquiries@inspiringgovernance.org to your inbox to receive email notifications. Please also check your junk box for an email containing the temporary password. If you still can't find your password you can email us and we will reset it for you.

Are there other ways we can support schools?

Yes. [Inspiring the Future](#) has a range of volunteer opportunities in schools that require a time commitment of as little as an hour a year. Simply [login](#) to your Inspiring Governance account to add further activities you would like to take part in.

Interested in finding out more?

Get in touch:

National Office

t 020 7566 4880

e enquiries@inspiringgovernance.org

To sign up, express an interest, or for more information please visit:

www.inspiringgovernance.org/volunteers