

Roles and Responsibilities of Boards of Governors

The implementation of the Education Reform Order (NI) 1989 increased the responsibilities of Boards of Governors, and these now cover an extremely wide range of roles and functions. The Board of Governors is responsible for the implementation of policy decisions covering a wide range of educational and professional issues. The undernoted is by no means an exhaustive listing of the main responsibilities of Boards of Governors but is indicative of the main responsibilities and functions to be covered.

The following responsibilities are carried out in conjunction with, and with the approval of the Education Authority (EA):

- (a) Curriculum** - ultimately the Board of Governors is responsible for ensuring that the statutory curriculum is delivered, and that the quality of education provided by the school, including the assistance given to the development of pupils, is satisfactory.
- (b) Employment** - the EA is the statutory employer of teaching and non-teaching staff. Boards of Governors have the primary role to ensure that the normal employment matters are addressed at school level. These include:
 - Appointments and Promotions
 - Discipline and Grievance Management
 - Development of Staff
 - Health and Safety
- (c) Enrolments and Admissions** - the Board of Governors is required to determine the admissions criteria which will be applied by the school in considering applications from parents/guardians, taking into account the communities served by the school.

Additionally, the Board of Governors may be required to develop a number of strategies to promote the school in order to secure a satisfactory level of admission.

- (d) Pastoral Care** - the Board of Governors is required to ensure that the individual school policies meet the needs of pupils attending the school. When necessary, it will be the responsibility of the Board of Governors to ensure that the Discipline Policy is applied and where necessary, the Suspension and Expulsion Scheme applied.

- (e) Financial Management** - the implementation of the LMS Scheme by the EA devolves to governors' responsibility for the financial management of the school in accordance with procedures and guidelines determined by EA. The Boards of Governors also has responsibility for developing and implementing a Salary Policy.
- (f) Annual Reports** - under Article 125 and 126 of the Education Reform (NI) Order 1989 it is the responsibility of the Board of Governors to prepare an Annual Report.
- (g) School Development Plans** - the Board of Governors shall prepare, and from time-to-time revise, a School Development Plan, considering any guidance given by the Department of Education, EA and (in the case of a Catholic Maintained School) the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools. Consideration must also be given to the findings of any inspection of the school.
- (h) Pupil Discipline** - the Board of Governors shall ensure that policies designed to promote good behaviour and discipline on the part of its pupils are pursued at the school and to make, and from time-to-time review, a written statement of general principles.
- (i) Pupil Suspension and Expulsion** - the Board of Governors shall ensure that a scheme prepared by EA, specifying the procedure to be followed in relation to the suspension or expulsion of pupils from the school and ensure that such a scheme is implemented when necessary. The Board of Governors shall also assist the principal in such a manner as is reasonably necessary to enable him/her to control the internal organisation, management and discipline of the school and provide the principal with such opportunity as may be necessary to enable him/her to express his/her opinion and to make his/her recommendations to the Board of Governors on all matters connected with the school.

The above responsibilities are extensive. As all governors give of their time voluntarily it is appropriate that in fulfilling the main responsibilities Boards of Governors' delegate responsibility to the principal and the senior management team of the school for the completion of much of the work. Boards of Governors receive the support, training, advice and guidance from officers of EA.