

**Charter for Sefton Council**

 **Local Authority Governance**

**Mission statement**

Sefton Council Local Authority values and supports a strategic approach to improving outcomes for all children and young people.

Working in partnership with all maintained schools to ensure appropriate support for all Local Authority Governors to have the skills, resources and attributes required to convey the core values and vision.

**Sefton Governor Services**

Mrs Jennifer Cunningham

Mrs Elisa Beattie

Mr Nik Bentley

Governor.Services@sefton.gov.uk

0151 934 3341 /3331

Sefton Council values the contribution made by all governors to raising and improving outcomes for the children and young people of Sefton. We recognise and appreciate the dedication, energy and commitment that governors give to schools.

We aim to work in partnership with every maintained school in the borough to ensure that children and young people achieve well and fulfil their potential. The Local Authority (L.A.) will ensure that it is focused on supporting schools to achieve the highest possible standards of performance by meeting the needs of every child and young person, especially the most vulnerable.

The Local Authority is committed to ensuring that its policies, procedures, and services show a consistent approach to championing excellence and promoting the development of successful, autonomous, inclusive and self-improving schools.

The responsibilities and accountabilities that schools and the Local Authority share are underpinned by the following principles:

* High ambitions for every child and young person
* Challenging underperformance quickly to promote high standards
* Intervening early when the quality of education may put children or young people at risk of not achieving to the best of their ability
* Strengthening leadership capacity where necessary, including governance, so that schools are leading their own improvement independently
* Practice that is transparent, equitable and based on need
* Effective and efficient systems and deployment of resources
* Working with successful partners to meet schools’ needs and share excellence
* Positive partnership based on mutual respect and professional integrity

Local Authority governors are expected to share this ambition and understand that improving outcomes is at the heart of their strategic role.

National research indicates that a school is unlikely to succeed without an effective Governing Body. Strong governance is key to ensuring successful educational outcomes since governors, although volunteers, play a vital role in holding school leaders to account through support and challenge to drive school improvement.

Effective Governing Bodies ensure continuity of leadership through growing leaders within the Governing Body and the school. This includes enabling everyone to play an active part by making good use of their skills and giving opportunities to lead on specific areas of responsibility.

School Governors represent the largest group of volunteers in the country.

Governors who work as a team, who have the necessary skills and experience to contribute to the role and who blend challenge and support to hold their workforce to account, will improve standards.

**Our Commitment to Supporting Local Authority Governors**

In order to raise outcomes for children in Sefton, it is vital that all governors have the skills and knowledge to challenge underperformance and raise standards. It is also important to be kept up to date with the changing educational environment and there are opportunities to reflect on good practice.

The Local Authority is committed to providing access to support, guidance and any advice needed, including:

* Governor Induction
* Attend any relevant training, development and support sessions
* Governors’ e-learning
* Bulletins for recent news and updates
* Sign up for updates from the Department for Education and the National Governors Association
* Governor briefing sessions
* Access to a range of resources

Thank you in advance for the time and commitment that you will bring if you are appointed to a Governing Body and the difference your contributions can make.



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**Mike McSorley Jennifer Cunningham**

**Head of Education Service Manager, Schools Education Services**

**The Governing Board has the following core strategic functions:**

**Establishing the strategic direction by:**

* Setting the vision, values and objectives for the school/ trust.
* Agreeing the school improvement strategy with priorities and targets.
* Meeting statutory duties.

**Ensuring accountability by:**

* Appointing the Lead Executive/ Headteacher.
* Monitoring progress towards targets.
* Performance managing the Lead Executive/ Headteacher.
* Engaging with stakeholders.
* Contributing to school self-evaluation.

**Ensuring financial probity by:**

* Setting the budget.
* Monitoring spending against the budget.
* Ensuring value for money is obtained.
* Ensuring risks to the organisation are managed.

**Effective governance:**

An effective board has:

1. The right people round the table
2. An understanding of the role and responsibilities of the Governing board
3. Good chairing
4. Professional clerking
5. Good relationships based on trust
6. Knowing the school – the data, the staff, the parents, the children, the community
7. A commitment to asking challenging questions
8. The confidence to have courageous conversations in the interests of the children and young people.

**The appointment of Local Authority Governors in Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council**

In May 2014, the DfE announced that all Governing Bodies must reconstitute under the School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2012 by September 2015. These regulations state that Governing Bodies must only have one Local Authority Governor. Statutory guidance for Governing Bodies of maintained schools and Local Authorities in England, May 2017 states:

*“Local Authority governors are nominated by the Local Authority but appointed by the Governing Body. The Local Authority can nominate any person who is eligible to be a Local Authority Governor but it is for the Governing Body to decide whether their nominee has the skills required to contribute to the effective governance and success of the school and meets any other eligibility criteria they have set. Local Authorities should therefore make every effort to understand the Governing Body’s requirements and identify and nominate suitable candidates. An individual eligible to be a staff governor at the school may not be appointed as a Local Authority governor.”*

“*A key consideration in the appointment, and election of all new governors should be the skills and experience the Governing Body needs to be effective. The skills they need are a matter for Governing bodies to decide having regard to the Department’s Competency Framework for Governance”.*

**Criteria for appointment**

Local Authority Governors are appointed as representatives of the Local Authority.

**5.3.1 Single maintained schools – from** [**Governance Handbook March 2019**](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/788234/governance_handbook_2019.pdf)

44. Once appointed, LA Governors must govern in the interests of the school and not represent or advocate for the political or other interests of the local authority; it is unacceptable practice to link the right to nominate local authority governors to the local balance of political power.

Sefton Local Authority has a statutory duty to appoint Local Authority governors to all Maintained School Governing Bodies.

No one can be an LA governor if:

* they are eligible to be a staff governor;
* they are under 18 years of age;
* they have been disqualified from any Governing Board through non-attendance in the previous 12-month period.

Governing Bodies must apply for an enhanced criminal records certificate through the Disclosure and Barring Service (D.B.S) before the governor can formally take up their role. The date of appointment will be the date of the D.B.S. clearance.

Local Authority governors are also expected to familiarise themselves with Local Authority priorities and be willing to keep their knowledge up-to-date. They should have expertise or life experience which will contribute to the success of the school for example, business or professional experience, experiences as a school governor or other voluntary role or experience of working with children or young people.

**Local Authority Governor Responsibilities and Behaviours**

The following criteria has been produced to assist in the application/assessment process.

* Be aware of the broader aims of Sefton’s 2030 vision. <https://www.sefton.gov.uk/your-council/vision-and-core-purpose.aspx>
* Be able to display support for the main strategic aims of the Education Service in Sefton Council for achieving the best outcomes for children.
* Gain an understanding of the Local Authority’s role in education.
* A passion for school improvement and raising standards to enable every child to achieve their potential.
* Understand that the task of the Governing Board is to govern the school, focusing on the core functions of providing strategic leadership, holding the headteacher to account and making sure the school’s money is well spent.
* Keep updated with local and national developments.
* Establish good effective working relationships with all school staff acting as a critical friend.
* Have an awareness of the issues facing schools and Local Authorities within the national context and be sensitive to the pressures under which Headteachers and staff work.
* Have an awareness or understanding of how the performance of schools is measured.
* Get to know the school and its strengths and areas for development.
* Recognise that all governors have the same rights and responsibilities and that no governor can act alone unless agreed by the Governing Board. Operate collectively, in the best interest of pupils, not as a collection of individuals lobbying on behalf of their constituencies. Once a collective decision has been made, all governors must accept it as being the majority view and be loyal to it outside the school.
* Able to appropriately question and challenge the work of the school and to monitor and evaluate its performance.
* Commitment to fulfilling the role responsibly in terms of the time needed to attend meetings, training, briefings and conduct school visits.
* Have the skills and experience or a willingness to develop, relevant and appropriate skills to make effective contributions to strengthen the Governing Board. Good inter-personal, team work and communication skills and appropriate levels of literacy in English (unless a Governing Body is prepared to make special arrangements) with sufficient numeracy skills to understand basic data on the educational and financial performance of the school.
* Able to take part in self-evaluation and be self-motivated.
* To act within the framework of the Governing Board’s legal requirements and agreed policies.
* Work as part of a team and express views openly, courteously and respectfully.
* Respect confidentiality including always using social networking sites responsibly.
* Adhere to the Governing Body’s Code of Conduct\*.
* Record any business interest in connection with the Governing Body’s business in the school’s Register of Business Interests and declare any potential conflict of interest. This will be published on the school’s website.
* Is committed to equal opportunities.
* Adhere to the Seven Principles of Public Life. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life>
* Act in the best interests of the children always.

\*Sefton LA Governors are expected to sign up to the Governing Body’s agreed Code of Conduct. The Code of Conduct will set out the expectations, the behaviours and the commitment that are needed for the Governing Body to discharge its strategic functions. It is recommended that

schools adopt the National Governors’ Association Model Code of Conduct (2018) and personalise it to the governing body’s needs. <https://www.nga.org.uk/codeofconduct2018>

By law, employers must give employees who serve on Maintained School Boards ‘reasonable time off’ to carry out their duties. The employer and the employee must agree on what is ‘reasonable time off’.

The principles and personal attributes that individuals bring to the board are as important as their skills and knowledge. These qualities enable board members to use their skills and knowledge to function well as part of a team and make an active contribution to effective governance. Further guidance on the roles and duties of governing boards, and advice on the skills, knowledge and behaviours they need to be effective is included in the DfE [Competency framework for governance.](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/583733/Competency_framework_for_governance_.pdf)

**Please read this guidance carefully before completing an application form for nomination for appointment or nomination for reappointment as a Local Authority governor.**

Other than in exceptional circumstances, all applications for the role of the Local Authority governor in a Sefton School, including re-appointments, will be considered by the Cabinet Member - Children, Schools and Safeguarding.

The Cabinet Member has the authority to nominate governors for appointment; all nominations will subsequently be considered by the Governing Board of the school concerned. The school will either appoint the nominee at the next Full Governing Board meeting or make representation to the Local Authority requesting that the nomination is withdrawn.

The Local Authority makes every effort to understand a Governing Board’s requirements and identify and nominate suitable candidates for appointment. The Local Authority will also liaise with relevant Governing Boards to determine any further criteria for appointment to each vacancy.

**The application process for new appointments**

1. All applicants are encouraged initially to contact Governor Services to check eligibility and current vacancies. governor.services@sefton.gov.uk 0151 934 3331 / 3341.
2. The application form - [Appendix 1](#Appendix1) can be completed online <https://forms.sefton.gov.uk/governorapplication> or available by email from Governor Services. All prospective Local Authority governors are asked to detail their skills which could contribute to the effective governance and success of the school. The Local Authority may interpret the word skills to include personal attributes, qualities and capabilities such as the ability and willingness to learn and develop new skills. Skills may also be taken to include knowledge and perspectives that will contribute to good decision making. The application form details the appointment criteria and the need to abide by it. Details of disqualification criteria are also included.
3. Completed applications will be acknowledged by Governor Services.
4. If current vacancies are identified, applicants will be invited for a short, informal interview with the Schools Education Services Manager.
5. Governor Services work closely with schools to match candidates as each Governing Body requires different skills and experience.
6. With the applicants’ agreement, applications and references are forwarded in confidence to relevant Governing Bodies for consideration.
7. There will be an opportunity to meet with the Chair and Headteacher to assess suitability for all parties.
8. Schools will notify Governor Services of applications they wish to support and the nomination will then be considered by the Cabinet Member - Children, Schools and Safeguarding at the next available meeting.
9. Once the nomination is approved, subject to a call - in period, the applicant will be sent a letter and declaration offering a 4-year term of office as a Local Authority Governor.
10. Upon signed acceptance of the position, the school will be informed of the nomination and will inform Governor Services of the official date of appointment in line with appointment guidelines.

**Commitment**

Local Authority governors must be able to demonstrate commitment to their ongoing training and development and to getting to know the school well.

Induction is essential if new governors are to understand their role and make an effective contribution to the Governing Body, and Local Authority governors who are new to school governance are expected to attend Introduction to Governance training within 6 months of appointment

**The application process for re- appointments**

A few months before a Local Authority governor’s term of office is due to finish, Governor Services will contact the school and ask that the Chair/Head establish if the governor would wish to be re-nominated for a further term of office.

Applicants for re-appointment are asked to outline their contribution to the school during their current/ previous term of office and include details of attendance at relevant training.

A re-nomination application form is available which has been designed to be used as a discussion document for the benefit of the school - [Appendix 2](#Appendix2)

**Vacancies**

Vacancies arise when the serving Local Authority governor does not wish to re-apply when they reach the end of their term of office or if they resign mid-term. Schools should inform Governor Services as soon as they are aware of a potential vacancy who will then liaise with the relevant Governing Body to determine the criteria needed to assist with filling the vacancy as soon as possible.

**Local Authority governors are expected to uphold The Seven Principles of Public Life.**

**1. Selflessness**

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

**2. Integrity**

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.

**3. Objectivity**

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

**4. Accountability**

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

**5. Openness**

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

**6. Honesty**

Holders of public office should be truthful.

**7. Leadership**

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

**Publication of governors’ details and the register**

Governors hold an important public office and their identity should be known to their school and wider communities. In the interests of transparency, a Governing Board should publish on its website, up-to-date details of its governance arrangements. This should include each governor who has served at any point over the past 12 months:

* Their full name, date of appointment, term of office (start date and end date), date they stepped down (where applicable), who appointed them (in accordance with the Governing Body’s Instrument of Government).
* Any relevant business and pecuniary interests (as recorded in the register of interests) including governance roles in other education institutions.
* Any material interests arising from relationships between governors or relationships between governors and school staff (including spouses, partners and close relatives).
* Their attendance record at Governing Board and committee meetings over the last academic year.

**Dismissal of Local Authority Governors**

Local Authority governors may be removed from office by the Local Authority that nominated them. In Sefton, the decision is made by the Head of Education. The Local Authority must give written notice of the removal to the clerk and the governor concerned.

Any Local Authority governor who is removed from office may not be appointed to a Governing Board as an LA Governor for a period of 12 months from removal. Should the governor concerned hold office on another Governing Board that position would not be affected.

**Grounds for disqualification**

**Department for Education: The Constitution of Governing Bodies of maintained schools. Statutory guidance for Governing Bodies of maintained schools and local authorities England (August 2017)**

**Qualifications and disqualifications (regulation 17 and Schedule 4 to the Regulations)**

**Grounds for disqualification fall into three broad categories:**

* general grounds;
* grounds that apply to categories of governor; and
* grounds that arise because of failings or actions on the part of the

governor.

All the grounds for disqualification apply also to Associate Members except that Associate Members can be registered pupils at the school and can be under 18.

**General grounds**

* Registered pupils cannot be governors.
* A governor must be aged 18 or over at the time of election or appointment.
* A person cannot hold more than one governor post at the same school at the same time.

**Grounds that apply to categories of governor**

* A person is disqualified from being a parent governor if they are an elected member of the LA or paid to work at the school for more than 500 hours (i.e. for more than one-third of the hours of full-time equivalent) in any consecutive twelve-month period at the time of election or appointment.
* A person is disqualified from being a Local Authority governor if they are eligible to be a staff governor at the school.
* A person is disqualified from being a partnership governor if they are:
	+ a parent of a registered pupil at the school;
	+ eligible to be a staff governor at the school;
	+ an elected member of the local authority; or
	+ employed by the local authority in connection with its education functions.

**Grounds that arise because of particular failings or actions on the part of the governor**

* A person is disqualified from being a governor of a particular school if they have failed to attend the meetings of the Governing Body of that school for a continuous period of six months, beginning with the date of the first meeting they failed to attend, without the consent of the Governing Body. This does not apply to the headteacher or to Foundation governors appointed by virtue of their office.
* A Foundation, Local Authority, Co-opted or Partnership governor at the school who is disqualified for failing to attend meetings is only disqualified from being a governor of any category at the school during the twelve-month period starting on the date on which they were disqualified.

**A person is disqualified from holding or continuing to hold office as a governor of a school if, in summary, that person:**

* + is the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order; an interim bankruptcy restrictions order; debt relief restrictions order; an interim debt relief restrictions order; or their estate has been sequestrated and the sequestration has not been discharged, annulled or reduced.
	+ is subject to a disqualification order or disqualification undertaking under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986; a disqualification order under the Companies (Northern Ireland) Order 2002; a disqualification undertaking accepted under the Company Directors Disqualification (Northern Ireland) Order 2002; or an order made under section 429(2)(b) of the Insolvency Act 1986 (failure to pay under county court administration order).
	+ has been removed from the office of trustee for a charity by an order made by the Charity Commission or Commissioners or High Court on grounds of any misconduct or mismanagement in the administration of the charity, or under section 34 of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 from being concerned in the management or control of any body.
	+ has been removed from office as an elected governor within the last five years.
	+ is included in the list of people considered by the Secretary of State as unsuitable to work with children or young people.
	+ is barred from any regulated activity relating to children.
	+ is subject to a direction of the Secretary of State under section 142 of the Education Act 2002 or section 128 of the Education and Skills Act 2008.
	+ is disqualified from working with children or from registering for child-minding or providing day care.
	+ is disqualified from being an independent school proprietor, teacher or employee by the Secretary of State.
	+ subject to certain exceptions for overseas offences that do not correlate with a UK offence has been sentenced to three months or more in prison (without the option of a fine) in the five years ending with the date preceding the date of appointment/election as a governor or since becoming a governor.
	+ subject to certain exceptions for overseas offences that do not correlate with a UK offence, has received a prison sentence of two and a half years or more in the 20 years ending with the date preceding the date of appointment/election as a governor.
	+ subject to certain exceptions for overseas offences that do not correlate with a UK offence, has at any time received a prison sentence of five years or more.
	+ has been convicted and fined for causing a nuisance or disturbance on school or educational premises during the five years ending with the date immediately preceding appointment/election or since appointment or election as a governor.
	+ refuses a request by the clerk to make an application to the Disclosure and Barring Service for a criminal records certificate.

**Anyone proposed or serving as a governor who is disqualified for one of these reasons must notify the Clerk to the Governing Body.**

**APPENDIX 1**

**APPLICATION FORM TO REGISTER AN INTEREST AS A**

**LOCAL AUTHORITY GOVERNOR**

First Name(s):..................................................................................................

Surname..........................................................................................................

Title - Mr / Mrs / Ms / Miss / Rev / Dr / other: ..................................................

Address: ...........................................................................................................

............................................................................. Postcode: ...........................

Daytime tel: ..........................................Mobile: .................................................

Email: ……………………………………………………………………...…………...

Occupation: .......................................................................................................

Professional qualifications: …………………………………………………………...

I would be interested in becoming a Governor of:

A Primary School  A Special School 

A Secondary School  No Preference 

A specific school 

Please state which school ................................................................................

Please detail any relationship you may have with any member of staff or the governing body of this school including spouse, partner or relative or N/A

………………………………………………………………………………………

I would be interested in the following geographical area(s):

……………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………………

**Please list any other governor positions you hold: or N/A**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Local Authority** | **School Name** | **Category of governor** | **Term of Office** |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| **Statement of skills and experience*** Please read the appointment criteria and outline your skills and experience that could contribute to the effective governance and success of a school.
* It is not expected that you will meet all the criteria so please complete your form with reference to the criteria most appropriate for you.
* The information you provide in your statement will be used to match to schools’ need in terms of knowledge, expertise, etc.
 |

**Referees**

Please supply 2 referees that are able to comment on your experience and skills to become a governor.

|  |
| --- |
| **1** Name…………………………………………………………………………………Address…………………………………………………………………………………Email……………………………………………………………………………………Relationship (if any) …………………………………………………………………………………………. |
| **2**  Name………………………………………………………………………………....Address …………………………………………………………………………………………..Email……………………………………………………………………………………Relationship (if any) ………………………………………………………………….…………….………… |

**DECLARATION**

I wish to register an interest in being appointed to serve as a Local Authority governor.

I have read the grounds for disqualification and I am not disqualified on any of these grounds.

Signed……………………………………………… Date……………

**Please return completed application either via email to** governor.services@sefton.gov.uk **or to the address below.**

**Sefton Governor Services**

**Oriel Road**

**Bootle Town Hall**

**L20 7AE**

**APPENDIX 2**

**APPLICATION FORM**

**RE-NOMINATION AS A LOCAL AUTHORITY GOVERNOR**

First Name (s): .................................................................................................

Surname: ...........................................................................................................

Title - Mr / Mrs / Ms / Miss / Rev / Dr / other: ...................................................

Address: ...........................................................................................................

............................................................................. Postcode: ..........................

Daytime tel: ..........................................Mobile: ...............................................

Email: …………………………………………………………………….…………...

Occupation: ……………………………………………………………………………

Please detail any relationship you may have with any member of staff or the governing body of this school including spouse, partner or relative or N/A

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Please list any other governor positions you hold: or N/A

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Local Authority** | **School Name** | **Category of governor** | **Term of Office** |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

**Statement of skills and experience**

Please read the appointment criteria and outline your skills and experience that contribute to the effective governance and success of the school.

**DECLARATION**

I wish to be re-nominated to serve as a Local Authority governor.

I have read the grounds for disqualification and I am not disqualified on any of these grounds.

Signed……………………………………………………. Date……………

**Please return completed application to the Chair of Governors at the school.**