

How employers can support school and trust governance

Find out how you can support your employees to govern and the value it can bring to your organisation.

There are over 250,000 people who volunteer on governing boards to ensure schools succeed and provide the best opportunities for children and young people. Many of those do so around full or part-time employment, bringing their professional knowledge and skills to the role. Employers can make a huge contribution to schools by supporting their staff who govern and encouraging more to do so.



Watch our film on the role of governors and trustees: nga.org.uk/governance-film

What do governors and trustees do?

Governors and trustees provide strategic leadership to schools and trusts, with the overarching aim to ensure the wellbeing of the children and young people and enable them to achieve to the best of their ability.

Governors and trustees are responsible for:

- developing a vision and strategy for the school or trust
- overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent
- holding school and trust leaders to account to ensure that every pupil has the best possible education
- engaging with pupils, staff, parents and the community to understand their views

There are no specific qualifications or requirements for the role – every governing board needs a balance and diversity of knowledge, skills and experiences. Organisations can offer a range of transferable skills and experiences boards can benefit from, from human resources, marketing and public relations, to property and estate management.

Why should you support your staff to govern?

Governing is a highly rewarding role which not only has a positive impact on the education and wellbeing of children and young people, but brings a range of benefits for organisations and their employees, including:

- Offering an ongoing, long term professional and personal development opportunity for those at all levels of their career.
- Bringing in sought after skills and experience to the organisation such as budget setting, strategic planning, performance management and data analysis.
- Providing an opportunity for employees to develop board level skills and experience normally not possible for most until many years into their career.

- Enabling employees to take on positions of responsibility and leadership, such as committee or governing board chair, particularly beneficial for those looking to move into senior leadership roles.
- Promoting feelings of pride and achievement for employees, able to make a positive difference to the lives of children and young people. Research has also shown employer supported volunteering promotes employee satisfaction, loyalty and engagement.
- Establishing long term links and contributing positively to your community, demonstrating commitment to social impact and helping to build positive brand awareness and reputation.

Skills gained through governing

Leadership

Collaboration

Effective teamworking

Performance/people management



Communication

Influencing/negotiating

Safeguarding

Interviewing

Chairing

Staff recruitment



Strategic planning/
thinking

Problem solving



Budget control

Data analysis

How to support

You can support your staff to govern in a range of ways, depending on your capacity, size and structure.

Make the opportunity visible	Make governing opportunities and the benefits visible to staff by sharing information via your organisation's internal communication channels, eg via staff intranets or staff meetings. Having the role championed at board or executive level can also help show the value given to it.
Celebrate those who govern	Celebrate the staff who govern and encourage them to be advocates for the role, both internally and externally. Sharing stories of what they do and why can help more staff see the benefits and positive impact of governing. You can visit nga.org.uk/VisibleGovernance for ideas on how governors and trustees can shine a light on what they do.
Provide paid time off and flexibility	Giving staff paid leave to undertake duties like visiting the school during the school day and flexibility to attend meetings can make it easier for employees to govern. This could be part of an organisation wide volunteering day allowance, or part of your flexible working policy.
Incorporate into development offer	Make becoming a governor/trustee part of staff objectives or your learning and development offer. Giving the role the importance and value as part of your employee's work objectives can encourage more people to apply, and ensure your staff feel supported to commit to the role. Taking on additional responsibilities such as chairing committees and becoming a board chair can also be included.
Set up a governor/trustee network	Governor/trustee networks or forums can provide an opportunity for those who govern to share experiences, advice and support. These can be formal or informal networks offering events and activities both for current and prospective governors/trustees. There are also a number of external networks you can encourage your staff to join, including the Young Governors Network for governors and trustees under 40 (nga.org.uk/YGN).
Provide access to resources	Governors and trustees are expected to pursue learning and development opportunities to do their role well, from keeping up to date with statutory guidance and legislation, to developing skills and undertaking specific training. Providing access to governance resources, support and guidance for your staff will help them to be confident in their role and support their board's effectiveness. Find out more about NGA's resources and membership at nga.org.uk .
Develop relationships with schools	Set up links with local schools and trusts in your area or reach out to those you may already be working with or supporting through other volunteer schemes. You can enquire about their vacancies, and the skills they need for their board. This gives your staff direct access to governance roles and helps schools fill their vacancies swiftly.

How to get involved

You can contact us at visible@nga.org.uk to find out more about supporting your staff to govern.

You can also sign up to one of the recruitment organisations:

Inspiring Governance runs the School Governor Champion campaign, working in partnership with employers and professional networks to promote the role to staff networks across the country. Find out more about the campaign and the support package Inspiring Governance provide at inspiringgovernance.org/employers

Governors for Schools offers a range of partnerships to suit different organisations deliver school governor programmes, which includes additional support and impact reporting. You can find out more about their corporate partnerships at governorsforschools.org.uk/partners/corporate/



About the Visible Governance campaign

The Visible Governance campaign aims to celebrate, champion and raise the profile of the impact of good governance on schools and trusts.

We'd love to hear from you about how you're supporting your staff to govern, get in touch at visible@nga.org.uk and find out more about the campaign at nga.org.uk/VisibleGovernance

Interested in governing? Find out more about the role and how to volunteer at nga.org.uk/volunteer