

**PROCEDURE FOR THE
ELECTION OF PARENT GOVERNORS IN A FEDERATION**

AND

GUIDANCE NOTES FOR HEADTEACHERS/PRINCIPALS

AUGUST 2026

Contact Point

Governor Support (01522 553240)
Governorsupport@lincolnshire.gov.uk

ELECTION OF PARENT GOVERNORS IN A FEDERATION

GUIDANCE NOTES

ELECTION PROCEDURE

1. **BACKGROUND**

The statutory requirements for the conduct of elections for parent governors are contained in Schedule 2 of the School Governance (Federations) (England) Regulations 2012 and Regulation 3 of the School Governance (Constitution and Federations) (England) Amendment Regulations 2016 amends the School Governance (Federations) (England) Regulations 2012.

2. **THE ELECTION PROCEDURE**

As of September 2016, parent governors within a federated governing body can be elected from any of the schools within the federation. When a parent vacancy arises, parents across all schools in the federation must be included in the procedure outlined in Sections 4 – 8 of this guidance note.

Examples of letters, forms and notes to be used are attached for your use. These include: -

- Timescale for the election process
- A letter to parents inviting nominations
- Notes of guidance on the nomination procedure
- Eligibility Criteria
- Nomination form
- Notes of guidance for parents on voting in an election
- Ballot paper

The Head of School will act as Returning Officer for each individual school within the federation and will be responsible for conducting the election in that school.

3. **TRANSLATIONS**

Where parents have a language other than English as a mother tongue, all documents should be translated into that language.

4. **ANNOUNCING THE ELECTION**

Parents across all schools within the federation must be advised of a forthcoming election on the same day in accordance with the procedure detailed in Section 6 of this guidance note.

5. **TIE BREAK ARRANGEMENTS**

The method to be used in the event of a tie should be decided before the election i.e. drawing lots, tossing a coin, the candidate with the youngest child in the school etc.

6. **ELIGIBILITY OF PARENTS TO PARTICIPATE**

The parents of all registered pupils known to you at all schools across the Federation are entitled to participate in the election procedures for parent governor(s). However, there are two exceptions: -

- Parents who are Elected Members (i.e. County Councillors) of Lincolnshire County Council **are not eligible to stand** for election as a Parent Governor. They are, however, entitled to second a nomination and vote in an election.
- Staff employed at the federation or a federated school who are themselves parents of pupils at a school in the federation, and work for more than 500 hours in any consecutive twelve month period (at the time of election) **are not eligible to stand** for election as a Parent Governor. They are, however, entitled to second a nomination and vote in an election.

Any parent of a registered pupil at a school across the whole federation may stand for election as a parent governor provided, they are eligible. Details of eligibility are specified in Regulation 14 of the School Governance (Federations) (England) Regulations 2012 and are attached as **Appendix D**.

Any parent of a pupil registered at a school within the federation may vote in an election for parent governors.

The term 'parent' relates to any person who has 'parental responsibility' as defined by Section 576 of the Education Act 1996. Where there is doubt about parental responsibility, this matter should be referred to the Local Authority who will seek clarification and guidance.

A pupil in your federation may, therefore, have more than two parents eligible to participate – for example, both the natural parents, stepfather/mother, foster parents and any other adult who has or shares the day-to-day care and control of the child. In cases of doubt, it would be advisable to ask for a letter of identity to be signed by one of the natural parents.

You are not required, however, to track down everyone who may qualify under the above definition.

7. **NOMINATIONS AND BALLOTING**

(a) **Nominations**

A letter, nomination form and notes for parents should be prepared and sent on the same day across the federation. These should include the dates by which the nomination form should be returned to school (see samples attached to this procedure).

The school **must** ensure that the arrangements implemented enable every eligible parent to participate in the elections.

The letter, nomination form and notes for parents should be sent to **each** parent. This may be done via:

- The Pupil
*Note: If there is more than one child per household in the school **only one set of papers for each parent** must be issued to the eldest child.*
- External Post

- *Electronically – e.g. email, ParentMail or similar communication systems*

However, if using electronic means to send out nomination forms, the school **must** ensure that the parents without access are sent a paper copy of all documentation.

After the closing date, if the number of nominations (candidates) is equal to the number of parent governor vacancies, no election is necessary.

A letter to all parents informing them of the elected parents should be sent as soon as possible.

If there are **fewer** nominations than vacancies, then these should be filled by the governing body using the process detailed in Section 7 below.

(b) Balloting

A ballot box must be positioned in school in a place easily accessible to parents normally only during school hours.

If there are **more** nominations (candidates) than vacancies, a secret ballot must be held across the federation.

Ballot papers (including any personal statements provided by candidates themselves) must be issued on the basis of one ballot paper per parent, to be taken home by the pupil.

Candidates may submit a personal statement but are not required to do so. There is also no limit on the number of words they may wish to submit. The Returning Officer (Head of School) should not alter these details except with the prior written approval of the candidate.

The ballot paper should be sent via the pupil to **each** parent across all schools in the Federation on the same day. If there is more than one child per household in the school(s) **only one set of papers for each parent** must be issued to the eldest child.

Arrangements should be made for ballot papers to be issued to the parents of absent children on the same day as they are issued to children present in school(s). These should be sent by post unless you can arrange delivery.

Duplicate papers should be issued where a ballot paper has been lost or spoilt. It is recommended that any duplicate papers are issued on coloured paper.

See The Notes of Guidance for Parents on voting in an election (**Appendix F**) for further information on the conduct of the election, returning the ballot papers, counting the votes and declaring the result.

8. APPOINTING PARENT GOVERNORS AFTER UNSUCCESSFUL ELECTIONS

The election process detailed in Section 7 must be implemented to fill any vacant parent governor posts.

If there are no or insufficient nominations received by the stated closing date, enquiries should be undertaken to encourage a parent of a child at the federation to take up the position. Under these circumstances the nomination form should be completed and returned in the same way.

If there is still a vacant post(s) despite encouraging parents to nominate themselves, then this will be filled by the governing body.

In these **exceptional** circumstances, and **only** if no parent of a registered pupil at a school within the federation can be persuaded to serve as a governor, then the governing body of the federation must appoint a person in the order of the following criteria:-

1. A parent of a registered pupil at a federated school;
2. A parent of a former registered pupil at a federated school;
3. A parent of a child, including a child who has special educational needs and is over compulsory school age.

The governing body **cannot**, however, appoint an Elected Member (ie County Councillor) or a parent who is employed to work at the federation or federated school for more than 500 hours in any twelve consecutive months.

The formal appointment of a Parent Governor can only be made at a full Governing Body Meeting.

9. ***NOTIFICATION OF SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATES***

Executive Headteachers should notify the Clerk to Governors of the successful candidates so that they can formally welcome the new governors. Arrangements should also be made to undertake the necessary eligibility checks.

The Clerk or School should also inform the Governor Services Team of the appointment who will issue appointment letters and other useful documentation.

The tenure of office of elected parent governors is 4 years unless the Instrument of Government indicates otherwise. Parent governors whose children leave the school part way through their term of office may continue to serve out their term of office and are not automatically forced to resign.

SAMPLE DOCUMENTS

- Timescale for the election process (**Appendix A**)

Nomination Stage

- A letter to parents inviting nominations (**Appendix B**)
- Notes of Guidance on the nomination procedure (**Appendix C**)
- Eligibility Criteria (**Appendix D**)
- Nomination form (**Appendix E**)

Ballot Stage (if required)

- Notes of Guidance for parents on voting in an election (**Appendix F**)
- Ballot paper (**Appendix G**)

PLEASE NOTE: DETAILS TO BE COMPLETED ARE SHOWN IN RED

SUGGESTED TIMETABLE FOR PARENT GOVERNOR ELECTIONS IN A FEDERATION

This timetable is only a suggested one and can be varied to suit an individual federation. However, the number of days given for each of the stages could be increased but should not be reduced.

Please note that **each** parent should receive all the documents

	To be Issued:
Letter, Nomination form and Notes of Guidance	Day 1
Closing Date for Nominations	Day 11
Issue Ballot Paper and Notes of Guidance	Day 12
Closing Date for Voting	Day 23
Day of Count	Day 24

(Day = school day)

Please feel free to include any additional recruitment materials/information with the nomination papers about how your own governing body works if you feel parents would find this helpful.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE APPOINTMENT DATE IS EITHER DAY 11 (CLOSING DATE FOR NOMINATIONS) IF THERE ARE SUFFICIENT NOMINATIONS TO FILL THE VACANCIES OR DAY 24 (THE COUNT DATE) IF THERE IS A BALLOT.

Dear Parent

PARENT GOVERNOR ELECTION AT
< NAME OF FEDERATION >

I am writing to let you know that there is a vacancy for < number > parent governor(s) at our Federation and to invite you to stand for election or to nominate another parent to do so.

The governing body, with the Executive Headteacher, has overall responsibility for the running of the Federation. Governing bodies have three main roles:-

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the educational performance of the Federation and its pupils; and
- Overseeing the financial performance of the Federation and making sure its money is well spent.

Governors are not expected to be involved in the day-to-day management and administration of the school, but rather to set strategic plans for the school and to provide the Headteacher with guidance on general principles. However, Governors need a strong commitment to the role, the curiosity to question and analyse and the willingness to learn.

We would particularly welcome nominations from parents with the following skills:- < insert any particular desired skills if appropriate >.

Our parent governors have a term of office of < number > years. Our governing body usually meets < number > times a year and has < number > committees who meet < number > times a term. < Schools may also wish to include the expected commitment of a governor in terms of attendance at meetings and visits >

If you would like to stand for election or wish to nominate someone else, you should complete the attached form and return it to the school via your child. Completed nomination forms must be returned by the end of the school day on < date >. If there are more nominations than vacant posts, a ballot will be held and one voting paper per parent will be sent to you via your child.

If you would like further information on your eligibility to serve as a parent governor or on the role of a governor, please contact me.

Yours sincerely

Executive Headteacher

ELECTION OF PARENT GOVERNORS IN A FEDERATION

NOMINATION PROCEDURE - NOTES FOR PARENTS

Eligibility

1. You must be the parent of a registered pupil at a school within the federation

The definition of a parent includes any person having all the rights, duties, powers and responsibilities and authority which a parent of a child has by law and therefore may include not only a child's natural parents but also others such as step-parents, relatives or partners of either natural parents or foster parents.

2. You are **NOT** eligible to be a parent governor if:

- you work at the federation or federated school for more than 500 hours per year;
- you are an Elected Member of Lincolnshire County Council
- You are disqualified by the Regulations - a summary of eligibility requirements is attached with this letter.

If you are in any doubt about your eligibility to be a parent governor, please contact the Executive Headteacher.

4. All governor appointments are subject to a signed declaration of eligibility.
5. Elected or appointed Governors will need to complete a DBS and S128 check. This check should take place within 21 days of appointment. Failure to provide evidence for these checks will result in disqualification.

How to Stand for Election

4. If you wish to stand for election, please complete the attached form and ask another parent of a registered pupil at the federation to second your nomination. That person **cannot** be your spouse or partner.
5. It is recommended that all candidates supply a personal statement about themselves for circulation to voters, should a ballot be needed.
6. Completed nomination forms must be returned to your child's school by the end of the school day on < **date** >. You may post your form to the school but it must be with the Executive Headteacher by this date.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA TO SERVE AS A SCHOOL GOVERNOR

A governor must be aged 18 or over at the time of his/her election or appointment and cannot hold more than one governorship at the same school.

A person is disqualified from holding or continuing to hold office as a governor or associate member if he or she:

- is subject to a bankruptcy restriction order, an interim bankruptcy restrictions order, a debt relief restrictions order or an interim debt relief restrictions order;
- has had his/her estate sequestrated and the sequestration has not been discharged, annulled or reduced;
- is subject to:
 - a disqualification order or disqualification undertaking under the Company Directors Act 1986
 - a disqualification order under the Companies Directors Disqualification (Northern Ireland) Order 2002
 - a disqualification undertaking accepted under the Company Directors Disqualification (Northern Ireland) Order 2002
 - an order made under section 429(2)(b) of the Insolvency Act 1986 (failure to pay under a county court administration order);
- has been removed from the office of charity trustee or trustee for a charity by an order made by the Charity Commission or Commissioners or High Court on the grounds of any misconduct or mismanagement in the administration of the charity, or under section 34 of the Charities and Trustees Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 from being concerned in the management or control of anybody;
- is included in the list of people considered by the Secretary of State as unsuitable to work with children;
- is disqualified from working with children or subject to a direction under section 142 of the Education Act 2002;
- is disqualified from working with children under sections 28,29, or 29A of the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000;
- is disqualified from registration under Part 2 of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 for child minding or providing day care;
is disqualified from registration under Part 3 of the Childcare Act 2006;
- has received a sentence of imprisonment (whether suspended or not) for a period of not less than 3 months (without the option of a fine) in the 5 years before or since becoming a governor;
- has received a prison sentence of 2½ years or more in the 20 years before becoming a governor;
- has at any time received a prison sentence of 5 years or more;
- has been convicted under section 547 of EA 1996 (nuisance or disturbance on school premises) or under section 85A of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 (nuisance or disturbance on educational premise) during the 5 years prior to or since appointment or election as a governor;
- is employed at the school for more than 500 hours per academic year if wishing to stand for parent governor at the same school;
- is an elected member of the Local Authority (applies to parent and community governors only);
- has refused a request by the clerk to the governing body to make an application under section 113B of the Police Act 1997 for a criminal records certificate
- has been disqualified from holding office as a governor of this federation due to failure to attend governing body meetings for a continuous period of six months
- has been removed as a governor at a school under Regulation 25 of the School Governance (Constitution and Federations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2017 within the last 5 years

(For further clarification or advice on eligibility, please contact your Executive Headteacher)

NOMINATION FORM FOR THE ELECTION OF PARENT GOVERNORS

< NAME OF FEDERATON >

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE CANDIDATE

Name:
 (please print)
 Address

 Email
 Telephone No.
 Signature

Candidate's Personal Statement (attach a separate sheet if preferred)

TO BE COMPLETED BY THE PERSON NOMINATING THE CANDIDATE

(who must not be the spouse or partner of the candidate)

Name:
 (please print)
 Address

 Signature

This form must be returned to <name of school> by the end of the day on < date > at the latest.

ELECTION OF PARENT GOVERNORS AT A FEDERATION

NOTES OF GUIDANCE FOR PARENTS ON VOTING IN AN ELECTION

1. **BALLOT PAPERS**

- (a) You may only vote for < number >) candidate(s) by putting an X in the appropriate box(es). You should not put any other mark on the ballot paper. Each parent must vote on a separate form.
- (b) If you lose your ballot paper or it gets damaged, please ask the Head of School for a duplicate.

2. **RETURNING THE BALLOT PAPER**

- (a) Completed ballot papers (in an envelope if preferred) must be returned to your child's school by the end of the school day on < date >. You may post your form to the school but it must be with the Head of School by this date.
- (b) When the ballot paper has been returned to the school, it will be placed in a sealed box or container and kept securely to be opened on the day of the Count.
- (c) This process will be undertaken by each school in the federation.

3. **CONDUCT OF THE ELECTION**

- (a) The Head of School at each school in the federation will act as Returning Officer at the school and will be responsible for conducting the election.
- (b) The candidate(s) receiving the highest number of votes across the federation will be elected.
- (c) A register of voters will not be kept but the Head of School will take all reasonable steps to ensure fairness in the election.
- (d) The election will not be invalidated if a person fails to receive or to return the ballot paper.

4. **THE COUNT**

- (a) The Heads of School will arrange for a count to be made in the presence of the candidates, or their representatives on < date > at a school within the federation and at a time mutually agreed by all parties and shall declare who has been successful in the election.
- (b) The Heads of School will transport each sealed ballot box to the count.
- (c) The Heads of School, in consultation with any of the candidates, if any are present, will decide on the validity of any dubious or spoilt papers.
- (d) In the event of a tie between two or more candidates to fill a single vacancy, < insert agreed tie break method > will decide the outcome.
- (e) Ballot papers will be kept by the Federation for six months.

5. **DECLARING THE RESULT**

The Executive Headteacher will inform all parents of the outcome of the election via the federation's normal channels of communication - e.g. through a Newsletter.

BALLOT PAPER FOR ELECTION OF PARENT GOVERNORS

< NAME OF FEDERATION >

LIST OF CANDIDATES

1.	NAME OF CANDIDATE	☐
2.	NAME OF CANDIDATE	☐
3.	NAME OF CANDIDATE	☐
4.	NAME OF CANDIDATE	☐
5.	NAME OF CANDIDATE	☐
6.	NAME OF CANDIDATE	☐
7.	NAME OF CANDIDATE	☐
8.	NAME OF CANDIDATE	☐
9.	NAME OF CANDIDATE	☐
10.	NAME OF CANDIDATE	☐

You may only vote for < number > candidate(s) by putting an X in the appropriate box(es). You should not put any other mark on the ballot paper.

Attached to this form are statements that **candidates have supplied about themselves** to assist voters to make their choice.