

## THE CLERK

Governing bodies have a legal duty to appoint a clerk. They are responsible for recruiting a suitable person and for deciding the clerk's conditions of service, including pay. **The clerk may not be a governor or an associate member of the governing body, or the head.**

The role of the clerk is to help the governing body to be more effective by providing administrative services and procedural advice. An effective clerk is an invaluable resource enabling the governing body to concentrate on its key strategic role of school improvement.

Responsibilities include: convening and attending meetings of the governing body, taking minutes, keeping a register of governing body members and attendance and reporting vacancies to the governing body. The clerk should keep abreast of the law and regulations, providing advice and support to the governing body. Peterborough Governor Development Team holds termly Clerks' Briefing sessions to provide clerks with information about governance issues and new legislation.

It is essential for the clerk to have a clear job description. The DfES has published a national job description and person specification for clerks in recognition of the increasing responsibilities expected of them and the key role that a good clerk can play in helping a governing body to be effective.

### Clerking for Committees

Governing bodies must appoint a clerk to every committee with delegated powers. Although the DfES recommends that such committees should be professionally clerked, there are fewer restrictions for committee clerking than for the full governing body. It is permissible for a committee to be clerked by a governor or associate member (but NOT the Headteacher).

## **Model Clerk's Job Description**

**– adapted from the DfES Model due to be updated in light of Education Act 2004**  
**Introduction**

**The clerk will** be accountable to the Governing Body, working effectively with the chair of governors, and with the headteacher and other governors. The clerk will be responsible for advising the Governing Body on constitutional matters, duties and powers and will work within the broad current legislative framework. He/she will secure the continuity of Governing Body business and observe confidentiality requirements.

### **Meetings**

**The clerk will:**

- ❖ work effectively with the chair and headteacher before the Governing Body meeting to prepare a purposeful agenda which takes account of DfES, Local Authority (LA) and church authority issues and is focused on school improvement;
- ❖ encourage the headteacher and others to produce agenda papers on time
- ❖ produce, collate and distribute the agenda and papers so that recipients receive them at least seven clear days, and preferably ten days before the meeting;
- ❖ record the attendance of governors at the meeting and take appropriate action re absences;
- ❖ advise the Governing Body on governance legislation and procedural matters where necessary before, during and after the meeting;
- ❖ take notes of the Governing Body meetings to prepare minutes, including indicating who is responsible for any agreed action;
- ❖ record all decisions accurately and objectively with timescales for actions;
- ❖ send drafts to the chair and headteacher for amendment /approval by the chair;
- ❖ Copy and circulate the approved draft to all governors within the timescale agreed with the Governing Body;
- ❖ advise absent governors of the date of the next meeting;
- ❖ keep a minute book, or file of signed minutes, as an archive record;

### **Model Job Description (cont)**

- ❖ liaise with the chair, prior to the next meeting to receive an update on progress of actions agreed previously by the Governing Body;
- ❖ following the approval of the minutes at the next meeting forward a copy to the LA, and where agreed, to the appropriate church or foundation authority;
- ❖ chair that part of the meeting at which the chair is elected.

### **Membership**

**The clerk will**

- ❖ maintain a database of names, addresses and category of Governing Body members, and their term of office;
- ❖ initiate a welcome pack/letter being sent to newly appointed governors including details of terms of office;
- ❖ maintain copies of current terms of reference and membership of committee and working parties and nominated governors e.g. literacy;
- ❖ advise governors and appointing bodies of expiry of the term of office before term expires so elections or appointments can be organised in a timely manner;

- ❖ inform the Governing Body of any changes to its membership;
- ❖ maintain governor meeting attendance records and advise the Governing Body of non-attendance of governors;
- ❖ a register of Governing Body pecuniary interests is maintained, reviewed annually and lodged within the school;

### **Advice and information**

#### **The clerk will:**

- ❖ advise the Governing Body on procedural issues;
- ❖ have access to appropriate legal advice, support and guidance;
- ❖ ensure that new governors have a copy of the *DfES Guide to the Law* and other relevant information;
- ❖ take action on governing body's agreed policy to support new governors, taking account of the Guidance for Head Teachers and Chairs of Governors on the National Training Programme for New Governors and induction materials/courses made available by LAs and others;
- ❖ advise on the requisite contents of the school prospectus and school profile for parents;
- ❖ ensure that statutory policies are in place, and that a file is kept in the school of policies and other school documents approved by the Governing Body;
- ❖ maintain records of Governing Body correspondence.

### **Professional Development**

#### **The clerk will:**

- ❖ successfully complete the National Training Programme for Clerks to Governing Bodies or its equivalent;
- ❖ attend termly briefings and participate in professional development opportunities;
- ❖ keep up-to-date with current educational developments and legislation affecting school governance.

### **Optional Extras**

The clerk may be asked to perform as part of their duties any of the following. *These additional tasks will usually be negotiated at an extra cost.*

- ❖ clerk some or all Governing Body committees;
- ❖ assist with the elections of parent, teacher and staff governors;
- ❖ give advice and support to governors taking on new roles such as chair or chair of a committee;
- ❖ participate in, and contribute to the training of governors in areas appropriate to the clerking role;
- ❖ maintain a file of relevant DfES and LA documents;

- ❖ maintain archive materials;
- ❖ assist with the preparation of the School Profile for Parents, assembling the statutory information and copying and distributing the report;
- ❖ prepare briefing papers for the Governing Body, as necessary;
- ❖ help to produce a Governing Body Year Planner, which includes an annual calendar of meetings and the cycle of agenda items for meetings of the Governing Body and its committees