

Electing a Governing Board Chair and Vice Chair

Guidance from School & Governor Support

September 2023

School & Governor Support
Children and Families Directorate
Email: governors@birmingham.gov.uk
Web: [School & Governor Support](#)
Twitter: @SGSBCC

The DfE advise that the focus in appointing a Chair and Vice-Chair should be on appointing someone with the skills for the role, not just the willingness to serve. Some Governing Boards (GBs) choose to elect Co-Chairs and/or Co-Vice Chairs in order to share the workload and ensure leadership development as part of effective succession planning.

1) Maintained Schools

The School Governance (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) (England) Regulations 2013, require that when the Chair's/Vice Chair's position becomes vacant, either at the end of an appointed term or due to a governor's term of office ending/resignation etc., then the **GB must elect a Chair and a Vice-**

- g) GBs are requested to inform governors@birmingham.gov.uk of all new Chair/Vice Chair appointments and ensure the DfE's Get Information About Schools (GIAS) and the Governors' page on the school website is updated as soon as possible.

If you have any queries regarding the election of the Chair/Vice Chair, please contact School & Governor support for advice: governors@birmingham.gov.uk.

2) Academies

The DfE model Articles of Association state that Academy Trustees should elect a Chair and Vice-Chair each school year. It is possible for a Trust Board to have Co-Chairs and Co-Vice-Chairs if the Board feels this is necessary and in the best interests of the academy trust.

Trustees who are paid to work at the school cannot be elected as Chair or Vice-Chair and the Chair of Trustees should not also be the Chair of the Audit and Risk Committee.

Local Governing Bodies (LGBs) should follow the Chair/Vice Chair election protocol laid down by their Trust and as described in their Terms of Reference.

New Trust Chairs are required to complete the [DfE's suitability check](#) and, on appointment, the Chair's details must be added to GIAS within 14 days and their name and contact details published on the Trust website. Trusts are also asked to inform School & Governor Support by emailing governors@birmingham.gov.uk.

If you have any queries regarding the election of the Chair/Vice Chair, please contact School & Governor support for advice: governors@birmingham.gov.uk.

3) Time in Office

The DfE advises that GBs consider carefully how many times they re-elect their Chair to a new term of office. With effective succession planning in place, it can be beneficial for strong chairs to move on to another school or academy trust after a reasonable time (e.g. two terms of office). This can help to share expertise across the system and prevent boards stagnating or individuals gaining too much power and influence solely through their length of service. The National Governance Association (NGA) recommends that no one serves as Chair in one school or trust for more than six years.

4) Support for New Chairs

S&GS provides training for new Chairs and termly Chairs' Briefings, both of which are **free of charge** to schools subscribing to our Service Offer. This training provides an overview of the main responsibilities for Chairs of Governors and how to ensure the effective functioning of the GB. Course dates can be found in the current [Training Programme](#) and the school office can make bookings via their usual BESS log-in. More guidance on the role and responsibilities of the Chair is available here:

- DfE: [Governance Structures & Roles](#)
- DfE: [A Competency Framework for Governance](#) (includes Chair-specific content)
- NGA: [Chair role description](#)