

VOLUNTEERING TO BE A SCHOOL GOVERNOR: GUIDANCE FOR STAFF

INTRODUCTION

As part of UEA's Access and Participation Plan and work undertaken within the Recruitment and Outreach department, the University is keen to support local schools and encourage members of staff to consider becoming a school governor.

Additionally, through the University's widening participation strategy, particular priority has been accorded to activities with young people, teachers, parents and local schools to raise aspirations towards higher forms of study within our local communities, where progression rates into higher education are among the lowest in the UK.

It is within this context that the University has established an initiative to encourage more staff to support the strategic development of local state schools in the University's local communities by volunteering as school governors. This document sets out some background about the initiative, how to become involved and the support the University will provide to staff who are governors. It should be read in conjunction with the University's:

- Time off work: Employee Rights and Management Guidelines

(<https://www.uea.ac.uk/documents/2506781/2685620/Time+Off+Work.pdf/785aeae6-7774-4576-b1df-dfc01725da92>)

UEA SCHOOL GOVERNORS NETWORK

From 2018, a new UEA School Governors Network was developed which aims to substantially increase the number of University staff working as governors in local state primary and secondary schools. The University has committed to:

- Help staff to find volunteering placements as governors in local schools
- Provide a network for University staff working as governors to share best practice, support each other and act as positive ambassadors for the University's work with schools and colleges. Meetings take place three times a year and the online platform [GovernorHub](#) is used to facilitate the Network.

BECOMING A SCHOOL GOVERNOR

By becoming a governor staff will have an opportunity to broaden skills and make an important contribution to the development of a school. They may become involved in issues as diverse as site management, marketing, pupil welfare, curriculum development, HR or finance. Training is offered locally to build personal skills and boost self-confidence. Volunteer governors do not have to be parents, nor do they need first-hand experience of the education system.

To view current school governor vacancies, please visit:

<https://portal.uea.ac.uk/arm/uk-eu-recruitment-and-outreach/uea-school-governors-network>

For internal enquiries about the governor network and becoming a governor, staff can contact Laura Anderson, Outreach Programme Officer at: governors@uea.ac.uk / ext. 1487.

TIME OFF FOR GOVERNOR DUTIES

Staff are encouraged to support the UEA School Governors Network and the University recognises the value this work can bring both to individuals and the University in terms of its impact on the local community. Many of the duties involved in being a governor will take place outside of working hours and do not therefore require time off from work. Staff cannot claim time off in-lieu for school governor duties performed out of normal working hours.

However, the University will provide reasonable amounts of paid time off work during normal working hours (in addition to annual leave) where necessary. Reasonable paid time off work is designed to assist staff undertaking core duties essential to the role of a school governor. These would not normally exceed four or five days per year as a maximum (pro rata for part-time members of staff) but for experienced school governors in the University it would in most cases be less. These core duties might include, inter alia:

- A meeting of the Board of Governors that started before the end of the working day e.g. 4pm. This would include appropriate travel time
- Being asked to represent the Board of Governors on an interview panel for a new Headteacher
- The need to attend a training or briefing session key to the role
- Making once per year visits during the school day if requested by the Head Teacher
- Attendance at assemblies and school open days.

There are also a range of optional duties where school governors may be asked to represent the Board. Examples may include representing the Board at a daytime event or award ceremony, or putting oneself forward to voluntarily take on additional duties such as involvement in a particular project. Time off work for these non-core duties may be with or without pay, depending on how much time staff have already taken for core duties.

All time off work must be agreed in advance with the line manager. Staff should give as much advance notice as possible. Normally schools will be able to provide a schedule of main meetings for a whole academic year which will allow staff to plan ahead for absences in good time.

Line managers would normally be expected to accommodate requests for leave wherever possible, but will also have to be mindful of the effect of such absences on the effective running of service areas. Agreement will not be unreasonably withheld.