

The Henry Beaufort School **Parent Governor Recruitment**

Introduction

Hampshire County Council (HCC) is the appropriate authority with regard to the election arrangements for parent governors in The Henry Beaufort School.

The County Council has delegated the responsibility for ensuring that an election takes place for parent governors to the Headteacher. The elections will be conducted in accordance with the Hampshire County Council guidelines and paragraph 4 and Schedule 1 of the School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2007.

A copy of the Hampshire County Council guidelines may be requested from the school office.

Who can vote in parent governor elections?

All parents of pupils currently at Henry Beaufort School may vote in parent governor elections.

The definition of a parent in the Education Acts includes:

- all natural parents whether they are married or not
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person

and

- any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person.

Further guidance on the definitions of parent, parental responsibility and care of a child or young person can be found in Appendix B of the guidelines. The DCSF is currently reviewing this guidance and in the meantime the school will seek advice from HCC if they are unsure of the status of any individual.

Who can stand for election as a parent governor?

Parents may not become parent governors if they are disqualified for any of the reasons given below.

People may not be school governors if they:

- are a pupil at the school or under 18
- are detained under the Mental Health Act
- were disqualified as a foundation, LEA or community governor at the same school in the last 12 months for non-attendance
- are currently subject to bankruptcy arrangements or disqualification orders or undertakings relating to insolvency or running a company
- have been removed from office as a trustee, or from being concerned in the management of any charitable body
- are included on any list of people whose employment with children is prohibited or restricted
- have received a prison sentence of more than three months within the last five years, of more than two and a half years within the last twenty years, or of five years or more at any time
- have been convicted of causing a nuisance or disturbance on educational premises and sentenced to a fine in the last five years
- refuse a request to make an application for a CRB check.

If there is any concern that someone may be affected by these regulations the school will seek advice from Governor Services.

It is a criminal offence for someone to serve as a governor if they are disqualified.

A person cannot be elected or appointed as a parent governor if they are an elected member of the local authority or paid to work at the school for more than 500 hours in any consecutive twelve month period.

Parent governors at Henry Beaufort serve for four years.

Seeking nominations

As soon as a resignation is received from a parent governor, or at the beginning of the school term in which a parent governor's term of office expires, the Headteacher will arrange for a letter to be sent to parents inviting applications for the post. This standard letter will cover the information which must be sent to all those believed to have parental responsibility for pupils at the school.

Where pupils have more than one person with parental responsibility who are living at different addresses, a letter will be sent to each address.

If a parent does not receive a letter because they have not provided the school with accurate information of their status as a parent or their current contact detail this will not invalidate any parent governor appointment.

A copy of these notes will be included on the school website and drawn to the attention of parents in the letter.

Where a vacancy arises at short notice, the letter will be sent as soon as possible. Where this situation arises near the end of the summer term, this process may be delayed until the beginning of the next term.

All those interested in standing as governors will be asked to complete the Hampshire County Council School Governor Application Form. This will ensure that all potential governors are aware of the disqualification regulations and that the necessary information is collected to enable the successful applicant to undergo the governor vetting process.

Closing date for applications

The closing date for applications will be ten school working days from the date on which letters are distributed. The actual closing date and time will be clearly stated in the letter.

Appointment of parent governors

If the number of applications is equal to, or less than the number of vacancies to be filled, a ballot need not be held. The applicant(s) is/are automatically elected. The Headteacher will notify the successful candidate(s), within three school working days. The Headteacher will ensure that information boxes 7 and 8 on the School Governor Application Form are completed, including the verification of identity. The completed form will be passed to the clerk to governors for forwarding to Hampshire Governor Services at the local office. The County Council will carry out the required vetting check.

If after seeking applications from parents of current pupils, vacancies for parent governors remain, the governing body can appoint people to the posts who are a parent of a former registered pupil at Henry Beaufort, or a parent of a child under or of compulsory school age.

All potential appointed parent governors will be asked to complete the School Governor Application Form which includes the disqualification regulations. Applications will be considered at a full governing body meeting as an item of the agenda. At least half of current governing body members, excluding vacancies (rounded up to the nearest whole number) must be present. The school information in boxes 7 and 8 on the School Governor Application Form will be completed and the form returned to Hampshire Governor Services at the local education office once the identity of the applicant has been verified. The County Council will then carry out vetting checks.

If there are still parent vacancies after the governing body has considered any candidates for appointment, the Headteacher will need to go back to the parents to request applications using for instance the alternative standard letter.

If there are more applications than there are vacancies, the Headteacher will arrange for a secret ballot to be held.

Election of parent governors

The ballot

The Headteacher will issue ballot papers to all eligible parents as soon as possible after the closing date for the receipt of applications.

If a parent does not receive a ballot paper because they have not provided the school with accurate information of their status as a parent or their current contact detail this will not invalidate any parent governor election.

The election statement will consist of sections 3 and 4 from the School Governor Application Form. Ten school working days will be allowed between the ballot papers being sent out and the last date for their return. The return deadline date and time will be clearly stated on the ballot papers.

The election will be held by secret ballot. Ballot papers themselves should not be signed or the voter identified in any way. They will be printed on paper of a distinctive colour.

The school will use a Double Envelope Voting System:

- 1 Two envelopes are sent with each ballot paper
- 2 The voter seals his/her ballot paper in an unmarked envelope
- 3 The unmarked envelope is sealed in an outer envelope on which the voter has clearly written his/her name.
- 4 The double envelope is returned to the school
- 5 On receipt of the ballot papers, the presiding/returning officer checks the name on the outer envelope against the list of those entitled to vote and ticks off the relevant name.
- 6 The outer envelope is removed and the inner envelope placed in the ballot box for counting at the appointed time.

Voting

Voting is on the basis of one vote per parent per governor vacancy and each parent will receive one ballot paper asking for a vote for each vacancy.

The school will have a register of parents entitled to vote and only one ballot paper will be accepted from each parent. If the school receives more than one ballot paper from a parent only the first ballot paper received will be accepted.

If a parent is not on the register of parents entitled to vote because they have not provided the school with accurate information of their status as a parent or their current contact detail this will not invalidate any parent governor election.

The Headteacher should arrange to get ballot papers to and from parents by pupil post where possible.

Where a pupil does not live with a person who has parental responsibility, or they are absent from school when the ballot papers are issued they will need to be posted or otherwise delivered to the parents.

If a ballot paper is returned and it is not possible to confirm it is from a person entitled to vote it will be treated as void.

Ballot papers will be kept unopened and secure until the count.

Candidates have the right to attend the count, and will be advised of the venue, date and time of the count at the same time as the ballot papers are sent out.

The count

The ballot box shall be opened on the next school working day after the closing date for the return of ballot papers, as notified to the candidates.

The presiding or returning officer shall be the Headteacher, or his/her nominee, who will conduct the count.

If there is a tie in the numbers of votes cast, the first step should be to recount the votes. If the votes are still equal for two or more candidates, the presiding officer shall arrange for those candidates to draw lots or toss a coin. If a candidate is unable to attend the count a member of the school staff, unrelated to any of the candidates, will act as that candidates representative.

After the election

The Headteacher will notify the result to any candidate not at the count within three school working days. The Headteacher will ensure that information boxes 7 and 8 on the School Governor Application Form are completed, including the verification of identity. The completed form will be passed to the Clerk to Governors for forwarding to Hampshire Governor Services at the local education office. All parents will be notified of the result by parentmail, a statement on the school website and an entry in the next school communication. Governors and all members of staff will also be notified by e-mail.

On receipt of the completed Application Form the County Council will carry out vetting checks.

The start date

The successful candidate(s) will take up the governorship(s) on the day after the end of the term of office of the present incumbent(s). Where the relevant governorship is already vacant the start date is the date of the count or the day after the closing date for applications when an election has not been necessary. Where parent governors are appointed by the governing body the start date is the date of the meeting at which the appointment was made.

Unsuccessful candidates

Any unsuccessful candidates will be thanked for their interest and encouraged to consider vacancies at other schools.

Should they wish to proceed further with becoming a governor in another school; Hampshire Governor Services will be pleased to receive their application.