

**The Vale of Glamorgan Council**

**Learning and Skills Directorate**

**Policy for the Appointment of LA School Governors**

An Advisory Panel for the Appointment of Local Authority (LA) Governors has been established to consider all matters relating to the appointment and removal of LA governors. In making appointments the Panel should note that LA governors cannot be mandated by the LA to take any particular line. They may represent the LA view but in all cases the interests of the school are paramount and all governors must abide by the governing body’s rules and code of conduct.

**Membership and terms of reference of the Advisory Panel for the Appointment of LA Governors**

The Advisory Panel for the Appointment of LA Governors will comprise 3 Labour (including the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services who will Chair the Panel), 1 Conservative, 1 Plaid Cymru and 1 Independent Elected Members. A representative of the Vale School Governors’ Association (VSGA), as determined by the Management Committee of that Association, will be invited to attend the Panel in an advisory capacity (i.e. without voting rights). In the event of any of the six members or the VSGA representative being unable to attend, named substitutes will be eligible to take their place to ensure that all these groups are adequately represented when the Panel meets.

The Director of Learning and Skills and/or the Head of School Improvement and Inclusion will be invited to attend Panel meetings in an advisory capacity (i.e. without voting rights). The senior officer(s) will brief the Panel outlining the nature of schools’ needs and challenges, where LA governor vacancies exist.

The Advisory Panel for the Appointment of LA Governors will be responsible for making recommendations to the Cabinet regarding the appointment and removal of LA governors in line with the approved criteria contained within this policy. If the Cabinet do not endorse any recommendations of the Panel regarding any LA governor appointments they will refer them back to the Panel in the first instance stating appropriate reasons for doing so. In the event of failure by the Panel to make an appointment, that appointment will then be made by the Cabinet, so as to ensure that the Council meets its obligation to fill vacancies within 6 months of their notification.

**Criteria for the appointment of LA governors**

The Panel shall apply the following criteria when considering appointments. In applying these criteria the Advisory Panel should consider the appointment of local members and the experience, skills, expertise and potential contribution to the school of all applicants. Factors for consideration include: -

* Experience as an effective school governor measured in terms of possession of relevant skills, knowledge and experience including skills that match the challenges of the individual school.
* The contribution made during their term(s) of office and regular attendance.
* A genuine desire to help improve standards of education within the school in partnership with the headteacher and the rest of the governing body.
* A knowledge of and an interest in the community in which the school is situated.
* A knowledge of modern education issues.
* A commitment to regular attendance at full governing body meetings as well as meetings of any committees of the governing body to which they are elected.
* A commitment to attend governor training courses to update their skills and knowledge to enhance their ability and effectiveness as a governor.

**Criteria for the removal of LA Governors**

The Panel can recommend that the Cabinet remove LA governors as the appointing authority but this power must be used reasonably. Any queries relating to the removal of LA governors should be referred to the Governor Support Unit of the Learning and Skills Directorate in the first instance.

Disqualification of LA governors, or indeed any governors, is dealt with in Schedule 6 of The Education (School Government) (Wales) Regulations 1999. Again any queries relating to such matters should be referred to the Governor Support Unit as above.

In the case of any such removals or disqualifications the LA governors concerned will be contacted and informed accordingly.

**Declaration of Interests**

In accordance with Council policy and good practice, members of the Advisory Panel should not preside over governor appointments to schools where they are also members of the governing body. Should any member(s) of the Panel need to withdraw during the consideration of any appointment(s) the party or organisation that they represent may nominate a substitute providing they are not a governor at the school with a vacancy.

**Operational Procedures**

All existing LA governors whose terms of office are due to cease will be contacted by the Governor Support Unit well beforehand to ascertain whether they wish to be re-nominated or not. Their response will then be reported to the Advisory Panel for consideration.

All resignations or retirements of LA governors should be brought to the attention of the Governor Support Unit as soon as possible in order that these vacancies can be considered by the Advisory Panel at the earliest opportunity.

**Advertisements for LA Governors**

Details of LA Governor vacancies including the names of schools with vacancies will be circulated to all Members of the Council, all Vale schools, members of the Vale School Governors’ Association (VSGA) management committee, members of the Vale Council for Voluntary Services and placed on the Council’s website and internal Intranet. Advertisements will also be shared with local and regional employers in advance of each Panel meeting to draw these vacancies to the attention of their staff living in the Vale. Members of the Council will also receive a supply of application forms each time an advert for LA governors is circulated.

The Advisory Panel will take into consideration any views expressed by the governing body of the school concerned as well as any skill set or experience gap and to this end governing bodies will be contacted well beforehand by the Governor Support Unit inviting submissions. All such submissions should be made in writing for the attention of the Governor Support Unit well in advance of the next scheduled meeting of the Advisory Panel. However, the decision of the Cabinet will be final on all matters relating to LA governor appointments.

The Advisory Panel will meet on an ad hoc basis determined by the number of vacancies. This way vacancies will be considered soon after they become known and it will avoid the situation where schools are without their full complement of LA governors for long periods of time therefore increasing the burden on the remaining members of the governing body.

If the LA, for whatever reason, fails to make an appointment of an LA governor at a particular school within six months of being notified of the vacancy the nominee of the governing body will automatically be appointed.

**Police Clearance**

Currently there is no legal requirement for school governors to be subject to police clearance prior to them taking up their appointments. Therefore LEA’s, diocesan offices and schools do not have to apply to the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) for DBS checks for school governors (formerly known as CRB checks).

However, the *Government of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations (2005) (Schedule 5, Regulation 12)* includes a provision covering disqualification of governors from holding office if they refuse a request from the governing body to undergo a DBS check.

**Application form to become or continue as an LA governor**

Anyone who expresses an interest in becoming an LA governor or continuing to be an LA governor will be invited to complete the appropriate application form and skills register. The applicant must provide clear reasons why they are particularly interested in a vacancy together with details of the skills, knowledge and expertise that they could bring to the role.

Anyone who has not completed an application form should not be appointed or re-appointed as an LA governor. Governors should be chosen on the basis of the contribution which they can bring to a school in terms of their skills and experience. The application form is the fairest method of ensuring that the Council does everything in its power to comply with this requirement when making LA governor appointments. Late applications will not be considered in the interests of fairness to all those who submit their applications by the published closing date unless no nominations are received for schools(s) and at the discretion of the Panel.

In preparation for each meeting of the Advisory Panel the Governor Support Unit will prepare a report detailing all current vacancies to be considered including the following information, wherever possible:-

* name of the school;
* name of the current or outgoing LA governor;
* the end of appointment date of the current or outgoing LA governor;
* whether or not the current LA governor wishes to be renominated;
* the length of time the current LA governor has been a governor at this particular school;
* the number of meetings the current governor has attended or been absent from in the last year;
* whether or not a completed application form and skills register is attached;
* details of any submissions by school governing bodies in respect of particular vacancies giving reasons for suitability;
* table matching applicants completed skills register against each schools submitted ‘register of need’; and
* a completed application form (where relevant).

The agenda, application forms and grid reference of schools and applicants for Panel meetings will only be circulated to Panel Members. This is consistent with procedures for other appointment panels of the Council and the application forms, containing potentially sensitive information about candidates would be circulated as Part II items. Minutes of Panel meetings will continue to be reported to the Cabinet as a Part I item, notwithstanding the fact that the application forms themselves would remain exempt from public inspection. Only Panel Members are entitled to attend meetings of the Panel. The only exception is where substitutes are required. There is no entitlement for other Members of the Council to attend meetings of the Panel.

Once the Advisory Panel has met to consider its recommendations on all the current LA governor vacancies these recommendations will be reported to the next scheduled Cabinet for decisions. Once the Cabinet has made its decisions and the subsequent calling-in period has expired the Governor Support Unit will write to all the appointees to notify them of their appointments or reappointments. Similarly the Governor Support Unit will also contact the Headteacher, Chair and Clerk to the Governing Body with details of appointees. All LA governors will be invited to attend, with other Vale governors, an enhanced training programme intended to better support the development of school leadership.

In the case of LA governors who are not reappointed they will also be contacted by the Governor Support Unit and informed accordingly.

Any queries relating to the procedure for the appointment or removal of LA governors should be referred to the Governor Support Unit in the Learning and Skills Directorate on 01446 709108 (direct line).