



Thought Leadership – The Role of the SEN Governor



Imagine this scenario..... you are in the first governing board (GB) meeting of the year. You feel you are settling into your position as a governor and beginning to understand the roles and responsibilities of your volunteer role. During the meeting the Chair of Governors asks for a volunteer to take on the role of Special Education Needs and Disabilities; you feel this might be something you are interested in and so you put your name forward. The whole GB heaves a sigh of relief.

What have you let yourself in for? Read on for a summary of the role and how to be as effective as you can in this particularly important position.

The Formal Bits

The 'SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years' 2015 states that the governing board must ensure that there is a designated governor identified to maintain oversight of SEND provision and make arrangements for this function to be delegated to an appropriate person or committee.

The governor responsible for SEND provision acts as the link between the governing board, headteacher and SENCO, reporting back to the governing board on monitoring and compliance with the 'SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years' including and 'The Children and Families Act 2014'. Compliance is a legal responsibility.

The governor responsible works with the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCo) to report on the steps being taken to ensure compliance. The role also includes ensuring that there is appropriate challenge to leaders so that SEND remains high on the school's agenda and that the school has high aspirations for SEND pupils.

The Practical and Priority Aspects of SEND Governance

Consider your expertise in the SEND area of governance and undertake training or seek external advice as required.

Meet roughly three times a year with the SENCO and or senior leaders to review SEND provision including staff and other resourcing and provide regular reports to the GB.

Visit school to talk to pupils about their learning (At an age-appropriate level).

Gain information about staff expertise and training. (The SENCo must by law be a qualified teacher and working towards the National Award in Special Educational Needs Co-ordination within three years of appointment.)

Gain an understanding of how the SEND notional budget is planned for and what impact it has on the progress and attainment of pupils.

Reflect on this SEND action plan and how this reflects the school vision and works in conjunction with the school development or improvement plan.

Maintain an awareness of the profile of pupils with SEND, including those with an Education Health Care plan in place. Make certain only anonymised information is shared to maintain pupils' confidentiality and comply with General Data Protection Regulations. (GDPR)

Ensure you understand how the school identifies who is a SEND pupil. How does the school identify pupils either joining the school or pupils already at the school who have SEND?

Familiarise yourself with the school's SEND policy for identification and assessment and other associated policies that support the SEND policy eg behaviour policy, admission's policy, equal opportunities policy (Equality Act 2010) and safeguarding policy.

Monitor the implementation of these policies and procedures for SEND and discuss with the SENCo the outcomes of the school's monitoring and evaluation of the provision and effectiveness made for pupils with SEND.

How does the school approach teaching to SEND pupils and are reasonable adjustments made to ensure SEND pupils access a broad and balanced curriculum?

What additional support is available to SEND learners?

Ensure the school revises and updates the school's SEND information report to reflect the changing nature of SEND cohorts and this report is ratified annually by the full GB and made available on the school website.

Check the school has updated its Accessibility Plan in line with DfF regulations detailing how the school will improve access to the physical environment and increase access to the curriculum for SEND pupils. Ensure this is made available on the school website.

Explore methods of communication with parents of SEND pupils and those external agencies that could offer advice, support and guidance.

Report back to the GB regularly through an agreed format eg a link governor report

Consider all of the above, and in your role strive to do your best. After all, that's what we ask of our pupils.