



## *Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2019 – 2023*

Available from:

<https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Information/Boards-of-Management/>

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*This note contains excerpts from the Governance Manual for Primary Schools, 2019-2023 (DES, 2019). The note was created to summarise key functions and processes of a school's Board of Management for prospective nominees. The full text of the Manual along with additional information on School Governance can be accessed from the link above.*

### **Functions of the Board (p.5)**

The Board manages the school on behalf of the patron and is accountable to the patron and the Minister. The principal is responsible for the day-to-day management of the school, including guidance and direction of the teachers and other staff of the school, and is accountable for that management.

### **Training for Boards (p.10 & 11)**

Board members are strongly advised to access relevant training to assist them in carrying out their role [including]:

- The Board as a Corporate Entity – function, roles and the Board in action
- Legal issues - policies and procedures arising from legislation, guidelines and circulars
- Child Protection Procedures
- Anti-Bullying Procedures
- Data Protection

The school principal and the chairperson of the Board will normally be the main source of information for other Board members in relation to general information and in relation to queries regarding Board matters. Board members will also find that the websites of the relevant Management Bodies and the Department are a useful source of general information.

### **Constitution of Boards of Management (p.15)**

For schools having a recognised staff of more than one teacher the Board of Management shall... comprise the following:

- (a) Two direct nominees of the patron.
- (b) Two parents elected from parents of children who are enrolled and have commenced attendance at the school (one being a mother, the other a father, elected by the general body of parents of children who are enrolled and have commenced attendance at the school).
- (c) The principal (or acting principal) of the school.
- (d) One other serving teacher on the staff of the school, elected by vote of the teaching staff which includes the principal.
- (e) Two extra members [community members] proposed by those nominees, described at (a) to (d) above.

### **Role of Nominees: (p. 25)**

Board members are not delegates of their electorates. They have no obligation to either report back to their electors or to take instruction from them on how to vote at board meetings. Such reporting may be a breach of confidentiality requirements. It is a matter for each Board to decide what may be



reported and by whom and, in this respect, it is essential that personnel, financial and personal matters are dealt with in line with relevant confidentiality requirements.

**Reporting on Board Meetings: (p. 25)**

Section 9.3 provides for the Board to put in place an agreed report to support good communications to parents, staff and the school community. The agreed report shall not include details of any issues which must remain confidential to Board members.

**Communications and Transparency: (p. 26)**

The Board, at the closure of each Board meeting shall determine the information to be conveyed to parents, school staff and the school community, and the manner and terms in which it should be conveyed and by whom. An agreed report should be drawn up for this purpose. The agreed report shall not include details of any issues which must remain confidential to Board members. The Board shall pursue a policy of openness and have a positive approach to sharing information with the school community.

**Frequency of meetings (p.30)**

A Board shall hold such and so many meetings at such times as the chairperson deems necessary but shall hold **a minimum of one meeting per school term** and shall hold **not less than five meetings in any school year**.

**First meeting (p.30)**

Every member of the Board shall sign the declaration at Form 2 at or before his or her first attendance at a meeting ... This is a declaration of acceptance of membership of the Board and an undertaking that he or she will adhere to the rules pertaining to his or her duties as per the Governance Manual for Primary Schools 2019 – 2023 and all other relevant rules, regulations and legislation.

Training, which is particularly important for new Board members, should be discussed at the first meeting of the Board with a view to putting in place a plan to identify and meet the training needs of board members. The training plan for Board members should be regularly reviewed and updated.

**Ordinary meetings (p.30)**

- (a) The chairperson may at any time call a meeting of the Board.
- (b) At least seven days before each ordinary meeting, a notice of the time and place of the intended meeting, together with an agenda for the meeting, shall be sent to every member of the Board. It should be clear that all members of the Board are entitled to be notified of all meetings – including meetings where issues may concern an individual member directly and he or she may be required to subsequently withdraw or not to attend if the meeting is solely for that purpose. Where exceptional circumstances warrant it, a meeting of the Board may be convened at less than seven days' notice and in such cases this fact should be recorded in the minutes.

**Appendix: Confirmation of Nominees**

When the nominees have been chosen and it has been confirmed that they have agreed to act as members, the patron's representative shall forward the names of the agreed nominees to the patron for appointment together with the names of the other persons nominated to serve on the Board.