PARLEY FIRST SCHOOL

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24th September 2015

Dear Parent/Carer,

PARENT GOVERNOR ELECTION

I am writing to you to invite you to stand for election as a parent governor, or nominate another parent to do so. In our school we have provision for three parent governors and there are currently three vacancies.

The governing body, with the headteacher, has overall responsibility for the running of the school. Governing bodies have three core strategic functions:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- Holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils; and
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

No special qualifications are needed and the most important thing is to have a keen interest in the school and be prepared to play an active part in the governing body's work. Training is available for all governors and this governing body has an expectation that those new to being a governor attend free induction training.

Please also find enclosed information which we have compiled to help you understand what being a School Governor at Parley means and what level of time commitment is required. In addition there is information which summarises the circumstances under which someone cannot serve as a governor as well as. Parents/carers who have paid employment in the school for 500 or more hours per academic year or who are elected members of the Local Authority are not eligible to stand in these elections. Nominations must be from parents or carers with children at the school on the day that nominations close.

If you would like to stand for election please complete the enclosed nomination form and return it to the school no later than **Monday 12th October 2015**. You may also include a short personal statement to support your nomination, which should be no longer than 250 words. Self-nominations will be accepted, but if you are nominating another parent please seek their prior consent.

If there are more nominations than vacancies the election will be by secret ballot. If that is necessary, voting papers will be sent to all parents together with details of the ballot procedure.

Yours faithfully,

Clerk to the Governing Body

Being a Parent Governor
at Parley First School

Parent governors are in a unique position on a governing body. Not only do parent governors have to work in the best interests of the school, but they have to balance this with their natural desire to see the best outcomes for their own child(ren).

The aim of this document is to outline what it means to be a parent governor and the commitment that is required to fulfil that role.

Parent governors are:

- ✓ well placed to understand parents' views and to remind the governing body how matters being discussed affect parents
- ✓ individuals! How you vote on any decision is up to you;
- ✓ in a good position to help the governing body to communicate effectively with parents;
- ✓ equal in status to all other governors.

Parent governors are not:

- × expected to gather the views of other parents and take them to the governing body
- × simply expected to represent the interests of parents
- × a link between parents and the governing body;
- × expected to vote as instructed by other parents.

How to fulfil your role

- Attend governing body meetings regularly and play an active role in committees and decision-making.
- Learn all you can about the school.
- Be approachable to other parents, but make sure you are clear about your role.
- Always represent the school positively.
- As a governor you are one of a group and must never act alone.
- Always support the decisions of the full governing body. Have your say on decisions in meetings and vote in the way you wish; but then support the outcomes of votes – even if you disagree with them.
- Always observe confidentiality. You will get to know a lot of highly sensitive and confidential information – don't discuss it with anyone who is not a governor. Remember, a governor can be suspended for serious breaches of confidentiality.

What is the commitment?
All members of the governing body need to be prepared to commit some time to the school in order to be an effective school governing body. The following list is designed to give you an idea of the requirements so that you can decide if being a Parent Governor is something that you are able to give the time to

- All new governors will be required to attend a number of training sessions run by Dorset Governor Services and are usually in the evening between 6pm and 8pm. Compulsory training is for New Governors and Safeguarding Training.
- During your time as a governor, further training courses are available and it is expected that you will attend any courses which are relevant to your role.

- All governors are also expected to make visits into school to enable you to fullfill your monitoring role. Again, the level of visits will vary depending on your role within the governing body.
- All governors are expected to attend all meetings of the Full Governing Body. These meetings are held twice a term on a Wednesday at 5pm
- All governors are also expected to sit on at least one other committee and each committee also meets twice a term. Depending on the chosen committee meeting times are either Wednesday at 5pm, Tuesday at 4.15pm or Thursday at 9.15am

How you can help individual parents
From time to time you may be approached by other parents asking for help, or wanting to make a complaint about something the school is, or isn't doing.
♦ Make it clear you can't act for the governing body.
♦ Don't raise expectations that the school will "put it right" – there may be underlying issues or background that you don't know about.
♦ Keep an open mind – there are at least two sides to every story!

What to do if you experience a conflict between being a parent and being a governor
This can happen – especially if you think the governing body is making decisions which you feel will adversely affect your child(ren).
♦ If a difficulty arises, take a step back and think things through as objectively as you can.
♦ If you are concerned, talk to the headteacher or to the chair of governors.
♦ Make sure you don't break confidentiality when discussing your concerns outside governing body meetings.

Where to get help, advice and support
Help and advice is available to you from other governors, the headteacher, the chair of governors and from the clerk to the governing body.

You will be allocated a governor mentor or "buddy" to help you through the first few months and it will be important that you attend induction training offered by the Local Authority

Dorset Governor Services have information available on their website http://www.dorsetforyou.com/5188 and we encourage you to have a look at these pages as they offer plenty of advice and support.

Nomination Form

Election of parent governors

Please enter IN BLOCK LETTERS the name and address of the person being nominated for election:

Name: _____

Address:

_____

Signature of person nominated: _____

Signature of proposer (if different to nominee): _____

Name and address in BLOCK letters of proposer (if different to nominee):

_____

Personal Statement (maximum 250 words)

I confirm (i) that I am willing to stand as a candidate for election as a parent governor and (ii) that I am not disqualified from holding office for any of the reasons set out in the School Governance Regulations.

Signature

(Date)

Completed nomination forms must be returned to the school by Monday 12th October 2015.

Qualifications and disqualifications to serve as a school governor

A governor must be aged 18 or over at the time of his/her election or appointment and cannot hold more than one governorship at the same school.

A person is disqualified from holding or continuing to hold office as a governor or associate member if he or she:

- is subject to a bankruptcy restriction order, an interim bankruptcy restrictions order, a debt relief restrictions order or an interim debt relief restrictions order;
- has had his/her estate sequestrated and the sequestration has not been discharged, annulled or reduced;
- is subject to:
    - a disqualification order or disqualification undertaking under the Company Directors Act 1986
    - a disqualification order under the Companies Directors Disqualification (Northern Ireland) Order 2002
    - a disqualification undertaking accepted under the Company Directors Disqualification (Northern Ireland) Order 2002
    - an order made under section 429(2)(b) of the Insolvency Act 1986 (failure to pay under a county court administration order);
- has been removed from the office of charity trustee or trustee for a charity by an order made by the Charity Commission or Commissioners or High Court on the grounds of any misconduct or mismanagement in the administration of the charity, or under section 34 of the Charities and Trustees Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 from being concerned in the management or control of anybody;
- is included in the list of people considered by the Secretary of State as unsuitable to work with children;
- is disqualified from working with children or subject to a direction under section 142 of the Education Act 2002;
- is disqualified from working with children under sections 28,29, or 29A od the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000;
- is disqualified from registration under Part 2 of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 for child minding or providing day care;

  is disqualified from registration under Part 3 of the Childcare Act 2006;
- has received a sentence of imprisonment (whether suspended or not) for a period of not less than 3 months (without the option of a fine) in the 5 years before or since becoming a governor;
- has received a prison sentence of 2½ years or more in the 20 years before becoming a governor;
- has at any time received a prison sentence of 5 years or more;

- has been convicted under section 547 of EA 1996 (nuisance or disturbance on school premises) or under section 85A of the Further and Higher Education Act 1992 (nuisance or disturbance on educational premise) during the 5 years prior to or since appointment or election as a governor;
- is employed at the school for more than 500 hours per academic year if wishing to stand for parent governor at the same school;
- is an elected member of the Local Authority (applies to parent and community governors only);
- has refused a request by the clerk to the governing body to make an application under section 113B of the Police Act 1997 for a criminal records certificate
- has been disqualified from holding office as a governor of this school due to failure to attend governing body meetings for a continuous period of six months