



# Transform Trust

## Maternity Leave for Governors Guidance

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336	Chief Operating Officer	V1 October 2022	Every 3 years

## Maternity Leave for Governors – Transform Trust Guidance

This guidance sets out our commitment to supporting our volunteer Governors who wish to take maternity leave during their term of office as a serving Governor.

Pregnancy is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010 (sections 17 and 18). It is unlawful to discriminate against someone who is pregnant or entitled to maternity leave. This includes people who provide services and carry out public functions, such as school Governors.

As Governors are volunteers, their legal status isn't explicit and there are no hard and fast rules for a Governor who wishes to take maternity leave. However, our commitment is that we will not treat any Governor less favourably because they are pregnant.

We have outlined the procedures we will take for any Governor who wishes to take maternity leave during the term of office as a Governor:

1. Upon receiving notification that a Governor is pregnant, we will make initial contact with the Governor to ascertain their intention to take maternity leave from their voluntary role. Under no circumstances will a Governor be asked to step-down or be removed from the Governing Body due to pregnancy – this would be unlawful.
2. We will discuss with the Governor how long they expect their period of leave will be and we will be as flexible as possible with the Governor but also ensuring that we are meeting the needs of the school.  
It is important to note that for any Governor who is continuously absent from meetings for 6 months without consent may be disqualified. However, this will only be as a last resort and without first trying to establish a date of return and the barriers to prevent them attending.
3. We will ask the Governor if they have a preference as to who they wish to nominate as their nominee to maintain contact during their maternity leave; and how they wish to be communicated with. For example, email, phone calls, virtual meeting. If no preference is given, we will ask the Governing Body, the School or the Trust's Governance team to identify a nominee and we will agree the arrangements of the contact in terms of frequency, time and focus.
4. We will ascertain if the Governor wishes to be kept informed on the work and progress of the Governing Body by receiving regular updates including meeting documentation while they are away.
5. We will also ascertain whether the Governor still wishes to attend meetings during the maternity leave which will be their choice. If this is the case, arrangements can be made to attend the meeting virtually if this is preferred.

6. If the Governor is a staff Governor who is on maternity leave, we will wherever possible try to organise governance work during 'keeping in touch' days.
7. For Staff Governors on maternity leave they should not attend meetings in their 2-week mandatory period of maternity leave [mandatory period of maternity leave](#).

### Securing the skills

If we believe there will be skills gap on the Governing Body during the period of maternity leave, we will work the Governing Body and school to help address this skills gap.

In the event that the Governor holds the position of Chair or is a named Link Governor for a specific area, we will work with the Governing Body and school to ensure that there is adequate support and guidance given.

### School Visits

We will work with the school to ensure there is a risk assessment in place for any Governor who is pregnant and wants to attend school for a meeting or conduct a school visit. This should be shared with the Governor and staff who are involved in the meeting or visit.

### Support for the School

Prior to the Governor commencing their maternity leave, we will liaise with the Headteacher of the school to gain what support they may need, particularly if the Governor holds the position of Chair, Vice Chair or is the named Safeguarding Governor.

We will support the school and Governing Body to ensure that they are meeting their statutory duties and still able to fulfil their core functions of:

1. To ensure that the vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school are clearly defined;
2. To ensure that the Headteacher performs his/her responsibilities for the educational performance of the school and the performance management of staff;
3. To ensure the sound, proper and effective use of the school's financial resources.

Our Governance Professionals team will maintain regular contact with all Governors and the Headteacher throughout the duration of the maternity leave to ensure that both the school and Governing Body are given support

### Application of Guidance

This guidance applies to all volunteer governors who wish to take maternity leave from their voluntary role as a Governor.