

5. The Annual Report and Annual Meeting with Parents

This section deals with the governing body's:

- responsibility to produce an annual report; and
- responsibility to hold an annual meeting with parents.

Background

1. Every governing body of a maintained school is required each year to produce a report on its work during the academic year. A governing body is also required, subject to certain exemptions, to hold a meeting for parents to discuss the annual report.

The Governors' Annual Report

2. It is a statutory obligation for the governing body of all maintained schools to produce an annual report.

3. The report must, at a minimum, contain certain information as detailed in Chapter 6 of this guide entitled 'Providing Information' and The School Governors' Annual Reports (Wales) Regulations 2001, as amended by The School Governors' Annual Reports (Wales) (Amendments) Regulations 2004. The report may include such other information as the governing body considers relevant. Amendments to these regulations and supporting guidance will be made in 2009, following consultation.

4. The governing body also has the opportunity to prepare a summary report, the minimum content of which is also prescribed in the regulations.

5. At a minimum, the governing body must circulate to all parents a copy of the summary report and inform parents that a copy of the full report is available to them should they wish to receive it.

6. It is for the governing body to determine both the language or languages and form in which the report is to be produced, subject to any direction given by the LA.

7. There is no set time of year for publishing the annual report, but to tie in with target setting requirements governing bodies are encouraged to publish their reports during the Autumn term.

8. The annual report must be provided to parents no less than 2 weeks before the annual meeting at which the report will be considered.

9. The writing of the annual report is the corporate responsibility of the governing body and should not fall to the headteacher on his/her own. Often a governing body will set up a working group, comprising a few governors, to prepare a draft for consideration at a meeting. This is a useful exercise and helps to share the workload whilst securing 'ownership'.

The Annual Meeting with Parents

10. A governing body of a maintained school is required to hold an annual meetings for parents in line with The Annual Parents' Meeting (Exemptions) (Wales) Regulations 2005. The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the annual report and other matters relating to the school.

11. In a maintained school where at least 50% of the pupils are boarders or a community special school established in a hospital, the governing body may decide that it is impracticable to hold a meeting.

12. For other maintained schools, a governing body is exempt from holding a meeting in any year in which:

- it holds a parents' meeting following a school inspection, to discuss the inspector's report prior to the preparation of the action plan.
- it holds a meeting or series of meetings where all parents have been invited to at least one of the series of meetings, and:
 - 20% or more of parents of registered pupils attend the meeting or at least one of the meetings;
 - the parents have the opportunity at these meetings to discuss the manner in which the school has been, and is to be, conducted and the school's performance; and
 - three or more governors are present at the meeting(s).
- fewer than 5% of parents of registered pupils respond to a notice sent out accompanying the annual report asking parents if they wish the governing body to hold the annual meeting.

These exemptions do not apply where:

- no annual parents meeting was held in the preceding year, or
- the governing body receives a written request from the parents of at least 5% of the registered pupils before 31 May in a school year, asking for an annual parents' meeting.

Attendance

13. All parents of pupils at the school have a right to attend the meeting. The head teacher also has the right to attend, whether or not he or she is a governor. The governing body may choose to invite other people to attend as well.

Purpose of the meeting

14. The WAG is firmly committed to securing greater involvement by parents in the education of their children. With the introduction of new initiatives in schools, parents will want to know how their school is planning to make improvements. The annual parents' meeting provides such an opportunity. This annual meeting gives governors a chance to demonstrate their accountability to parents.

15. As well as discussing the annual report, the meeting must provide an opportunity for parents to discuss what has been happening at the school over the previous year, including how the governors, head teacher and LA have performed during the year, the aims and values of the school and the development of pupils in the widest sense (spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical).

16. The meeting should be used as an opportunity to share the governing body's plans for promoting high standards of educational achievement, good behaviour and discipline and to actively seek the views of parents. The above should ensure that the meetings do not just look back at the previous year, but provide a real opportunity for parents to make their views known about the future of the school.

17. The governing body may agree that the parents present at the meeting can pass resolutions (formal suggestions) on any of the topics raised. Resolutions should then be considered by the governing body, or passed on to the head teacher or the LA, where appropriate. A comment on any resolution so passed should be included in the following annual report.

Running the Meeting

18. The governing body is responsible for planning and running the meeting with parents. Before it takes place they will need to decide:

- the time and place;
- the agenda;
- who should chair the meeting - normally the chairperson of the governing body;
- who will take a note of any resolutions passed; and
- who to invite to help in answering questions.

19. It is not necessary for the annual parents' meeting to be a formal occasion just because it is legally necessary to hold it. Governing bodies should consider the best way to encourage useful discussion. This may involve looking at how invitations are sent out, hospitality, the type of welcome and seating.

In brief

The Governing Body

- must prepare an annual report, in line with the regulations;
- must circulate the report as required;
- must hold a meeting for parents every year subject to certain exemptions set out in the regulations;
- must make the meeting open to all parents and the head teacher, and anyone else they wish to invite;
- must run the meeting;
- may allow for resolutions to be passed;
- consider and report back on any resolutions passed; and
- may ask the head teacher or the LA to comment on any resolutions that relate to their duties.

The Law

The Education (Annual Parents' Meetings) (Exemptions) (Wales) Regulations 2005 SI 2005/2911

The School Governors' Annual Reports (Wales) Regulations 2001 SI 2001/1110, as amended by The School Governors' Annual Reports (Wales) (Amendments) Regulations 2004 SI 2004/1735.

New Regulations expected to be made in 2009.