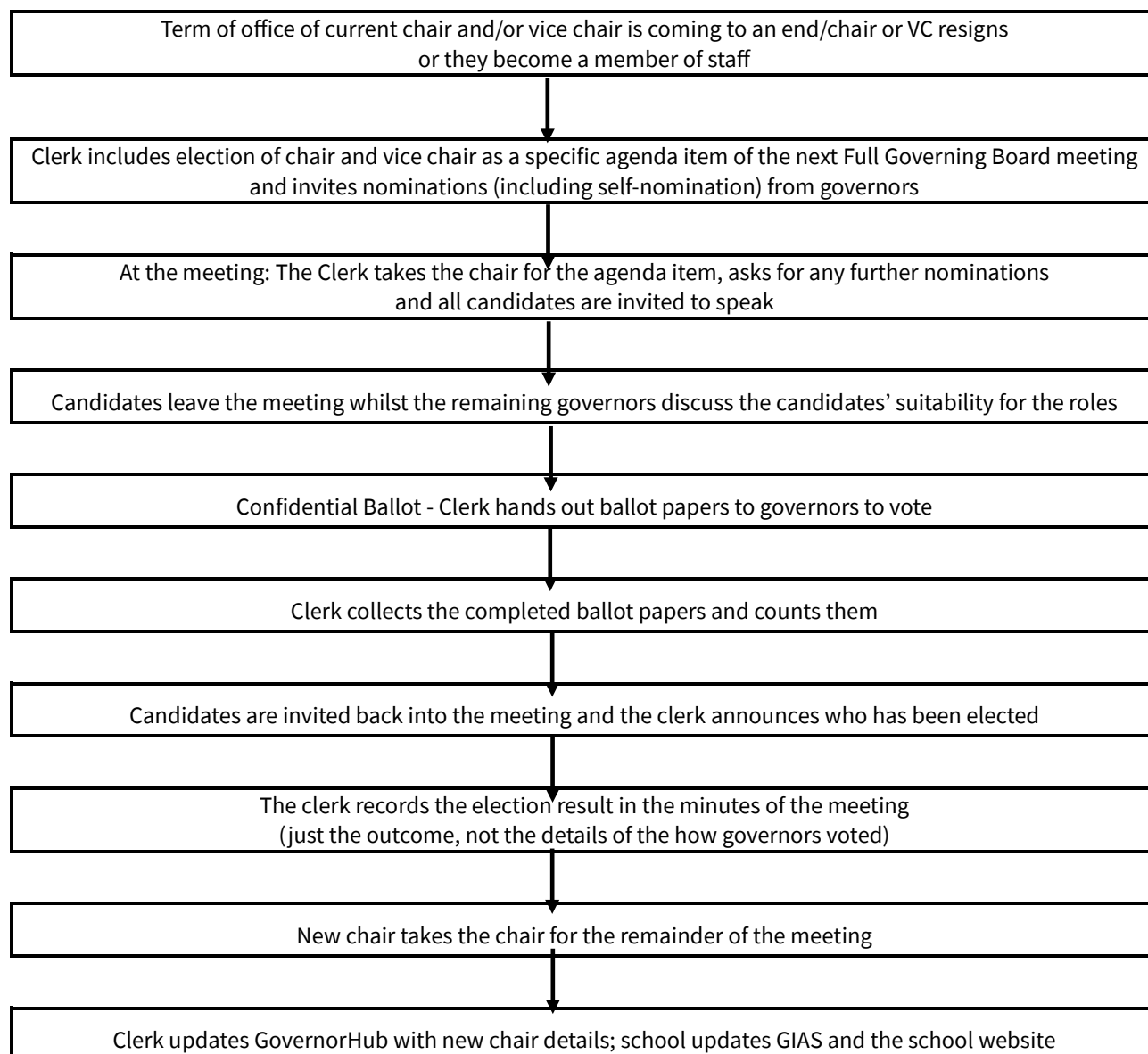


Procedures for the Election of Chair and Vice Chair of Governors

Updated August 2026

Guidance for Governors and Governance Professionals of Maintained Schools

Election Process Overview



Contact us

For **governance** queries
email: governorservices@oxfordshire.gov.uk
Phone: 0330 0249 046
For **clerking** queries
email: clerking.service@oxfordshire.gov.uk

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Chair and vice chair - FAQs

- Who is responsible for arranging an election?

The clerk should ensure that the election is on the agenda of the relevant FGB meeting

The clerk should notify governors that the election is taking place and invite nominations.

- Who is eligible to be nominated and who can vote in the election?

Any governor who is NOT a member of school staff is entitled to stand for election as chair or vice chair, regardless of their governor category.

Associate members cannot be candidates as they are not governors.

ALL governors not standing for election can vote.

- Can a chair or vice chair be re-elected at the end of their term of office?

Yes. There is no limit on the length of time a governor can be chair or vice chair, so long as they remain a governor and are re-elected by the board. However, it is recommended that the role of chair be rotated among governors every few years.

NB. If your governor term of office has expired, you are no longer a governor, so cannot be the chair.

- Do we have to have a chair?

Yes

“Election of the chair and vice-chair

7.—(1) Subject to section 67 of the EIA 2006 (power of Secretary of State to appoint additional governors), the governing body must elect a chair and a vice-chair from among their number.”

[The School Governance \(Roles, Procedures and Allowances\) \(England\) Regulations 2013 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

- Can we elect a chair by email/outside of an FGB meeting?

No. Chairs and vice chairs must be elected and re-elected in a full governing board meeting.

- If the election vote is tied, how should we decide who becomes chair?

We would suggest that the election be decided by the toss of a coin.

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- Can we have co-chairs?

Yes

[Co-chairing guide \(NGA\)](#)

- If we have co-chairs, do they both have a vote at meetings?

As individual governors, yes. But if the decision is split the chair only has one vote. So either the governors agree on how to vote as one, or one of them votes for both.

- How long is the term of office for chair

To be agreed by the board before the election is held, but best practice is to run chair and vice chair elections every year.

Along with the NGA, we would recommend that no one governor serves as chair for more than 6 years.

- What does the role of Chair/Vice chair entail?

[Maintained school governance - structures and role descriptors \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

“Specific Roles

The chair

Subject to the powers of the Secretary of State in relation to schools causing concern, the board must elect a chair and vice-chair from amongst themselves.

The chair, with support from the vice-chair(s) and the clerk, is responsible for ensuring the effective functioning of the board and has a vital role in setting the highest of expectations for professional standards of governance.

It is the chair’s responsibility to give the board clear leadership and direction, keeping it focused on its core functions.

The chair and vice-chair(s) should encourage the board to work together as an effective team, building its skills, knowledge and experience.

The chair should ensure that everyone is actively contributing relevant skills and experience, participating constructively in meetings, and is actively involved in the work of committees.

The chair, in conjunction with the clerk, should also ensure that everyone understands the expectations placed upon them and that they receive appropriate induction, training and development”

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- What support is there for new or inexperienced chairs of governors?

Governor Services runs a training course “Successful Chairing” at least twice per year. We would encourage any governor interested in becoming chair or vice chair to attend. It is not just for those who are already chair of governors.

We strongly encourage boards to adopt a succession planning and mentoring programme so that anyone on the board that wants to has the support to become chair or vice chair.

Our free advice line (both email and phone) is available to all governors and governance professionals, so if you have queries, please do get in touch.

Further Reading

[The School Governance \(Roles, Procedures and Allowances\) \(England\) Regulations 2013 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

[Maintained schools governance guide - 4. People - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Role description for governing board chairs | National Governance Association \(nga.org.uk\)](#)

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