



## SUMMARY OF THE GUIDANCE REGARDING THE DUTY TO HOLD MEETINGS WITH PARENTS

**This document is a summary of the statutory guidance to the governing bodies of maintained schools in Wales regarding the duty to hold meetings with parents**

**Guidance Document no: 104/2013**

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/parents-meetings-statutory-guidance/?lang=en>

- The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 (section 94 (13)) removes the previous requirement for a governing body to hold an annual meeting with parents.
- The guidance comes into force on 4 May 2013.
- The Act enables parents to request up to three meetings in a school year with their children's school governing body.

### **Statutory Requirements**

- **The petition to call for the meeting must contain the signatures of the required minimum number of parents of registered pupils:**
  - parents of 10% of registered pupils or
  - 30 registered pupils, whichever is the lower. In the case of schools with more than 300 pupils, the requirement to have the signatures of parents of 30 registered pupils will be easier for parents to achieve.
  - e.g. both parents may sign the petition, but they have only one child at the school. In this case both signatures will count as one "registered pupil".
  - e.g. one parent may sign the petition, but has three children at the school. This means that the signature of that parent will count as three "registered pupils".
  - It is expected that information on the number of registered pupils on the school roll will be accessible to parents via the school office.
- **The meeting must be for the purpose of discussing matters relating to the school:**
  - The meeting must be for the purpose of discussing a matter which relates to the school.
  - A meeting must not be viewed as an alternative route to make a complaint.
  - Issues of a personal or individual nature relating to a specific child or member of staff must not be the subject of, nor discussed in detail at, a meeting.

Such matters must be viewed as being confidential, and not suitable for open discussion.

- An issue or concern that affects a single class can be discussed, provided that the “threshold” petition numbers have been met. The threshold will not change.
- Should a panel of governors turn down a request for a meeting on the basis that the purpose of the meeting is not to discuss matters related to the school, then parents who disagree can use the school’s complaints procedure to appeal against this decision.

➤ **There will be no more than three meetings held in the school year in which the petition from parents is received:**

- A school year runs from the beginning of the autumn term in September of one year to the end of the summer term in July of the following year.

➤ **There must be sufficient school days left in the school year to allow a meeting to be held before the end of a 25 day period:**

- The Act provides that a meeting can only be called if there are sufficient school days left in the school year to allow a meeting to be held before the end of a 25 day period.
- Weekends, bank/public holidays, school holidays and INSET days do not count towards the 25 day period.

➤ **The petitioning process**

In order to ensure that the governing body can satisfy itself that a valid petition has been presented, it is expected that the petition will:

- contain a statement that parents are using their right to request a meeting with the governing body;
- give a brief synopsis of the matters to be discussed and the reasons for calling the meeting;
- indicate what number the meeting is in that school year, as only three meetings may be held in a school year.
- The synopsis of the matters to be discussed should appear at the top of the petition, with the parents’ signatures appearing below.

➤ **Receipt of a petition**

The governing body must hold a meeting if:

- it receives a petition from the parents;
- the governing body is content that the statutory requirements are satisfied.
- It is expected for a petition to be delivered or sent to the clerk or chair of the governing body for consideration by the governing body. It would also be acceptable to present the petition to the governing body “care of” the head teacher.

➤ **How is the governing body to give notice of a meeting?**

- A written notice giving details of the date, venue and time of the meeting and the matters to be discussed must be placed on all school notice boards, in prominent places, and beside all places of exit from school grounds. In addition, a written letter for parents of all registered pupils at the school should be sent home, either with the pupil or electronically.

- The meeting should be open to the head teacher and other persons invited by the governing body.
- No charge can be made for the provision of information to any person relating to the meeting.
- A meeting must be held before the end of a 25 day period after the petition is received.
- A notice of 10 clear school days should be given.

➤ **Conduct of a meeting**

It is suggested that a school should draw up a procedure that addresses such issues as:

- who will chair the meeting;
- the required quorum of both parents and governors (it is expected that the quorum for parents should be a proportion of the number of parents who have signed the petition);
- who will take notes at the meeting (ideally this would be the clerk);
- the arrangements for parents to speak at the meeting;
- the information which is to be circulated to all governors before the meeting;
- the steps which will be taken following a meeting.

➤ **Informing parents of their rights to petition a meeting using section 94 of the Act**

It is expected that governing bodies will inform the parents of their rights to petition a meeting.

- It is expected that the school sends a letter to parents by the end of October of each school year. The attached sample can be used.
- It is expected that governing bodies will continue to communicate and engage with parents over the school year.
- It is expected that schools will inform parents of their rights to petition a meeting through the School Prospectus and the Annual Parents' Report.

SAMPLE LETTER:

**Your right to request a meeting with the school's governing body**

The Schools Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 (The Act) removed the requirement for school governing bodies to hold an annual meeting with parents. Instead, new arrangements were introduced to enable parents to request up to 3 meetings in any school year with a governing body, on matters which are of concern to them.

If parents wish to use their rights under the Act to hold a meeting, 4 conditions will need to be satisfied:

**1. Parents will need to raise a petition in support of holding a meeting**

The parents of at least <sup>3</sup>10% of the school's registered pupils/ 30 registered pupils will need to sign the petition. If it is a paper petition, then a written signature must be given as well as the name and class of each child who is a registered pupil at the school. If the petition is in electronic format, the 'signature' required is the typed name of the parent plus the name and class of each child who is a registered pupil at the school and the email address of each parent who 'signs' the electronic petition.

<sup>4</sup>There were [*insert number of registered pupils*] children registered as pupils with this school at the beginning of this academic year. Exact roll numbers at any time during the year may be obtained from the school office.

**2. The meeting must be called to discuss matters which affect the school**

The meeting cannot be called to discuss such matters as the progress of individual pupils, or to make a complaint against a member of the school's staff or governing body. The petition should contain brief details of the matter(s) to be discussed, and the reasons for calling the meeting. This information should be clearly displayed at the top of the petition, with parents' signatures appearing below.

**3. A maximum of 3 meetings can be held during the school year**

The law allows parents to use their rights to request up to 3 meetings with a school governing body during the school year.

**4. There must be at least 25 school days left in the school year**

The law makes it a condition that at least 25 school days are left in the school year when the petition is received so that the meeting can be held. A "school day" means a day when the school is open to pupils: it does not include weekends, public holidays, school holidays or INSET days.

The address for service of a petition requesting a meeting with this school's governing body is:

NAME AND ADDRESS OF SCHOOL.....

Further advice on how parents may go about requesting a meeting with a governing body is available on the Welsh Government's website at:

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/educationandskills/publications/guidance/parents-meetingsstatutory-guidance/?lang=en>

Signature

<sup>3</sup>Delete as appropriate according to the size of school. Schools which have or are likely to have less than 300 pupils during the school year should choose the "10%" option. Larger schools should choose the "30" option. Where schools are approximately 300 pupils in size, then "10% of the school's registered pupils or 30 registered pupils, whichever is the lower," should be used.

<sup>4</sup> This paragraph should be included and completed only in the case of schools likely to have less than or approximately 300 registered pupils during the school year. Larger schools should delete this paragraph.