

School governing body Champion for Teaching Assistants – model role description

This document is provided to give school governing bodies in Wales an understanding of the benefits of appointing a Teaching Assistant champion for their school and the duties they may perform. The appointment of a Teaching Assistant champion does not alter the requirements on a governing body to fulfil its statutory functions.

Why does my governing body need a Teaching Assistant champion?

We encourage all governing bodies in Wales to appoint a Teaching Assistant Champion to ensure the important role that school support staff play as part of the collective education workforce is recognised and appreciated. The roles undertaken are critical to the delivery of education across Wales. The Teaching Assistant Champion will advocate for Teaching Assistants and ensure their perspective is considered when decisions are made and policies developed by the school and can help assist outcomes which relate to:

- Being more effective in their job role
- Identifying professional development priorities
- Encouraging more effective and consistent relationships with other staff and pupils to raise standards
- Receiving the same positive, consistent messages about the school, its values and policies.

What's involved?

A Champion for Teaching Assistants should consider Teaching Assistants and the roles they play and be prepared to represent them in school policy making decisions. They should be comfortable in challenging school leaders and governors where necessary and raising awareness about issues relating to Teaching Assistants. The role lends itself to the embedding of good practice, and the scrutiny and review aspects of serving on a governing body.

What special qualifications, training or experience are needed to take on this role?

None. A Champion for Teaching Assistants just needs to be passionate about representing this staff group. This position can be filled by a new or existing member of the governing body who is determined to develop the role of Teaching Assistants within the school.

However, a champion may wish to take advantage of any additional training offered by their local authority or consortium. This will help to ensure they are equipped with the knowledge and tools to help the school leadership team effectively utilise and support Teaching Assistants in the school.

The Teaching Assistant role involves working with a wide range of teaching and non-teaching staff in a school. A Teaching Assistant champion will need to appreciate the

different roles of staff in the school and the process of decision making within the overall staffing structure of the school.

What questions should the Teaching Assistant champion be asking the head teacher and the governing body?

The Teaching Assistant champion should be prepared to ask what the head teacher and governing body are doing to ensure the Teaching Assistant role is being utilised and supported effectively. Here are some examples:

- What levels of Teaching Assistants do we have in the school and how many of each?
- Are governors aware of the different levels of Teaching Assistants and the difference between the roles at each level?
- Are Teaching Assistants asked to carry out tasks outside of the role they are employed to do?
- What evidence exists to demonstrate equal training between different roles within the school ie. Teachers and Teaching Assistants?
- Are senior staff and TLR holders aware of the role that Teaching Assistants undertake?
- Within the school, do TAs have a job description?
- Are TAs on the appropriate pay scale for the role they carry out?
- What guidance is available for staff to assist them with the effective deployment of Teaching Assistants?
- How are Teaching Assistants incorporated into Learning & Development activities, including participation in inset days?
- Is Teaching Assistant development prioritised in the same way that Teachers are?
- Can Teaching Assistants access training during the school day?
- Who is the named support person/s for Teaching Assistants to approach if they have concerns? What processes are in place to help Teaching Assistants speak up without fear of reproach and in confidence their issue will be dealt with properly?
- How are Teaching Assistants consulted as part of whole school self-evaluation?
- How often are Teaching Assistant wellbeing surveys conducted?
- How are Teaching Assistants involved in innovations and initiatives that are being developed?
- How are Teaching Assistants thoughts and opinions captured and taken into account?
- How do we ensure any changes to school policies and new school policies do not adversely affect the Teaching Assistant role?