



THE AVON VALLEY SCHOOL & PERFORMING ARTS COLLEGE

4th June 2025

Our ref: BFR/KEW

Dear Parent/Carer

Election of two parents to serve on the Governing Body of The Avon Valley School for 4 years

I am writing to inform you that, following the request for applications in respect of two vacancies for a Parent Governor, the following applications have been received from parents wishing to serve as Parent Governor on the school's Governing Body for a period of 4 years.

Ms Devenne Kedward
Mr Danny Ahern
Mr Gary Poppitt
Ms Eleanor Bates

A ballot is therefore necessary and a ballot paper is attached for your use. Each parent may record up to two votes for the candidates of their choice. You may not vote twice for the same candidate or vote for more than two candidates. To assist you in this matter, brief details of the candidates are attached.

Ballot papers should be returned to me sealed in a blank envelope. The blank envelope, should then be put into the A5 envelope clearly marked with the voter's name and 'Parent Governor Election – Ballot Paper', by post, or sent in with a student at the school.

The closing date for the receipt of votes is 3.30pm on Thursday 19th June 2025. Any votes cast after this time will be invalid.

The counting of votes and declaration of the result will take place on Friday 20th June 2025 and you will be informed of the result as soon as possible after that date.

Yours sincerely

Blake Francis
Headteacher

Newbold Road, Rugby, Warwickshire CV21 1EH
Headteacher: Blake Francis Bsc Hons, PGCE, NPQH

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CANDIDATE ELECTION STATEMENT

DEVENNE KEDWARD

Personal Statement

As a committed parent and experienced professional with a strong background in leadership, compliance, and strategic planning, I am deeply passionate about supporting young people to thrive, particularly those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). I believe that every child deserves the opportunity to succeed in an inclusive, nurturing environment, and I am eager to contribute my skills and experience to help Avon Valley School deliver on that vision.

I currently lead operational and compliance functions in a fast-paced property investment company, where I manage teams, budgets, and regulatory responsibilities with a focus on excellence and accountability. Alongside this, I run two non-profit organisations in the Rugby area: one dedicated to supporting elderly residents and the other focused on empowering young people to make good choices. This community work reflects my enduring commitment to social impact and bridging generational gaps through practical support and advocacy.

I have also dedicated significant time to researching how to improve educational outcomes for all students and have actively engaged with policy discussions to inform both local and national government strategies. I bring a collaborative approach, a strong moral compass, and a deep-rooted belief in the power of education to change lives. As Parent Governor, I will work tirelessly to support the school, champion young people, and ensure that all students are given the tools they need to flourish.

Reasons for applying

I am applying for the role of Parent Governor because I am passionate about education and committed to supporting all young people, especially those with SEND, to achieve their full potential. As both a parent and an active member of the Rugby community, I want to lay a direct role in shaping a positive, inclusive environment where every student feels valued and empowered.

With a strong background in leadership, compliance, and team development, I believe I can offer practical insights and a strategic mind set to help the school continue to grow and improve. My voluntary work running two local non-profit organisations – one supporting elderly residents and the other focused on youth development – has deepened my understanding of community needs and strengthened my desire to advocate for meaningful change.

This role would allow me to combine my personal commitment, professional skills, and community values to make a tangible difference for the students, staff, and families of Avon valley School.

Experience and personal skills

I bring a breadth of experience in operational leadership, compliance, and stakeholder engagement, which equips me to contribute effectively to the strategic oversight required of a Parent Governor. In my role as Operations Manager and Compliance Lead, I have developed and implemented systems to improve performance, ensure regulatory compliance, and support team development across multiple sites. These experiences have sharpened my analytical thinking, problem-solving ability, and attention to detail – all essential for governance and school improvement.

Beyond my professional background, I have a deep-rooted interest in community support and development. My additional work has strengthened my skills in advocacy, safeguarding, budgeting, and volunteer coordination, all within a local context.

I am also a confident communicator and active listener, comfortable working collaboratively while maintaining high standards of accountability. My ongoing research into educational outcomes and policy gives me a broader perspective on the challenges and opportunities facing schools today. I am committed, dependable, and enthusiastic about contributing to a governing body that seeks the best for every student.

CANDIDATE ELECTION STATEMENT

DANNY AHERN

Reasons for applying

Personal Statement for Parent Governor Application

As a passionate and proactive parent, I am eager to contribute to the school community by becoming a parent governor. Having experienced the challenges that schools face, particularly in addressing issues like bullying and the impact of social media, I strongly believe that every parent deserves a voice in shaping the environment where their children learn and grow.

In the past, I have successfully advocated for my son, who was failed by the system due to his autism. By challenging both the school and local authority, I was able to fast-track the support he needed, ensuring he received the education he deserved. This experience has fuelled my determination to create positive change for all children, especially those who may feel unheard or unsupported.

Professionally, I bring a wealth of experience in negotiation and presenting to stakeholders at all levels. These skills have equipped me to communicate effectively, build consensus, and drive meaningful outcomes. I am confident these abilities will enable me to present parents' concerns and collaborate with the school to address challenges and implement solutions. As a parent governor, I am committed to ensuring that every child and adult in our school community has a voice. I want to work closely with the school to foster an inclusive, safe, and supportive environment where all children can thrive. I am driven, approachable, and deeply invested in making a difference for our children and their future.

Experience and personal skills

As a parent with first-hand experience navigating the challenges faced by schools, I am deeply committed to fostering positive change and supporting the school community. My journey has equipped me with a unique perspective and a strong skill set that aligns with the expectations of the governing body.

In the past, I have successfully advocated for my son, who faced challenges due to autism. By addressing the shortcomings of the school system and local authority, I was able to fast-track the support he needed, ensuring his educational and personal development was prioritised. This experience has given me a deep understanding of the importance of inclusivity, communication, and the need for every child to have a voice.

I am particularly passionate about addressing issues such as bullying and social media's impact on students. Having personally experienced these challenges within the school environment, I am driven to contribute to creating a safe, supportive, and inclusive space for all children.

Professionally, I have a strong background in negotiation and stakeholder engagement at all levels. I have developed the ability to communicate effectively, build consensus, and deliver results in high-pressure environments. These skills will enable me to represent the views of parents and collaborate with the school leadership to address challenges and implement solutions.

My ability to analyse situations, provide constructive feedback, and work towards shared goals makes me an excellent candidate for this role. I am approachable, empathetic, and committed to ensuring that every child and parent feels heard and supported.

Interests

I am particularly interested in promoting mental health and well-being within the school community, ensuring that children have the tools and support they need to thrive. I am also passionate about fostering strong communication between parents and the school, ensuring transparency and collaboration in decision-making processes.

CANDIDATE ELECTION STATEMENT

GARY POPPITT

Reasons for applying

I feel I can make a real difference to this great school. I would embrace this opportunity and would greatly appreciate the opportunity to learn new skills. I have always had a desire to teach, but, life passed me by. I am very young at heart and feel I can relate to the students. I live locally and lived in Newbold for the first 20 years of my life.

Experience and personal skills

I am a Distribution Centre Manager for the world's leading pharmaceutical and chemical distribution company. I have 50 people reporting to me, so I know how to deal with people in a respectable manner. I have been there for 32 years. I have a huge interest in all sport. This position is something I truly believe I can offer an unbiased approach to.

CANDIDATE ELECTION STATEMENT

ELEANOR BATES

Reasons for applying

I have decided to nominate myself as Parent Governor because I would like to contribute to the School. My daughter has been attending Avon Valley for 2 years and has excelled. The Senco and Welfare Team has been invaluable and I would like to give something back to the school. I believe that every child should receive an education with a positive attitude and have the same opportunities regardless of the background, race, gender or disability. Children learn and are engaged when they feel happy, valuable to the school community and engage with the subject.

Experience and personal skills

I have a Level 3 Diploma in Children and Young Persons and have worked with children with autism and disabilities for over 10 years. When I moved here I decided to go back to college and retrain and qualify as a bookkeeper. I enjoyed the subject so much I decided to continue with my studies and qualify to a high enough standard to be able to open my own practice. I am now the owner of Brinklow Bookkeeping Solutions and in the process of sourcing new clients and building my business. Above all I am a parent who likes to be active in their child's education and feel I am an approachable caring professional person.

Obviously I understand the concept of confidentiality and policy and procedures, and feel I would be an approachable person that other parents would feel comfortable talking to me about their concerns regarding their child's education. I have a full enhanced DBS certificate due to my business.