

How can I contribute to the school community?

A godly attitude

'Let me tell you why you are here. You're here to be salt-seasoning that brings out the God-flavors of this earth ... You're here to be light, bringing out the God-colors in the world' (Matthew 5.13-14, The Message). This is the role that Jesus has defined for you in your child's learning community and He also said that 'God is not a secret to be kept' - missional living is not an option.

Advocate for visitors who can fulfil part of the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural programme for the school without proselytising or indoctrinating - some are listed below.

'God is not a secret to be kept'

But don't stop there and think 'Job done'. You have a responsibility to live for God in a very personal capacity. Your friends and social group in that community are unique to you - only you can be as Christ to them.

Take time to nurture trusting relationships with everyone in the community - with teaching and ancillary staff, with governors and with other parents. Ensure that the principle laid down in Philippians 4.5 'Let your gentleness be evident to all' defines all of your communication, even when you're anxious or your child is upset. Take time to listen to other parents - a cup of coffee when someone needs to talk is a great bridge builder.

A practical approach

Be a positive parent - one who is supportive, who offers to help and who is respected by other parents. Join the home-school association or parent council. Look for opportunities to offer your skills or to encourage others to offer theirs. For example, you might know an elderly couple who have been married for many years and who would be willing to talk to students in a relationships lesson about the commitment of their life together. You might have friends from other cultures who could talk about their lives. Every life is a unique story and it is through sharing stories that connections are made and communities are built.

Perhaps you could help with music, art or sport. Maybe you have a hobby that you could share in an extra-curricular club. Invite your child's friends and family into your home - you're not only encouraging friendships, you're also demonstrating the biblical principle of offering hospitality. Put into practice Paul's advice to 'in humility value others above

yourselves' (Philippians 2.3) – don't hassle your child's teacher about your own child's progress; offer instead to help someone else's child.

A caring heart

Staff receive far more complaints and negative comments than they do acknowledgement and thanks. One way you can help your school community is to lead the way in developing an attitude of gratitude. Don't wait for Christmas or the end of the school year; write a note or send a card any time, just to say thank you.

Include the Head occasionally – management can be a lonely place. Make sure your interaction with other parents is always positive, particularly on social media. Ofsted inspections are high stakes and so a very stressful time for staff. Take in a card, send in biscuits, cake or chocolate, or offer

to make coffee. Above all, pray regularly for the learning community and be a champion in your church, encouraging prayer and practical support for your local schools and colleges – visit Pray for Schools www.prayforschools.org for more information.

'Governors can be highly effective agents of transformation'

A servant's mind

One of the most influential roles you can fulfil is as a governor. Governing bodies are teams – governors work in partnership with each other, with staff and with the school community. So being a governor is a relational activity, an opportunity to demonstrate critical friendship, conflict resolution, skilled communication and how to disagree well. You will be able to build bridges, offer a better way, explain clearly, suggest action and challenge without condemnation. You will have an opportunity to discuss the ethos of the school, the development of the learning environment, its values, and a holistic approach to education that aims to nurture rounded people with strong moral values. Governors can be highly effective agents of transformation in school communities.

For more information:

- Transforming Governing <http://transforminggoverning.org.uk>

For school visitors

- Open the Book www.biblesociety.org.uk/about-bible-society/our-work/open-the-book
- Prayer Spaces in Schools www.prayerspacesinschools.com
- iSingPOP www.isingpop.com/index.html
- Schoolwork.co.uk www.schoolwork.co.uk