

# How to: minute a meeting effectively

## Naming names in minutes - extract

### NGA's general rule

Whilst there are exceptions, overall, NGA's view is that names of individual governors should not be recorded in the minutes. We believe that all governors should feel able to state their views and opinions without worrying about the reactions from those outside the governing board.

### Reasons for the general rule

A governing board meeting should be an environment for open discussion and governors and trustees should not feel restricted in voicing their comments (subject to good meeting etiquette). Governors and trustees should feel able to raise points that may be unpopular but are in the best interests of the school or trust. If governors and trustees are named this free debate could be restricted, as individuals may be reluctant to put forward their opinions knowing that the minutes will be available to anyone who asks.

More importantly, the governing board is a corporate entity and so needs to demonstrate collective challenge. When evaluating the effectiveness of a governing board the contribution of individual governors is not important; what is important is the collective actions of the board.

There is also the question of corporate responsibility – i.e. once a decision has been made all on the governing board are required to support it, even if they did not vote in favour of it. Recording who said what in the minutes makes it possible to identify those who were for or against a particular decision. While it is good that a diversity of views are expressed a good chair will ensure that consensus can be reached and collective responsibility for decision making accepted. Staff and parents need to be confident that the governing board work well together with the aim of securing the best outcomes for the school.

### Exceptions to the general rule

There are clearly some circumstances where it is appropriate to name individual governors or trustees: for example, if a governor will be responsible for a specific action point or if the source of comment is essential, for instance when a governor is declaring an interest.

There may sometimes be cases in which a governor or trustee wishes to have their dissent to a particular decision recorded in the minutes. Such requests should be used sparingly and in general only where the individual has concerns about whether a decision is outside the legal framework the board operates under. In most circumstances it should be sufficient that a 'no' vote is registered.

- Extract from NGA 'Clerking Matters' article Naming Names from minutes