



ROBERT CLACK SCHOOL CANDIDATE SUPPORTING STATEMENTS FOR PARENT GOVERNOR ELECTION – AUTUMN 2026

CANDIDATE A – DJENABU BALDE

I am pleased to express my interest in becoming a Parent Governor at Robert Clack School. As a parent of a child currently in Year 7, I have a personal interest in the success, wellbeing and future of the school and its pupils. I would welcome the opportunity to use my leadership, community and educational experience to contribute positively to the Governing Board.

My commitment to children and education is at the heart of my work. I am the Founder of Education4Kids (E4K), a charity that began by supporting just two children in 2022, and has grown to reach more than 1,000 children through education, nutrition, sport and community initiatives. Building the charity has given me practical experience of leadership, governance, strategic planning, partnership working, project management, fundraising, communication and community engagement.

My work with Education4Kids has also provided me with a strong understanding of the importance of putting children's needs at the centre of decisions. I have worked with schools, volunteers, community organisations and partners from different backgrounds, learning the importance of listening, accountability, safeguarding, responsible use of resources and working collaboratively to achieve meaningful outcomes.

In 2025, my work through Education4Kids was recognised at the World Leaders Summit at Oxford University, where I had the opportunity to represent Guinea-Bissau and speak about children's education, opportunity and community development. My community engagement has also been highlighted at the House of Lords, further encouraging me to continue contributing positively to communities and creating opportunities for young people.

Alongside my charity work, I am an Ambassador for Young African Leaders for Global Impact, supporting initiatives that promote youth leadership, collaboration and opportunities for young people. This has developed my skills in public speaking, relationship building, international collaboration and engaging with young people and community leaders.

Professionally, I work as a Lead Agent with Jet2.com at Stansted Airport. This role requires professionalism, teamwork, clear communication, responsibility and the ability to work effectively in a busy and diverse environment. These are qualities that I would bring to the Governing Board, particularly when working with governors, school leaders, teachers, parents and the wider school community.

I have also developed experience in local community representation. In the 2026 local elections, I stood as a candidate in Eastbrook and Rush Green. This gave me the opportunity to engage directly with local residents, listen to their concerns and understand some of the priorities affecting families and communities locally. It strengthened my ability to communicate respectfully with people from different backgrounds and to represent community perspectives constructively.

If appointed, I would bring a parent's perspective combined with practical leadership and community experience. I would be particularly interested in supporting the school's work around pupil wellbeing, educational achievement, attendance, safeguarding, inclusion, parental engagement and opportunities for young people.

I also understand that being a governor is not simply about bringing personal opinions to the table. It requires listening, asking constructive questions, understanding evidence, respecting confidentiality and working collectively in the best interests of all pupils. I would be committed to undertaking governor training, attending meetings and contributing actively beyond the minimum requirements.



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CONTINUED CANDIDATE A – DJENABU BALDE

I believe that every child deserves to feel safe, valued, supported and capable of achieving their ambitions. My own journey—from growing up in Guinea-Bissau to building an education-focused charity and working with communities internationally—has reinforced my belief in the transformative power of education.

As a parent, I would be proud to contribute to the school that is helping shape the next generation. If selected, I would bring energy, commitment, a willingness to listen and a genuine desire to work collaboratively with the Governing Board, school leadership, staff, parents and pupils.

I would be honoured to serve as a Parent Governor at Robert Clack School and to contribute to creating the best possible opportunities and outcomes for every child.



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CANDIDATE B – ESRA DAG

I currently work as a Mental Health Practitioner within the NHS Talking Therapies, supporting people experiencing common mental health problems in regaining control over their lives. My work has incorporated me with the ability to adopt structured thinking, be non-judgemental, empathic, an attentive listener and respect everyone regardless of their experiences or who they are.

I have a son in Year 3 who attends Robert Clack. I am committed in understanding the education, opportunities and support the school provides to ensure each child feels cared for, as schools play an important role in building resilience in children and shaping their future.

I am a strong believer that children should be supported with equal opportunities to reach their full potential; where children develop problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, independence, find their talents, manage conflict and become the most authentic version of themselves. I believe schools should provide a rich, broad and balanced curriculum, encouraging curiosity and creativity.

Children are more likely to learn, develop confidence and achieve their full potential when they feel safe, secure, valued and supported. Children should have fair access to free provisions in the school, extra-curriculum activities, have clear consistent rules, safeguarding and anti-bullying policies. I would be willing to support the school achieve strategies where children's strengths, weaknesses and struggles (especially with anxiety, learning difficulties or special needs) are acknowledged and to create classroom environments where diversity is celebrated. Moreover, encouragement, praise and challenge are key in developing self-confidence and motivation so strategies that foster positive reinforcement are crucial.

As a Parent Governor, I feel confident to provide appropriate challenge in meetings, consider different perspectives, and work collaboratively with the school as a whole, including strengthening parent-teacher association to bring any matters to discussion and support the operation of beneficial strategies that will contribute positively to the school.



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CANDIDATE C - SHAFIQ REHMAN

I am a qualified and experienced Accountant with over 20 years of experience in the financial sector, working across a range of accounting and auditing practices, including leading Top 5 and Top 20 firms.

I am also a proud parent of two children at the school, one in Year 7 and one in Year 9. As a parent, I understand how important it is for every child to feel supported, valued and given the opportunity to achieve their full potential. I would like to use my experience and commitment to contribute positively to our school community and represent the views of parents.

Throughout my career, I have developed strong experience in budgetary management, budgeting, financial analysis, and decision-making. I have also supervised and mentored colleagues, developing strong leadership, communication, and teamwork skills. Good governance is built on integrity, accountability, listening and working together. If picked, I would be an approachable and committed parent governor who listens to parents, works constructively with the school, and always keeps the best interests of pupils at the heart of my contribution.

I would be honoured to serve our school community and use my professional experience, together with my perspective as a parent, to help support a positive environment where every child can learn, grow and succeed.



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CANDIDATE D – ROB RIACH

I am a parent of a child at Robert Clack School and would be honoured to serve as a Parent Governor.

Robert Clack has played an important role in my life. I attended the school myself and have always been grateful for the opportunities, support and encouragement I received here. Those experiences helped shape who I am today and were a significant reason for choosing this school for my own child.

I am passionate about ensuring that every pupil can achieve in a **safe, supportive** and **ambitious environment**. I strongly believe in the values and ethos of the school and the positive impact it has on the wider community.

I currently serve as Chair of Governors at a local primary school, giving me practical experience in governance, safeguarding, finance and supporting school improvement. Alongside this, my professional role requires strong leadership, financial acumen, compliance management and a focus on health and safety and performance.

I believe these experiences would enable me to make a positive contribution as a Parent Governor at Robert Clack School.

As a Parent Governor, I would bring a combination of governance experience, professional expertise and a genuine passion for the school. I would work alongside stakeholders to continue to support the success of Robert Clack School and help ensure every pupil has the opportunity to achieve their full potential.



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CANDIDATE E – JAMIE STRIPLING

I am writing to express my interest in applying to serve as a Parent Governor at Robert Clack School. I am deeply aligned with the school's vision to empower students with the knowledge, skills, and character needed to reach their full potential and make meaningful contributions to society.

As the parent of a Year 8 student, I have witnessed firsthand how effectively the school supports, encourages, and inspires its pupils. My motivation to join the governing body stems from a genuine commitment to maintaining high educational standards, supporting school staff, and fostering an environment where every student can thrive.

Professionally, I bring over 20 years of public service experience across the Ministry of Justice and the Cabinet Office, specialising in recruitment, stakeholder engagement, and administration. Working within complex regulatory frameworks throughout my civil service career has honed my ability to interpret, implement, and uphold policy with high standards of governance. This background has developed my keen attention to detail, strategic problem-solving skills, and ability to communicate effectively across diverse stakeholder groups—qualities that directly align with the dual role of supporting and constructively challenging a school leadership team.

In my current role as a Campaign Manager within the Cabinet Office Public Appointments Team, my core focus is on recruitment, governance, and assessment. I am responsible for designing end-to-end recruitment campaigns for public bodies, chairing panel meetings, and evaluating candidates against objective criteria. A central pillar of my work is championing Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI). I work to ensure selection processes are fair, transparent, and structured to attract broad talent, removing systemic barriers so that public boards reflect the diverse communities they serve.

My 20-year career in public service—defined by rigorous governance, objective panel leadership, and a steadfast commitment to equality—provides a strong foundation for this role. As a dedicated parent, I am eager to contribute this professional expertise to support the leadership team, drive continuous improvement, and serve the best interests of all students, staff, and families at Robert Clack School.



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CANDIDATE F – HELEN WRIGHTSON

I would like to put myself forward for the role of Parent Governor because I care deeply about the quality of education, opportunities and support available to all young people at Robert Clack School.

I have worked in education for many years. My role gives me experience of school improvement, curriculum and teaching, staff development, safeguarding and supporting pupils with a wide range of needs. I believe this experience would allow me to make a useful contribution to the governing body, particularly when looking at the impact of school decisions on pupils and their families. I understand the importance of governors providing both support and appropriate challenge, asking thoughtful questions and keeping the best interests of pupils at the centre of decision-making.

However, I would come to the role first and foremost as a parent. I understand how important good communication, high expectations and positive relationships between school and home are. I would want to represent the wider parent community fairly, listening to different perspectives rather than simply representing my own views or experiences.

I am committed to giving the role the time and attention it deserves and would be very pleased to have the opportunity to contribute to the continued development of the school and its community.

END OF SUPPORTING STATEMENTS