A very warm welcome to the Spring term edition of the Governors’ and Clerks’ Newsletter. If you need further information, the Governor Services website has archived copies of our newsletters, contact details and a wealth of other governance guidance can be found here.

Reconstitution

The School Governance (Constitution and Federation) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 came into force on 1 September 2014. These new Regulations require all governing bodies from maintained schools to be constituted under the 2012 Regulations by 1 September 2015. Many governing bodies have already made the necessary changes, but those remaining will need to do so by the end of the current academic year. Further guidance is available on our website in the Latest News and Newsletters section and a new e-learning package is available on our intranet. Your local office will also be very pleased to help if you have any queries about the process.

New Year…. New Challenge!

Are you an experienced school governor? Do you have time and energy to spare? Could you share your expertise and governance knowledge to support another governing body? If you can answer yes to these questions then we would be keen to hear from you, simply e-mail your contact details to your local office: western.governor.services@hants.gov.uk or eastern.governor.services@hants.gov.uk and one of our Co-ordinator team will get back to you to provide you with further details about this exciting and challenging role.

Governors’ Good Practice Guide

We have recently revised our Choices and Good Practice Guidance. This has been updated to reflect recent changes in Regulations and has been renamed the Governors’ Good Practice Guide. It is available on our website under G in the A-Z index.

Could you be a Governing Body clerk?

We are currently looking to expand our team of Local Authority clerks. This role is not a conventional part time job. It is a position that allows flexible working and is also an important, interesting and much valued role in the UK education system. Clerks provide professional support to school governors to help maximise the performance of school governing bodies, and thus the progress and success of schools. More information about the role and details of how to apply can be found here.

Understanding your Data

Fischer Family Trust (FFT) have developed a Governor Dashboard to help governors support and challenge the school leadership team. This clearly displays information about results, pupil progress, subject performance, progress of pupil groups, school context, and attendance. It highlights some of the strengths and weaknesses of the school to help governors understand and interpret this information. FFT Governor Dashboard E-Learning modules are available by registering here.

Governors’ Handbook

An updated version of the handbook was published in September 2014:
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Governors’ Handbook

It reiterates the Government’s high expectations that governing bodies, as the strategic leaders of schools, have a vital role to play in making sure every child gets the best possible education.

In all types of schools, governing bodies should have a strong focus on three core strategic functions:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- Holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff; and
- Overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

The Handbook states that all schools and academies should publish, including on their website, up to date details of the structure of the governing body and any committees, together with the names of their governors and their particular roles and responsibilities within that structure. They should also publish an annual statement setting out the key issues that have been faced and addressed by the governing body over the last year, including an assessment of the impact of the governing body on the school. For academies, these details of their governance arrangements must also be provided within the governance statement of their published annual accounts.

New E-learning on our website

Governor Services have been working hard to increase the amount of e-learning available to subscribers to our service. These can be found on the Governors’ Intranet page of the Governor Services website and can be accessed at any time:

- Reconstitution Guidance
- Dealing with Pay Appeals
- Dealing with Child Protection Allegations
- Complaints Handling (updated)
- Governors’ Discipline Committee
- Governor Hearings on Staffing Matters

Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions

The Childrens and Families Act 2014, enacts a duty on governing bodies of maintained schools, proprietors of academies and management committees of PRUs to make arrangements for supporting pupils at their school with medical conditions.

Consequently, the DfE have reviewed and revised their guidance on managing medicines resulting in the production of the ‘Supporting Pupils with Medical Needs’ document. This came into effect on the 1 September 2014 and replaced the previous ‘Managing Medicines in Early Years Settings’ document of 2005.

The aim of the guidance is to ensure that all children with medical conditions, in terms of both physical and mental health, are properly supported in school so that they can play a full and active role in school life, remain healthy and achieve their academic potential.

Hampshire County Council have been working to help assist schools in meeting the new requirements and as a result have produced the following documents:

- Supporting pupils with medical conditions guidance
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions policy template
- An administration of medicines risk assessment
- A medicine in school tracking form
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The Southern Health School Nursing Team have worked with Hampshire County Council and produced a Health Questionnaire for schools to complete and a document explaining the process for identifying a child with a medical condition.

All of these documents are available as links to Schools Communication number SC012182 which is available through the Governor Services website.

Quality of Service Questionnaire 2014 outcomes

This year the questionnaire was produced electronically and so it was decided that it should be distributed county wide. The survey was conducted in the Autumn Term with 39% of governing bodies making a return. 98% of the returns expressed satisfaction with the overall service provided, with 56% very satisfied, 42% satisfied, 1% dissatisfied and 1% very dissatisfied. The results continue to indicate that in the majority of service areas, governing bodies are satisfied with the service on offer. There were 10 areas that achieved satisfaction ratings in excess of 90% and the top five were:

- Information is accurate (99%)
- Information is helpful (99%)
- Courtesy of staff (97%)
- Governors’ / Clerks’ Newsletter (97%)
- Information is presented in a way that is understandable to all (97%)

73% of the respondents felt that governor training had had a positive impact on their practice (24% partial impact), 71% stated that it had contributed to school improvement (27% partially contributed) and 79% recorded that advice and guidance had improved governance at their school (24% felt it had partially helped).

There was only one area where governing bodies were less than satisfied by over 10% which was, ‘how far the training provision met the needs of governing bodies – which came in at 11%. The content of our training provision is regularly reviewed and updated. We have also ensured that the programme for next year does have an even clearer focus on how governing bodies can effectively fulfil their primary roles and responsibilities.

The comments also showed that the format of our website continues to be an issue and we are planning to do further work on this in the coming year to make it more accessible.

Thank you to all those governing bodies that took the time to put in a return. We do greatly appreciate the feedback on our services and it does inform our development planning for the following year.

Supplementary Guidance to Keeping Children Safe in Education

At the end of October, the DfE issued supplementary guidance to Keeping Children Safe in Education 2014.

The guidance is bringing in requirements from the updated Early Years Foundation Stage (EYSF) guidance particularly around the childcare disqualification requirements from The Childcare Act 2006 and the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009.

Attention is required by those schools where:

- staff work in early years provision (including teachers and support staff working in school nursery and reception classes);
- staff work in later years provision for children who have not attained the age of 8. This includes before school settings such as breakfast clubs and after school provision;
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- staff are directly involved in the management of such early or later years provision.

The guidance can be found here.

Educational Personnel Services are assessing the impact of this guidance and will provide further advice to schools in due course.

Statutory Policies for School

The Department for Education (DfE) has updated its guidance for governors which outlines the policies and other documents school governing bodies are legally required to hold.

One new policy has been added:
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions

The guidance is available here.

The DfE have also updated their list of information that maintained schools should publish on their website and can be found here.

Governing Body training session – last chance to book!

For any governing bodies who have not yet decided on their Whole Governing Body training session, please note the deadline for booking your 2014-2015 event is 31 January 2015. Please encourage all of your governors to attend, as the training is far more effective if they all participate. Should you require help or advice in order to choose your topic, please contact your Local Office.

Pay-as-you-go schools can book a session of their choice for £450.

Keep your records up to date!

The Governor Services database is recording a large number of governing bodies that have no chair or vice chair and have one or more of their governors with specific responsibilities missing (Safer Recruitment governor, Forum Rep, Training Liaison Governor). It is important that these records are kept up to date to ensure important communications and updates are not missed. Also it is still a requirement that Headship recruitment panels have a governor on them who has undertaken safer recruitment training.

New Guidance on SMSC

Maintained Schools:

The Department for Education has published guidance on promoting fundamental British values as part of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development in schools. The main points of this advice are to make clear:

- that maintained schools should promote pupils’ SMSC development;
- what is expected of schools in promoting fundamental British values; and
- how this aligns with schools’ duty to promote SMSC.

More information can be found here.

Academies:

Guidance is available here.

Preventing and tackling bullying

The Department of Education have published new advice on preventing and tackling bullying. It is available here. Governing Bodies should review their bullying policies in the light of this new guidance.

Employer supported volunteering

Does your employer promote and support volunteering? Do you have colleagues in your workplace that have skills from industry that they could share in a school governor role? You do? Please point them in the direction of their local...
governor services team or ask them to complete the on-line governor application form which can be found on the Hampshire Governor Service website.

Changes in staff

Western Office

We are delighted to welcome two new members to governor services. Valerie Skaf and Samantha Ward joined the team in the western office in October. Some of you will have already spoken to them on the phone. Valerie and Sam join us from another team within Hampshire so are both already aware of where the service fits within the authority. They are gaining in knowledge and confidence on a daily basis and are proving to be valuable additions. We know you will join with us in giving them a warm welcome.

Academy News

Primary PE and Sport Premium allocations for 2014 to 2015

Last term the details of the 2014-15 Primary PE and Sport Premium funding were released by the Education Funding Agency (EFA). You should have received the first payment of this Premium on 1 November for the period September 2014 to March 2015. The second payment for the remaining 5 months of the Academy financial year should be with you at the beginning of May 2015. Your Academy’s allocation can be found here.

The funding is intended to promote a more active lifestyle for primary pupils through the improved provision of PE and sport. Academies are required to publish information on their website, by April 2015, giving details of how they have used the premium and the impact it has had in improving the health of their pupils. This is an aspect of the academy’s provision that Ofsted will look at as part of their inspection process.

Open and transparent governance

One of the main ways to demonstrate a commitment to open and transparent governance is to publish relevant information on your website about the performance of your academy, its curriculum provision and details of the work of the governing body. The DfE list of information that maintained schools should publish (https://www.gov.uk/what-maintained-schools-must-publish-online) is a useful checklist against which you can review the content of your site.

You should also review your Articles of Association and Funding Agreement to make sure you are meeting the requirements to publish information contained within these documents. As well as this you must have on your site; your Financial Statements, your Value for Money Statement and an up to date Register of Business Interests. Reviewing the content of websites has recently been a focus for Ofsted, so now would seem an appropriate time to audit your website to ensure that the information that is on it is fit for purpose and demonstrates open and transparent governance.
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Governing Body Meeting 1

- Review GB membership / governor end dates
- Monitor School Improvement Plan priorities
- Review progress against governing body improvement targets identified through the GB self-evaluation process
- Discuss priorities for next financial year based on school improvement plan
- Agree training budget for staff development plan
- Discuss predicted pupil numbers and their budgetary implications
- Evaluate resourcing and budget control of SEN provision
- Ensure the GB has at least one safer recruitment trained governor (excluding the headteacher)
- Agree Governor Services subscription arrangements for 2015/16
- Consider RAISE online / Fischer Family Trust data
- Confirm subscription to the clerking service and agree the contracted hours
- Ensure 2014/15 whole governing body training session is booked by 31 January

Governing Body Meeting 2

- Receive a written headteacher’s report
- Receive report from the Finance Committee on issues arising from strategic financial planning
- Discuss annual visit report by LLP (due between October and April)
- Agree equalities information and review progress against equality objectives
- Consider how the pupil premium is being spent within the school
- Approve and ensure the submission of the Schools Financial Value Statement on the online form by 31 March

The governing body should also:-

- Have a policy review cycle through the year advice can be found in the Policy Guide on our website
- Discuss governor training each term
- Ensure the school’s website is updated to include all information required by the School Information Regulations and other DfE guidance
- Discuss governing body membership each term and forward plan to fill vacancies and officer posts
- Assess the impact its work has had on school improvement

All Committees

- Provide finance committee with the cost of new priorities to be included in the 2015/16 School Improvement Plan
- Declaration of pecuniary interest should be a standing item on ALL agendas
- Receive reports on recent governor visits

Committee Responsible for School Improvement and Curriculum Issues

- Discuss subjects in line with School Improvement Plan
- Monitor progress against school improvement targets
- Consider RAISE online data and Fischer Family Trust data
- Review SEN provision
- Review predicted outcomes for vulnerable groups
- Review predicted outcomes by Department

Committee Responsible for Personnel Issues

- Discuss the staff structure and management plan for 2015/16
- Review and evaluate the staff development plan

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Performance Management Committee
- Monitor progress on headteacher’s targets

Committee Responsible for Finance
- Monitor spending against budget plan
- Draft outline budget plans for 2015/16 and 2016/17 using the strategic planning tool
- Discuss financial implications of PLASC (Pupil Level Annual School Census) return
- Review any outstanding invoices raised by the school that have not been paid
- Adopt the updated Statement of Financial Expectations

Committee Responsible for Site Management
- Report on health, safety and security

# Primary only ^ Secondary only
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Governing Body Meeting 1

- Monitor progress against School Improvement Plan focusing on pupil progress
- Approve budget plan by 31 May
- Approve 3 year financial strategic plan - deadline 31 May
- Plan and approve capital spend
- Review attendance and punctuality
- Review home-school agreement
- Receive report: performance management
- Review governor training and receive report from TLG on value for money
- Review arrangements for recruitment of new governors and their induction
- Ensure training is booked for new members of Headteacher’s Performance Review Panel
- Review transition arrangements

Governing Body Meeting 2

- Have a policy review cycle through the year - advice can be found in the Policy Guide on our website
- Discuss governor training each term
- Discuss governing body membership each term and forward plan to fill vacancies and officer posts
- Receive reports on recent governor visits
- Assess the impact its work has had on school improvement

All Committees

- Provide governing body with any proposals for school targets/School Improvement Plan priorities for 2015/16
- Review committees’ terms of reference and propose amendments to GB
- Identify School Improvement Plan priorities to be monitored and add to agendas to ensure a systematic review of progress is undertaken throughout the year
- Declaration of pecuniary interest should be a standing item on ALL agendas

Committee Responsible for Personnel Issues

- Discuss with HT staff structure for academic year 2015/16
- Review staff absence levels

Performance Management Committee

- Receive an update from headteacher on progress against targets for the academic year 2014/15
- Encourage new members to attend training

The governing body should also:

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Committee Responsible for School Improvement and Curriculum Issues

- Review outcomes in reaching school improvement targets, pupil progress including vulnerable groups and initial SAT's results
- Review outcomes of 1:1 support for pupils, where appropriate
- Analyse and discuss attendance data
- Analyse and discuss exclusions

Committee Responsible for Finance

- Consider budgetary implications of staff structure for academic year 2015/16
- Evaluate value for money
- Review the figures from the previous financial year ensuring reasons for any significant variances to the plan are understood

* Primary Only ^ Secondary only