



# ***Go-Governance - a newsletter for Governors and Clerks***

Issue 1 - September 2016

---

## **Introduction**

Welcome to the first edition of *Go-Governance*, our new newsletter that aims to provide helpful information and support for all school governors, academy directors and clerks to governors serving in the Clifton Diocese. I hope the following articles and prompts are useful and assist you in fulfilling the valuable role that you perform in helping the children and staff in all our schools.

## **Education Sunday**

As you may be aware, the 11 September was Education Sunday which this year had a particular focus on governance. An appeal encouraging people to volunteer to be a Foundation Governor was made at many Churches and the Catholic Education Service provided promotional post cards and book marks to support the event. We also produced new updated promotional posters and information leaflets that have been sent to every school and parish (please let me know if you would like any additional copies). Even if you currently have your full quota of Foundation Governors it is still important to promote the role so that we can build up a data base of new recruits who can be appointed quickly when vacancies occur. I've already received a number of enquiries from potential governors and hopefully more will follow, so may I offer the departments sincere thanks to any governors or clerks who supported Education Sunday in any way.

## **New Foundation Governor Nomination Forms**

In addition to updating our promotional poster and information leaflet, we have also updated the 'Nomination Form' that people need to complete to apply to become a Foundation Governor. We've also introduced a new, separate 'Clergy

Nomination Form' for Priests and Deacons to complete. The governor resignation form that needs to be completed by the Clerk to Governors whenever a Foundation Governor resigns before the end of their term of office has also been updated. All of these forms replace the previous versions which should no longer be used, and are available on our website at [http://schools.clifftondiocese.com/?page\\_id=110](http://schools.clifftondiocese.com/?page_id=110)

In the near future we shall be producing **online** versions of the nomination forms to make it even easier for people to apply to become a Foundation Governor - we'll let you know as soon as our website has been updated to enable this to happen.

Please may I remind Clerks, that if you are not already doing so, the school Instrument of Government requires that all governors (and Head Teachers) must be issued with a copy of the Instrument on appointment. Clerks for academies are requested to issue all new appointments with a copy of their Articles of Association.

### **Governor and Clerk training**

Please may I remind everyone that Bishop Declan expects **all** Foundation Governors and Clerks to regularly attend training provided by both the Diocese and the Local Authority. Training is important because it provides you with the necessary up-to-date knowledge and support to effectively and appropriately fulfil your responsibilities as a governor of a Catholic school. It explores what it means to be a Governor/Clerk in a Catholic school and its distinctive nature.

It is a requirement that all newly appointed Foundation Governors attend the 'Governor Induction Training session. This training explores what it means to be a Governor in a Catholic school and its distinctive nature.

Because of changes to governance it is also appropriate and beneficial for existing Foundation Governors who have not received training in the last 3 years to attend. The sessions are being held at Alexander House in Bristol on:

14 November 2016 7.00 pm - 9.00pm (fully booked)  
4 March 2017 10.00 am - 12.00pm  
19 June 2017 7.00 pm - 9.00pm

Clerk Induction Training sessions are also being held at Alexander House on:

10 February 2017 9.30 am - 12.30 pm

24 February 2017 6.00pm - 9.00pm

Our Governor Conference is on **Saturday 12 November from 10.30am - 3.30pm at St Brendan's Sixth Form College in Bristol**. All governors are invited and an agenda will be sent out to clerks as soon as it has been finalised.

### **Training for Specific Roles**

It is vital that each governing body has designated governors with 'Safer Recruitment' training and accreditation to comply with regulations when interviewing. It should not be expected that it is just the head. It is advisable to have at two governors trained in each relevant area to ensure adequate cover for times when one is not available and for governor resignations.

Please also remember to ensure that all Safeguarding Officers have up to date training and that you are aware of when it has expired. It is important that a place to renew the qualifications is booked **before** the expiry date and not after.

The dates of governor and Safe Guarding Officers training should be recorded in minutes of governor meetings.

### **Return of Governance training template**

As the Bishop appointed the majority of the governors to the board he carries a significant responsibility for how effective they are. Challenges occur from Ofsted and the DFE when there are concerns. One of the key concerns highlighted by OFSTED is the lack of training undertaken by governors. Therefore in order for the Bishop to evaluate the governing body's skills, the department is asking all clerks to complete an annual return on the training that the governing body has undertaken. The return will be requested at the end of the academic year. A copy of the form to be completed is attached to this newsletter so you may keep a log of training during the year.

## **Governing body membership**

Please ensure that, as legally required, the membership of your governing body is always recorded on the school website and that any changes are immediately updated.

If you have elected a new Chair of Governors or appointed a new Clerk, please ensure you advise me of their name and school contact details as soon as possible so that I may update our records and ensure correspondence is always sent to the correct person. Please also remember to inform me whenever a Foundation Governor resigns before the end of their term of office by sending me a completed Resignation Form, which as mentioned above is available on our website.

## **Academies**

May I remind all clerks that when a new Chair is elected they need to ensure that the new chair completes a 'Deed of Adherence'. This is a legal requirement. Please let me know if you require a copy of this form.

## **Email Security**

Please will all Chairs and Clerks refrain from using their own personal or work email address for governor business. Only school allocated email addresses should be used. I must also point out that, confidential or sensitive information should never be shared by email unless security encrypted.

## **Admissions**

At this time last year we asked all our schools to consult on their admission arrangements for the 2017-18 school year. This was a 'big' but very worthwhile exercise and so may I take this opportunity to thank you all for helping to minimise the risk of challenge from outside bodies by ensuring your policies were legally compliant. If you wish to make any changes to your admission arrangements for the 2018-19 school year you will once again have to undertake a formal consultation by 19 December to be completed by 31 January at the latest. Every Local Authority in the Diocese has (or soon will be) setting a Relevant Area, which unfortunately was not the case last year, which should make it easier to identify who schools should be consulting with.

Our own diocesan admissions guidance has been updated for 2018-19 and is available at: [http://schools.cliftondiocese.com/?page\\_id=104](http://schools.cliftondiocese.com/?page_id=104)

Schools in Gloucestershire, Somerset and Wiltshire will be aware that the Diocese is currently consulting on proposed designated primary schools for parishes in those areas that currently do not have one. Please ensure governing bodies consider the proposals and that responses are sent to me by 16 October 2016. Final decisions will be made by 30 October and schools that become the designated school for any of these parishes **will I am afraid have** to undertake a formal consultation on their proposed admission arrangements for 2018-19 by 19 December at the very latest - even though they consulted last year.

Please may I remind our Academies that (with the exception of All Saints Academy) in accordance with your current Members Agreement any change to your oversubscription criteria requires the written consent of both the Bishop and CCDEF.

### **Applications for places**

In response to a query, may I clarify that the consideration of applications for all school places, i.e. for new intake and in-year admissions, is the responsibility of the governing body or admission committee if delegated to it, and **not** the Head Teacher. The School Admissions Code clearly states:

"Admission authorities must allocate places on the basis of their determined admission arrangements only, and a decision to offer or refuse admission must not be made by one individual in an admission authority. Where the school is its own admission authority the whole governing body, or an admissions committee established by the governing body, must make such decisions."

### **Thank You**

May I, on behalf of Bishop Declan and all of the Schools and Colleges department offer our sincere thanks for all the tremendous work you do for the benefit of our children and staff at our schools - it really is very much appreciated.

## **Next Issue**

I hope you have found this first issue of *Go-Governance* helpful and I hope to produce further editions on a regular basis. If there are any items or topics that you would like to see included in the next edition please just let me know - I would love to hear from you.

Best wishes for the year ahead.

*Bill*

Bill McEntee  
Strategic Officer for Governance  
0117 9025599  
bill.mcentee@cliftondiocese.com