



Go-Governance - a newsletter for Governors and Clerks

Issue 3 - January 2017

Introduction

Welcome to the first edition of *Go-Governance* of 2017. I sincerely hope you had a happy and relaxing Christmas and feel ready to face any challenges that may occur in 2017. I hope the following articles will assist you in your task.

New Department for Education Guidance

As you may be aware, the DfE recently issued a new statutory guidance document called 'The constitution of governing bodies of maintained schools'

<http://schools.cliftondiocese.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/2012-Constitution-Regulations-Statutory-Guidance-Sept-2016.pdf>

This should prove to be very helpful to clerks and governors. It is for governing bodies of all maintained schools. The guidance covers the following:

- the description of the different categories of governor
- priorities in deciding the constitution and membership of the governing body
- the skills governing bodies need
- governor elections
- publication of governors' details and the register of interests
- terms of office
- removal and disqualification of governors

- instruments of government (setting out the governance structure of the governing body)
- all aspects of the School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2012

Statutory guidance sets out what schools must do to comply with the law so it is very important that **all governors and clerks of maintained schools** become familiar with this guidance.

Governor Conference

The Governor Conference on Saturday 12 November was very successful and was attended by 75 governors & clerks from 37 schools - so many thanks for giving up your Saturday to come. It was nice to meet, in person, so many of the people that I have been corresponding with over the last year. The talk given by the main speaker Fr. Adrian Porter was truly inspiring and his PowerPoint presentation has, as requested been emailed to all attendees.

Attendance at the event is part of formal training and so Clerks should include all Foundation Governors who attended on the 'CLERK and FOUNDATION GOVERNOR TRAINING FORM 2016/17' form that was attached to Issue 1 of Go-Governance and needs to be completed at the end of the school year.

Academy meetings with Bishop Declan

The Annual General Meetings for Academies took place on 7 and 8 December where governors were able to discuss important matters relating to their school with Bishop Declan. Thank you to all those who attended.

Whilst maintained schools are not required to hold AGMs, it is proposed (as indicated in recent correspondence from the Director) that governors and heads of all maintained schools will also be given the opportunity to meet with the Bishop. Due to the number of schools it will not be possible for every school to meet Bishop Declan annually so there will be a rolling programme where one third of our schools will be offered a meeting each year so that every school meets with the Bishop every third year. Those schools for this coming year should have already received notification.

Foundation Governor Recruitment Process

Regrettably there have been several instances recently where existing governors have unfortunately not reapplied to be appointed for a new term until **after** the completion date of their current term of office. This means that they **cannot** take part in any governor activities until the Bishop has been able to reappoint them. Please would all Clerks regularly check when the term of office of their Foundation Governors is due to expire and ensure that if they intend to stand again, they complete a nomination form **at least 2 months** before their current term of office expires.

I am pleased to report that all potential Foundation Governors (both new and those wishing to stand again) may now apply quickly and easily by using our new **online** nomination forms. Priests and Deacons should complete the new online **Clergy** Nomination Form http://schools.cliftdiocese.com/?page_id=2089 and everyone else should complete the **Foundation Governor** Nomination Form http://schools.cliftdiocese.com/?page_id=2061

Whilst paper forms will be accepted for those without internet access, please ensure that all other potential governors are given the above website links and not paper forms. Please note that like many online application services, candidates should apply using a desk-top computer rather than from a mobile device.

Self-Evaluation of Governing Bodies

In order for governing bodies to be as effective as possible, it is vital that you undertake regular self-evaluation to identify your strengths and areas for further development. To assist you with this important task the Catholic Education Service has produced a model Self Evaluation Form http://schools.cliftdiocese.com/?page_id=1596 (ces-medel-sef-november-2016) to be used on an annual basis. It is in Word format so you can amend it as necessary to suit your own particular needs.

I shall be contacting you later in the year to obtain your views on the suitability of the CES form as a tool to help you with your self-evaluation.

OFSTED Inspectors will look for evidence that governors have undertaken self-evaluation and use of this form is good evidence of having done so.

Admissions Policies and the Schools Adjudicator

The admissions policy of St Michael's Catholic Primary School in Surrey was recently objected to and referred to the School's Adjudicator. The Adjudicator upheld the objection and found the policy **not** to be compliant with the requirements of the School Admissions Code for several reasons. In particular the arrangements:

- included criteria for practising Catholics. He found that the method used to confirm this was not 'reasonable, clear and objective'.
- included a criterion for those of other faiths. He found it was not specifically defined as to which faiths were referred to
- required **all** applicants to complete a Supplementary Information Form when only those applying under certain criteria would need to do so
- for part-time attendance stated it could be requested when it is a statutory right for those offered a place

The full adjudication is important reading for those responsible for setting admissions policies

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/564938/ADA3124_St_Michael_s_Catholic_Primary_School_Surrey_2_November_2016.pdf

The above adjudication once again emphasises the reason as to why Bishop Declan will not support admission arrangements that include any criteria that require children (or parents) to be a **practising** Catholic and why the Diocese recommends not having criteria for those of other faiths. I am pleased to say that the majority of our schools no-longer use such criteria and have opted to keep the criteria as simple as possible.

Further information about these issues is included in the Diocesan admissions guidance <http://schools.cliftondiocese.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Diocesan-Guidance-on-Admissions-Nov-2016.pdf>

Many schools have consulted on their proposed admission arrangements for 2018-19 and I aim to respond to each of those schools by 31 January. If however your consultation ends before that date please let me know the date

your governors are meeting to determine their final policy and I will endeavour to reply before the meeting.

Clerk to Governor Training Courses

Induction training for Clerks to Governors at Alexander House in Bristol is scheduled for:

10 February 9.30am to 12.00pm

24 February 6.00pm to 8.30pm

These sessions are for both new and experienced Clerks and aim to support you in the valuable role you provide. If there are not enough attenders to make these events viable we would reluctantly have to cancel them - so if you've not already done so, please book a place by sending an email to my Graham Tiley at Graham.Tiley@cliftondiocese.com as soon as possible.

Pupil Premium Strategy

Schools are reminded that they are required to publish online their pupil premium strategy including evidence and rationale used. [Further information](#) and [voluntary templates](#) are available at the following link <http://tscouncil.org.uk/resources/guide-to-effective-pupil-premium-reviews/>

Please therefore ensure there is appropriate analysis of the impact of pupil receiving premium funding and that this is kept up to date on the school website.

Clifton Directories and Diaries for 2017

The popular Clifton Diocese Directory and the Clifton Diocese Liturgical Diary for 2017 are now both available for order via <http://www.cliftondiocese.com/diocese/publications/>

Congratulations!

Many congratulations are offered to June Little, Foundation Governor at All Saints Academy and Chair of Governors at St Thomas More Primary School (both in Cheltenham) who has been named as both the 'Education Hero' and the overall winner in the prestigious 'Heart of Gloucestershire Awards' for 2016

<http://www.southwestbusiness.co.uk/regions/gloucestershire/winners-revealed-heart-of-gloucestershire-community-awards-2016-02122016071508/>

June is also a National Lead Governor, a member of the Clifton Catholic Diocesan Education Foundation and is Chair of its Mission and Ethos Committee. Well done and congratulations June - it's nice to know that all your time and voluntary hard work, given for the benefit of children has been so well recognised - your awards are much deserved!

If you know of any other 'good news' stories about our clerks or governors that should be celebrated in future editions, please just let me know.

Next Issue

As usual I hope you have found this edition helpful and if there are any items or topics that you would like to see included in the next edition please just let me know.

May I wish all our Clerks and Governors a very happy New Year.

Best wishes

Bill

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