



# A FUTURE FULL OF HOPE

CLIFTON DIOCESE

# Go-Governance

*A Newsletter for Governors and Clerks*

## Introduction

It's been a little while since the last edition and a lot has happened since September. Most notably, a new Government Minister for Education has been appointed - time will tell what impact he will have but let's hope it will be a positive one. I hope you like the new design of the newsletter and that you'll find the following items and action points helpful.

## Department Newsletters

As previously mentioned before, it is important that all members of governing bodies are fully informed and kept up-to-date with all issues affecting schools and governing bodies. Rather than issuing a series of random ad-hoc emails, our newsletters are the Department's way of communicating with governors on all general matters. It is therefore vital that the Go-Governance newsletter, plus the other Department newsletters (from Colleen, Ann and Lisa), are circulated to all governors, in advance of all governor meetings. Please kindly add consideration of all newsletter 'Action Points' as a standing item to the agenda of all meetings.

**Action Point: Clerks and Chairs to ensure that Department newsletters are always circulated to all governors and action points are a standing item on meeting agendas, as appropriate.**

## A Future Full of Hope

As you may be aware in October, Bishop Declan launched his new Diocesan Strategy 'A Future Full of Hope' <https://cliftondiocese.com/#!/diocese/future-full-hope/> giving a roadmap for the next three years. Governors are encouraged to use this roadmap to support the Bishop's vision. A supplement to a 'Future Full of Hope' is available for schools and colleges <http://schools.cliftondiocese.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/A-Future-Full-of-Hope-Mission-2017-2018.pdf>

**Action Point: All governors are aware of the Bishop's vision and the focus on Mission this year.**

## Governor Briefings

It was with much regret that our Governors conference, scheduled for last November had to be cancelled. However, as an alternative, Governor Briefings sessions were held within each School Partnership group before Christmas. Considering these were held at short notice, they were well attended, so many thanks to all who were able to make them. The feedback we have received has been very positive and so we intend to hold more sessions in the summer term, when hopefully even more governors and clerks will be able to attend. Further details will be announced as soon as dates and venues have been fixed.

**Action Point: Lookout for details of the next Governor Briefings and discuss possible specific items for your Partnership.**

## Changes to Section 48 Inspections from April 2018

Please note that new National Guidelines for Section 48 inspections will come into force from Easter 2018. These will not be radically different from the old ones, but Religious Education (RE) will now become a separate heading. Details of the new guidelines can be found on the Schools and Colleges website along with an updated Self Evaluation Form (SEF) and Parental questionnaire, in the RE Inspections Section (Guidance documents): <http://schools.cliftondiocese.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Guidelines-from-Easter-2018.pdf>

There is also an informative PowerPoint presentation on the new format which you will find helpful. It is essential that governors and leaders promote, monitor and evaluate the provision for the Catholic life of the school and RE in order to meet all statutory, canonical and diocesan responsibilities. How they

### Foundation Governor Nomination Forms

A surprising number of people are still completing out of date nomination forms when applying to be a Foundation Governor. These old forms do not include the latest questions relating to skills and experiences, statutory disqualification and legal declaration and so delay the application process and should not be used. The latest versions of the forms are always to be found on our website: [http://schools.cliftondiocese.com/?page\\_id=110](http://schools.cliftondiocese.com/?page_id=110)

**Action Point: Stocks of old forms to be destroyed and only the latest forms to be used.**

embark on this is at their discretion but it must be accurate, consistent and rigorous.

The updated diocesan SEF, which mirrors the new National Guidelines, will act as a helpful tool for all to support this process. It should of course be noted that a school can present their Self-evaluation information in whatever format they feel is best.

It should be noted that the new parental questionnaire will be implemented after Easter.

Please do not hesitate to contact Colleen Collett or Ann Fowler if you require any further information regarding this.

**Action Point: Ensure all governors are aware of new guidelines.**

### Instrument of Government

Thank you for returning your proposed varied Instruments of Government. These were all submitted to your relevant Local Authority and with one exception\*, the Instruments have all now been formally completed. Obviously, your varied Instrument replaces all previous versions, which should now be disregarded to avoid any confusion.

I am advised by each Local Authority that they have sent these new Instruments to each school. As legally required, if you've not already done so, please ensure you issue a copy of the Instrument to each governor, including the Head and any Associate Members, as soon as possible.

\*Wiltshire County Council are still working on the Instruments for the schools in their area, but hopefully will not be too much longer.

(Please note that the above does not apply to academies, religious/charitable order schools or sixth form colleges.)

**Action Point: Schools to issue a copy of the varied Instrument to all governors as soon as possible.**

## Admission Arrangements 2019-20

All schools must set determined arrangements each year. Schools that decided to formally consult on their arrangements have been sent their own Diocesan response. Schools that elected not to consult on their arrangements, are legally not allowed to make any changes to them (other than updates).

Paragraph 1.46 of the School Admissions Code, requires that all governing bodies must, if they've not already done so, determine their admission arrangements by 28 February at the latest. Once determined, final arrangements must be sent to the Diocese and your Local Authority and posted on your website by 15 March and you must notify all appropriate bodies in accordance with Paragraph 1.47 of the Code.

Our admissions guidance <http://schools.cliftondiocese.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Admissions-Guidance-2019-20-Updated-February-2018.pdf> has been updated to reflect the Diocese has now been incorporated.

**Action Point: All governing bodies determine their arrangements by 28 February at the latest and ensure they comply with the School Admissions Code.**

## Code of Conduct

Governors should adopt a code of conduct which sets out the purpose of their governing body and describes the appropriate relationship between individual governors or directors, the whole governing body and the leadership team of the school. If you've not already done so, please ensure that all members sign a Code of Conduct for your school as soon as possible and at the start of each subsequent school year. The Catholic Education Service provide a model Code of Conduct for both schools and academies <http://www.catholiceducation.org.uk/guidance-for-schools/governance/item/1003629-codes-of-conduct-for-governors-and-directors>

**Action Point: A Code of Conduct to be signed by governors annually.**

## Catholic Education Survey National Conference

Archbishop Malcolm McMahon will welcome leaders of Catholic Education from across England and Wales to a one-day conference on the mission of Catholic school leadership on Thursday 15 March. Keynote speakers will include executive headteacher James Lane, former Secretary of State for Education and Pro Vice-Chancellor at St Mary's University the Rt. Hon Ruth Kelly and Canon John Udris. Workshops on governance, executive headship and inspiring middle leaders will be available. The event will take place at 110 Rochester Row, London and the cost is £75 per participant. For further information, or to book your place, please email Eileen Williams [ewilliams@catholiceducation.org.uk](mailto:ewilliams@catholiceducation.org.uk)

**Action Point:**  
Any governor wishing to attend should email Eileen Williams.

## Academies

i) Many thanks for submitting 'Fit and Proper Persons' forms for Bishop Declan to sign. These have all been signed and returned to schools. The 'Declaration of Related Party Interest' forms unfortunately had to be delayed but will be submitted to the Bishop in the near future. I will of course let you know once they have been signed.

ii) Many thanks to all those who attended the 2017 Annual General Meeting (AGM) in December for their

Academy. The 2018 AGMs have been scheduled for 6 and 7 December 2018. The schedule detailing the time and dates for each academy was emailed to schools in December.

**Action Point:** Please note the date and time of your 2018 AGM to avoid any event conflicts, for example Nativity plays.

## Standardised Admission Policy in future Years?

Currently each school within the Diocese is free to decide what is included within their own admission arrangements, subject to compliance with directives from Bishop Declan and other legal requirements. Admission arrangements are therefore not consistent across the Diocese with considerable variation in the language used, the oversubscription criteria categories and how they are used. The impact of this is that there can be differing outcomes for families, depending on where they live within the Diocese and their designated school's own policy.

The legal requirements relating to admission arrangements and the consultation processes are very complex. The demands therefore, placed on governors in compiling policies is something that has been raised as a concern. The turnover of governors and the legal requirement to only have to consult on admission arrangements every 7 years (if there are no changes), also make it difficult for governing bodies to maintain a level of expertise in admission arrangements and so to obtain legal compliance. This potentially increases the likelihood of more time consuming successful appeals and legal challenges with the potential for reputational damage. In view of this, the Mission and Ethos Committee is consulting on the possible introduction of a common Diocesan admission policy for all schools. You may have already been made aware of this proposal, via your Partnership Representative.

Every parish now has a designated primary school, which would support the introduction of a coordinated common

policy for primary schools. Arrangements for secondary schools may be more complex due to the use of named feeder schools and because large parts of the Diocese do not have a Secondary school i.e. North Somerset, Somerset and South Gloucestershire. However, making the arrangements as consistent as possible could still be achieved. Please take part in this consultation and let us know your views. The Mission and Ethos Committee will consider the responses received, before deciding whether to proceed with taking the proposal to Clifton Catholic Diocesan Education Foundation.

**Action Point: Responses to the proposed process to be sent to your Partnership Representative, who should submit them to [bill.mcentee@cliftondiocese.com](mailto:bill.mcentee@cliftondiocese.com) by 30 March**

## **Governor Appointment Process Review**

In response to feedback received concerning the application process for Foundation Governors who are applying for another term of office, the Mission and Ethos Committee considered how the process for renewing governors may be improved. The aim is to find an application process that is less onerous for renewing governors but still ensures that due diligence is maintained. As a result, it has been decided to consult with schools on the following proposed process for those governors wishing to stand for another term of office:

- Nominees complete a 'Renewing Governor Nomination' form
- The nominee states what training they have undertaken, what their contribution has been and how effective they have been and what impact they have had on the school and pupil outcomes
- A Priest/Deacon will still be required to confirm the nominee's Catholic practise - but references from 2 x lay-people to verify skills and experience will no longer be required (unless we have no reference on file when they will be).
- The Chair of governors will be asked to complete a short reference form to confirm the nominee's

rate of attendance at governor meetings, confirm the training they have undertaken, summarise their contribution to the governing body and to state if they support the re-appointment or not. In the case of it being a chair seeking reappointment, the vice chair will be asked to complete the form

The process for new nominees standing to be appointed for the first time, would remain the same as it currently is.

It has also been proposed that governors should be limited to a maximum two terms of office at any one school, unless there are exceptional circumstances. This was due to occasions when a governor has been in post at the same school for a long time and this has led to issues related to conflict of interests, a lack of objectivity and opportunities for new governors wishing to be considered. Equally there is an awareness of the difficulty of attracting new governors to fill vacant posts for some schools. You may have already been made aware of these proposals, including new draft Renewing Governor nomination and

governor reference forms, via your Partnership Representative. Please take part in this consultation and let us know your views. The Mission and Ethos Committee will consider the responses received, before deciding whether to proceed with taking the proposal to Clifton Catholic Diocesan Education Foundation.

**Action Point: Responses to the proposal be sent to your Partnership Representative, who should submit them, by 30 March, to [bill.mcentee@clifftondiocese.com](mailto:bill.mcentee@clifftondiocese.com)**



## Federation

Congratulations to Corpus Christi School, Weston-super-Mare and St Joseph's School, Burnham-on-Sea, whose governing bodies officially joined together on 1 January to form the **Holy Trinity Catholic Federation**.

This is the first formal federation of schools within the Diocese and we wish them every success in this exciting venture.



## Data Protection, Website Compliance and Working in Partnership

i) You're probably very aware that the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) are coming into force on 25 May 2018 and this will have a significant impact for all schools and the diocese.

However, the current Data Protection legislation already requires us all to be very mindful of how we hold and share data. In particular, please kindly ensure that when emailing anything that can identify someone i.e. it includes a name, date of birth, telephone number, address, email address etc. - for example when emailing a governor nomination or meeting record to me, that you always encrypt it with a security measure. Alternatively, please post such documents to me via Royal Mail.

**Action Point: Data Protection regulations are adhered to.**

ii) As you may already be aware the General Data Protection Regulations will require all organisations to employ a Data Protection Officer (DPO). This does not necessarily mean that every individual school will have to make such an appointment but it could be a post that is shared between two or more schools. If you've not already done so, schools should now investigate the most cost-effective ways of meeting this requirement of the GDPR.

**Action Point: Schools to look in to appointing a DPO.**

iii) At the last Mission and Ethos Committee meeting the importance of ensuring that school websites meet all legal requirements was discussed, particularly due to this

becoming an increasing part of OfSTED inspections. It was suggested that consideration should be given to appointing a dedicated governor within each School Partnership Group, to be responsible for helping each school maintain legally compliant websites.

**Action Point: Each School Partnership to consider appointing a 'Website Compliance' Governor.**

iv) When dealing with formal grievances or disciplinary issues, it can often be difficult to have suitable governors who are able to sit on the investigating panel. This may be due to work commitments or ineligibility due to being named in the complaint or a lack of training. It is therefore absolutely vital that each governing body makes formal arrangements to use governors from other schools, when necessary, within their School Partnership groups. This avoids any undue delay in dealing with such issues. These arrangements should be reciprocal and recorded in each school's agreed disciplinary and grievance procedures and ratified at a full governing body meeting. The diocese has been called on significantly more often to provide governors for panels which is difficult.

**Action Point: Schools to ensure they have robust arrangements in place with other schools to share governors if required.**

## Next Issue

If there are any issues you would like to see included in any future issue, please just let me know.

*Bill*

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## Governor meeting prayer

**Almighty God May we bring reflection and wisdom to our meeting Use our expertise and our judgement Lord and direct our contributions. Let us be listeners as well as speakers. May we always have in mind your will for the well being and the future of our schools. In the name of Jesus Christ Amen.**

# MISSION

