



Department for Schools and Colleges

Go-Governance - a newsletter for Governors and Clerks

Issue 18 - September 2020

Introduction

Welcome to the first edition of the *Go-Governance* newsletter of this school year. I hope you've had a refreshing break, even if you were not able to get away somewhere. The ongoing Covid19 situation, will no doubt present many challenges for governors and may we thank you in advance for all that you will do for the pupils & staff, during the coming year

1) - Admissions Matters x 5!

i) Guidance

The School Admissions Code requires governors to have regard for any guidance from their Diocese when determining their admission arrangements. The Diocese has produced separate Admissions Guidance documents for **primary** <https://schools.cliftondiocese.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/ADMISSIONS-GUIDANCE-August-2020-PRIMARY.pdf>

and **secondary** schools

<https://schools.cliftondiocese.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Admissions-Guidance-August-2020-SECONDARY.pdf>

to help you determine admission arrangements for the 2022-23 year (which governors must consider this autumn).

ii) Primary

A common admissions policy was previously determined by CCDEF for all our primary schools for 2021-22. Those schools who determined the final varied policy should not consult on changing these arrangements, unless authorised to do so by the Diocese, and so are otherwise expected to keep their arrangements the same and to determine them again for 2022-23. The Diocese will be in contact with those schools who did not determine the final varied common policy, concerning the process for adopting it for 2022-23.

iii) Secondary

The Mission & Ethos Committee of CCDEF will now look into the possibility of a common policy for our secondary schools and will be consulting with secondary schools on this during the school year. Due to the legally prescribed timescales, any such policy would not come into effect until the 2023-24 school year.

iv) Revised School Admissions Code Consultation

The DfE are consulting on a proposed revised School Admissions Code that includes introducing timescales for considering In-Year applications and Fair Access Protocol cases, so has implications for governors. The consultation <https://consult.education.gov.uk/home-to-school-transport-and-admissions-team/changes-to-the-school-admissions-code/> closes on 16 October if you would like to respond to it.

v) Special Training Session on Admissions

To help Governors & Clerks gain an understanding of the complex requirements involved in considering In-Year applications, ranking new intake applications and determining admission arrangements in accordance with legislation, a special training session has been scheduled for **Thursday 1 October** 6.30 - 8.00pm. It will be a virtual session, so you'll need access to Microsoft Teams.

To book a place just complete our simple online booking form <https://schools.cliftdiocese.com/courses> and select 'Governor Admissions Training' from the drop-down menu **by 28 September** and you'll be sent an invitation for the online session.

2) - Code of Conduct

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

3) - New Chairs & Clerks

The start of the school is often a time when governing bodies elect a new Chair of Governors. In order to ensure that our records are kept up to date and that correspondence is sent to the correct person, please ensure that any changes (including contact details) of Chair and/or Clerk are notified to the Diocese and your Local Authority (LA) as quickly as possible.

Please may I remind **academies**, that in accordance with your Members Agreement, the Chair & Vice-Chair posts must be filled by a Foundation Governor. Also, legislation specifies that **academy** Chairs must complete a suitability check as soon as they are appointed. For more information, read 'Academy trust chair suitability checks'

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academy-trust-chair-suitability-checks> If you've not already done this, please do as soon as possible to meet this legal requirement.

4) - Leaving Governors

If any **Foundation** Governors have resigned before their term of office has been completed, please will Clerks notify the Diocese by using the 'Resignation Form', <https://schools.cliftondiocese.com/governance> (click on the 'Recruitment' Tab) as soon as possible.

5) - Reception Intake applications for 2021-22

We want to try to ensure that parents of children who are due to start school, apply for a place at the right time. Every year some parents unfortunately miss the closing date or forget to provide their child's baptism certificate and so risk missing out on a place at a Catholic school for their child. Please would you therefore help parents, by including the following notice, or something similar, in all your newsletters to parents and on your school website, from now until 10 January 2021:

Starting School? If you have a child born between **1 September 2016** and **31 August 2017**, then **now** is the time to apply for a place at our school for admission from **September 2021** onwards. You must complete an application form that is available from the school admissions team of the **[INSERT NAME OF YOUR LOCAL COUNCIL(S)]** Council. If your child has been baptised and you wish to apply for our school, you **must** also provide a copy of the baptism certificate to the school. Please ensure you apply by the closing date of **15 January 2021**.

I have asked all Parish Priests to include a similar notice in parish newsletters.

6) - Updated Guides

We have updated our '*A Guide for Foundation Governors*' <https://schools.cliftondiocese.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/A-Guide-for-Foundation-Governors-August-2020.pdf> and '*A Guide for Clerks to Governors*' <https://schools.cliftondiocese.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Clerk-to-Governors-Guidance-August-2020.pdf> documents. These easy to read guides deal with the specific requirements of governance specifically at Catholic schools in our Diocese. Please read them as they will help and support you in your roles.

7) - Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) Audit

i) The Diocesan DBS protocol <https://schools.cliftondiocese.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/DBS-Protocol-for-Foundation-Governors-April-2020.pdf> requires all Foundation Governors to have an up to date enhanced DBS certificate. The Diocese is undertaking an audit of DBS clearance and during

September I will be sending each Clerk to Governors an audit form to complete with the date of the latest DBS and Section 128 clearance for each Foundation Governor. The data will then be added to our Foundation Governor database.

ii) Now that schools have reopened, any Foundation Governor (both new and those undertaking another term of office) who have been unable to complete their DBS clearance check since being appointed, must now do so by Tuesday 13 October. If this is not undertaken, then unfortunately a suspension may have to be introduced.



8) – Academy Annual General Meetings

The 2020 Academy AGMs with Bishop Declan have been set, as below. Please would Chairs, Heads & whoever else may be attending, keep the date for your academy's AGM free. Despite Covid19, these AGMs will go ahead but it will be decided nearer the time if they will be held in person or virtually.

THURSDAY 26/11/20

	<i>Time</i>
<i>St Nicholas of Tolentine Primary, Bristol</i>	<i>9.30am</i>
<i>St Joseph's College, Swindon</i>	<i>10.00</i>
<i>The Rosary Primary, Stroud</i>	<i>11.30</i>
<i>St Augustine's College, Trowbridge</i>	<i>12.00pm</i>
<i>Holy Cross Primary, Swindon</i>	<i>12.30</i>
<i>St Catherine's, Swindon</i>	<i>1.30</i>
<i>St Mary's Primary, Swindon</i>	<i>2.00</i>
<i>St Bede's College, Bristol</i>	<i>2.30</i>

FRIDAY 27/11/2020

<i>St Patrick's Primary, Bristol</i>	<i>9.30am</i>
<i>St Edmund's Primary, Calne</i>	<i>10.00</i>
<i>St Joseph's Primary, Devizes</i>	<i>10.30</i>
<i>Holy Rood Primary, Swindon</i>	<i>11.30</i>

<i>St Mary's Primary, Churchdown</i>	<i>12.00pm</i>
<i>St Peter's High, Gloucester</i>	<i>12.30</i>
<i>Holy Family Primary, Swindon</i>	<i>1.30</i>
<i>St Teresa's Primary, Bristol</i>	<i>2.00</i>



AGM

9) Diocesan Trustees and CCDEF Update

The Diocesan Trustees have a responsibility to protect the estate of the Diocese along with assisting the Bishop in ensuring that his Catholic schools provide a quality Catholic education. Whilst this is largely undertaken by the Schools and Colleges Department, the Trustees have formed two separate structures to assist the department in fulfilling this.

a) **Clifton Catholic Diocesan Education Foundation (CCDEF) - also known as The Diocesan Academy Project Board.** CCDEF is a company established by the diocesan trustees in response to the establishment of single academies in 2011 and protect the Bishop's canonical rights. It has now also become known as the Diocesan Academy Project Board. Its prime responsibility is to oversee the establishment of the diocesan strategy to now establish Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs) and to hold academies, either as single academies or MATs, to account. All applications to move towards academisation, must be submitted to and approved by this board. The Board is chaired by the Bishop and its membership comprises of:

- Lyn Murray - Chief Operating Officer
- Michael Thompson - Educational Trustee

- Michelle Morgan - Educational Trustee
- Margaret Young - Legal Trustee
- Colleen Collett - Director of Schools and Colleges
- Paul Kehoe - School Partnership Officer
- Fr. Adrian Porter - Independent panel member (Director of Jesuit Institute).

b) **Schools & Colleges Committee.** This is a committee that has been set up to assist the Schools and Colleges Department in fulfilling its role. It enables its stakeholders - schools & colleges, to contribute to and critique the Department. The Committee is chaired by the Bishop. It has a representative from all partnership groups along with a Bishops' representative for education, finance and mission, 6th form, special schools and independent schools. The Chief Operating Officer, Director of Schools and Colleges and Schools Partnership Officer also sit on the Committee.

10) - Governance Update from the Department of Education

In case you've not see it, please see the July DfE Governance Update

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-governance-update/academy-trusts-school-governance-update-july-2020>

The update covers a range of policy areas including:

- Highlighting the guidance for the full opening of schools in the Autumn term
- The catch-up premium
- Risk Protections Arrangements
- Academies Financial Handbook 2020
- Related Party Transactions
- DBS suitability checks for chairs of trust boards
- New guidance on managing cyber security risks

- Trustee training programmes offered under licence to.

11) – Governor Meetings

Whilst schools have now reopened, we all still need to be very mindful that Covid19 has sadly not disappeared and that we still need to take all necessary precautions to protect ourselves and others. We would therefore still recommend that governor meetings are not held in person but that virtual meetings are arranged where governors can attend remotely. Governing bodies need to formally agree to hold meetings virtually and so should consider and vote on this at their next meeting.

Next Issue

Best wishes for the year ahead and please let me know if you wish to include any topics in the next issue.

As I'm working from home, please email or call my mobile number below, if you need to speak with me.

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