



Department for Schools and Colleges

Go-Governance - a newsletter for Governors and Clerks

Issue 19 - November 2020

Introduction

Welcome to the second edition of the Go-Governance newsletter of the 2020-21 school year. I'm sure that the national increase in Covid19 cases and the current lock-down situation, is making life very challenging for all those involved in the running of our schools. May we thank you again for all that you are doing for the pupils & staff at this difficult time.

1) DBS Clearance - action required!

Whilst the country is currently in lockdown, schools are still legally required to undertake Disclosure Barring Service (DBS) checks for all governor appointments **within 21 days** of their appointment. The DfE has issued changes to their DBS ID checking guidelines

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/covid-19-changes-to-dbs-id-checking-guidelines> that enables, for a temporary period, documentation to be confirmed via video or scanned to schools, with original copies being provided at a later date - so DBS checks can and must still be undertaken for all governor appointments.

As previously advised, for Foundation Governors, Bishop Declan requires that DBS clearance must be obtained every 4 years (regardless of individual school

policies). We are about to undertake a DBS audit and will shortly be contacting all schools to ensure that this requirement is being complied with. All schools will be asked to confirm the date of their last DBS & Section 128 clearance for each Foundation Governor. In advance of your DBS audit being sent to you, please arrange for the DBS date of each Foundation to be checked. In the event of it being outside the 4 year period, you need to arrange for the DBS clearance to be applied for as a matter of **urgency**. **We would not wish to be in the position of suspending any of our governors.**

Please would you also ensure that whoever is responsible for undertaking DBS & Section 128 checks at your school is aware of the DBS protocol
<https://schools.cliftondiocese.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/DBS-Protocol-for-Foundation-Governors-Nov-2020-1.pdf>

2) - **Formatio online training**

You may recall from previous editions that in conjunction with the CES, Formatio provides online training for governors at Catholic schools. They now provide 5 x different modules:

Module	Topic	Time (mins)
1	An introduction to Catholic Education	30
2	The environment of Catholic Education	30
3	Strategic direction	45
4	Accountability	30
5	Financial probity	15

This training is free and is available to all governors and clerks
<http://formatio.org.uk/governors>. We would encourage everyone to take advantage of it.

3) **New online governor application service**

I'm very pleased to announce that we now have a new online application service for all Foundation Governor nominations. It's very easy to use and makes

applying much simpler and quicker for new candidates, renewing governors applying for another term of office and for Clergy applicants. It also includes a simple DBS Self-Declaration. In light of this can I ask that you do not use the existing PDF forms (unless the applicant is without internet access) but visit our website <https://schools.cliftondiocese.com/governance> and click on the 'Recruitment Tab' to access the new online forms.

4) - Admissions Arrangements

i) Primary

Just a reminder that as a common admissions policy was previously determined by CCDEF for all our primary schools for 2021-22, 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 has now been in contact with any schools who did not determine the final varied common policy or need to make any adjustments to their arrangements, concerning the process for adopting it for 2022-23.

ii) Secondary

As previously advised, the Mission & Ethos Committee of CCDEF is looking into the possibility of introducing a common policy for our secondary schools. I have therefore recently consulted all secondary schools about a proposed possible common policy (that would not come into effect until the 2023-24 school year). Secondary governing bodies are asked to respond to the consultation by 31 January 2021.

5) - Reception Intake applications for 2021-22

As mentioned in the last edition of *Go-Governance*, 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. If you've not already done so, please would you 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) – New DfE documentation

The Department for Education has issued some new documents for governors, including an updated *Governors Handbook* and 'Role Descriptors' for schools and academies. Please see the DfE *School Governance - October 2020* for full details <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-governance-update/school-governance-update-october-2020>

Next Issue

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

As this may be the last issue before Christmas, please may I take this opportunity to thank you again for all have done for our children & staff, in what must have been (and still is) the most challenging year. I am sure it may be considered early but can I also wish you a very joyful, holy Christmas and a happy new year.

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