



Department for Schools and Colleges

Go-Governance - a newsletter for Governors and Clerks

Issue 20 - January 2021

Introduction

Welcome to the third edition of the *Go-Governance* newsletter of the school year. I hope that despite Covid19 and its restrictions you were able to enjoy a well-earned Christmas break.

We have just been informed that one of our long- standing chairs, Allan Paver has sadly passed away unexpectedly. Allan was Chair of the Holy Trinity Federation of Corpus Christi, Weston-super-Mare and St Joseph's Primary, Burnham-on-Sea. Can I ask you to remember him, his family and the communities he served in your prayers?

Once again, may I thank you for all that you are doing to help education to continue at our schools, whilst trying to keep the children and staff safe, in these most difficult of circumstances.

1) Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) and Section 128 Audit

As previously mentioned, the Diocese has undertaken an audit of the DBS & Section 128 status of all our Foundation Governors, so many thanks for all the submitted returns. I am pleased to report that the audit has shown that nearly all schools do have recorded on their Single Central Register, a DBS date and a

Section 128 date, within the last 4 years, for the vast majority of Foundation Governors. However, the audit has also shown that, in some cases:

- The governors last DBS clearance was outside the required 4-year time period
- DBS clearance has been seen, but Section 128 clearance had not been checked
- DBS & 128 clearance had been seen by the school, but the Clerk was not aware and so the Diocese had not been informed, causing delays to governors starting their role
- Governors had been allowed to start their governor duties (or another term of office) before DBS & 128 clearance had been obtained
- DBS clearance was not being applied for within the legally required 21 days from appointment
- Relevant staff at schools were not aware of the Diocesan DBS Protocol

As a result of this can I please remind everyone that;

- Foundation Governor appointments are provisional, dependent on the school (not the Diocese) obtaining evidence of enhanced DBS clearance (within the last 4 years) and the school undertaking a satisfactory Section 128 clearance check
- For **new** Foundation Governors, the letter of appointment will specify that they must **not** start their role until the Diocese, following confirmation from the school of clearance dates, has confirmed that they are able to do so
- For **existing** Foundation Governors undertaking another term of office, unless the Diocese is already aware that their DBS & 128 clearance is within the last 4 years, the letter of appointment will also specify that they must **not** start their next term of office until the Diocese confirms that they are able to do so
- Clerks must therefore ensure that Governors do **not** undertake governor duties unless approval and notification has been given by the Diocese
- Please ensure that whoever is responsible for undertaking DBS & Section 128 checks at your school, is aware of the Diocesan DBS protocol <https://schools.cliftodiocese.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/DBS-Protocol-for-Foundation-Governors-Nov-2020-1.pdf> and that you have

processes in place to ensure that they inform the Clerk of the DBS & 128 dates as soon as they are obtained, so that the Clerk can inform the Diocese, who is then in a position to confirm their appointment.

- Legislation requires that DBS checks are undertaken within 21 days of appointment

During the first Covid19 school's lockdown, the Diocese temporarily suspended the requirement for DBS & 128 clearance to be obtained before governors started their duties. However, following the DfE issuing changes to the DBS ID checking guidelines, available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/covid-19-changes-to-dbs-id-checking-guidelines>, permitting documentation to be confirmed via video or scanned to schools (with original copies being provided at a later date) during the pandemic it means governors for DBS clearance can still be obtained. The suspension is therefore no longer in place and so DBS clearance must be obtained before governors start their term of office.

I apologise if these requirements appear to be prohibitive, but it is vital that Safeguarding requirements are adhered to. As you are aware any non-compliance with safeguarding will not be looked upon favourably by Ofsted, even during monitoring visits

2) What - no more certificates!

Following a review of the administrative processes within the department, in agreement with the Bishop and in common with other dioceses, we will no longer be issuing a 'Certificate of Appointment' (apart from to those who were already promised one when they received their email notifying them that they had been provisionally appointed). From now on, governors will simply receive a letter of appointment, issued on behalf of the Bishop. This letter will also include the dates of their term of office. A copy of it, (encrypted with a password to be GDPR compliant) plus their contact details will be sent via email, to the Chair, Clerk and the Local Authority.

3) - Admissions Arrangements

Just a reminder that, if you have not already done so, all governing bodies **must determine their admission arrangements for 2022-23 by 28 February 2021 at the latest** (even if you did not consult on your arrangements this year).

Primary schools are reminded that Bishop Declan expects all schools to determine the common arrangements that were previously agreed by him and CCDEF

4) - Recruitment Campaign

The Diocese is very aware that there is a significant number of Foundation Governor vacancies throughout the Diocese and that many schools are operating without their full quota of governors, which increases the burden on the existing governors. To attract more interest in the role, we have included an appeal for new governors on the 'carousel of slides' on the homepage of the Diocesan website <https://cliftdiocese.com/> and have asked all parishes to include the appeal in their newsletters and on their own websites. It has already generated some applications and hopefully more will follow. If you know of anyone who might be interested in taking up this ministry, please ask them to apply via our new easy to use online application service <https://schools.cliftdiocese.com/form-2> or to contact myself for more information.

5) - Training

Due to Covid19, our training for Clerks and governors is now being presented remotely via Microsoft Teams. Because these sessions can be attended from the comfort of your own home, this has resulted in an increase in the numbers attending our sessions. The next training sessions are scheduled for:

- Clerk to Governors - 9th February 2021 (Tuesday)
9.30 am - 11.00 am
- Induction for Governors - 6th March 2021 (Saturday)
10.00 am - 11-30 am
- Governor Refresher - 24th April 2021 (Saturday)
10.00 am - 11.30 am

In order to ensure you keep abreast of diocesan requirements as a Catholic governing body it is essential that you attend training on a regular basis and on appointment attend either the induction or refresher session. This is an expectation on your appointment by Bishop Declan. Places can be booked via: <https://schools.cliftdiocese.com/courses>

Finally, once again, the Prayer to St. Corona to be said during a time of epidemic

Lord Jesus Christ, You came into this world for our salvation. Look kindly on us now, we pray, that we, and all those who serve You, might be kept safe from this epidemic. Heal those who are sick, comfort the suffering, bring back those who have gone astray, and above all, increase our faith, O Lord. Give us the grace to follow You and, like the martyr St. Corona, who gave her life for love of You, to take up our crosses daily without fear or hesitation. Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God, have mercy on us and on the whole world. St. Corona, patroness of epidemic victims, pray for us.

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Please do not hesitate to contact me with any news that can be included in the newsletter to celebrate the work that you are doing. Thank you once again for all that you are doing for our schools, particularly at this very difficult time.

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