



Department for Schools and Colleges

Go-Governance - a newsletter for Governors, Directors and Clerks

Issue 28 - September 2022

Introduction

Welcome to the first edition of *Go-Governance* of the 2022-23 school year. I hope you were able to enjoy the hot weather and have had a refreshing break.

1) New Guides

The Diocesan guidebook <https://schools.cliftondiocese.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/A-Guide-for-Foundation-Governors-August-2022.pdf> for *Governors and Directors* has been updated for 2022-23. Whilst primarily aimed at *Foundation Governors & Directors*, all governors of any category will find it a useful tool to help them perform their role effectively.

The Diocesan guidebook <https://schools.cliftondiocese.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Clerk-to-Governors-Guidance-2022.pdf> for our *Clerk to Governors* has also been updated and focuses on the various aspects of being a *Clerk* at a school within the Diocese. A 'must-read' for all our *Clerks*!

2) Virtual Attendance

The Covid19 pandemic obviously meant that governors were not able to hold meetings in person - but thankfully, modern technology enabled meetings to still take place via Teams or Zoom etc. - what would we have done without them! Whilst the Covid19 situation has greatly improved and governing bodies are generally able to meet in person again, things could of course change at any time

and some governors may not yet feel comfortable or safe attending in person. Also, some governors may not be able to attend in person due to work or family commitments but may be able to attend remotely. The school governance regulations do enable governors to attend remotely but as part of 'approved alternative arrangements.' So, if they have not already done so, governing bodies should formulate and approve their own 'virtual attendance policy', detailing when and how they will permit virtual attendance. We do not have an approved policy but this sample policy [A3B57EC5FE3A083270753FB3B96A1587.pdf \(allsaintsce.lbhf.sch.uk\)](https://allsaintsce.lbhf.sch.uk/A3B57EC5FE3A083270753FB3B96A1587.pdf) obtained via the internet, may be helpful when producing your own virtual attendance policy.

3) Diocesan Training

The Diocesan Schools & Colleges Department 'Booklet of Courses' <https://schools.cliftodiocese.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/CPD-booklet-2022-2023.pdf> for 2022-23 lists the training sessions & courses, special Masses, retreats, conferences, partnership meetings etc. etc. available for governors/directors, clerks, staff and pupils. Please read it to see what would be appropriate for yourself and your school. Sessions for governors & clerks taking place during the autumn term include:

- **Induction** - for any governor who has not previously attended a Diocesan Induction session. Next session on 17 November - see page 26
- **Refresher** - for all experienced governors. Next session on 5 November - see page 27
- **Admissions** - for anyone involved in considering admissions applications. On 29 September only - see page 28
- **Religious Education Link Governor** - for all RE Link Governors. 3 x sessions in September - see page 25
- **Clerk to Governors** - for new & experienced Clerks/Governance Professionals. Next session on 13 October - see page 29.

Just complete the online booking form <https://schools.cliftodiocese.com/courses> to reserve a place on any of the sessions, which are held via Microsoft Teams.

4) Local Authority Training

In addition to Diocesan training, Local Authorities (LA) often provide helpful courses, covering various topics that governors should avail themselves of, although of course I realise it can be difficult to find enough time to fit it all in! Schools may need to subscribe to an LA service agreement, but some sessions may be open to any governor/clerk. Please visit the following LA websites to see what they have to offer:

Bristol - <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/residents/schools-learning-and-early-years/school-governors/training-support-and-updates-for-school-governors>

Gloucestershire -

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/schoolsnet/governors/governor-training-courses/central-training-courses/>

Somerset and North Somerset -

<https://www.supportservicesforeducation.co.uk/Services/3255>

South Gloucestershire - not a website but maybe contacted via email

governor.services@southglos.gov.uk

Swindon - not a website but maybe contacted via email

PCummings@swindon.gov.uk

Wiltshire - <https://rightchoice.wiltshire.gov.uk/Training>

5) Training Records

Please would all Clerks keep an annual log of any training attended by governors & clerks during each school year. It can help to identify any training needs and would be a ready-made record, if requested by OFSTED, your LA or the Diocese.

6) Important Reminders

i) **Chair & Vice-Chair:** In accordance with their Articles of Association, schools that are a Single Academy Trust - and in accordance with their Scheme of Delegation, schools that part of a Multi Academy Trust - must all at their first meeting of the year, elect a Chair and Vice-Chair and these must both be a Foundation Governor (unless exceptionally agreed otherwise by the academy

Members). Boards of Directors of a Multi Academy Trusts (MAT) must also elect a Chair & Vice-Chair annually.

For a VA maintained school, it is not compulsory for the appointment of the Chair to be considered every year at a (unless otherwise stated within a governing body's own arrangements), although it is good practice, and the Chair does **not** have to be a Foundation Governor.

ii) **Code of Conduct:** At your first meeting of the new year, it is appropriate for all governors and directors of any category to sign a 'Code of Conduct'. This is to protect all members and mitigate against any possible difficulties that could occur within governing bodies. Governing bodies & MAT Boards should use the appropriate Code of Conduct provided by the Catholic Education Service, as they provide protection specifically for Catholic schools. Bespoke Codes are provided for:

- VA Maintained Schools and Sixth Form Colleges
- Single and Multi-Academy Trusts
- Local Governing Boards (for schools within a MAT).

Visit <http://catholiceducation.org.uk/guidance-for-schools/governance/item/1003629-codes-of-conduct-for-governors-and-directors> to select your appropriate Code.

7) Admissions Arrangements for 2022-23

i) All our **primary** schools are responsible for undertaking the full process for In-Year applications and so parents should apply directly to the school using its own In-Year application form, rather than via their Local Authority (LA).

ii) The School Admissions Code requires **all** schools to set out on their websites, how In-Year applications will be dealt with. This is a legal requirement and must be complied with **by 31 August 2022** - so please action this if you have not already done so.

iii) As previously advised, **all** schools are legally required to vary your set admission arrangements for 2022-23 to include provision for children who appear to have been adopted from state care outside of England and many

thanks to all the schools who have already varied their arrangements and sent them to me. As this is a legal requirement, any school that has not already done so, **must** make the necessary changes to your arrangements as a matter of urgency, to be legally compliant. Emails were sent at the end of August to any school who appeared not to have completed this.

8) – Reception Intake applications for 2023-24

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. All the LAs* in the Diocese, will be open to receive applications for 2023-24 by 26 September 2022. 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 the end of September until 15 January 2023:

Time to start school? If you have a child born between **1 September 2018 and 31 August 2019**, then **now** is the time to apply for a place at our school for admission from **September 2023** onwards. You must complete an application form that is available from the school admissions team of **[INSERT NAME OF YOUR LOCAL COUNCIL(S)]** Council. Please ensure you apply by the closing date of **15 January 2023**. If your child is Catholic, you **must** also provide a copy of the baptism certificate to the school by this date.

** Except for Gloucestershire County Council, who will not be open for applications until 3 November 2022. Schools in Gloucestershire should either wait until then to include a notice or should make clear in their notice that parents cannot apply until that date.*

I will contact Parish Priests to ask them to include a similar notice in parish newsletters & websites.

Where a baptism certificate is not provided by the closing date, schools should **not** chase parents for it, as other parents could complain that their child has been wrongly denied a place, because the school did not follow their own published admission arrangements. The onus is on parents to comply with the requirements of the admissions policy and to provide any certificates by the

closing date. To try to avoid any problems, in addition to repeated notices in parent & parish newsletters/websites, schools could also:

- Put posters in school reception areas and church noticeboards
- Ask clergy to mention applying & providing a baptism certificate, at the end of Masses.

Where schools are in areas that include a significant number of families where English is not their first language, notices in newsletters and websites should also be provided in the other languages that are prevalent in your local area, which can be easily done using 'Google Translate'. Some communities often have Masses and newsletters in their own language and so these could be targeted to raise awareness. Please consider what other strategies you can use to engage with such communities. Appeal Panels may often consider the measures taken by schools to raise awareness for families from abroad. This may involve some additional work now, but it will save schools a lot of time and hassle later-on, if it avoids Catholic children being denied a place, so will be very worthwhile!

9) - Admission Arrangements for 2024-25

i) Primary Schools:

Please remember that the common admission arrangements are still in place for all our primary schools and so Bishop Declan does **not** expect schools to deviate from the common arrangements (unless specifically requested to do so by the Diocese) when determining your arrangements for 2024-25 (apart from rolling forward the dates) and they should be determined during the autumn term. You must determine the policy **and** the In-Year application form

It is a legal requirement that governors have regard for the Bishop's guidance, and this is contained in our Admissions Guidance booklet

<https://schools.cliftondiocese.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/ADMISSIONS-GUIDANCE-August-2022-PRIMARY.pdf>

ii) Secondary Schools:

The Diocesan Schools & Colleges Committee, Chaired by Bishop Declan, has determined that common admission arrangements (including standard

oversubscription criteria) should be introduced for all secondary schools with effect from the 2024-25 school year. As mentioned in the email sent on 1 September to all secondary Chairs & Heads, the oversubscription criteria to be included within these arrangements will be agreed by the Committee at its meeting on 21st September. Because governors are legally required to have regard to guidance given by the Bishop (see para. 1.38 of the School Admissions Code), governing bodies should not consider their arrangements until they have been notified of the outcome of the Committee meeting (in late September/early October). Our Secondary Admissions Guidance will also be issued at that time, along with details of the process for the required public consultation, which must start by 3 December to meet legal timescales. Governors must therefore meet between **mid-October and 2 December 2022** to consider the 2024-25 arrangements. Please just let me know if you've any queries.

10) Education Sunday

Every year 'Education Sunday' promotes, and gives thanks for Catholic education, in parishes throughout the country. This year it is on 11 September and the theme is 'enlightening the mind'. To help schools & parishes celebrate, the Bishops' Conference has released a range of resources <https://www.catholiceducation.org.uk/schools/education-sunday> including this prayer:

"Dear Lord,

Thank you for the gift of Catholic schools. Thank you for all those who have given their talents to educating our young people. Through the challenges they encounter each day, lead them to an ever-deeper appreciation of the sacred duty to which you have called them. Thank you for all those who contribute to the efficient running of our schools; support staff, kitchen staff, maintenance staff, governors and chaplains. We thank them for their hard work and dedication. Thank you for all those who lead our Catholic schools. May they be people of integrity so that they can be witnesses as well as teachers. We pray that the schools they lead will become places where our young people can experience your love in their lives. Thank you for our pupils. May your love strengthen and nurture them through the influence and example of those who care for them. We pray that through their time at school they will flourish and

grow to discover who you have called them to be. We make this prayer through your Son, Jesus Christ, our teacher and our Lord, Amen."



11) Best wishes for 2022-23

Please let me know if would like anything included in the next edition. Thank you very much for being a governor and may I offer you my best wishes for the year ahead.

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