

SCHOOL GOVERNORS BRIEFING PAPER – SPRING TERM 2019

This briefing paper is a summary of recent key developments and announcements which have implications for the governance of schools. Governors and Governing Boards are asked to consider any implications for the governance of their school.

This paper does not constitute definitive guidance or advice on whether any of these developments have an impact on the governance of your school or how to respond. Please seek advice from your Clerk if you need advice on any of the developments covered in this paper.

Dennis Harvey, Managing Director

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1. **GBASE UPDATES**

We are pleased to share with you significant enhancements to GBase, our online and secure system.

GBase now includes the following functions:

- Governor Attendance records
- Facility to record for each Governor when they have signed their declaration of eligibility to serve, the Code of Conduct and their Register of Interests entry
- Schools can also enter information concerning DBS clearance for a Governor

At the end of the current school year, client schools and academies will be able to download a report on Governors' attendance for all meetings held during the 2018-19 year.

We would also want to encourage clients to consider using GBase as the basis for the secure circulation of agendas and papers for meetings of the Governing Board and Committees. From 1st April 2019, our standard Service Level Agreement will include free access for Governors if the school receives our full service, including Governor records.

Using GBase in this way will ensure that client schools comply fully with GDPR requirements as well as having significant benefits in developing further effective governance. Please contact Dennis, Charmaine or Paul on 0775 15 88777 if you wish to discuss this further.

2. **SAFEGUARDING**

2.1 **Updated Actions Flowchart – Keeping Children Safe in Education**

The DFE has updated the document 'Keeping children safe in education: for school and college staff (part 1)' with a more accessible flowchart titled 'Actions where there are a concern about a child' found on page 12.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/741315/Keeping_Children_Safe_in_Education_2018_Part_One_14.09.18.pdf

We advise that Governors receive a report on the updated 'Keeping children safe' document.

2.2 **Roadmap to statutory Relationships and Sex Education**

The Sex Education Forum and the PSHE Association have produced a new 'Roadmap to statutory RSE'. The document provides a breakdown of the task of preparing for statutory RSE into helpful sections.

<https://www.sexeducationforum.org.uk/resources/advice-guidance/roadmap-statutory-rse-0>

This resource may be used by Governors to review the school's progress in providing statutory RSE.

3. GUIDANCE FOR SCHOOLS' COMPLAINTS PROCEDURES 2019

The DfE have produced updated guidance released on 11th January 2019 titled 'Best practice guidance for schools' complaints procedures 2019'.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-complaints-procedures/best-practice-advice-for-school-complaints-procedures-2019>

Governing Boards are advised to review their school's procedures for handling complaints and consider any amendments required. The DfE have also published model policies, including one for Managing Serial and Unreasonable Complaints.

The guidance aims to:

- share and encourage best practice
- help schools avoid common pitfalls

The guidance states the difference between 'legal requirement' and good practice using the terminology:

- must – where a school has a legal duty to do (or not do) something
- can – where a school has a legal power to do (or not do) something
- should – for guidance on best practice.

With regard to Governance the main points include:

- that complainants should be discouraged from approaching individual Governors with a complaint
- Governors have no power to act on an individual basis and it may prevent them from hearing complaints at the appropriate stage in the procedure
- it is the Governing Board that is the responsible body for dealing with any complaints about the school, following the procedure in its published policy
- there is no formal role for the LA in hearing complaints about maintained schools
- if the school's complaints procedure has been exhausted, complainants should be referred to the Department for Education. The DfE may refer such complaints on to Ofsted.

4. NEW OFSTED FRAMEWORK UPDATE

The draft education inspection framework for 2019 was published on 16th January 2019. It provided detail as to how Ofsted propose to inspect schools, further education provision and early years settings.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/education-inspection-framework-draft-for-consultation>

Ofsted have launched a consultation on the proposed education inspection framework for September 2019 and you can have your say until 5th April 2019.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/education-inspection-framework-2019-inspecting-the-substance-of-education>

We advise that Governors consider the draft framework to ensure that your school is prepared for the suggested changes in the event of an inspection.

5. GDPR AND COMMUNICATION SECURITY

GDPR requires Governors to do everything in their power to prevent inadvertent data breaches within school. Therefore the use of school email accounts for all Governors is strongly recommended. Web-based email providers, like gmail, Hotmail, Yahoo etc, are not regarded as sufficiently secure and some Local Authority officers and other agencies may refuse to send documents and email to Governors who have an insecure email address.

6. WHAT MAINTAINED SCHOOLS MUST PUBLISH ONLINE

The DFE's guidance on what maintained schools, academies and free schools must publish online was update in October 2018 with specific guidance as to the information required about individual Governors and the Governing Board.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-maintained-schools-must-publish-online>

You must publish up to date:

- details of the structure and responsibilities of the Governing Body and its Committees
- information about each Governor, including their:
 1. full name, date of appointment, term of office, date they stepped down (where applicable) and who appointed them (in accordance with the Governing Board's instrument of government)
 2. business and financial interests
 3. governance roles in other educational institutions
 4. any material interests arising from relationships between Governors or relationships between Governors and school staff (including spouses, partners and close relatives)
 5. attendance record at Governing Board and Committee meetings over the last academic year.

Governors are advised to ensure that your school has the relevant information published online.

7. NATIONAL GOVERNING ASSOCIATION (NGA) SURVEY RESULTS

The NGA have run an annual survey of School Governors in partnership with the Times Educational Supplement since 2011. The survey aims to gather views of Governors in order to provide an overview of the state of school Governance in England in the absence of official data.

The result of the 2018 survey can be found via the link below.

<https://www.nga.org.uk/Guidance/Research/Academic-year-2018-19/School-governance-in-2018-an-annual-survey-by-NGA.aspx>

8. **PARENTKIND ANNUAL SURVEY RESULTS 2018**

The results of Parentkind's Parent Insight Survey 2018 have been published on their website recording 1,500 UK parents' attitudes and opinions on a number of topics related to their children's education including:

- perceptions of effectiveness of schools'
- communications with parents
- the importance of parental influence of children's education
- children's mental health and wellbeing at school
- attributes that children should have when they leave school
- attributes of a successful school
- parents' satisfaction.

<https://www.parentkind.org.uk/Research--Policy/Research/Annual-Parent-Survey-2018>