



## BRENTWOOD DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE

*“Supporting Catholic schools to provide excellent education where pupils flourish, and Christ is made known to all.”*

November 2020

Dear chair

This twice-termly chairs mailing is part of our commitment to support you and keep you up-to-date with educational developments and good practice, both locally and nationally. I hope you will find it a useful summary.

The new term is now well underway and it is clear that we have come back to no less challenging times. During these extraordinary times for schools and governors and on behalf of Bishop Alan, Father Stephen and Rob Simpson may I give a big ‘thank you’ to all of you for the incredible way in which you have adapted to the challenge.

With the new national restrictions coming into force today (5 November), the government has published [guidance](#) for education settings which build on the guidance first published in July. This includes the new instruction that during the national restrictions face coverings should be worn by students and staff in secondary schools in communal spaces, outside of classrooms, where social distancing cannot be maintained. Schools should work to implement the guidance as soon as possible, but have until Monday 9 November if they require additional time.

DfE guidance is that governing and trust boards should continue to take a pragmatic approach to meetings at the current time. Much of the business of the governing body should still be conducted remotely so it is likely that ‘virtual’ meetings will continue for some time. If any governors do need to meet in person, then they would need to comply with social distancing, any local health and safety measures and the school’s risk assessment.

### **Diocese of Brentwood News**

#### *Election of Chairs and Vice Chairs*

Chair and vice chair roles should be filled by **Foundation Governors**. Any exception to this must be approved by the Diocese of Brentwood.

The governing bodies’ occupation of the school site is subject to compliance with the Diocesan Trust Deed, which sets out the powers of the Bishop (under canon law). These powers are widely drafted and in essence schools must comply with the wishes of the Bishop. Where these are to be formally stated they are usually set out in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or Directive, and that is the case here.

#### *Election of Foundation Governors*

As set out in the MOU, Foundation Governors should not seek re-appointment beyond their third term of office. It is worth stating this because a question comes up about this most years. It is also worth highlighting that Foundation Governors need to

be practising Catholics with the support of a Parish Priest. The Parish Priest's role is to confirm that the prospective Foundation Governor is indeed a practising Catholic.

### *Instrument of Government*

All Diocese of Brentwood schools which are not yet academies should have Instruments of Government that are in line with relevant CES model guidance. [Our model Instrument of Government](#) incorporates the CES model guidance and should be used when changing your Instrument of Government. We have also produced [guidance for maintained schools on changing their Instrument of Government](#)

It is good practice for governing bodies to review their effectiveness regularly. This includes the extent to which their size and structure is fit for purpose, but we are aware that some Instruments of Government have not been updated for some time and are not in line with CES model guidance in this area. Please can you ensure that if you have an Instrument of Government that it has been updated. If you need any help with this just [get in touch](#).

### *Capitation for VA Secondary Schools*

The practice of paying capitation was already in place when Rob Simpson started as Diocesan Director of Education in 2016. Capitation seems to have been in place for a long time and was most likely originally put in place to support the building and upkeep of Catholic secondary schools. More recently it has been a contribution towards the 10% shortfall on capital projects faced by VA secondary schools. As our schools become academies this ceases to be an issue because capital projects for academies are fully funded.

Over the last few years he has come across irritation in some quarters where priests have been sent bills that may not have not been closely checked and have included pupils on them who do not reside in the parish that the school is charging. It is however reasonable for a parish to make a contribution for Catholic children who live in a given parish so that the shortfall in capital costs (the 10%) can be supported in the local Catholic VA secondary school.

For this to work effectively going forward it is his belief that the following things need to apply:

- Capitation should be paid for Catholic children attending a Catholic VA Secondary school.
- Payment should only be claimed for Catholic children who actually live within the respective Parish Boundary.
- A list needs to be provided by the school of the names and addresses of those being claimed for, so that the Parish Priest can satisfy himself that the invoice is accurate and therefore can be paid.
- In order to share the names and addresses of pupils who are being claimed for with the relevant Parish Priests (under GDPR rules) consent to share data may need to be sought by VA secondary schools from all relevant families.
- If schools seek consent during this academic year then it should help to resolve any queries around the accuracy of what is being claimed from September 2021.

### *Monitoring Remotely*

Although the world remains very different this autumn, governors will need to re-focus on the other areas of monitoring that may have been side-lined over the past

few months and it will be important to draft and implement a monitoring programme which allocates specific areas to governors/committees if you haven't already. [This guide is to help governors prepare for, and carry out, the challenge of their monitoring role in the remote world](#)

*Religious Education, Collective Worship and the Celebration of Mass in schools*  
CES have prepared [guidance regarding Religious Education, Collective Worship and the Celebration of Mass in schools during COVID-19](#)

*Bishops' Conference statement on the production and use of a covid-19 vaccination*  
The Bishops' Conference has produced a [statement on the production and use of a covid-19 vaccination](#). This statement has been approved for publication by the Department bishops of the Department of Social Justice at their recent meeting and goes out in their name.

*Relationships, Sex and Health Education*

As you know, the new RSE curriculum became statutory from September 2020

The Diocese has put together useful [supporting information for RSE](#) including:

- A Model Catholic RSE Curriculum – Secondary
- A Model Catholic RSE Curriculum - Primary
- A Diocesan RSE Exemplar Model Policy
- A Governor Audit for Monitoring RSE
- Ofsted: Outstanding RSE in a Catholic Context (a case study)

*Updated Disciplinary Policies*

[Updated disciplinary policies are now available to download from the CES website](#)

There are separate versions of the policies maintained schools and academies, both in fully amendable word format – however, please note that **we do not expect schools to make substantial changes to the policies without discussing this with the Diocese first.**

Please make sure your HR provider is aware of the updated policies.

*New Headteacher Induction Course*

If you have a new headteacher, they should have signed up to the New Headteacher Induction course which begins on 5 November 2020. Details were sent by the Diocese to individual headteachers.

### **Governor Recruitment**

Since we are currently unable to hold a face-to-face governor recruitment event, we are advertising vacancies online for foundation governors. We are also working with the local parishes, *Inspiring Governance* and *Governors for Schools* to look for suitable governors for our schools.

We have asked clerks to advise us of [foundation governor vacancies](#) but if your school is not shown and you need support in filling a foundation governor vacancy please [get in touch](#).

### **Governor Development**

Face-to-face training is cancelled for the Autumn term 2020. Training is therefore being rolled out online and meetings are also being held in this way. We have been

working hard to develop a range of on-line training courses that will be delivered via Zoom and we have continued our work in the development of courses for the GIFT-Ed App.

### *Gift-ED Online learning – Headteacher Appraisal*

Don't forget to access the new online **Headteacher Appraisal** course if you are carrying out your headteacher appraisal this term. The course covers key steps of the process, as well as advice on appointing the headteacher's performance management panel, external advisers, setting objectives and pay recommendations. You can [preview a demo version here](#)

The course is part of the Gift-ED library. If you already have an access code for *Faithful Governance* you will now be able to view the course. If you do not already have an access code for your school, please advise Sophie of the governors you are nominating for your school [by using this link](#)

### *Certificates now available*

We have been working with Anspear to develop downloadable certificates and/or a 'digital badge' on completing a Gift-ED course and I am pleased to confirm that all learners who have completed *Faithful Governance* or *Headteacher Appraisal* have now been awarded a badge and certificate.

For all future completions, learners will get an email notification automatically.

It works as follows:

1. User completes a course
2. User receives an email from Anspear Ltd (via Accredible) saying that they have earned a badge/certificate
3. User clicks on the 'View my award' button in the email to admire it. It can be downloaded and shared in various ways
4. There is an 'Awards' button in the online learning interface that allows the user to admire all their badges/certificates

### *New webinars for governors*

- *Safeguarding Children*  
I am delighted to confirm that we have arranged a *Safeguarding Children* webinar for governors on 16 November 2020 (17:30-19:00) Suitable for all governors, but essential for those with a key responsibility for child protection and safeguarding, you can [book your place here](#)
- *Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) webinar – guidance for governors*  
The new RSE curriculum became statutory from September 2020 and it is important that primary and secondary governors are aware of their responsibilities under the new statutory guidance. This workshop will provide a comprehensive overview of the responsibilities of governing bodies in this area and address the response of the Catholic Education Service to the Statutory Guidance in the form of the October 2019 update to the CES Model Primary and Secondary RSE Curriculum. To book your place [please use this form](#)

### **Safeguarding Update**

*Health and Safety Executive: Checking of Schools Risk Assessments*

As you are aware, the Health and Safety Executive are contacting schools through a

firm called Civica to 'check their risk assessments and the arrangements they have in place to reduce the risk of transmission of coronavirus'. Inspectors will check that the school has carried out a '*suitable and sufficient*' risk assessment and put in place measures to make the school COVID-secure in line with the latest government guidance.

The following is a summary of some of the questions that have been asked of head teachers in schools:

- How many adults / staff in TOTAL - HT advised to have this number to hand, including **all** teachers, TAs, lunchtime supervisors, kitchen staff not employed by school, office staff.
- How confident are you that you can keep staff two metres apart from each other?
- What have you in place when teachers can't keep two metres apart?
- What have you in place regarding frequently touched surfaces?
- Who wrote the risk assessment?
- How do your parents, children, staff know what to do in relation to the risk assessment?
- What facilities are in place for increased handwashing?
- How confident are you in interpreting government guidance?
- Have you read the latest government guidance? How do you keep up to date and act on it?
- What procedures have you put into place should anyone display symptoms?
- How are you mitigating the risk of visitors to school?

Where the initial call raises serious concerns about a school's approach, it will be referred for a 'further intervention', which may include a visit to the school on a date arranged in collaboration with the school.

#### *Recruiting Overseas Teachers from January 2021*

The government has published [guidance about recruiting teachers from overseas once the UK has left the EU](#). In addition to the usual checks, schools 'can ask candidates for a teaching position to provide proof of their past conduct as a teacher as issued by the professional regulating authority in the country in which the applicant has worked – where available, this can be considered together with information obtained through other pre-appointment checks to help assess suitability'. This is a new check.

#### *Asbestos Management in Schools*

DfE have published [guidance to help schools and colleges understand their duties in relation to asbestos management](#). It should be used alongside more detailed advice, such as the Health and Safety Executive's (HSE) [duty to manage asbestos guidance](#) and [asbestos management checklist for schools](#)

#### **DfE News**

##### *Revised Governance Handbook*

The [Governance Handbook](#) has been updated to reflect policy and legislation changes from the past year, or to clarify language where necessary. For example, it includes information about cyber security in schools and the new requirement for trust boards to have a clerk/governance professional. A summary of changes can be found on page 8 of the handbook

### *Governance structures and role descriptors*

DfE have published new role descriptors designed to provide high-level information about [structures and roles in maintained school governance](#) and [academy trust governance](#). The maps and descriptions contained in the documents are designed to serve as an introduction to, and clarification of, the various roles in the governance system.

### *Remote Education Provision*

On 30 September the DfE published a [direction](#) pertaining to the requirement to provide remote education during COVID-19. The direction is accompanied by a [guidance note](#) which explains the clauses of the direction. The direction will come into force on 22 October 2020 and will have effect until the end of the school year (unless it is revoked before then).

DfE have also published [guidance to support school leaders in developing their remote education contingency plans](#)

The DfE expects schools to consider how to improve the quality of their existing curriculum, for example through technology, and have a strong contingency plan in place for remote education. Governors and Trustees should be checking up, in due course, that their schools are accessing the funding, resources and training available to improve provision.

### *Cyber Security in Schools*

DfE and the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) has been made aware of an increasing number of cyber-attacks involving ransomware infection affecting the education sector. They recently wrote to school leaders with guidance on ransomware. Following this guidance will help schools cover the basics. You should:

- have an incident plan and test it
- make sure your data is backed up offline and test the recovery of it
- regularly review your defences and controls

They have also worked with the NCSC on [cyber security questions for governors and trustees](#) to help inform conversations with school leaders.

### *Headteachers' Standards*

DfE have published [Headteachers' Standards 2020](#), non-statutory guidance which replaces the national standards of excellence for headteachers 2015. The standards are an important benchmark for headteachers and those who hold headteachers to account and can be used to:

- shape headteachers' own practice and professional development, within and beyond the school
- support the recruitment and appointment of headteachers, including the development of job descriptions and person specifications
- underpin frameworks for the development of school leaders
- inform the performance management of headteachers

### *Coronavirus (COVID-19) catch-up premium*

DfE have published [guidance on what school leaders need to know about the catch-up premium and National Tutoring Programme](#), which schools should use for specific activities to support their pupils to catch up for lost teaching over the previous months, in line with the guidance on [curriculum expectations for the next academic year](#). To support schools to make the best use of this funding, the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) has published a [coronavirus \(COVID-19\) support guide for schools](#) with evidence-based approaches to catch up for all students.

### *PE and Sport Premium for primary schools*

The existing guidelines regarding the use of the PE and sport premium continue to apply but, as a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, any unspent grant can be carried forward into the 2020 to 2021 academic year. Any under-spends carried forward will need to be spent in full by 31 March 2021 and schools should factor this into spending plans for their 2020 to 2021 PE and sport premium allocation.

### **Ofsted News**

#### *COVID-19: Evidence of pilot visits to schools*

Ofsted has published its [first snapshot of the pilot visits it carried out in September](#) with key findings showing primary schools giving extra attention to reading as well as remote learning materials in many cases not being fully aligned with the regular curriculum.

#### *YouTube playlist: a headteacher talks about an Ofsted visit - autumn 2020*

Ofsted have released [a series of short clips in which Matt Rooney, Head of School, St Giles, Retford talks about what happened on his recent Ofsted visit](#). There is a long (12 minute) version and seven short clips focusing on the different themes.

### **Latest Research**

#### *Governing in unprecedented times*

A [joint study by Ofsted and NGA has looked at school governance during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)

#### *State of the nation 2020: children and young people's wellbeing*

The second annual [State of the Nation report](#) published to mark World Mental Health Day has provided an in-depth picture of the experiences of children and young people during the pandemic and how it affected their wellbeing.

Thank you for all that you do for your school. School leaders including governors have been put in unprecedented situations through lockdown and the re-opening of schools. What you have managed to achieve has been magnificent and needs to be acknowledged.

I would like to reassure you that the BDES team will continue to be available to support you by phone, email, on-line and in person where the government guidance permits.

With best wishes and prayers

Debbi Botham

Diocesan Governance Development Officer