



April 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.

I hope that you all managed some respite during the Easter 'break' despite lockdown restrictions and providing ongoing service for your vulnerable pupils and Key Workers' children. Thank you for all you are doing.

Diocese of Brentwood News

Free coronavirus employer toolkit

Browne Jacobson have produced [a free toolkit for governing bodies and academy trusts regarding what to do re employment matters during the lockdown](#). This covers many frequently asked questions including furloughing of staff, what to do regarding wraparound and nursery staff, temporary staff, recruitment and dealing with unions.

Updated Model Employment Contracts for Schools and Academies

Following the conclusion of the consultation process with national union representatives, the updated model employment contracts for schools and academies are now available on the [CES website](#). Please note that new rules come into force on 6 April concerning the contents of written particulars to be provided to employees and the updated contracts take these new rules into account. These contracts should be used for all employees starting work on or after **6 April 2020**.

The models are now provided in fully amendable word format to enable schools and academies to tailor the contracts accordingly. Whilst amendments are now possible, CES advises schools and academies not to amend the main provisions of the contracts but only to make amendments to those paragraphs highlighted in yellow. If schools and academies want to amend more than the sections highlighted in yellow, they should contact the Diocese for permission and the Diocese can seek CES advice.

Churchmarketplace

*This is a free service and schools can subscribe at www.churchmarketplace.org.uk
[Click here to view their current Schools Suppliers List](#)*

Churchmarketplace have recently released two new publications:

- [“National Schools Energy Framework” e-Guide](#)
The official CMP e-guide explains everything Governors/ Trustees and Head teachers, Finance Directors and Pupils need to know about the IFM energy framework
- [“Compliance” Guide](#)
This e-guide sets out to explain what we do and how we do it. It also brings together for the first time in a single document all the fact sheets for every

CMP framework enabling decision makers in schools to buy via CMP with confidence.

Academy News

Congratulations to the following school who recently became an academy in a Diocesan Catholic Multi Academy Trust:

The Christus Catholic Trust

St Peter's Catholic Primary School, Billericay (April 2020)

Governor Development

It is so important that governors keep up to date with the latest legislation and good practice and reflect on their responsibilities as a governor in a Catholic school.

Online Learning - Gift-ED

The first online course *Faithful Governance* is now available as part of Gift-ED, the online App developed by the Brentwood Diocesan Education Service in collaboration with Anspear. This is free of charge and foundation governors are being offered the first wave of licences.

At this difficult time when most of us are confined to our homes and all Diocesan face-to-face governor training has been postponed, I hope governors will find the course particularly useful in developing their knowledge and skills. You can [preview a demo version here](#)

If you have not already done so, please advise Sophie of the first 5 foundation governors you are nominating for your school [by using this link](#). We will then be able to send governors the access code for your school to start their learning. Governors will have up to 6 months to complete the course.

Diocesan Conference for Governors – booking now available

I am delighted to inform you that our [first Governors' Conference is now available for booking](#). This full day Conference will be held on **Friday 9 October 2020** (9:30-16:00) at de Rougemont Manor in Warley and will be an exciting opportunity to network and learn with other governors and trustees across the Diocese.

[The Conference will include a mix of speakers and workshops as well as a buffet lunch](#). We have been keen to keep the cost as low as possible so there is a very competitive charge of £50 per governor.

Governor workshops and events – postponements

In light of the extended lockdown as a result of Covid-19 and the ongoing government requirements for social distancing we have made the decision to postpone or cancel a number of meetings, celebrations and face to face training sessions. This approach will apply to all Brentwood Diocesan Education Service events up to and including Tuesday 30 June 2020 including:

Governors commissioning by Bishop Alan	Thursday 7 May 2020 18:45-20:00	Brentwood Cathedral
Safeguarding Children	Wednesday 13 May 2020 17:30-19:30	Chelmsford

We do this reluctantly but feel that it is the right thing to do given the current situation. We hope that this will provide clarity and certainty at this difficult time. We reluctantly for the autumn term in the hope that the situation will have improved sufficiently by then.

Coronavirus (COVID-19): Advice on holding virtual meetings

DfE advises that school leaders should stay in touch with their governing bodies during this time, including providing information on the welfare of staff and pupils so governors can retain a strategic overview of the situation and the school.

They advise against governing bodies meeting in person, and to instead adopt alternative arrangements such as video or teleconferencing applications. If you are using video conferencing platforms to continue to meet as a governing body, then you must consider the security of the platforms that you are using. You should read the privacy terms and conditions and ensure that where possible you enable any security features. Please also remember that all parties will need to agree to these arrangements.

Governing bodies should be pragmatic in what they cover in meetings during this time, and focus on urgent, time-bound decisions.

It is therefore recommended that all non-urgent business be delayed and for governing board meetings to focus on:

- business critical decisions (e.g. budget approval, ratifying school leadership appointments etc.)
- monitoring how the school is continuing to provide care for children who are vulnerable, children with ECHP plans, the children of key workers and associated risks
- safeguarding - monitoring safeguarding arrangements including the arrangements to keep children not physically attending the school safe, especially online
- any issues arising from how the building is currently being used and remote working for staff
- support being given to parents and carers to help them educate their children at home

This may also require governing bodies to review and amend their levels of delegation to enable fewer governors/trustees to make business critical decisions, minimising the risk of being unable to take these decisions.

NGA have produced [useful advice on business continuity and holding virtual meetings](#) so governing boards continue to function, carry out their urgent business and make necessary decisions. [You may also be interested in the experiences of these three governing boards in meeting virtually](#)

Safeguarding Update

Keeping Children Safe in Education – consultation

DfE has suspended its consultation on proposed changes to the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) due to the current lockdown. Any responses already submitted will be taken into account in the final consultation report.

Coronavirus (COVID-19): safeguarding in schools, colleges and other providers
DfE have produced [detailed guidance for schools](#)
Please take special note of the [Interim DfE Safeguarding Action Checklist](#)

Child Protection Policy - Coronavirus Addendum

It is important schools and Trusts review and revise their child protection policy and keep it under review as circumstances continue to evolve. One of the most important recommendations is to write a specific coronavirus addendum for your child protection policy to reflect new arrangements in response to COVID-19. Amongst other things the revised child protection policy should reflect:

- any updated advice received from local authorities regarding children with education, health and care (EHC) plans, the local authority designated officer and children's social care, reporting mechanisms, referral thresholds and children in need
- what staff and volunteers should do if they have any concerns about a child
- the continued importance of all staff and volunteers acting and acting immediately on any safeguarding concerns
- DSL (and deputy) arrangements
- the continued importance for school and college staff to work with and support children's social workers and the local authority virtual school head (VSH) for looked-after and previously looked-after children
- peer on peer abuse - given the very different circumstances schools and colleges are operating in a revised process may be required for managing any report of such abuse and supporting victims (the principles as set out in part 5 of KCSIE should continue to inform any revised approach)
- what staff and volunteers should do if they have concerns about a staff member or volunteer who may pose a safeguarding risk to children (the principles in part 4 of KCSIE will continue to support how a school or college responds to any such concerns)
- any arrangements to support children the school or college are concerned about who do not meet the 'vulnerable' definition
- what arrangements are in place to keep children not physically attending the school or college safe, especially online and how concerns about these children should be progressed

It is important that all staff and volunteers are aware of the new policy and are kept up to date as it is revised. The revised policy should continue to be made available publicly.

Ofsted and School Inspection News

Coronavirus (COVID-19) rolling updates

[Ofsted have published this new page to set out guidance and information relating to coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) for schools, early years, children's social care and further education and skills providers. They are updating it regularly.

Routine Ofsted inspections suspended in response to coronavirus

[Ofsted have suspended all routine inspections of schools](#) and are not publishing reports from their recent inspections until schools reopen as normal for pupils.

However, urgent inspections where specific concerns have been raised are still going ahead.

Section 48 Inspections

There will be no Section 48/Catholic School Inspections in the Brentwood Diocese until at least after October half term 2020 to allow schools some time to come to terms with the impact of the long closure.

The Diocesan inspection of maintained schools is a statutory duty which must be completed before the end of the fifth year following the academic year in which a school was last inspected so if a school falls outside the statutory compliance window, the Diocese will issue a formal note of deferral that explains why the school has not been inspected within the statutory time-frame.

These deferral notices will be issued in September 2020 for relevant schools not inspected in this academic year (ie before July 2020 and who would have been due an inspection during the lockdown period).

DfE News

Here are links to the latest guidance from the Government that are particularly relevant to schools.

DfE guidance – Actions for schools during the coronavirus outbreak

As you know, schools remain closed until further notice, except for children of critical workers and vulnerable children who are encouraged to attend where it is appropriate for them to do so.

DfE have produced [detailed guidance for schools](#) which includes advice on:

- attendance
- safeguarding
- workforce
- staffing levels and deployment
- supply workers
- holidays
- pay
- exclusions
- school meals

Novel Coronavirus COVID-19

DFE has published [guidance to assist schools in providing advice regarding the novel coronavirus COVID-19](#)

This includes:

- How to prevent the spread of all respiratory infections, including COVID-19
- What to do if someone develops symptoms of COVID-19 whilst in an educational setting

Handling complaints during the COVID-19 outbreak

DfE does not expect schools to handle new or existing complaints whilst they are closed. However, schools should still engage with parents and pupils where they can. Complaints can be considered once the government confirms schools can safely reopen.

Coronavirus (COVID-19): School Admission Appeals

The coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak will impact on the ability of admission authorities to carry out admission appeals in the usual way but parents must continue to have the right to appeal to any school which has refused their child a place. [DfE will therefore be making regulatory changes that, subject to legislation, will come into force on 24 April 2020.](#) The new regulations will relax some of the current requirements set out in the [School Admission Appeals Code 2012](#) and enable admission authorities to proceed with their admission appeals.

Coronavirus (COVID-19): school and college accountability

As part of steps taken to fight the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19), the [government announced](#) that all exams due to take place in schools and colleges in England in summer 2020 are cancelled and that it will not publish any school or college level educational performance data based on tests, assessments or exams for 2020. [This update is to clarify what this means for the way school and college accountability will operate for 2019 to 2020.](#)

Key Stage 1 SATs replacement to be rolled out from September 2020

From September all new primary school pupils will take the reception baseline assessment (RBA). This teacher-led check will pave the way for the removal of SATs in year 2 from 2022/23.

Our thoughts and prayers are with you given the unprecedented circumstances that we all currently face.

Thank you for all that you do for your school.



Debbi Botham
Governance Development Officer
Diocese of Brentwood

A: Cathedral House, Ingrave Road, Brentwood, Essex, CM15 8AT
T: 01277 265284
E: debbibotham@dioceseofbrentwood.org

This is an optional service, sent twice a term. If you prefer NOT to receive this chairs mailing please e-mail sophierussell@dioceseofbrentwood.org with the subject heading UNSUBSCRIBE; please include your name and school.