



## BRENTWOOD DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE

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

April 2021

Dear chair

Welcome back to the start of the summer term of what has been a very testing period for all schools across the country. I hope that you all managed a well-earned break during the Easter period. Thank you for all the great work you are doing to support our Catholic schools.

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.

### **Diocese of Brentwood News**

#### *Mental Health and Wellbeing*

I am delighted to confirm that the Mental Health and Well-Being page on our website is now live for use. Here you will find [a wealth of links to useful resources](#).

BDES have worked with Brentwood Catholic Children's Society ([BCCS](#)) on a [resource to support school staff during the return to school](#). This is something we are hoping staff will access individually to allow time for reflection. It is entitled [Strength in the Community: Catholic School Life](#)

#### *Code of Conduct*

Don't forget that all governors are expected to sign the Code of Conduct on an annual basis and uphold the [Seven Principles of Public Life](#) (the Nolan principles). The Code of Conduct sets out clear expectations of the role and behaviour required from all school governors and trustees in order for the governing board to properly carry out its work.

If you have not already done so, the Diocese recommends that you adopt/adapt the [Catholic Education Service Code of Conduct](#) (they have 3 versions for different types of school). The Code of Conduct should be reviewed and agreed at the first full governing body meeting of the autumn term each year, but **please remember that new governors should sign the Code of Conduct when they are appointed.**

#### *Section 48/Catholic School Inspections*

Catholic School Inspections in Brentwood will not be resumed until the Autumn term 2021. When Catholic School Inspections are resumed in Brentwood, they will take place under the current framework until September 2022 when the new CSI becomes mandatory.

#### *Updates to CES Guidance Document*

CES have updated their [Guidance for Governors – Recruitment and Application](#)

[Forms – Notes to Applicants](#) In addition to a general update of the guidance documents, the following key changes have been made:

### Guidance for Governors - Recruitment

- The requirement for teachers who have lived/worked overseas to provide a letter of professional standing; and
- Changes to right to work checks following Brexit.

### Application Forms – Notes to Applicants

- Changes to the right to work section to reflect current immigration law and
- Updates to the Rehabilitation of Offenders – Disclosure Form section to reflect legislative changes made in November 2020.

Please ensure relevant HR Personnel are informed.

## Governor Development

### Webinars

#### **Diocese of Brentwood Conference for Governors – now virtual for 2021**

Due to ongoing safety concerns, we have decided to run the July 2021 Governors' Conference via Zoom, with interactive webinars held over 2 mornings:



<b>Friday 2 July 2021</b>	
9:15	Welcome: Rob Simpson Director
9:30	<b>Webinar:</b> Holding school leaders to account (Rosemary Lovatt, NLG and NLG Advocate for East of England and NE London)
10:45	Break
11:00	<b>Webinar:</b> Supporting staff wellbeing – some practical suggestions (Cathy McKenna, Secondary Link Adviser)
12:15	Address by Bishop Alan
12:30	Close



<b>Monday 5 July 2021</b>	
9:15	Welcome: Rob Simpson, Director
9:30	<b>Webinar:</b> SEND – Responsibilities and Accountability of Governors and Trustees ( <a href="#">Professor Adam Boddison, Chief Executive at the National Association for Special Educational Needs</a> )
10:45	Break
11:00	<b>Webinar:</b> The New CSI (Catholic Schools Inspection Framework) – what governors need to know (Maria Shepherd, Deputy Director)
12:15	Closing Address: Maria Shepherd, Deputy Director
12:30	Close

Delegates are able to book for either or for both mornings, but please note that places are limited to 100 delegates and will be allocated on a first come, first served basis. Should the conference be oversubscribed priority will be given to up to two governors from each school.

To [book Friday 2 July 2021](#)

To [book Monday 5 July 2021](#)

#### **NEW Safeguarding Children (webinar for school governors)**

I am delighted to confirm that we have arranged a further *Safeguarding Children* workshop for governors on **Monday 14 June 2021** (17:30-19:00). This workshop will run as a webinar and cover all the essential information you need to understand your statutory responsibilities. Suitable for all governors, but essential for those with a key responsibility for child protection and safeguarding, [you can book your place here](#)

#### *Finance, Budgets and Financial Monitoring Webinars*

We have arranged 2 webinars to provide governors with the knowledge to effectively lead strategic financial management within their schools. These webinars are suitable for all governors, but essential for those serving on a finance committee.

[To book webinar for maintained school governors](#): Tues 11 May 2021 17:30 -19:00

[To book webinar for governors in Academies/MATs](#): Wed 9 June 2021 17:30 -19:00

#### *Role of Trustees in a Catholic MAT*

This webinar is a short course intended for those new to the trustee role within a Catholic MAT (CMAT) or as a refresher for trust boards as part of their ongoing training requirements. The training on **27 April 2021** (17:00-18:30) will cover:

- Structure of MATs
- Role of Members
- Roles and Responsibilities of Trustees

The training will also provide an opportunity to look at sample trust board agendas; due diligence templates; and examples of Trust Vision documents. To book your place [please complete this form](#)

#### Face to face workshops

##### **NEW Clerking Specialist Committees**

The role of the clerk is crucial to governing board effectiveness. This half day workshop on **Tuesday 5 October 2021 (9:30-12:00 noon)** at Cathedral House in Brentwood, will help clerks in Diocese of Brentwood and Diocese of Chelmsford schools understand their key responsibilities around clerking specialist committees such as exclusions, disciplinary and complaints.

Facilitated by Anne Whelpdale, an experienced clerk in these matters, [you can book your place here](#)

#### *Annual Clerks' Conference (Essex Clerks' Association)*

This annual conference, run by the [Essex Clerks' Association](#), is always a useful event for clerks, and is taking place on **Tuesday 19 October 2021** at the JobServe Community Stadium, Colchester from 9.00am until after lunch [included] at around 1.00 p.m.

The guest speaker will be Pam Langmead, who is highly experienced and respected in school governance. Further details of the workshops will follow in due course, but clerks can reserve their place at [bookings@essexclerks.org](mailto:bookings@essexclerks.org)

### *Online learning through Gift-ED*

Governors who already have an access code for *Faithful Governance* can access the following courses as part of the Gift-ED library. Each are suitable for both governors in maintained schools and academies:

- Faithful Governance (for new and re-appointed governors)
- Engaging with Parents
- Preparing for Ofsted
- Headteacher Appraisal (for members of the headteacher appraisal committee)

The next course will focus on headteacher/deputy headteacher recruitment, and is due for release later this term.

Each school has been allocated up to 10 Gift-ED licences so if you would like to request access for further governors, please advise Sophie Russell of the governors you are nominating for your school [by using this link](#)

### **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 also work with 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](#).

### **Safeguarding Update**

#### *Sexual Abuse in schools*

The website *Everyone's Invited* has drawn much recent publicity for the shocking testimonials from over 10,000 people describing sexual abuse by other young people. As a result, the government has announced that they are launching a review into sexual abuse in schools.

As well as asking Ofsted to undertake an immediate review of safeguarding policies in state and independent schools, a new dedicated NSPCC helpline (**0800 136 663**) has been set up to provide children and adults who are potential victims of sexual abuse in schools with the appropriate support and advice as well as providing support for parents and professionals.

Andrew Hall, Safeguarding Consultant, [recommends that schools and governing bodies make sure that these steps are taken:](#)

- Make sure your safeguarding policy is clear about how concerns are reported and dealt with. NB This policy must be published on your school website
- Unpick your data – how are incidents reported? What has been done about them?
- Reassure parents

- Set up a targeted working group which includes SLT, your safeguarding team, the chair of governors and safeguarding governor. You may also wish to include your IT specialist.

Whilst this issue is probably more prevalent in secondary schools, there are occasions where sexual abuse by children has happened within primary schools. This is an important issue, not least because the [Internet Watch Foundation has found an increase in children abused online are being encouraged to abuse their siblings and friends](#). This will be a very difficult topic for parents and schools need to tread a very fine line. There should be a clear link with the RSE policy with a focus on talking about relationships, how boys and girls are taught to be respectful to each other and how any bullying is tackled (including any online).

#### *Domestic Abuse Bill – children to be legally defined as victims*

Although in the past children have been seen as 'witnesses' to domestic abuse, the new [Domestic Abuse Bill](#), will define children as 'victims' for the very first time. The Bill says that a victim of domestic abuse includes a reference to a child who sees or hears, or experiences the effects of the abuse, the adult is their parent or someone who has parental responsibility for the child, or who are related to them.

#### **Ofsted News**

##### *Ofsted's review of sexual abuse in schools*

Ofsted has published [plans for a review into safeguarding policies and practices relating to sexual abuse in schools](#) following anonymous testimonials of sexual abuse on the website *Everyone's Invited*. The review is aimed to conclude by the end of May 2021.

It will visit a sample of schools where cases have been highlighted to seek to find out whether schools have appropriate safeguarding processes in place. As well as talking to school leaders, pupils and students, Ofsted will look at how well systems of support are working and consider whether schools need further support in teaching about sex and relationships. It will also consider whether current guidance is understood by schools, and sufficient to help them respond effectively to allegations.

##### *School Inspections*

Ofsted have confirmed that their full programme of graded school inspections will resume in autumn 2021, with most schools not receiving an inspection until the programme of routine inspections restarts in September.

However, from 4 May, section 8 monitoring inspections of schools graded 'inadequate', and those graded 'requires improvement' at their last 2 consecutive full inspections will resume.

In line with their usual policy, where inspectors find evidence that an inadequate school has improved and is no longer inadequate, they will be able to convert this to a [section 5 \('full'\) inspection](#), which will be graded. Where inspectors find evidence that a 'requires improvement' school has improved, they will recommend that a full inspection is carried out before the end of the summer term.

They will continue to prioritise inspections of all schools where significant concerns are raised, when necessary. Ofsted will also inspect 'good' schools that, due to the pandemic, have not had an inspection within the statutory 5-year window. These will



be section 8 inspections and follow the usual approach to inspecting good schools, as outlined in the [section 8 school inspection handbook](#).

Unless significant concerns are raised, Ofsted will not inspect secondary schools in the first half of the summer term. This will allow leaders and staff to focus on assigning and submitting teacher-assessed grades. Secondary schools will be included in inspection schedules from 21 June.

## **DfE News**

### *Face coverings in secondary schools*

DfE has confirmed that face coverings should continue to be worn in secondary school classrooms as a precautionary measure when students return after the Easter break to help limit the risk of transmission, as twice weekly testing is established and embedded in pupil's routines. It is expected that face coverings will no longer be required to be worn in classrooms, or by students in other communal areas, at step 3 of the roadmap, which will be no earlier than 17 May 2021. Any changes will be confirmed with one week's notice.

### *Early Careers Framework (ECF) Reforms*

DfE have [published details on the offer available to early career teachers](#) and how this will be developed for national roll-out.

### *SFVS Returns*

To take account of the current pressures faced by schools, the [SFVS return for maintained schools has been delayed this year](#). For the financial year 2020 to 2021, schools should submit their SFVS to their local authority **no later than 28 May 2021**.

### *Catch up Plans*

DfE has confirmed that they are [considering a five-term year and changes to summer holidays](#) to help pupils in England catch up on lost learning.

### *Pupil Premium*

As part of the [pupil premium allocations and conditions of grant for 2021 to 2022](#), all schools are now required to:

- demonstrate, from the next academic year, how their spending decisions are informed by research evidence (condition 7)
- use the [strategy statement templates](#) to publish their pupil premium strategy (condition 8). All schools must use these templates to publish their 2021 to 2022 pupil premium strategy, by the end of December 2021. DfE will undertake monitoring checks on a sample of schools' published reports.

Given their role in ensuring schools spend funding appropriately and in holding school leaders to account for educational performance, governors and trustees should scrutinise schools' plans for and use of their pupil premium funding and ensure these are published on the school website.

### *PE and Sport Premium*

DfE has [updated guidance on conditions of the grant 2020-2021](#). As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, DfE allowed any unspent grant to be carried forward into the 2021-2021 academic year. Any underspends will need to be spent in full by the end of the 2020 to 2021 academic year and schools should factor this into their 2020-2021 [PE and sport premium](#) spending plans.

## **Latest Research**

*Measuring the disadvantage gap in 16-19 education*

[Research by The Education Policy Institute \(EPI\)](#) suggests lower GCSE grades, then fewer and lower level qualifications aged 16-19, causes a 'disadvantage gap' for poorer students, though this is not the case in some London areas.

The EPI looked at students' free school meal status during their last six years of school and their attainment, based on qualifications and grades between the end of secondary school and by the age of 19. It finds the gap is bigger in A-levels than vocational qualifications. Recommendations include targeted support to address learning losses caused by the pandemic, which is likely to impact the poorest students the most.

*Experiences of disabled children and their families during lockdown 3*

[A lockdown report by the Disabled Children's Partnership](#), a major coalition of more than 80 organisations campaigning for improved health and social care for disabled children, young people and their families, revealed that parents reported a detrimental impact of their child's disability during a time of reduced level of informal and formal support at home during the pandemic.

Three-quarters of families reported delays to routine health appointments for their disabled child. Over half (51%) of families stated that these delays had a negative impact on their child's condition. As a result of these delays, families reported additional problems with: anxiety and behaviour (70%), sleep (66%) and loneliness (65%). More than 3 in 10 families (34%) felt their disabled child had depression. The situation is compounded for those children accessing support for their disability via their nursery, school, college or placement with 70% or more children unable to access their usual therapies.

*The Big Ask*

Millions of children across England are being asked to contribute to [an anonymous survey, The Big Ask, about their hopes and ambitions for the future and what is holding them back](#). Children's Commissioner for England Dame Rachel de Souza says the results will inform a review aimed at tackling 'generational problems that have held back too many children for decades'.

Thank you for all that you do for your school. 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