



BRENTWOOD DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE

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

September 2021

Dear chair

Welcome back to the start of the new academic year. I hope you managed to enjoy some time over the summer to refresh and relax to recharge your batteries for the forthcoming academic year.

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 am sure it will be another busy school year and challenges due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic remain. [DfE updated guidance for schools during coronavirus](#) on 27 August as well as [Contingency framework: education and childcare settings](#) and [SEND and specialist settings: additional COVID-19 operational guidance](#)

Here's hoping for a much smoother term but please make sure school safety measures are kept under review.

Diocese of Brentwood News

Diocesan Protocol for VA schools and academies in the Diocese of Brentwood

The newly published [Diocesan Protocol for VA schools and academies in the Diocese of Brentwood](#) explains and exemplifies the relationship between the Diocesan Bishop and the schools of the diocese, building on the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that has existed in the diocese for a good number of years.

The document provides clarity about what is expected from governors and school leaders in their roles and is intended to be a 'go to' reference document that schools will use to help them to work closely with the diocese in order to maintain and preserve Catholic education.

Wellbeing and Mental Health

Is wellbeing a regular agenda item at your full governing body meeting? [This document signposts to useful mental health and wellbeing resources](#)

Considering sensitive issues around Gender, Sex and Relationships within the context of safeguarding (webinar)

Commissioned by the Diocese of Brentwood in response to a number of queries from schools, this webinar will provide delegates with an understanding of matters raised by 'Everyone's Invited' and transgender issues whilst setting these areas within a much broader general safeguarding context.

We are running two identical twilight sessions, suitable for headteachers, chairs of governors and senior leaders and strongly recommend that all schools are represented.

The sessions are taking place on:

Tuesday 14 September 2021 (16:30-18:00) [to book](#)

Monday 4 October 2021 (16:30-18:00) [to book](#)

Both events will be facilitated by Tracey Eldringe-Hinners, a Senior Associate Solicitor from Winckworth Sherwood. The session will encourage interaction, discussion and the sharing of best practice. The cost of this training session is subsidised by the Diocese and each school can have two delegates in attendance. The cost for the first delegate is £25 and the second delegate is free.

Section 48 Inspections

As you are aware, these will resume under our current framework from the end of October/beginning of November 2021. Schools will be given 5 working days' notice of inspection; they will be one- day inspections (Primary), usually with one inspector (unless a shadow is present). We will begin with those furthest back.

We have now been notified that the DFE will allow a maximum of 8 years for dioceses to 'catch their inspections up'. It likely that we will have caught all schools up within a 7- year period and once you have been re-inspected, the 5 year limit comes back into effect. Any inspection taking place after September 2022 will be under the new CSI framework.

NEW Handbook for New Chairs

We have developed a handbook for new chairs to give chairs in our Catholic schools the key information they need to be effective in their role. The handbook will be sent electronically to all chairs in the autumn term and thereafter to new chairs when they are appointed.

Governor Development

Webinars

NEW Racial Justice Conference- hold the date

We are putting together essential input on anti-racism that is relevant for all headteachers and chairs of governors. This full day webinar will take place on **23 November 2021** (9:30-15:30) and include a host of international speakers with different perspectives. More information and booking details will follow shortly.

NEW Exclusion – the role of the governing body

This is a very important role and it is vital that all involved are clear about the procedures and protocols that must be followed. The webinar, led by Julie Keating, Education Access Manager at Essex County Council on **Monday 15 November 2021** (17:30-19:30) will look at the [statutory guidance relating to exclusions](#) and explore the legal responsibilities of the governing body.

[You can book your place here](#)

NEW Maintaining and Improving the Premises and Sites of Catholic Schools

A new webinar *Maintaining and Improving the Premises and Sites of Catholic Schools* has been arranged - particularly useful for chairs and those governors responsible for premises issues, whether in a maintained school or academy. You can book your place here [28 Sept 2021](#) or [12 Oct 2021](#)

NEW Changes to Ofsted Framework (webinar for school governors)

This webinar on **Wednesday 1 December 2021** (17:30-19:30) will give governors an important overview of the new Ofsted framework, which comes into force on 1 September 2021, and the implications for governors and trustees. This includes key changes on responsibilities around safeguarding and tackling sexual harassment, abuse and violence among children and young people. [Book your place here](#)

NEW Safeguarding Children (webinar for school governors)

The next *Safeguarding Children* workshop will run as a webinar on **Monday 17 January 2022** (17:30-19:00) and cover all the essential information needed to understand your statutory responsibilities. It is important that all governors are aware of their responsibilities for child protection and safeguarding - [you can book your place here](#)

Now being run as a webinar:

Induction – Being an Effective Governor in a Catholic School

We are still not able to access Cathedral House and with the upcoming uncertainties of possibly rising Covid numbers after the return to school the decision has been taken to run this session as a webinar (over Zoom) instead of a face to face session. This session will still be held on **Saturday 9 October (10:00- 13:00)**. Designed for new governors, the workshop will help governors gain confidence and knowledge of the three core functions of governance within a Catholic setting.

Facilitated by John Adams, Secondary RE Adviser and Debbi Botham, Diocesan Governance Development Officer, governors can [book their place here](#)

Online learning through Gift-ED

Governors who already have an access code for *Faithful Governance* will now be able to view a new course **Curriculum for Governors** as part of the Gift-ED library. Each school has been allocated up to 5 Gift-ED licences so if you would like to request access to the Gift ED library of online courses for further governors, please advise Sophie Russell [by using this link](#)

The next two courses to be released later in the autumn term will be:

- Appointing headteachers and deputy headteachers
- Appointing Heads of RE

Governor Recruitment

Foundation governor vacancies are advertised through the Diocesan website. 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](#).

Academy News

New Academies Trust Handbook

The 2021 edition of the Academies Financial Handbook, which came into effect on 1 September 2021, has been published. It has been renamed [The Academies Trust Handbook](#) with changes to the previous edition summarised on page 9.

Suitability Checks

Chairs of trustees in academy trusts must [complete a suitability check](#) as soon as they are appointed. This is in addition to any checks arranged locally by the academy trust such as proof of practicing Catholic status. ESFA conducts suitability checks to support the safeguarding requirements set out in legislation.

If your trust has recently appointed a new chair of trustees who has not yet applied for a suitability check, they should do this without delay. If an existing chair of trustees' term of office has recently been extended, and they did not receive a check when originally appointed, please ensure they [apply for a suitability check now](#).

Guidance for trust partnerships published

DfE has published non-statutory [guidance](#) and a [model service level agreement](#) (SLA) for trust partnerships, a time-limited arrangement between a school and academy trust that allows them to explore how a permanent arrangement might work. Trust boards may wish to consider this option to support other schools in a 'try before they buy' arrangement.

The SLA can be adapted to individual circumstances. For example, for schools to collaborate and their share expertise with a trust or for a school to receive school improvement support. Funding towards a partnership is a new support element for standalone schools eligible for the 2021 to 2022 [Trust and School Improvement Offer](#).

Safeguarding Update

Keeping Children Safe in Education Sept 2021


The final version of [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (KCSIE) 2021 has now been published and has come into effect.

As expected, one area that has been extensively revised in KCSIE is peer-on-peer sexual abuse in schools. Paragraph 18 says, *'All staff should be able to reassure victims that they are being taken seriously and that they will be supported and kept safe. A victim should never be given the impression that they are creating a problem by reporting abuse, sexual violence or sexual harassment. Nor should a victim ever be made to feel ashamed for making a report.'*

Schools will need to update their safeguarding and child protection policies so that it reflects the whole school approach to peer on peer abuse in its many forms. The policy should clearly set out its reporting systems as set out at paragraph 8.3: *'Where there is a safeguarding concern, governing bodies, proprietors and school or college leaders should ensure the child's wishes and feelings are taken into account when determining what action to take and what services to provide. Systems should be in place, and they should be well promoted, easily understood and easily accessible for children to confidently report abuse, knowing their concerns will be treated seriously, and knowing they can safely express their views and give feedback.'*

The Diocesan guidance [Safeguarding – A whole-school response to Everyone's Invited](#) summarises the actions that all schools should now be taking to meet this challenge.

Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools Sept 2021
In addition, a new version of [Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges](#) has also been published, ready to come into force in September 2021.

	<p>Make sure that the KCSIE 2021 changes are reflected in your school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Set aside time to read the detail, particularly Part 4 (low-level concerns) and Part 5 (Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment)• Review the staff CPD programme to ensure that the new information and topics are covered appropriately. Ensure especially that peer-on-peer abuse, sexual violence and sexual harassment and harmful sexual behaviour is understood and acted upon by all staff• Check that the following policies are updated - safeguarding and child protection - staff code of conduct - online safety - behaviour policy - safeguarding arrangements for the hire of school premises are set out in the hire agreement (see paragraphs 155/156)• Check that your safer recruitment processes are compliant (see Part Four)• Check that child protection records include all the statutory requirements (see paragraph 71)• Consider how barriers to reporting could be overcome for children with SEND or physical health issues
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Ofsted News

Ofsted's review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges

Ofsted have [published their findings and recommendations of sexual harassment and sexual violence in schools, including online sexual abuse](#) finding that sexual harassment, including online sexual abuse, has become 'normalised' for children and young people. This is an important report which is likely to set the agenda for safeguarding in schools for some time.

School and college leaders should create a culture where sexual harassment and online sexual abuse are not tolerated, and where they identify issues and intervene early to better protect children and young people.

In order to do this, they should assume that sexual harassment and online sexual abuse are happening in their setting, even when there are no specific reports, and put in place a whole-school approach to address them.

This is **not** just an issue for secondary schools. Some of the unwanted and unacceptable behaviours are seen in primary schools, so the responses to them are setting the foundations for later.



Key recommendations include:

- a carefully sequenced RSHE curriculum, based on DfE statutory guidance, that specifically includes sexual harassment and sexual violence, including online. This should include time for open discussion of topics that children and young people tell us they find particularly difficult, such as consent
- in primary schools the RSHE curriculum focuses ‘on boundaries and privacy, ensuring young people understand that they have rights over their own bodies. This should also include understanding boundaries in friendships with peers and also in families and with others, in all contexts, including online...At all stages it will be important to balance teaching children about making sensible decisions to stay safe (including online) whilst being clear it is never the fault of a child who is abused and why victim blaming is always wrong.’
- high-quality training for teachers delivering RSHE
- training to ensure that staff and governors are able to better understand the definitions of sexual harassment and sexual violence (including online sexual abuse), identify early signs of peer-on-peer sexual abuse and consistently uphold standards in their responses to sexual harassment and online sexual abuse
- routine record-keeping and analysis of sexual harassment and sexual violence, including online, to identify patterns and intervene early to prevent abuse
- a behavioural approach, including sanctions when appropriate, to reinforce a culture where sexual harassment and online sexual abuse are not tolerated
- working closely with Local Safeguarding Partnerships (LSPs) in the area where the school or college is located so they are aware of the range of support available to children and young people who are victims or who perpetrate harmful sexual behaviour
- support for designated safeguarding leads (DSLs), such as protected time in timetables to engage with LSPs

Ofsted handbook changes from 1st September 2021

Ofsted has updated their [Education Inspection Handbooks](#) clarifying, amongst other things, how inspectors will assess how schools and colleges tackle sexual harassment, abuse and violence among children and young people.

Inspectors will expect schools and college leaders to assume that sexual harassment, online sexual abuse and sexual violence are happening in and around their school, even when there are no specific reports, and to have put in place a whole-school approach to address them.

A clear line of enquiry for governing bodies will be around the RSE curriculum.

Inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills (Ofsted, September 2021

Ofsted has published an [updated version of Inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills](#) to align it to the latest version of KCSIE. It should be read alongside the Education Inspection Framework.

Inspectors will pay close attention to how school leaders adapted approaches to safeguarding during the pandemic to make sure that vulnerable pupils were prioritised for face-to-face education in school and whether safeguarding procedures remained effective for those receiving remote education, as well as those attending school.



Please make sure at least one of your governors attends the [Changes to Ofsted Framework webinar for school governors](#) on **Wednesday 1 December 2021** (17:30-19:30)

SEND

An Ofsted report has found that children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) have been disproportionately affected by pandemic
You can [read the report, 'SEND: old issues, new issues, next steps', in full.](#)

Many of you attended the [presentation by Professor Adam Boddison](#) at our recent virtual Governors' Conference where he emphasised these key actions for governing bodies:



- Do you have a SEND governor to oversee the school's arrangements for SEND? (p92 of SEND Code of Practice)
- Ensure your SEND governor is familiar with chapter 6 of the [SEND Code of Practice](#) (Jan 2015) – including the 4 broad areas of need
- The governing body should ask itself 'What are the most prevalent primary areas of SEND need in our school?' How does this compare nationally and regionally?
- Does this routinely feed into your strategic decision-making?
- Is your SENco part of the SLT? (p108)

DfE News

PE and Sports Premium

The Government has confirmed that funding will continue for the next academic year. Any under-spends carried forward from the 2019 to 2020 academic year will need to be spent in full by 31 July 2022. Boards will need to take this into consideration when monitoring this funding stream.

DfE have [updated guidance on how school leaders can use their pupil premium funding effectively.](#)

For 2021 to 2022, schools are required to:

- use their [recovery premium](#) alongside their pupil premium funding and report on their use of them as a single sum in their [strategy statement](#)
- use this [template](#) to publish their strategy statement - see condition 8 of the conditions of grant

- publish their strategy statement by **31 December 2021** - this enables schools to take the needs of their new intake into account
- demonstrate how their spending decisions are informed by a range of evidence

Early Years Foundation Stage Framework

The [new early years foundation stage \(EYFS\) framework](#) was published on the 31 March 2021 and should be used by all Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) providers in England from September 2021.

Governing bodies will wish to assure themselves that the school is ready to implement the revised framework and staff have received the necessary training. The aim is to strengthen the early year's curriculum, assessment and practice, to improve outcomes for all children and close the gap for disadvantaged children. This is particularly crucial in light of the current pandemic.

DfE says it has reformed the EYFS framework to transform early year's curriculum and assessment, focusing on what matters most for children's outcomes:

A strong and holistic curriculum that puts early language at its heart

There is a focus on early language development and vocabulary throughout the new EYFS framework as there is a national target on improving early language and literacy for all children. Vocabulary is recognised as a key indicator of children's success in school and in later life.

Reduction in workload

A reduced workload for staff is envisaged through a streamlined and effective process, with a revised EYFS profile and removal of statutory local authority moderation. Spending time interacting with the children, rather than documenting evidence of learning and analysing data, is a key thread throughout the EYFS reforms. Relationships with parents and the two way flow of information remains important.

A new requirement to support good oral health

This could include talking to children and parents about the importance of brushing teeth, a healthy balanced diet, not eating sugary foods throughout the day and discouraging bottle feeding from 12 months.

This year has been a particularly difficult and challenging time for the early years sector, with children's learning being disrupted across all ages. The intended aims of the reforms will provide a powerful basis for supporting children's wellbeing through and beyond COVID-19.

Phonics Screening Check

Cancellation of the phonics screening check in June 2021 means incoming year 2 pupils will not have taken the check in year 1. As in the 2020/21 academic year, it will be statutory for schools to administer a past version of the check to year 2 pupils during the second half of the 2021 autumn term. Year 2 pupils who do not meet the expected standard in the autumn check will be expected to take the statutory check in June 2022.

Incoming year 3 pupils, who were due to take the statutory check in June 2021 are not required to take the autumn check. Schools are expected to maintain a

programme of support for these pupils, which should be informed by formative assessment.

Early Career Teachers

[Induction and support for new teachers is changing from September 2021](#), as part of the wider government teacher recruitment and retention strategy, which aims to improve the training and development opportunities available for all teachers, including those who are new to the profession. Formerly referred to as 'newly qualified teachers' (NQTs) early career teachers will be entitled to a two year funded programme of support (currently one year), with clear parameters for what individuals should learn about and have an opportunity to put into practice during their first two years in the classroom.

New teachers are entitled to 10% timetable reduction in their first year, this will continue to be the case but there is a new, funded, entitlement to a 5% reduction in teaching time during the second year. There is a strong focus in the Early Career Framework that new teachers will 'learn that' and 'learn how to', so that concepts introduced and learnt are then applied in a practical way within the classroom.

If your school employs an early career teacher (ECT) from September 2021 the statutory induction process will need to change.


The 'induction for early career teachers' statutory guidance sets out that the governing body:

- should ensure compliance with the requirement to have regard to this guidance
- should be satisfied that the institution has the capacity to support the ECT
- should ensure the headteacher/principal is fulfilling their responsibility to meet the requirements of a suitable post for induction
- must investigate concerns raised by an individual ECT as part of the institution's agreed grievance procedures
- can seek guidance from the Appropriate Body on the quality of the institution's induction arrangements and the roles and responsibilities of staff involved in the process
- can request general reports on the progress of an ECT

Careers guidance and access for education and training providers - statutory guidance for schools

DfE has updated the [statutory guidance on careers education in schools](#). The role of the governing body in a secondary setting is to provide clear advice and guidance on which the school can base a strategic careers plan, developed in line with the Gatsby Benchmarks, which meets the legal or contractual requirements of the school.

Page 13 of the guidance sets out the responsibilities of the governing body in more detail.

	Do you have a member of the governing body (secondary schools) who leads on taking a strategic interest in careers education and guidance and encourages employer engagement?
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Latest Research

The Forgotten: how white working class pupils have been let down, and how to change it

The Education Committee's report [The forgotten: how White working-class pupils have been let down, and how to change it](#), highlights the educational underachievement of white pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds including white working class pupils.

Music education in schools in England

Ofsted's [review of research into factors that influence the quality of music education in schools](#) found that we should not be satisfied with just having music on the timetable. Schools need to be ambitious about what they expect for music in the classroom and make sure that time is well used. Ofsted plans to publish a report on the quality of the music curriculum taught in schools in 2022 following subject 'deep dives' during inspections under the Education Inspection Framework.

An [updated version of the school governors' guide to Music Education](#) by Arts Council England (ACE) in partnership with the National Governors Association (NGA) and Music Mark includes questions that the governing body can ask.

Thank you for all that you do for your school.

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