



BRENTWOOD DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE

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

April 2022

Dear chair

Welcome back to the start of the summer term. I hope you have had a restful break and are still feeling the joys of Eastertide, coming back refreshed for the term ahead.

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

REMINDER *Commissioning of Foundation Governors by Bishop Alan*

Don't forget to book your place at the commissioning event at **Brentwood Cathedral on Monday 16 May 2022 (18:30-19:30)**. Governors and MAT trustees will be commissioned directly by Bishop Alan, who they represent on governing bodies of Catholic schools.

Bishop Alan wants to meet and commission all Foundation Governors who are currently in post, but please note that **this event is for those who are new to the role or who were unable to attend a previous commissioning**. Those who attended a previous commissioning event are not expected to attend again.

Other governors serving in our Catholic schools who would like to attend are also very welcome to be part of this unique event. We look forward to welcoming you together with governors and trustees from your school. To book your place please [complete this form](#)

Admissions Update

Please can you ensure that your school is following appropriate Catholic guidance and you are not in breach of the Schools Admission Code. The best way to ensure this is by using the model CES policies on admissions.

Diocesan advice has consistently required the use of [CES Model Admissions policies](#). **This position has not changed**. Each year however we still get the same questions that arise about admissions and inevitably there is always some uncertainty about the use of the Certificate of Catholic Practice. [This update clarifies the position for schools not oversubscribed with Catholics](#)

Please also note that DfE has updated the **School Admissions Code**. This is [statutory guidance](#) that schools must follow when carrying out duties relating to school admissions.

Consultation on the Religious Education Curriculum Directory (RECD) 2022
The [consultation on the Religious Education Curriculum directory is now open](#). The closing date for the consultation is **20 May 2022**.

A [video is also available which provides an introduction to the RECD](#). The video has been prepared by Philip Robinson RE Adviser for the CES.

Permanent Exclusions

Governors serving on a panel to review the headteacher's decision to exclude a pupil may find this [checklist](#) (based on the Essex Aide Memoire for decision-making) useful.

Excluding a child from school is subject to statutory guidance and is a legal process. We would always advise checking latest guidance to see if your letters are up to date. Here are quick links to the various guidance:

[School suspensions and permanent exclusions](#)

[School complaints procedures: guidance for maintained schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)


[Setting up an academies complaints procedure - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Please note that the temporary Covid-19 arrangements regarding the use of remote access technology for meetings of governing boards and independent review panels (IRPs) has now ended, though DfE has [recently been seeking views](#) on revised exclusion guidance that could make virtual meetings a permanent option in any circumstances.

Greener Governance - Taking Care of our Common Home

As you know, the Catholic Bishops' Conference issued a letter to primary schools for Pentecost 2021 which includes the following excerpt:

'We all have a responsibility to take care of our common home, and you can make that change through your choices as an individual in your home, school, parish and local community. Recycling materials correctly, reducing food waste, not wasting water, switching the lights off and thinking about the way you travel to school. Young people are passionate about making these important changes. Not only are you probably already doing them, but through your actions you are also educating others around you!'

	<p>Reflect: How 'green' is your school?</p> <p>Do you regularly discuss these issues and seek to improve your school's carbon footprint?</p> <p>Has your GB made a 'Greener Governance' pledge to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• reduce carbon at your school or trust• put your school's or trust's contribution to environmental sustainability on the agenda• ensure a climate action plan is developed in 2022 to make this happen
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The DfE have published [top tips for sustainability in schools](#)

Governors serving on Premises committees may be interested in attending our webinar *Understanding, Managing and Reducing a School's Energy Consumption* (**Wed 27 April 2022, 16:30-18:00**) where Matt Fulford of Inspired Efficiency will discuss how to understand, manage and reduce a school's energy consumption. Matt will also explain how energy consultants such as Inspired Efficiency can help schools. To register for this webinar please follow this [link](#)

School governor monitoring visits

Many governors and trustees have once again started to experience school life, culture and ethos first-hand. While governing bodies need to be mindful of ongoing disruption related to COVID-19, now is a suitable time to agree or review a schedule of visits that aligns with your school's strategic priorities:

- Review any link governor/trustee responsibilities to ensure these roles are effective and well understood
- Review your school visits policy and report template, schedule to support your planning. [BDES has a model visits policy that you can use or adapt](#)

Save the date: We are planning a workshop *Making Effective Governor Visits* on **Wednesday 12 October 2022**. Booking available soon.

Governing Body Effectiveness – annual reflection and self-review

An annual review of skills and regular self-evaluation and review of individuals' contributions to the governing body is essential to ensure the board continues to have the people and leadership it needs to remain effective. This is an important part of succession planning.

BDES has developed a [model self-review tool](#) to help governing bodies assess the contribution of governors and to ensure the board makes best use of the skills and experience of governors/trustees. You are welcome to adapt this for use by your own governing body. The recommendation is that governing bodies complete this as part of the annual calendar of business; the summer term meeting is a good time to do this.

NGA '20 questions'

You may also be interested to note that [NGA have refreshed their popular 20 Questions \(21 for Academies\) to help governing bodies self-evaluate their effectiveness and better reflect changes in governance](#). Although still called 'questions', they are now statements, giving more opportunity for discussion.

There are now 3 versions available:

- 20 questions (single schools)
- 21 questions (Trust Boards)
- 16 questions (Academy LGCs)

Academy News

CMAT News

The [summer term CMAT News](#), which shares information about MATs and academies across the Diocese of Brentwood, is now available.

As you know, the Bishop's vision and the wider Diocesan plan is for all schools within our Diocese to become part of deanery based multi academy trusts. The

Brentwood Diocese CMAT [key document](#) reflects the journey we have been on and looks to the future as we see it for Catholic education.

Congratulations to the following school who became an academy in a Diocesan Catholic Multi Academy Trust on 1 April 2022:

Our Lady of Grace Catholic Trust
St Winefride's Catholic Primary School, Manor Park

Governor Development

Webinars

NEW DATE *Induction – Being an Effective Governor in a Catholic School*

The next Induction webinar will take place on **Monday 23 May 2022** (16:30-19:00). Especially useful for new governors, the webinar will also benefit governors wishing to refresh their knowledge about the role and will help governors gain confidence and knowledge of the 3 core functions of governance within a Catholic setting. To [book your place please complete this form](#)

NEW *Refresher on Good Estate Management in Schools*

Our webinar [Refresher on Good Estate Management for Schools](#) on **Wed 11 May 2022** (6:30-18:00) will give school leaders and governors with property responsibilities an overview of the information held in the DfE [Good Estate Management for Schools](#) (GEMS) manual. To [book your place](#)

AMENDED DATE *Maintaining and Improving the Premises and Sites of Catholic Schools*

Following this popular session last year, a premises webinar has been arranged for **Thursday 30 June 2022 (17:30-19:00)**. This webinar is particularly useful for chairs and those governors responsible for premises issues, whether in a maintained school or academy. You can [book your place here](#).

NEW DATE *Role of Trustees in a Catholic MAT*

This webinar on **Monday 20 June 2022** (17:00-18:30) is 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.

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 will cover:

- What are the basics of good governance?
- How Trust Boards work
- The core functions of a Catholic multi academy trust board

Facilitator: Stephen Adamson, Diocesan MAT Development Officer. [To book your place please use this form](#)

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

The next *Safeguarding Children* workshop will run as a webinar on **Monday 26 September 2022** (17:30-19:00) and cover all the essential information needed to understand your statutory responsibilities. It is so important that all governors are aware of their responsibilities for child protection and safeguarding, especially new governors as part of their induction, and governors with a lead for monitoring safeguarding in your school. [You can book your place here](#).

NEW SEND – Responsibilities and Accountability of Governors and Trustees

All governing bodies [have important legal duties in relation to pupils with SEND](#) including monitoring to ensure the SENCO has sufficient time and resources to carry out their role effectively. This webinar on **Tuesday 4 October 2022** (18:00-19:30) will explore the responsibilities and accountabilities of all governors and trustees, as well as the role of the governor with a lead responsibility for SEND, sharing good practice around monitoring SEND provision. Led by [Professor Adam Boddison](#), you can [book your 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 **Appointing Heads of RE** as part of the Gift-ED library.

There are currently 159 active learners, with the Gift-ED library continuing to grow. As well as *Faithful Governance* (for new and reappointed governors), the library includes the following online courses, specifically for governors in the Diocese of Brentwood:

- Engaging with parents
- Preparing for Ofsted
- Curriculum for governors
- Appointing the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher
- Appointing Heads of RE
- Headteacher Appraisal (for members of the headteacher appraisal panel)



Each school has been allocated at least 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 [Evangeline Poku](#) by using this link

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.

Schools looking to recruit Foundation Governors may also be interested in our [flyer](#) to distribute to parents and the local Catholic community. [Get in touch](#) if you would like a word version to adapt for your school.

Do you know of someone who may be interested in becoming a Foundation Governor at one of our schools? If so, we would love to hear from them.

 <p>“Putting faith into action using my skills, knowledge and experience in a way that supports the development of our children.”</p> <p>Timothy, St Joseph's Primary School</p>	<p>Who can be a Foundation Governor?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• must be over 18 and a practicing Catholic. <p>Click here to find out further information about being a Foundation Governor</p>
 <p>“It’s a stimulating and rewarding role which allows me to give back to the school that gave me an excellent start in life.”</p> <p>Ian, St Mary's Catholic Primary School</p>	<p>What is the application process?</p> <p>Here you can find an application form to become a foundation governor in the Diocese of Brentwood and a list of current vacancies</p> <p>Application forms should be emailed to debbibotham@dioceseofbrentwood.org</p>

Safeguarding Update

Guide to DBS Checks

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) has recently created a useful animated [‘Guide to DBS checks’](#) and [accompanying leaflet](#).

Ofsted News

Raising the quality of PE and school sport

Ofsted has highlighted factors that contribute to a high quality school physical education (PE) curriculum in a [research review](#) published this week.

PE, together with school sport and other physical activity, supports pupils’ mental health, social wellbeing and wider development. Effective delivery can offer opportunities rich in personal development as well as creating opportunities for increased overall attainment.

The emerging picture on education recovery

Ofsted’s [latest briefing](#) on education recovery highlights clear signs of improvements but expresses concern on the impact of high levels of absence on pupil mental health and behaviour. Ofsted chief inspector Amanda Spielman said she was “particularly worried about younger children’s development”. The report emphasises the continuing impact on communication and language development as well as the negative implications for children’s personal, social and emotional development.

However, the report does indicate that school leaders are responding well by putting measures in place including staff modelling positive behaviour to develop the youngest pupils’ understanding of sharing and listening skills and creating calm atmospheres where possible.

DfE News

White paper – Opportunity for all: strong schools with great teachers for your child
DfE has set out proposals for future legislation in their new white paper [Opportunity for all: strong schools with great teachers for your child](#)

Please see the attachment for a summary of the key points.

SEND Review: right support, right place, right time

DfE is seeking views on their long awaited [SEND Review proposals](#). The [consultation](#) closes on 1 July 2022.

The review identifies 3 key challenges facing the SEND and alternative provision system:

1. Navigating the SEND system and alternative provision is not a positive experience for too many children, young people and their families.
2. Outcomes for children and young people with SEND or in alternative provision are consistently worse than their peers across every measure.
3. Despite the continuing and unprecedented investment, the system is not financially sustainable.

Proposals include a national SEND and alternative provision system, setting national standards and new local SEND partnerships. The importance of the relationship between the governing board and the SENCo is also emphasised as key to the effective governance of SEND and ensuring positive outcomes for children and young people with SEND.

Providing remote education – guidance for schools

The temporary provisions in the Coronavirus Act 2020 expired on 24 March 2022. As a result the [Remote Education \(England\) Temporary Continuity \(No.2\) direction](#) no longer has effect.

[This document provides non-statutory guidance to schools on maintaining their capabilities to deliver high quality remote education](#) in cases where it is not possible or contrary to government guidance for some or all pupils to attend face-to-face education. Please note that remote education should only ever be considered as a short-term measure and as a last resort where in person attendance is not possible. This guidance is effective from 29 March 2022.

All schools to have high-speed internet by 2025

[DfE have announced that all schools will be able to access high-speed internet by 2025](#), with schools most in need of WiFi upgrades to benefit from £150 million in government funding. The Education Secretary, Nadhim Zahawi, has also shared plans to publish a set of technology standards aiming to support schools and colleges in understanding which technologies they should have in place to best support effective teaching.

The announcement follows the recent publication of a DfE report exploring the relationship between schools' digital maturity and attainment. Using data from the education technology (EdTech) survey: 2020 to 2021, the report found that just 9% of schools were classified as being digitally mature.

Secretary of State's letter to LAs about Ukrainian children school admissions

In a letter to local authorities (LAs), the Secretary of State for Education has set out his expectation that LAs will work with families arriving from Ukraine to enable the children to attend school as soon as possible. The letter makes it clear this should be the case even if places are not in the immediate vicinity of the family's home. Where necessary, LAs are being asked to apply flexibilities to admit above published admission number (PAN), even if it means exceeding the infant class size limit.

To support this process, the Department has updated its guidance on [school access rights for pupils from overseas](#) and will add some questions and answers to the [Homes for Ukraine frequently asked questions page](#).

Latest Research

Interim findings of attendance audit

Interim findings from the Children's Commissioner's [attendance audit](#), have been published, highlighting what Dame Rachel de Souza DBE described as "a very concerning situation".

The results of the survey, issued to every local authority (LA) in England, found that in Autumn 2021 there were 1,782,000 pupils persistently absent (missing over 10% of sessions) from education and 124,000 pupils severely absent (missing over 50% of sessions).

The report identified four potential solutions to improve school attendance including a review of how schools collect data. It follows Ofsted's [report, Securing good attendance and tackling persistent absence](#), published last month highlighting the importance of governing boards in setting clear direction for leaders on promoting attendance and challenging absence.

Reflect:

Does your governing body look beyond the overall school attendance figure, consider variations in attendance and punctuality of different student groups and explore some of the issues that could be lying behind poor attendance?

How well are parents and carers engaged by schools in England?

Findings of a [survey](#) exploring how well parents and carers are engaged by their child's school has been published by Edurio. Effective communication was identified as the biggest driver of parental engagement, out of all the activities measured in the survey.

The research also highlighted that parents are keen to see that their voice has an impact in decision making across the school. Among parents who always see that their feedback has an impact, 97% also felt satisfied with the school's attempts to engage them as a parent, almost ten times more than the 10% of parents who never feel that their feedback has an impact.

Governors with access to Gift-ED can complete the online course *Engaging with Parents* which includes useful tips for increasing parental engagement.


You can nominate further governors to access the Gift-ED library [by using this link](#)

Paving the way - careers guidance in secondary schools

Pupils are still lacking quality careers guidance according to a [report published by the Sutton Trust](#). The research found that 36% of pupils lack confidence about next steps in education and training and less than a third had completed work experience by year 13, prompting a call on the government to develop a new careers strategy. The report also highlighted a variation in the quality of careers education between schools in more and less.

Secondary school governors have a [key role in ensuring schools meet their legal requirements and equip pupils with the tools and knowledge to make informed choices about their futures](#).

Do you have a link governor for careers?

	<p>Role of Link Governor for Careers</p> <p>The role could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• supporting the Careers Leader by arranging regular meetings and supporting careers events• reporting back to the governing body on how the careers provision is contributing to learners' learning and career decision-making• reviewing, with school leadership, learner destinations• facilitating partnerships with local businesses• ensuring that the governing body is advised of and meeting its requirements and expectations in relation to careers provision
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Thank you for all that you do for your school.

With best wishes and prayers

Debbi Botham
Diocesan Governance Development Officer

Diocesan communications are issued solely to support you to carry out your education functions as a Catholic school leader on behalf of your diocesan bishop. They may contain sensitive information and must be respected as private communications and not be shared with any third parties external to the diocese without written BDES consent.