



GST Newsletter

Issue 4 – November 2023

Introduction

Welcome back to the second half of the Autumn term. As part of the Learning Improvement Service (LIS) the Governor Support Team (GST) are here to support you and your board.

To assist us, it would be very helpful if you can update us with any changes to chairs and clerks contact details, so we can ensure all boards receive our communications. GST contact details can be found at the end of this newsletter.

News/updates

As well as the Department for Education's (DfE) **School Governance** update, below are further items which may be of interest:

Safeguarding

Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE)

The September 2023 version of the keeping children safe in education guidance is now in force, replacing previous versions. The changes to this year's guidance are summarised in annex F of the guidance including the role of schools around the filtering and monitoring of internet content.

In addition, see new over-arching DfE guidance After-Schools clubs, community activities and tutoring safeguarding guidance for providers. This is now the latest version of the guidance to be followed by organisations other than schools who work with children and young people. These organisations include (but are not limited to):

- Community activities
- Before and after school clubs
- Holiday clubs
- Supplementary schools
- Private tuition
- Music lessons
- Sports training



Although this guidance is non-statutory, it is to be regarded as best-practice. The DfE is encouraging organisations, clubs and tuition providers (known as out-of-school settings) to follow it.

KCSIE states that when schools hire their premises to organisations that work with children, they should check that the guidance in 'After-school clubs, community activities and tuition: safeguarding guidance for providers' (KCSIE, paragraphs 166 and 167) is being followed.

If your school hires out their premises to an organisation working with children and young people, if not already reviewed, hire agreements should be reviewed to ensure that reference is made to the updated guidance.

DfE has produced a '**Keeping children safe during clubs, tuition and activities summary leaflet for providers running out-of-school settings**', which may be informative to governors.

Schools should check their hirers meet the (minimum) standards listed in the **checklist on pages 11 to 12**.

Revised Prevent Duty Guidance

The PREVENT Duty, first published in 2015, is now nearly a decade old. In the past few years and with the shift in personal technology capacity/availability and increased use of social media, the Home Office has revised the guidance.

Reinforced Autoclave Aerated Concrete (RAAC)

The DfE has updated its **guidance for responsible bodies and education settings with confirmed RAAC** and includes the update to Ofsted's approach to inspections of schools with confirmed RAAC and those indirectly impacted, for example hosting pupils from schools with RAAC.

National Governance Associations (NGA) guidance for governing boards on dealing with RAAC in schools has also been updated.

As part of good estate management governors may find the following helpful:

NGA webinar: **Safe schools, sound futures: Estate management for governing boards**.

School suspensions and permanent exclusions

A reminder that the DfE's **Guidance** on the suspension and permanent exclusion of pupils from Local Authority (LA) maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units, was updated at the beginning of September. The main change being around virtual access and is explained in Part 11 and Annex 1.

The Access and Inclusion Team wanted us also to bring to governors attention - that the governing board must consider the headteacher's decision to suspend or exclude a pupil in the circumstances set out on page 39 of the DfE guidance ie if the total of suspensions in one term reaches or exceeds 15 days, the panel is only to consider whether the pupil should be reinstated in light of the most recent suspension.

Governors may also find the National Governance Association Learning Link (NGA LL) module: How to; review suspensions and exclusions useful.



Parental responsibility: guide for schools and LAs

Schools are required by law to engage with pupils' parents in a number of different ways. They can find themselves caught up in disputes between a number of adults, each claiming to have parental responsibility for a particular child. They are also expected to navigate complex living arrangements, particularly for children who are living in social care, where parental responsibility can be confusing or unclear.

This guidance helps schools understand their obligations and duties in relation to the rights and responsibilities of parents, as recognised by education law. It has been recently updated to include guidance on the role of the 'corporate parent', releasing GCSE results to a parent and notifying separated parents about a child moving school.

Inspecting schools: guide for maintained and academy schools

This guide gives a summary of what schools should expect and what they need to do as part of an Ofsted inspection.

There is a helpful guide to the potential timing for the next inspection, depending upon the current Ofsted judgement, the status of the school and when the school was last inspected.

The leaflet for schools to clarify the monitoring process for schools judged as requires improvement and inadequate, has also been updated.

Clarification to what is meant by 'ineffective safeguarding' and defined what is meant by schools having a 'safeguarding culture'.

The National Association of Headteachers has provided a **breakdown of the changes**, which governing boards may be interested to read.

Inspecting schools: guidance for parents

DfE have updated their leaflet for parents and carers of children whose school is due for inspection. This may be of interest particularly to new members of your board who have not yet experienced inspection.

In addition, new board members may find it useful to complete the NGA LL modules:

- Ofsted inspections: step by step
- Good governance: Ofsted and the inspection framework.

Working together to improve school attendance

The DfE has produced non statutory guidance to help schools, trusts, governing bodies, and LAs maintain high levels of school attendance. Following public consultation, the Secretary of State has committed this guidance becoming statutory when parliamentary time allows.

The guidance should be read alongside the statutory guidance documents on **parental responsibility measures, children missing education, supporting pupils with medical conditions at school, suspensions and exclusions, alternative provision, and safeguarding**.

We know that there are several elements that can impact attendance, particularly for our disadvantage children and young people. Below are some resources you may find helpful:

Pupil Premium

The Education Endowment Fund has produced a **guide to Pupil Premium**, including a **Discussion prompts for governors and trustees to support an effective strategy**.

Holiday Activity and Food Programme (HAF)

The HAF programme is funded by the DfE and has been supporting children and families in the school holidays since 2018. The HAF programme provides healthy food and enriching activities to children and young people, with free places available for those on free school meals (FSM) during the Easter, Summer and Winter holidays. Eligible children can access up to 4 days provision in Easter and Winter and 16 days provision in Summer. Funding levels are based on the number of children on FSM using data from the school's census.

Why is it so important?

School holidays can be a particularly challenging time for some families due to increased food and childcare costs and reduced incomes. It can mean that families struggle to provide food and activities for children. This funding helps ensure that eligible children have access to healthy food as well as fun, enriching activities to help keep them active throughout the school holidays.

How does the programme work?

Westmorland and Furness Council commissions providers to deliver holiday clubs. Clubs will offer engaging and enriching activities such as arts, sports, drama and music which provide opportunities to develop and strengthen skills and knowledge. Activities on offer can also include trips and other valuable learning experiences. Clubs must also provide healthy free meals, nutritional education and physical activities daily.

As a governing board:

- Are you aware that parents/carers at your school (especially your disadvantage pupils) are being made aware of this offer?

To find out more about the programme and how to book visit: **Westmorland and Furness Council HAF programme.**

Religious education (RE) in LA maintained schools

DfE guidance about RE in the curriculum and the roles of those who have a responsibility for, involvement in or interest in the subject.

For academies and free schools, see '**RE and collective worship in academies and free schools**'.

Key updates for Church of England (CE) trusts

The DfE have published updated versions of two key documents, for MATs which contain one or more CE school. The **model articles of association** have been updated, and a new **memorandum of understanding** has been agreed between DfE and the National Society.

The trust's articles are a contract between the trust and DfE. They set out the fundamental constitutional rules for the trust, including the composition and procedures for the members, trust board and local academy committees.

Mobile phone use to be banned in schools in England

New guidance from DfE will back headteachers in banning mobile phone use throughout the school day, including at break times, to tackle disruptive behaviour and online bullying while boosting attention during lessons. It aims to support the wider work the government is doing to raise standards in schools by increasing students' focus and reducing distractions.



Development/Training

Headteacher Performance Management (LA maintained schools)

All schools are required to have an appraisal process in place for the headteacher and must be completed by 31 December each year. An effective appraisal process is a framework to allow a clear and consistent assessment of performance and continual professional development and is key in securing development and progress in the school.

The principles of the headteacher's appraisal are the same as for the other staff with school. However, the process differs as it is a panel of governors, delegated with this responsibility by the governing body, which appraises the performance of the headteacher, advised and supported by an external advisor.

Headteachers must be assessed against the **Teachers' Standards** but the governing body may also wish to use the **National Standards of Excellence for headteachers**.

The governing body should appoint a minimum of two (three are recommended) members to act as the Review Panel. Panel members should ideally have the knowledge and experience to carry out the role and should not have any personal or pecuniary interests and should not be a members of school staff or paid to work at the school.

In accordance with the statutory regulations the review panel must be supported by a suitably skilled and/or experienced external advisor, who is appointed by the governing body.

To find out more about the headteacher appraisal and process please visit:

- **DfE, Headteacher performance, effective management**
- **NGA, Exploring headteacher appraisal**
- **NGA LL, Headteacher appraisal and capability**

Governance – Role of the chair, Developing Leadership

The GST are delivering the above session (virtually), This session provides delegates with a greater understanding of the role of the chair in leading the governing board to fulfil its strategic responsibility in delivering effective governance.

It will also consider ways in which to strengthen the team to lead to effective succession planning.

The event will consist of a presentation followed by an opportunity to ask questions.

The dates are:

7 November 2023

27 February 2024

11 June 2024

All sessions will run from 6.00pm – 7.00pm. Bookings are made via the Westmorland and Furness SLA online.



School to school support

Further to our article 'School to School Support' previously, the GST wish to remind any governors/trustees who feel they may be in a position to provide governance support to other boards on a voluntary basis, to contact the GST for an informal conversation.

We would like to extend this invite to include clerks (governance professionals).

Please contact either your Governor Support Assistant or drop an email to GST.mailbox.WAF@cumbria.gov.uk to discuss further or if you would just like a little bit more detail.

GST Contact Details

The GST continues to offer advice, support, and guidance, specific to your boards needs and can be contacted as follows:

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