

GST

Newsletter

Issue 2 September 2021



Welcome back to a new academic year! We hope governors have managed to take some time to enjoy a summer break and recharge batteries. In this edition we have focused on some of the key aspects and tasks for the start of a new year which we hope you will find helpful.

As schools start to return, headteachers and staff will be feeling the pressure which comes with starting a new school year. It is critical that chairs (or the wellbeing governor) make regular contact with their headteacher throughout the year. This might be a phone call, a virtual meeting or face to face. Your support and duty of care to your headteacher can make a significant difference to their wellbeing.

The Governor Support Team (GST) are part of the Learning Improvement Service (LIS) and we 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.

National Governance Association (NGA): e-learning for school governors, trustees, chairs and clerks

As part of the LIS support to our governing boards, all schools in Cumbria have been gifted 12 months free subscription to the NGA Learning Link. This offer ends in April 2022. Hopefully all governors have now registered with the NGA Learning Link and have had an opportunity to explore and complete some of the modules. The start of a new academic year is the perfect time for refresher trainings and the GST have produced a training record template, with examples, which you are welcome to adapt and use.

GB Training Record Template 2021-22

The following NGA LL modules may assist you with forthcoming tasks for the governing board:

- Safeguarding: The governor's role (please note KCSIE 2021 is now in place)
- The role of the SEND governor
- Headteacher Appraisal and Capability
- Ofsted and the new inspection framework
- Governance visits to schools

NGA Updates

The NGA have updated the model **Code of Conduct**. Details of the update can be found on the link below:

<https://www.nga.org.uk/Knowledge-Centre/Good-governance/Ethical-governance/Model-Code-of-Conduct.aspx>

The NGA have made some significant changes to the **Skills Audit and Matrix**.

The skills audit is a key tool for boards to use to identify where they need to develop knowledge, skills, and behaviour to deliver their functions effectively. The skills audit should be completed at the start of each academic year. The 2021/22 skills audit and matrix can be found on the link below:

[https://www.nga.org.uk/Knowledge-Centre/Good-governance/Effective-governance/Governing-Board-Self-Review-\(1\)/Skills-Audit-and-Skills-Matrix.aspx](https://www.nga.org.uk/Knowledge-Centre/Good-governance/Effective-governance/Governing-Board-Self-Review-(1)/Skills-Audit-and-Skills-Matrix.aspx)



Special Educational Needs (SEN) Census

The SEN Census gathers data on SEN status and primary need in January of each year. SENCOs should work alongside administrative support in their school to ensure all census information is correct. It is this information that helps to decide on appropriate funding for pupils nationally and at a Local Authority (LA) level. This year the LA is focusing on reducing the number of pupils identified as NSA (No specialist assessment)/Other. All pupils should be identified as having a primary need.

Governors can help challenge the use of these codes and the accuracy of the census. In the Autumn Term the link Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Governor could ask the SENCo/Headteacher:

- How many pupils have you identified at NSA/Other for their primary need?
- What can you do as a school to identify the pupil's primary need?
- Remind the school that they do not require a formal assessment to decide on a primary need.

The attachment below gives further information about the SEN census for SEND governors. It is recommended that governors read this to understand how and why schools have been using the NSA/Other code and why this needs to be avoided.

How can Governors support schools in the accurate recording of SEN needs?



Early Years Update

As you will be aware, the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework has changed and takes effect from 1st September 2021. Development Matters have produced a 'Thumbnail guide to the revised EYFS for governors', which you can find on the link below:

http://development-matters.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/The-revised-EYFS-info-for-governors1.pdf?fbclid=IwAR1rleAZU6wpJD8WoBS_ulOxvew2xsWnBlij7eSK2II3me5ytedBS6vi33E

In addition, the Early Years Team have also produced a short document for governors, including the link to their excellent webinars:

Implementing the revised Early Years Foundation Stage: Principles into Practice- Information for Governors

Governor Vacancies

If you have a vacancy on your board, you can register with Inspiring Governance (<https://www.inspiringgovernance.org/>), a free, online service that connects schools and trusts in England with skilled volunteers in your area who are interested in becoming a school governor or trustee. The website also provides tips and advice on recruiting governors and how to bring professional skill sets to your board. Anyone aged 18+ can become a governor.

Contact

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

Jane Lees (Barrow and South Lakes)
E: jane.lees@cumbria.gov.uk
M: 07768 027 244

Faith Matthews (part-time), (Carlisle and Allerdale)
E: faith.matthews@cumbria.gov.uk
M: 07384 825 941

Kellie Fricker (part-time), (Copeland and Eden)
E: kellie.fricker@cumbria.gov.uk
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There is also a wealth of information on the Governor Support Team website:

www.cumbria.gov.uk/childrensservices/schoolsandlearning/governorservices/govcontact.asp

