

# Governing Body Recruitment

Do you experience difficulty in recruiting members to your governing body?

When recruiting new governors it is important that individuals are aware of what is involved in the role - the level of decision making and responsibility as well as the time incurred. With parents this information may be given in a variety of ways such as through your regular school newsletters to parents; through governor attendance at other meetings for parents; word-of-mouth from other governors or family liaison workers/parental involvement officers within your school. Information about the work of the governing body could be included in your school prospectus. Parents can also be invited to attend governing body meetings as observers.

Often parents lack the confidence to come forward as school governors. They may prefer to be involved in a PTA or other parent workshop first and then move on to the role of parent governor when they feel more self-confident and able to contribute to discussion about the work of the school. Model personal statements could be provided to support them in the election process.

In some cases parents have reported that they don't feel valued and therefore see no point in putting themselves forward for election. To counter this view it may be helpful to provide examples through school newsletters of ways in which parent governors have made a positive difference.

School Governor Service has various fliers/leaflets which can be displayed or sent out to parents/staff/community

members to encourage them to consider the role. These can be downloaded from our website and customised to your school. Follow the link to access these: <http://www.educationbradford.com/%21+Governors/Useful+Documents.htm>

The DCSF has produced a toolkit entitled 'Help Schools Help Children: School Governor Recruitment Tool-Kit' which gives useful information on recruiting governors. The toolkit is available free to schools using the reference number LEA/0224/2002. Leaflets are available from the DCSF in both English and a number of community languages. Up to 50 of these leaflets can be ordered through prolog. The leaflets are entitled 'Help Schools Help Children, How to Become a School Governor'.

The School Governor One Stop Shop (SGOSS) works with schools and communities to recruit volunteers as governors. They can be contacted at School Governor's One Stop Shop, 64 Essex Road, London, N1 8LR; tel. 0870-241-3883 or email [info@schoolgovernors-oss.co.uk](mailto:info@schoolgovernors-oss.co.uk)

**If you require any further help or support in recruiting governors please contact School Governor Service on (01274) 385629, or e-mail: [school.governor@educationbradford.com](mailto:school.governor@educationbradford.com)**



## Schools Opening in Bad Weather

Some parts of England have already endured bad weather this winter and although most schools in the affected areas stayed open, a handful closed. The DCSF has produced brief guidance which asks and encourages head teachers to do all they can to keep their schools open in adverse weather conditions.

The guidance takes the form of a letter from Ralph Tabberer, Director-General of Schools, who reinforces the Health and Safety Executive's message about sensible risk assessment. This should include careful planning against likely natural events such as snowfall. The letter can be viewed at <http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/>

## Department of Services for Children and Young People: Skills for Work

Skills for Work Learning Centres at Workable, Jacobs Well and Kershaw House Bradford and at Keighley Training Group will be offering Vocational Tasters for Year 11 pupils during the February 2008 half term break. As part of the Central Confederation of Schools Vocational Taster offer the Training Centres will be providing the following with 20 places for pupils available on each session:- Introduction to Business Administration (A practical taster in a real office environment at "Aire Valley Supplies"), Introduction to Retail and Customer Service, Introduction to the World of Work, Introduction to Horticulture with a valentine theme. For further information and dates please contact Skills for Work on 01274 437172.



*Notepad is a regular news sheet produced for all governors of schools throughout the Bradford District. It is intended to be a brief and cost effective way of providing all school governors with up-to-date information about services, local and regional activities, and training opportunities.*

*Notepad is compiled and produced by School Governor Service, Education Bradford, Future House, Bolling Road, Bradford, West Yorkshire, BD4 7EB.*

*John Hesketh, Linda Townsend, Diane MacBrady and Geoffrey Green are happy to provide any further information you may need about any item appearing in this issue. We can be contacted at the above address, Tel 01274 385629, Fax 01274 385624, e-mail: [school.governor@educationbradford.com](mailto:school.governor@educationbradford.com)*



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To Achieve School Improvement through  
the Effective Governance of Schools

## Raising the Achievement of South Asian Heritage Pupils in Primary Schools

Conference: Saturday 19 January 2008,  
9.30am - 4.00pm at Future House

This conference is aimed at staff and governors of primary schools educating pupils of South Asian heritage. It is the first of a series of conferences that will focus on raising the achievement of specific groups of pupils.

The conference aims to share good practice in a number of areas that directly influence the achievement of pupils. Participants will be encouraged to build on their shared interests to establish networks that will enable them to maintain regular contact after the conference to

support each other in implementing and developing strategies for improvement. There will be 5 workshops to choose from including 'The Governor's Role in Raising Achievement' which will be led by Professor John Adams, Vice-President of the National Governors Association.

If you would like to attend please ring School Governor Service on (01274) 385629 or e-mail [school.governor@educationbradford.com](mailto:school.governor@educationbradford.com) for a booking form.

### THE ITEMS COVERED IN THIS ISSUE:

- > *The Primary Capital Programme*
- > *Governor Mark: The National Quality Mark for School Governance*
- > *Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups act 2006: Independent Safeguarding Authority Scheme Consultation*
- > *Winter vomiting virus*
- > *Assessing Information*
- > *Information sent to chairs of governors*
- > *Guidance on the use of biometric systems in schools*
- > *Parent Councils*
- > *Restraining pupils: Use of force*
- > *Governing body recruitment*
- > *Schools opening in bad weather*
- > *Department of Services for Children and Young People: Skills for Work*

## Changes to the Law on School Information Reporting

Over the summer the rules around the annual publication of School Achievement and Attainment Tables have been combined into the Education (School Performance Information) England Regulations 2007, which came into force on 10 September 2007.

This consolidated the seven sets of regulations each altering and amending the original regulations. It is essential as all this information comes from schools and the personal data of pupils must be protected by robust statutory rules.

The Regulations confirm the current arrangement with duties placed on governing bodies to comply with requests from the Secretary of State, and forward

specified information to the Local Authority, the National Data Collection Agency and external working agency.

As well as this requirement there is also a requirement for the head teacher to provide the governing body with the information.

New to the regulations are powers for the Secretary of State to set "focused absence targets" and targets for schools with large numbers of 'persistently absent' pupils - defined as absent for any reason for at least 20% of the period for which information is required.

These regulations apply to all maintained schools and academies.

Date for Your Diary

School Governor Service will be running their Annual Conference on Saturday 21 June 2008. Further details of speakers and topics will be available in the February edition of Notepad.

# The Primary Capital Programme

The Primary Capital Programme brings with it the opportunity for all local authorities to improve their primary school estate, by refurbishing, rebuilding or taking out of use up to fifty per cent of their 'worst' buildings over a fifteen year period.

This will make a significant difference to the experiences of many adults and children in our schools, and will present governing bodies with the opportunity to further develop their work with

schools on effective learning environments.

A group of officers is currently engaged in assessing schools for inclusion in the programme. Their work is focussing on condition and suitability factors, within the overall context of the need to ensure that our schools are sustainable and serving the needs of their communities.

Meetings have taken place with the Primary School Executive to outline

the thinking around the Primary Capital Programme and it is envisaged that further consultation and discussion will take place in January with elected members, so that schools can have an early indication of their place in the programme.

Projects are due to begin in the spring of 2009.

Contact: Mike Charnock. Education Client Team Office. Future House. Tel: 385530

## Governor Mark: The National Quality Mark for School Governance

In recognition of the vital role that governing bodies play in school improvement, a National Quality Mark has been developed to help to identify and recognise high quality governance. This project is supported by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and the National Governors' Association. As with other quality marks, it is entirely optional and governing bodies will not be pressured to seek accreditation. However, the document that details the standards is a very useful tool for all governing bodies to evaluate their performance against best practice. This standards document is free and is currently available on the Oxfordshire County Council website at [www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/governormark](http://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/governormark)

Governor Mark has been designed to recognise the quality of the contribution to school leadership and management governing bodies make.

- It is a non prescriptive model which measures the working practices of the governing body and their impact on school performance
- It recognises that there are many approaches to achieving sustainable excellence in school governance within the leadership and management structure of the school
- Governor Mark is a mechanism to achieve accreditation against an agreed quality standard
- Schools are able to access free of charge the quality standards criteria

Assessment against the criteria for accreditation is externally verified and will last for a period of 3 years. A charge is made for accreditation and if governing bodies wish to pursue this option they should contact School Governor Service for details.

School Governor Service is available to support governing bodies in working towards the standard in a range of ways including: providing materials and training to facilitate governing body self review; training tailored to your governing body such as the Leading Together course and courses available through our termly prospectus.

## Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006: Independent Safeguarding Authority Scheme Consultation

The implementation of the Independent Safeguarding Authority Scheme, under the terms of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 will introduce the most stringent vetting and barring service yet. The scheme will protect both children and vulnerable adults by preventing those who are known to pose a risk of harm accessing these groups through their work. The consultation seeks views on a wide range of policy issues that will ensure the successful implementation of the Act. This consultation is jointly published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families, Home Office, and the Department of Health.

The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act Policy consultation document is available to download on the DCSF e-consultation website ([www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations)).

When implemented this will apply to governors (and volunteers) and they will be required to register. The registration will be through the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) and governing bodies are asked to ensure that all CRB checks are in place.

# Winter vomiting virus

Some schools are currently reporting higher than usual numbers of staff and pupils with symptoms of sickness and diarrhoea so we are reiterating our earlier advice to schools. In these cases it is important that schools act promptly.

Advice for schools can be found in "The Control of Infection in Schools and Other Childcare Settings in Bradford" which can be accessed via the Bradford Council website [www.bradford.gov.uk/scsafety](http://www.bradford.gov.uk/scsafety), using the username SOS and password lookout. The document can be found at the drop down menu "choose a topic/A-Z full list of all documents", select "I" for Infection Control.

Schools need to contact the Communicable Diseases Control Team at Jacob's Well if they experience an increased number of absences for the time of year due to children or staff with similar symptoms and/or increased reports of vomiting and/or diarrhoea. The contact number is 01274 434392.

All notifying schools will be advised by the Communicable Diseases Control Team regarding what actions to take to minimise the risk of the virus spreading to other schools. Once a school has been confirmed as an outbreak site they will be contacted by Janine Munday to discuss whether visits by EB staff to schools should be suspended to avoid the spread of the virus. If restrictions on visits are agreed then EB staff will be notified.

Advice from the Communicable Diseases Control Team is that schools should put notices up warning that there is an increased number of cases of vomiting/diarrhoea.

## Guidance on the Use of Biometric Systems in Schools

Guidance on how the Data Protection Act 1998 applies to the use of biometric data in schools is now available on the British Educational Communications and Technology Agency (Becta) website.

The guidance advises schools to fully involve parents in any decision to introduce biometric or fingerprint technology for cashless lunch queues, school libraries or attendance systems. It also underlines that head teachers and governing bodies should be clear and open with all parents and pupils about this and all aspects of their education.

The updated Guidance can be viewed at <http://schools.becta.org.uk>

## Restraining pupils: use of force

All schools should have a policy on the use of force to control or restrain pupils. The head teacher should ensure that this is included in the school's discipline policy. Revised guidance on the Use of Force to Control or Restrain Pupils is now available on TeacherNet at <http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/> which replaces Circular 10/98.

## Accessing Information

Information relating to schools is provided electronically on a wide range of topics through what is known as the Bradford Schools e-portal. Topics covered include: consultation documents; guidance documents and information sent to head teachers each week, as well as teaching and learning resources.

This information can also be accessed by governors on [www.bradfordschools.net](http://www.bradfordschools.net) this will take you to the home page. As a new user you will need to download an application form to access sections of the site in addition to what you can see on the Home Page. Under 'Your Role' state that you are a governor. When you have completed and returned the form, following the instructions given, you will receive an email as soon as your account is set up.

## Information sent to chairs of governors

The following items have been sent to chairs of governors this term:

- Food Policy in Schools - A Strategic Policy Framework for Governing Bodies - Revised September 2007
- Succession Breeds Success - How to Grow Leaders in Your Governing Body
- School Information Folder Data File.

## Parent Councils

From May 2007 schools have had a duty to take account of the views of parents. All schools are encouraged to review their current arrangements in relation to this duty and to consider enhancing them by setting up a Parent Council.

The Parent Council's role is advisory and consultative. It has an important role in informing decision-making processes but it cannot make decisions on behalf of the school. Setting up a Parent Council will not lead to any reduction in the role and responsibilities of the governing body, but parents will benefit from being able to express their views and knowing that they are able to make a difference.

A pack is available to see schools through the process of setting up a Parent Council and to be used for ongoing reference and support once the Parent Council is established. You can download the pack from [www.governor.net.co.uk/parentcouncils](http://www.governor.net.co.uk/parentcouncils)

School Governor Service in conjunction with Healthy Schools is starting a pilot with a school in Bradford and will provide information on this as we go along.