



GOVERNOR SERVICES NEWSLETTER

“What you are is what you have been taught, and what you will be is what you do now” The Buddha

Well it's been a “baptism of fire” with never a dull moment since I arrived at Trafford Governor Services at the end of January. When I was scheduled to present to 28 Headteachers on “Safer Recruitment” on my 3rd day in post – I questioned whether this was induction or “initiation”?!?

I am particularly grateful to the Governor Services team at Waterside House for their support in my first term. I have been impressed by their strong work ethic combined with in depth knowledge of Governance law and procedures. With a full spring calendar of training to be delivered and lots to learn at the office there has been limited time for me to get out to visit your schools however when I have had the opportunity – it has been an inspiration and a privilege to see so much good work in progress!

My thanks to all those of you I have met so far – Governors, Headteachers, school staff and indeed colleagues at Trafford CYPS – for your friendliness and consideration. Governance is a steep learning curve – each and every day brings a new challenge. What I hope I can offer is a different perspective and a commitment to high quality services, positive communication and enthusiasm.

Julie Lawson
Governor Services Manager

Summer 2010

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Sharing Expertise

Our thanks to Trafford CYPS colleagues who have shared their expertise with Governors this term including:

- Anne-Marie Steadman (Schools Financial Services Manager) who comprehensively summarised the complex world of schools financing.
- Ken Bold (School Improvement Adviser) gave a thorough and hugely informative insight in to the new Ofsted Framework.
- Karen McCallum and Sue Pennington (Behaviour and Attendance) delivered a thought provoking session on Pupil Discipline and Exclusions.
- Keith Wilkinson (Schools HR Manager) wins the award for “best heckler in Trafford” and was able to expertly field a barrage of questions at both Safer Recruitment and ISA, Vetting and Barring sessions.
- With special thanks to “the much in demand” Helen Wilson (Child Protection Advisory Teacher) for Safeguarding training. A subject which is emotionally challenging but which Helen delivers with great sensitivity and substance.

We have included two more Safeguarding sessions in the Summer Training Calendar as this is such an important issue for which there is high demand.

We are committed to offering Trafford Governors a varied, interesting and relevant portfolio of training sessions. Our sincere hope is that as many of you as possible attend these sessions. If you have any concerns about attending training sessions or ideas for alternative venues or even timings please contact me to discuss - I would really appreciate your thoughts. Please contact Julie Lawson 0161 912 3218 or julie.lawson@trafford.gov.uk

Trafford Governors' Message Board

The Governing Body of Wellacre Technology and Vocational College would like to express their special thanks to Mr John Hodgkinson for his contribution and for 10 years service to the school.

Governors Forum Feedback

The Spring Term Governors' Forum was very well received – thank you to everyone who attended and enthusiastically took part in an introductory Governor Speed Dating session!

There was then a brief introduction to the new Governor Services Manager with a reflection on the strengths of governing bodies in Trafford and the importance of Teamwork.

George Herbert (Deputy Director of Education) invited schools and local authority colleagues to give particular consideration to accommodate disadvantaged children, including children in care. He stressed the importance of Parental Engagement to the education of children and identified the on-going challenge of attracting new governors. George celebrated the strong working relationship between schools and local authority in Trafford and reiterated a commitment to positive collaboration to improve outcomes for all our young people.

Sam Martin (Principal Scrutiny and Improvement Officer) updated governors on the role of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and invited Parent Governors to consider joining. The final presentation was a snapshot of successful recruitment tips courtesy of Keith Wilkinson (Schools HR Manager).

After refreshments various issues were raised for discussion by attending governors including

- School holidays; there has been some concern at the differing school holidays schedule for 2010-11 within Trafford and neighbouring authorities. Trafford consult and advocate dates but the final decision rests with individual schools. It was agreed that the aim should be consensus.
- Sustainable schools; a governor recommended that governing bodies consider their energy management and procurement policies in light of the Government's Carbon Reduction Commitment. Training sessions will be considered for the Autumn Calendar.
- The long term affects of PARIS and the possible rising costs of Extended Services were considered as well as the impact on staff morale.
- New governors asked questions about the appropriateness of visits to school sites and some established governors gave suggestions and examples of activities.
- Finally Cllr Rigby (Chair, West Trafford Learning Partnership) praised the commitment of Trafford to Governor Services and reflected on the positive public perceptions of Trafford schools.

It's good to surf

We are planning some improvements to our on-line services for governors via the Trafford CYPS website. Subject to time and resources we aim to give governors the ability to access a wide range of information and services. If you have any ideas which you would like to contribute to this please contact me. I look forward to updating you in the coming months. In the meantime here are some websites you might find useful:-

- ✓ Governornet www.governornet.co.uk/

- ✓ TDA – Training & Development Agency for Schools www.tda.gov.uk/

- ✓ Teachernet www.teachernet.gov.uk

- ✓ UK Governor Forums www.forums.ukgovernors.org.uk

ISA, Vetting & Barring Scheme

From November 2010 it will be an offence to recruit a new employee to work with children in what is classed as "regulated activity" unless they are ISA registered. Headteachers will be liaising with Trafford HR for Schools regarding ISA registration and checks for new and existing staff – developing a rolling programme of implementation. We understand that all Governors will need to be ISA registered – however there is no charge for volunteers. For more information we have sessions for Governors in the Summer Term Training Calendar.

Parent Governor Representatives required for Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Here is an opportunity to play a role in the review and scrutiny of policy provision for education in Trafford. It is recognised that Parent Governors have an important role to play at Council level and there are 3 posts available for Parent Governor Representatives on the Trafford Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Your commitment would be to a 4 year term of office with approximately 10 formal meetings plus the opportunity to participate in relevant practical scrutiny activities and reviews. Please consider whether you could contribute in one of these roles – and look out for nomination details which will be issued in the summer term or for more information contact Governor Services.

School Complaints

I recently attended a North West Regional Conference for Co-ordinators of Governor Services – where it was noted that there has been a general increase of complaints to schools. It is necessary for all schools to have a robust Complaints Procedure. Trafford have a standard best practice template which will be available via the website in time, meanwhile for a copy please e-mail governor.services@trafford.gov.uk or call 0161 912 5853. The following general principles for complaints procedure are worth consideration.

- **Publicise it**

A complaints procedure should be easily accessible and well publicised.

- **Handle it swiftly**

Procedures should be as speedy as possible. Be consistent and ensure that everyone involved is dealt with fairly. Each stage of the procedure should have a known time limit.

- **Support for complainant**

It is helpful for parents to know where they can go for information, advice and advocacy, if they require it.

- **Support for a person complained against**

Staff must feel they are being treated in a fair way and that they too will have an opportunity to put their case. They should be told about the procedure and be kept informed of progress.

- **Confidentiality**

It is very important to treat conversations and correspondence with discretion.

- **Redress**

Clearly define a process based on possible outcomes.

- **Staff Awareness and Training**

School staff should be familiar with the procedure so that they can advise parents.

- **Record Keeping**

Monitor and record the level and nature of complaints.

- **Informal**

The vast majority of concerns and complaints can be resolved informally. There are many occasions where concerns are resolved straight away through the class teacher or school secretary or Headteacher, depending on whom the parent first approached. Parents must feel able to raise concerns with members of staff without any formality.

- **Referral to the Headteacher (or designate) for investigation**

As Headteachers have responsibility for the day-to-day running of their schools, they have responsibility for the implementation of a complaints system.

- **Review by the governing body**

Complaints only rarely reach this formal level, but it is important that the governing body is prepared to deal with them when necessary.

Complaints should not be raised at full meetings of the governing body and should not be reported to the governing body until resolved by the appropriate panel and then not in detail.

Beyond the Governing Body

Vexatious complaints can be taken to the Secretary of State or the Local Government Ombudsman.

However neither will look at internal school management matters and usually expect that thorough attention has been given to a complaint locally before investigation.

10 Top Tips for Governance

Someone shared these tips with me saying “follow these and you will not go far wrong!”

1. Get to know your school

- ✓ Attend special events and celebrate successes
- ✓ Seek out and read information about your school, including its performance

2. Attend meetings regularly

- ✓ Make sure you note dates and times of any meetings
- ✓ Prepare well by reading all the documentation in advance

3. Be a team player

- ✓ Treat all Governors as equal
- ✓ Be willing to help and to learn from each other
- ✓ Don't disagree in public with the Governing Body after a decision is made

4. Make a positive contribution

- ✓ Make the most of the skills you have to offer, when in doubt about anything, ask
- ✓ Make sure you are aware of the training available to governors

5. Follow procedures in meetings

- ✓ Signal to the Chair when you want to speak
- ✓ Don't interrupt others
- ✓ Listen to differing points of view and learn
- ✓ Don't monopolise the discussion or refer back to matters which have been decided
- ✓ Don't raise matters under 'Any other business' unless it is genuinely urgent and could not have been foreseen when the agenda was drawn

6. Remember that as an individual you have no authority

- ✓ You can only speak and act on behalf of the Governing Body when it has formally delegated the power to you
- ✓ If you want to raise a matter, you should ask for it to be put on the agenda

7. Be clear - you are neither a representative nor a delegate

- ✓ You have a duty and a responsibility to put forward the views of those who appointed you e.g. other parents, the staff etc. This ensures diverse views are put forward
- ✓ However, when it comes to a vote, you must weigh up all the arguments and vote the way your conscience directs for the good of the pupils and the school.

8. Maintain confidentiality and discretion

- ✓ Sometimes the business of the governing body is confidential - keep this confidence and act with integrity
- ✓ Although the minutes of meetings (Part A only) are made public, the details of the discussion that takes place should remain confidential
- ✓ The Part B section of the meeting (if any) remains entirely confidential and minutes are not made public
- ✓ The more trust placed in you by the school, the school community and other governors, the more effective you can be in your role as a governor

9. Declare any personal interest

- ✓ Don't use your position as a governor to gain an advantage or benefit in other situations
- ✓ If a matter under discussion affects you personally and/or financially, you should declare an interest at the start and you will be asked to withdraw from that part of the meeting

10. Act as ambassador for your school

- ✓ Find every opportunity to make good news public
- ✓ Never talk down your school in public
- ✓ Never gossip about individual staff or pupils with others
- ✓ If things are going wrong, ask yourself if you are part of the problem or part of the solution
- ✓ Be there for your school

Promoting the Educational Achievement of Looked After Children

All schools have a designated teacher for looked after children and this is now a statutory requirement under section 20 of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008.

A new statutory guidance is available for school governing bodies and further good practice guidance is available for primary and secondary schools. You can download copies from www.GovernorNet.co.uk

The Role and Responsibilities of the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children

From 1st September 2009 the governing bodies of all maintained schools are required to appoint a designated teacher to promote the educational achievement of looked after children who are on the school roll.

The governing body must ensure that the designated teacher undertakes appropriate training and as a minimum receive an annual report which should enable the governing body to make overall judgements about the designated teacher role in the context of wider school planning. The governing body and the school leadership team should consider the report and act on any issues it raises. The designated teacher should have lead responsibility for helping school staff understand the things which affect how looked after children learn and achieve.

Governors' Feedback – Who has the answers?

It has been great to meet so many governors at the training sessions and to have a chance to talk during the activities or at the end. Some common themes have been discussed including *“How can we communicate better as a team?”* and *“How can I make a difference as a new governor?”* or indeed *“How can we get new governors on board?”* I can't pretend to have all the answers but I can give some suggestions, ideas and solutions for you to consider within your governing bodies. It does however strike me that **Trafford Governors do have some of the answers already.** Ofsted have rated 88% of primary school governing bodies, in Trafford, as “Outstanding” or “Good”. In addition the average Ofsted rating for governance in secondary schools is 1.6 (i.e. Good to Outstanding). Please come along to the training sessions to learn, share and network. We can all learn from each other! Which brings me nicely to a closing quotation from Dr William Glasser which struck a cord with me:-

“We Learn . . .
10% of what we read
20% of what we hear
30% of what we see
50% of what we see and hear
70% of what we discuss
80% of what we experience
95% of what we teach others.”

Have a great term and I look forward to seeing you at the Training Sessions.

Julie Lawson
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Summer Training Programme

Independent Safeguarding Authority, Vetting and Barring Scheme

The ISA has been set up by the Home Office to operate independently. This is a new vetting and barring service for all those working with children and vulnerable adults in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. This course will introduce ISA to governors, explain how it works and the implications it has for governing bodies.

Welcome Meeting * For New Governors *

This session has been designed especially to welcome newly appointed governors. It is planned to make it a relaxing and enjoyable session with a buffet tea. The aim of the session is to give newly appointed governors a chance to meet, and have an introduction to their role and participation at governing body meetings.

Roles and Responsibilities * For New Governors *

New governors sometimes wonder what they have let themselves in for. It is important that they have a chance to ask questions about their new role. We shall explore how, as individuals, they work as members of a corporate team and the framework in which they carry out their responsibilities.

Safeguarding

This important module looks at Safeguarding in the context of Every Child Matters. Responsibilities of the school leadership including the governing body are explored. We will discuss ways to ensure that safeguarding is at the heart of all child centred practice.

Governing Body Health Check

We will explore the Ofsted framework and some tools to enable governors to prepare for inspection. Recognising too that there is more to governance than Ofsted we will touch on best practice for teamwork and some positive communication techniques.

Governors' Forum

All governors are invited to the Forum. The Forum will start with a buffet tea at 5.30 p.m. and the formal meeting will begin at 6.00 p.m. This is a chance for Trafford CYPS colleagues to present updates to governors and for you to submit questions or subjects for discussion.

Healthy Schools Update

The Healthy Schools Programme aims to improve health and raise pupil achievement. This session will explore the key drivers and update governors on managing critical incidents.

Chairing Matters

Are you a newly appointed chairman, or do you chair a committee? If so, this is the course for you. We will be considering the particular responsibilities of the chairman, and the procedures that they need to be aware of. This will be a workshop session allowing governors to share experiences and have time to consider how they would deal with situations that can arise.

New Forms of Governance and Community Cohesion in Practice

This new and informative session will focus on the Government White Paper on 21st Century schools and the implications for governing bodies. We will celebrate some local examples of Community Cohesion and new Governance models such as Trusts and Federations.

Previous Training Courses

If you would like a copy of reference booklets which support previous courses just telephone Caroline Myers on 0161 912 5853.

E-learning for School Governors in Trafford

All governors whose schools have bought back '**Option One**' of the Governor Development, Training and Support Service now have free access to the Modern Governor website www.moderngovernor.com

Modern Governor is a service from **Learning Pool**, the public sector e-learning exchange. It is designed to help school governors develop their skills through e-learning. It is however not intended to replace face-to-face training which will continue to be offered through our training programme.

Whether you're a newly elected governor or an established governor looking to increase your existing knowledge, Modern Governor has something for you.

Modern Governor has been created with help from experts in governor services. This means that all the courses reflect the latest initiatives and challenges facing school governors today.

If you would like assistance with registration or any further details please call Julie Lawson on 0161 912 3218

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April/May

Independent Safeguarding Authority and Vetting and Barring Scheme

Thursday 15 April 2010
1.00 p.m. to 3.00 p.m.

Tuesday 20 April 2010
9.30 a.m. to 11.30 a.m.

Closing date for applications 9 April 2010

Welcome Meeting

Buffet Tea will be available at 6.00 p.m.

Thursday 22 April 2010
6.30 p.m. to 8.00 p.m.

Closing date for applications 9 April 2010

Roles and Responsibilities

Tuesday 11 May 2010
9.30 a.m. to 11.30 a.m.

Closing date for applications 30 April 2010

May/June

Safeguarding

Thursday 13 May 2010
6.30 p.m. to 8.00 p.m.

Tuesday 15 June 2010
1.30 p.m. to 3.00 p.m.

Closing date for applications 30 April 2010

Governing Body Health Check

Tuesday 18 May 2010
1.30 p.m. to 3.30 p.m.

Thursday 17 June 2010
6.00 p.m. to 8.00 p.m.

Closing date for applications 7 May 2010

Governors' Forum

Buffet tea available from 5.30 p.m.

Tuesday 22 June 2010
6.00 p.m. to 8.00 p.m.

Closing date for applications 11 June 2010

June/July

Healthy Schools Update

Tuesday 29 June 2010
6.00 p.m. to 8.00 p.m.

Thursday 1 July 2010
9.30 a.m. to 11.30 a.m.

Closing date for applications 18 June 2010

Chairing Matters

Tuesday 6 July 2010
9.30 a.m. to 11.30 a.m.

Closing date for applications 25 June 2010

New Forms of Governance and Community Cohesion in Practice

Tuesday 20 July 2010
9.30 a.m. to 11.30 a.m.

Thursday 22 July 2010
6.00 p.m. to 8.00 p.m.

Closing date for applications 9 July 2010

Course details can be found on pages 7/8 of the Newsletter

Governor Training Sessions will be held at Sale West Development Centre, Manor Avenue, Sale (see map overleaf)

VENUE

Sale West Development Centre

The Sale West Development Centre is located on Manor Avenue, Sale, M33 5JX. Approaching from Carrington Lane (with the Development Centre on the right) turn into the first gateway. Car parking spaces are available at the back of the building, overlooked by the Development Centre.

