

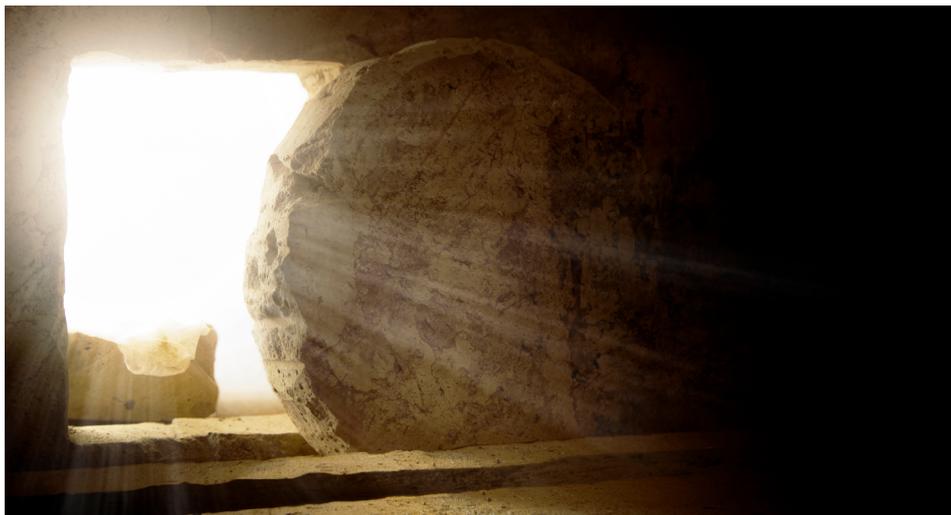
the Maximilian

Monthly Newsletter for Governors from the Education Commission

Edition 86
March 2021

Welcome... *The Maximilian* is a monthly newsletter from the Education Commission to all categories of governors in our schools, highlighting changes in legislation and other news which will be of help to governing bodies.

Easter Message: From the Director



Unlike this time last year, we are able to meet outdoors in small groups and attend socially distanced parish masses and liturgies all of which lead to a sense of renewal and growth in our world. The events of Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and the Easter Triduum will be lived out in a subdued manner across the Diocese, with some able to attend in person and many more participating from their living rooms via video link.

Reflecting on the events of the past year, I am truly humbled to see how well all of you, and the staff in your schools have been able to respond with grace, compassion, and flexibility to the everchanging academic landscape, ensuring that all pupils are safe and provided with the tools and resources to learn. I know of the countless additional hours put in by you, teachers, support staff and governors, in order to run school-based food banks, ensure all pupils have devices to work on, make wellbeing phone calls and doorstep home visits. In doing so you fully embody these words of Jesus:

...for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me... (Matthew 25:35-36)

Now that you are finally able to be together as full school communities, albeit in bubbles, I am sure that this Holy Week has taken on deeper significance. The children, young people and adults have returned forever changed by the pandemic; family members and friends have been lost; jobs have been lost; friendships have been strained by distance. Thank you for placing the spiritual, emotional and social needs of our children, young people and those who work in our schools, at the heart of this return to normality. As we each carry our own crosses and continue, as a Catholic community, to heal the scars of the past year I am reminded of the words of Pope Francis in Fratelli Tutti:

Once more we realized that no one is saved alone; we can only be saved together. As I said in those days, "...the storm has exposed our vulnerability and uncovered those false and superfluous certainties around which we constructed our daily schedules, our projects, our habits and priorities... Amid this storm, the façade of those stereotypes with which we camouflaged our egos, always worrying about appearances, has fallen away, revealing once more the ineluctable and blessed awareness that we are part of one another, that we are brothers and sisters of one another". (FT 32)

I would also like to take this opportunity to say thank you to the team at the Education Commission for all they do to support the schools and you. Many of you have expressed how much you appreciate the publications, phone calls, email exchanges, online courses and virtual visits they offer. It has been difficult, especially for the RE team, to be prevented from being able to visit and deliver training in person but based on the positive feedback from you, they have done an admirable job thus far in this brave new world.

As we move into the joy of the Easter season, I pray that you are all able to have some time and space to switch off, breathe and renew yourselves: spiritually and physically.

Have a blessed Easter season



Governor Visits into School

The DfE guidance continues to state that schools are able to use volunteers to support the school's work although numbers visiting the school should be limited, where possible. Although previously reference was made to consideration being given to the timing of volunteers' visits and whether these can be conducted outside of core school hours, practically, this consideration should continue and it is recommended that Board and Committee meetings are held remotely.

Formal School Visits

It is recommended that:

- Physical Governor visits into school are not undertaken in the spring term.
- The only two exceptions to this may be visits by the Safeguarding Governor and the Health and Safety Governor as certain aspects of their strategic work (such as inspecting the Single Central Record) may not be undertaken as effectively through a virtual meeting.
- Where physical attendance is a necessity, this will need to be agreed with both the Head and the in-school link representative prior to the visit. The visiting Governor will need to ensure that all the health and safety protocol in place at the school is followed and, where possible, the meeting time limited.
- Governors are strongly encouraged to continue making contact with their in-school link representative virtually through the spring term.
- Formal visit reports should continue to be completed to identify the strategic areas raised and discussed; visit findings should continue to be an item for discussion on the relevant Board/ Committee agenda.

Ofsted published have their approach to inspections during the summer term (published on Monday 30th March 2021). In short, they are:

*No graded inspections until the autumn.

*Inspections during the summer term 2021 will be 'lighter-touch inspections to provide reassurance about how will children and learners are catching up'. Typically these will be on-site, subject to Covid 19 protocols.

*"where the evidence strongly suggests that a school's current grade is no longer a fair reflection of its work (eg currently inadequate or RI but has clearly improved) inspectors will be able to convert to a full graded inspection either immediately or later in the term".

*Other than where significant concerns are raised, Ofsted will not inspect secondary schools in the first half to the summer term to allow them to focus on centre-awarded grades

Further details can be viewed by [clicking here.](#)

Safeguarding

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021

At the end of last term, the DfE launched a consultation on updating its KCSiE statutory guidance for September 2021. The consultation closes on the 4th March and can be accessed [here](#). As well as KCSiE, the DfE is also seeking revisions to its advice on sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges.

The consultation document sets out the majority of the changes to KCSiE that the DfE began to consult on back in February 2020; due to the pandemic, this consultation was withdrawn at the end of March 2020. Some of the key changes proposed include:

- Part One of KCSiE sets out what all staff need to know, what they need to look out for and where they should report their concerns. There is an argument that the current detail in Part One is excessive for those staff who do not regularly work directly with children, such as caterers and cleaners, to fulfil their safeguarding responsibilities and in fact obscures the basic safeguarding message. Thus the DfE is proposing a shortened version of this Part One guidance with Governing Boards given the freedom to choose this shortened version, for those staff not regularly working directly with children, where they think it will provide a better basis for them to promote the welfare and safeguard children.
- Additional content on child criminal exploitation, child sexual exploitation and serious violence is proposed to be included in Part One and Annex B of KCSiE to better help schools and colleges understand how to identify children at risk from these harms.
- It is proposed that a significant amount of the online content in Annex C of KCSiE 2020 is now moved to Part Two of the draft guidance. This proposed change will give online safety the prominence it deserves in the main body of the guidance; whilst new burdens or processes are not introduced, it does makes clear that the management of online safety sits alongside, and should be considered with, broader safeguarding requirements and the whole school/college safeguarding approach.

- Part Three of the guidance (Safer Recruitment) will be restructured as the DfE believes that currently Part Three potentially overly focuses on DBS checking, as part of the safer recruitment process, and does not place enough emphasis on encouraging schools/colleges to have in place an ongoing culture of vigilance. The DfE is keen to emphasise that no changes to the statutory requirements placed on schools and colleges have been proposed.
- Part Four of the guidance (allegations of abuse against staff and volunteers) has been restructured so that schools/colleges better understand:
 - o the Local Authority arrangements for managing allegations, including the contact details of the local authority designated officer (LADO); and
 - o how to manage allegations that do not meet the LADO threshold.
- Interestingly, in the name of expanding the DfE's evidence base, a number of questions have been included in the consultation (Section 7) looking at the safeguarding training of both the Safeguarding Governor (KCSiE currently advises all schools and colleges to have a senior Board level safeguarding lead) and the rest of the Governing Board. The expansion of the evidence base, it is argued, would help the DfE understand what training is currently being undertaken by Governing Boards and whether mandated safeguarding training would be helpful.

The full consultation document can be accessed [here](#).

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020

Last week saw the current KCSiE 2020 guidance updated to reflect some legal changes, following the UK's exit from the European Union, including guidance on checking the past conduct of individuals who have lived or worked overseas.

The update KCSiE 2020 guidance can be accessed [here](#).

Abuse during Lockdown

New lesson plans and resources for Key Stage 3, 4 and 5 students have been published to help support children and young people who may have suffered harm, including sexual and physical abuse, during lockdown. This is part of a new campaign, 'Something's Not Right', which aims to build children's awareness of the support services available to them and encourage disclosure of abuse to a trusted adult.

The resources have been developed by the Home Office and PSHE Association, in partnership with charities including Childline and Barnardo's.

The charity, NSPCC, has reported that contacts to its helpline about the impact of domestic abuse on children have increased by 32% since the start of the lockdown, to an average of one an hour. In turn, 58% of the calls made have led to referrals or a referral update to the Local Authority. In some of these cases, fears about the virus were exploited to withhold access to children, cut off contact to family and friends, and monitor movement under the pretext of keeping them safe from the virus.