



the Maximilian

Monthly Newsletter for Governors from the Education Commission

Edition 88
May 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.

The Catholic school sets out to be a school for the human person and of human persons. 'The person of each individual human being, in his or her material and spiritual needs, is at the heart of Christ's teaching: this is why the promotion of the human person is the goal of the Catholic school.'

The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, 9

Changes to the Admissions Code

A draft Code and associated regulations were laid before Parliament on 13th May 2021. There is a period of 40 days during which both Houses of Parliament have the opportunity to review the Code, with any member having the right to pass a motion not to approve. Any such motion would prevent the Code coming into force. The 40 period expires on the 1st July and if there are no such motions, the new Code will come into force on 1st September.

The 2021 School Admissions Code requires children who appear (to the admissions authority) to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted to be given equal first priority in admission arrangements, alongside looked after children and children who were previously looked after by English local authorities.

Action that admission authorities must take in order to be compliant with the new provision.

The new Code (Paragraph 1.7) sets out the new provision with regards to children who appear to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted. This new provision will require variations to determine the admission arrangements to take effect from 1st September 2021. Admission authorities will need to vary their admission arrangements for 2021/22 and 2022/23, both of which would have been determined by 28th February of the previous year. Failure to make these variations will mean that determined admission arrangements would no longer comply with the code from this date.

Admission authorities will therefore be expected to hold a meeting between now and 31st August to determine the variation to their arrangements for 2021/22 and 2022/23. Any variations will be conditional on the Code passing through the Parliamentary process, which should be completed on or around the 1st July 2021. Any variations agreed prior to this date must make clear that they are conditional on the Code passing through Parliament. These variations should come into effect 1st September 2021.

These variations will be necessary in order for admission arrangements to comply with the Code and therefore it will not be necessary to refer a variation request to either the OSA, in respect of maintained schools or the ESFA in respect of academies.

All applications that are received prior 1st September 2021 will have been processed with regards to the existing Code of 2014 and any made and places allocated will be unchanged. Any applications received on or after 1st September 2021 will be subject to the new Code. Any child who is on a school's waiting list prior to 1st September 2021 and meets the definition of a child who appears to have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted, must be ranked again on 1st September 2021, following the new Code coming into force so that the child is given equal highest priority with LAC and PLAC.

Responsibility for determining whether a child meets this new criterion rests with the admission authority. Given the fact that evidence may vary for each case, the Education Commission will look to assist and support admission authorities in deciding what evidence can be used to support an application by parents who want their child to be considered under the new criterion, on a case by case basis.

News in Brief

Pupil Premium Grant

Changes from 2021/22

Whilst the per pupil allocations for 2021/22 remain unchanged from the previous year (£1,345 for primary pupils, £955 for secondary pupils and £2,345 for Looked After Children), allocations will be calculated on data collected during the October 2020 rather than the January 2021 school census; the October school census will continue to be the focal data point for PPG calculations moving forward. The change in the data collection date has caused concern amongst school leaders; whilst schools will receive extra funding for those pupils newly eligible for the grant by October 2020, any children who have faced increased deprivation since then will not be factored into the 2021/22 funding decisions. Whilst the DfE refuses to state how much funding schools have missed out on as a result of the change, a survey by the NAHT school leadership union suggested that England's primary schools alone could face a £180M funding gap. Some have estimated that the full shortfall could amount to £250M.

There are some changes in the terms and condition document recently published by the DfE which Governing Boards need to be aware of with respect to the Pupil Premium Grant:

- From the academic year 2021/22 onwards, schools must demonstrate how their PPG spending decisions are informed by research evidence, making reference to a range of sources, including the Education Endowment Foundation's toolkit. In line with the EEF's pupil premium guide, activities should include those that:

- o support the quality of teaching, such as staff professional development;
- o provide targeted academic support, such as tutoring; and
- o tackle non-academic barriers to success in school, such as attendance, behaviour and social and emotional support.
- To comply with School Information regulations, maintained schools (and most academies, as per their Funding Agreements) are required to publish an annual pupil premium strategy. All schools now must use the DfE's templates to publish their 2021/22 pupil premium strategy, which must be done by 31st December 2021. The DfE has stated that it will undertake monitoring checks on a sample of schools' published reports to ensure compliance.
- The information provided on the strategy template should explain:
 - o How much pupil premium funding the school has been allocated for the current funding year;
 - o How the school intends to use its pupil premium funding (specific activities, strategies, initiatives);
 - o The rationale for allocating the funding on specific areas including the barriers they will help to overcome;
 - o The intended impact of allocating the funding in this way; and
 - o The effect of the previous year's pupil premium funding on eligible pupils and more widely.

The DfE clearly states that the PPG does not have to be completely spent by schools in the financial year beginning 1st April 2021; some or all of it may be carried forward to future financial years.

Increase in PPG numbers

Whilst the per pupil PPG allocations remain unchanged for 2021/22, the total pot of PPG funding will be increasing; census data published by the DfE shows an additional 302,397 pupils became eligible for free school meals between the first nationwide lockdown in March 2020 and the October 2020 school census. During the same period a year before, numbers increased by 208,500.

The latest data highlights that 19.7% of pupils were eligible for free school meals as of October 2020, up from 17.3% in January 2020. In total, 1.63M children qualified by the autumn term. Whilst the highest rates of eligibility were in north-east England, at 26.3% of pupils, every region has seen an increase since spring, with the highest jumps in the West Midlands and the north-east.

School Exclusions

The DfE has updated its school exclusion guidance to highlight that:

- Meetings relating to exclusions occurring between 25th September 2020 and 24th September 2021 must take place within the normal timescales described in the 2017 statutory exclusions guidance.
- If it is not reasonably practicable for panels to meet by the usual deadline, either in person because of coronavirus or by remote access because the conditions for a remote access meeting have not been met, the meeting must not be delayed any longer than is reasonably necessary.
- The deadline for applications for an independent review in relation to exclusions occurring between 25th September 2020 and 24th September 2021 will be 25 school days (rather than the 15 days highlighted in the statutory guidance) from the date on which notice of the Governing Board's decision is given in writing to parents.
- Schools must wait for the extended period of 25 school days to pass without an application having been made before deleting the name of an excluded pupil from their admissions register.

For exclusions occurring between 25th September 2020 and 24th September 2021, Governing Board Panels or IRPs should be held via remote access if:

- It is not reasonably practicable for the meeting to take place in person, within the usual timescales, due to coronavirus.
- The Governing Board, or arranging authority for IRPs, is satisfied that:
 - all the participants agree to the use of remote access;

- all the participants have access to the technology which will allow them to hear and speak throughout the meeting, and to see and be seen, if a live video link is used;
- all the participants will be able to put across their point of view or fulfil their function; and
- the meeting can be held fairly and transparently via remote access.

The Governing Board, or arranging authority for IRPs, is responsible for ensuring that these conditions are met before a meeting takes place. When determining if it's practicable to meet in person, the governing board or arranging authority should assess the:

- Facts of the case;
- Circumstances in which a meeting in person could be expected to take place;
- Needs of the intended participants, as far as this is possible; and
- Latest public health guidance.

It is interesting to note that the updated guidance refers to expulsions and suspensions – a genuine mistake by the DfE or a sign of change to come? Watch this space!

Designated Senior Mental Health Leads in Schools

Training for a designated senior mental health lead in every school by 2025 could begin in the autumn, with the funding handed directly to schools.

In 2017, the DfE announced that it would support all state schools and colleges to identify and train a senior lead for mental health by 2025. The delay in ensuring that this training is up and running has been blamed by the DfE on the 2019 election and the impact of the coronavirus pandemic. The initial procurement notice published in July 2019 sought a supplier, or consortium of suppliers, to deliver a “national senior mental health leads training programme” across all state schools and colleges. It was due to conclude in December 2019, but the DfE said it was paused due to the rules around new business in an election period.

The £30M contract was due to start in January 2020 and run up to July 2024, subject to contract extensions. However, the DfE has now said that schools and colleges would get funding to pay mental health training providers directly.

The Government has said that it is aiming for a “phased approach” to training senior leads from autumn this year and that schools would, at some stage, receive details on the value of the grant and how it could be used. Watch this space!

Early Career Framework Reforms (ECF Reforms)

From September 2021, statutory induction for new teachers will change as part of the ECF reforms. Through these reforms all early career teachers in England undergoing statutory induction will be entitled to 2 years of high-quality professional development support and training.

In March, the DfE announced that a number of providers (Ambition Institute, Best Practice Network, Capita with lead academic partner, the University of Birmingham, Education Development Trust, Teach First and UCL Institute of Education) have been selected to deliver funded training programmes based on the ECF as part of a national roll-out.

Schools can choose to sign up to one of these provider-led programmes, utilise DfE accredited materials to deliver a programme of training and support, or design their own induction programme based on the ECF.

All state funded schools offering statutory induction will receive additional funding to deliver the ECF reforms.

Teaching School Hubs

The teaching school hub programme will create a network of 87 centres of excellence for teacher training and development across England, focused on some of the best schools and MATs in the

country. This programme replaces the previous network of around 750 teaching schools which will come to an end in August 2021.

Teaching school hubs will provide high-quality professional development to teachers at all stages of their careers and will be expected to play a significant role in delivering:

- School based Initial Teacher Training;
 - The Early Career Framework when it becomes nationally available from September 2021;
- and
- The new specialist National Professional Qualifications, including leadership NPQs.

Teaching school hubs will be funded for 3 years and will be accessible to every school in the country. Each hub will receive an annual grant, subject to conditions, including demonstrating progress against key performance indicators. Each hub will have its own defined area and must serve all schools within it, although this will not prevent hubs from working with schools outside their area.

Behaviour Hubs

Heads and behaviour leads from some of England's highest performing schools and MATs have now been confirmed as mentors and trainers in the DfE's £10M Behaviour Hubs programme.

Designed to support schools struggling with poor discipline, training through these Behaviour Hubs for the first group of participating schools will commence from the start of the summer term; this is particularly timely given the extra support that some students may require to re-engage with education following the pandemic and two whole school closures.

The lead schools and MATs will work closely with the schools they are supporting to diagnose what could be improved, develop and launch new behaviour approaches and policies and provide ongoing mentoring and support. Lead schools will advise their counterparts on issues ranging from setting clear expectations to eliminate low-level disruption in classrooms to more systematic approaches to maintaining order and discipline across the school, such as forbidding the use of mobile phones and maintaining quiet corridors.

The programme will run on a termly basis, with lead schools and MATs forming hubs with two different supported schools each term. The programme will expand next year, with further lead schools and MATs appointed, to help reach the target of 500 supported schools over the three-year programme.

Sports Premium Funding

As a result of the pandemic, the DfE relaxed the ring-fencing arrangements for the PE and Sports Premium funding in the 2019/20 academic year to allow any unspent grant to be carried forward into 2020/21. The DfE has now confirmed that any under-spends carried forward from 2019/20 will need to be spent in full by the end of this academic year as further carry forward will not be permitted.

Schools must publish details of how they have spent their PE and Sport Premium funding by the end of the summer term or by 31 July 2021 at the latest. If they have any carried forward funding from 2019/20, it should be shown separately how this funding has been spent. As a reminder, online reporting must include:

- the amount of PE and sport premium received;
- a full breakdown of how it has been spent;
- the impact the school has seen on pupils' PE, physical activity, and sport participation and attainment; and
- how the improvements will be sustainable in the future.

SEND Investment

Children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or requiring alternative provision in England will benefit from a recently announced new £280M investment. Councils will receive the funding to create new places in schools, academies, colleges and early years settings. The funding is expected to help improve existing provision by creating modern, fit-for-purpose spaces suited to a wider range of pupil needs. This could be by contributing to the cost of creating a whole new special school or by improving accessibility, such as installing ramps, handrails or ceiling hoists.

The funding is for the 2021/22 financial year to support the provision of high needs places needed by September 2022. Up to an additional £20M will be used to support High Needs capital projects in a small number of Local Authorities which are facing the highest Dedicated Schools Grant deficits.

Cyber Attacks

With many staff working from home, a rise in the number of cyber-attacks targeting business has, inevitably, been seen. This includes a recent rise in cyber-attacks targeting schools, including the Harris Federation, which has resulted in the loss of data. The National Security Cyber Centre (NSCC) has issued an alert for those responsible for IT and data protection in educational settings which can be accessed here

Governing Boards should be reviewing, reflecting and requesting an overview from senior leaders and/or their data protection officer of the systems and strategies that are currently in place to ensure these are as robust as possible.

Review Launched by the New Children's Commissioner

A 'once in a generation' review of the future of childhood has been announced by the new Children's Commissioner, Dame Rachel de Souza. The Children's Commission will look at the barriers to children reaching their potential and propose policy solutions with 10 year targets. The project will be shaped by the findings of 'The Big Ask', a survey of school pupils which has just been launched, to gain the views of children across the country. The Commission aims to address issues highlighted and exacerbated by the pandemic including the impact of missed schooling on children's career prospects and mental health.

SFVS for Maintained Schools

The DfE have confirmed that, as a result of the pandemic, maintained schools, including nursery schools, can now submit their completed 2020/21 Schools Financial Value Standard by 28th May 2021 (normal submission date would have been 31st March 2021). As a reminder, if Boards have adopted a committee structure, the SFVS will need to be discussed and ratified by the Full Governing Board prior to submission to the LA and this ratification formally recorded in the minutes. Boards will also need to ensure that sufficient time has been allowed for the review and discussion of the data dashboard, and any issues that have been highlighted, before the final submission of the SFVS.

Firm Foundations updates

A new publication has been added to the library of the Firm Foundations governor training app. It is called 'Guide to Admissions' and has been written by our team to support governors of Catholic schools in the processes. It will be a helpful reminder for some and will be particularly useful for governors unfamiliar with admissions procedures. It should load automatically to the library on apps on smart phones provided you are connected to Wi-Fi when opening the app.

Now is a good time to remind governors to make use of this training app. The diocese has invested in this training app for our governors so that it is 'free as the point of delivery'. The more it is used, the greater the likelihood that time can be given to write fresh materials and an second extension to the licence.

We are currently working on some other publications to be added later in the year. There will be one on Relationships & Sex Education to reflect impact to the changes to legislation. Another will be based around Governors responsibilities for buildings. Other dioceses are starting to use Firm Foundations and some are working on adding publications. We hope some of them will be added to the library soon.

Contact Patrick Harrison (patrickharrison@rcaos.org.uk) if you would like him to give a presentation about Firm Foundations at a governing body meeting. New governors (or those who need reminding of their username/password can use our online form <https://www.rcaoseducation.org.uk/ffr/>

There is a facility for one governor (perhaps the Chair or the Clerk) to have oversight right. This will enable the usage of the training app to be monitored by governors. Please email patrickharrison@rcaos.org.uk if you want someone to be given that facility.

No Place for Racism and Catholic Social Teaching For Governors

Saturday 19th June 2021 10am-2pm
£50 – Zoom

Archbishop John Wilson wrote a letter to the Diocese on 17th June 2020 stating the following: Our Catholic Faith does more than condemn racism; it also calls us to challenge racism, to eliminate its causes and to heal the wounds it brings.

What are we doing to achieve these outcomes in our schools/colleges and academies?

Please [click here](#) to book your places.

Reminder to access the free period products scheme

You can still order a range of free period products for learners, including environmentally friendly and reusable products. Schools and colleges have had an activation email from phs with information on how to log on to the portal and order products.

Find practical support and guidance on the scheme on gov.uk or contact phs customer services if you have any questions: 01827 255500 or periodproducts@phs.co.uk.