



the Maximilian

Monthly Newsletter for Governors from the Education Commission

Edition 89
June & July 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.

Message from the Director

Dear Colleagues,

The long-awaited 'opening up' arrives as schools say goodbye to pupils in Years 6 and 11. We enter a phase of transition. Sadly, two schools close their doors for the last time: Virgo Fidelis Convent Girls School, St Joseph's Independent in Gravesend and Beechwood Sacred Heart moves into a new era de-designated as a Catholic school under new ownership. We wish all associated with these changes all the very best. Our thoughts and prayers go with them.

This year has been particularly challenging as schools have had to cope with the ongoing threat of the coronavirus. I continue to be amazed by the resilience of staff and pupils and their capacity for shifting gear or procedures as each new challenge emerged. On behalf of Archbishop John, can I thank you for your tremendous support for school leaders enabling them to make an enormous contribution to dealing with the pandemic. Thank you for your and their commitment to making school as good as it could be in such a difficult context.

Can I also take this opportunity to thank you - staff, governors, parents, clergy and Religious – for all that you do in anyway to support the children and young people in our school communities. We have seen unprecedented numbers of you taking up opportunities for training and development. We have met more of you than ever before through the medium of technology and we have benefitted from the shared wisdom that comes from so many of your experiences and expertise. Thank you. There remain challenges ahead but we will meet them head on, knowing that it is together that we continue to grow and develop successful Catholic schools.

With all good wishes and prayers for a safe, happy and restful summer holiday.



Changes to the Admissions Code

You will have noted in the mailout last week that we highlighted the proposed key changes to the Admissions Code for September 2021. One key change will have implications for your oversubscribed criteria.

The change impacts on Criteria 1 and 3, as set out in Appendix 1 and 2 of the Guidance on School Admissions document. Set out below is an example of how this change can be incorporated into your current oversubscribed criteria in your Admission Arrangements

Criterion 1:

Looked after Catholic children or looked after children in the care of Catholic families, looked after Catholic children who have been adopted or who have become the subject of a residence or guardianship order and Catholic children who appear (to the admissions authority) to have been in state care outside of England and cease to be in state care outside of England as a result of being adopted.

Criterion 3:

Looked after children, looked after children who have been adopted or who have become the subject of a residence or guardianship order and children who appear (to the admissions authority) to have been in state care outside of England and cease to be in state care outside of England as a result of being adopted.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you require any further clarification.

Supporting Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils in Catholic Schools

Please click the link below to view the guidance from the CES.

<https://www.catholiceducation.org.uk/images/MIGI2 For website.pdf>

Updates

Summer born children's admission

The DfE has published the results of two surveys of Local Authorities and parents and carers of summer born children requesting delayed admission to reception. The subsequent DfE report, which can be accessed in full [here](#), considers:

- trends in the number of requests for delayed entry into reception for summer born children;
- whether Local Authorities are changing their approach to handling requests;
- factors affecting demand for requests to delay entry for summer born children; and
- parents' and carers' reasons for requesting delayed entry for their summer born children and their demographics and childcare arrangements.

Senior Mental Health Lead Training

The DfE has now collated its resources for mental health and wellbeing support in schools and colleges on one webpage which can be accessed [here](#).

Part of this webpage references senior mental health lead training which the Government has committed to offer to all state schools and colleges by 2025 (although this training is not compulsory). The DfE is offering a senior member of staff in every school/college the opportunity to obtain a grant for training to help the mental health lead develop or introduce a whole school or college approach to mental health and wellbeing in their setting and make best use of existing resources.

Training could be for the head, deputy head, SLT member or an appropriate member of staff empowered to develop and oversee the whole school/college approach. Existing mental health leads, or someone who has previously had mental health and wellbeing training, can still be nominated for this training.

The grant on offer will be a contribution to the cost of training and the hiring of supply staff whilst leads are engaged in learning. Between September 2021 and March 2022, about a third of all state schools and colleges will be able to apply and access the grant and the DfE webpage will be updated to identify when applications can be made. Schools are expected to receive c.£1,200 although the precise amount will be confirmed in the 2021 autumn term.

For those schools unsuccessful in the initial round, a waiting list will be created with the DfE confirming future grant funding in the spring of 2022.

Academy Trust financial management good practice guides

The ESFA has a number of good practice guides for Academy Trusts with respect to financial management and assurance, including operating as a going concern, internal scrutiny and an external audit reporting checklist. The full range can be accessed [here](#)

The ESFA has recently updated its good practice guide on Risk Management which looks at:

- The key stages in developing an effective risk management process, including a risk management policy, the identification of risks, measuring, managing and monitoring those risks as well as strategic reporting and scrutiny.
- The common pitfalls of Trust risk management including reporting too many risks as well as ignoring known risks.

The updated risk management guidance can be accessed [here](#)

National Behaviour Survey

The Education Secretary recently announced a new national Behaviour Survey to provide a regular snapshot of the state of behaviour in schools. The National Behaviour Survey will run once a term from the 2021/22 academic year. The survey will not provide school-level data or be used as a school performance measure. Instead, the intention is to allow the DfE to build up a national picture of behaviour in schools over time and act as a signpost to what schools need. The survey will cover low level disruption, bullying and other incidents of challenging behaviour.

Pupil Premium

A survey published by F40, a group that represents the lowest funded education authorities in England, estimates that schools in the F40 areas alone, will see a Pupil Premium funding shortfall of more than £36M because of changes to how the funding is calculated this year (the new funding calculation is based on the October 2020 school census, rather than in January as in previous years).

The survey of F40 members shows that between October 2020 and January 2021, collectively there was an 8% rise in eligibility for free school meals in primary schools with a collective 3.5% rise in secondary schools. Those trends are likely to be replicated across the country but not reflected in the funding issued; the DfE's PPG funding allocations are expected later this month.

Attendance Guidance

The DfE has updated its guidance for schools and local authorities on improving school attendance.

The guidance sets out the principles underpinning an effective whole school strategy for attendance including leadership and management, relationships and communication, and interventions. The guidance also highlights targeted actions for all pupils, pupils at risk of poor attendance and pupils who are persistently absent, as well as signposting leaders to a range of supporting resources.

School Uniform Costs

Schools will be required to follow new statutory guidance on uniform costs which instructs them to keep prices down. The guidance, due to be published this autumn, will also require schools to consider high street alternatives for branded items, measures on second-hand uniform and ensuring parents have access to clear information about uniform policies.

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 at the point of delivery'. The more it is used, the greater the likelihood that time can be given to write fresh materials and a 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 rights. 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.

RSE Update

Following communication from the Minister of State for School Standards and the Catholic Education Service, the Archdiocese of Southwark Education Commission is not presently able to support the use of the relationships and sex education (RSE) programme, 'A Fertile Heart' published by Panda Press. For further support and guidance on RSE, please contact Sharon Docherty.