The Maximilian

A monthly newsletter for governors within the Archdiocese of Southwark

June 2026

Sister Anne-Marie

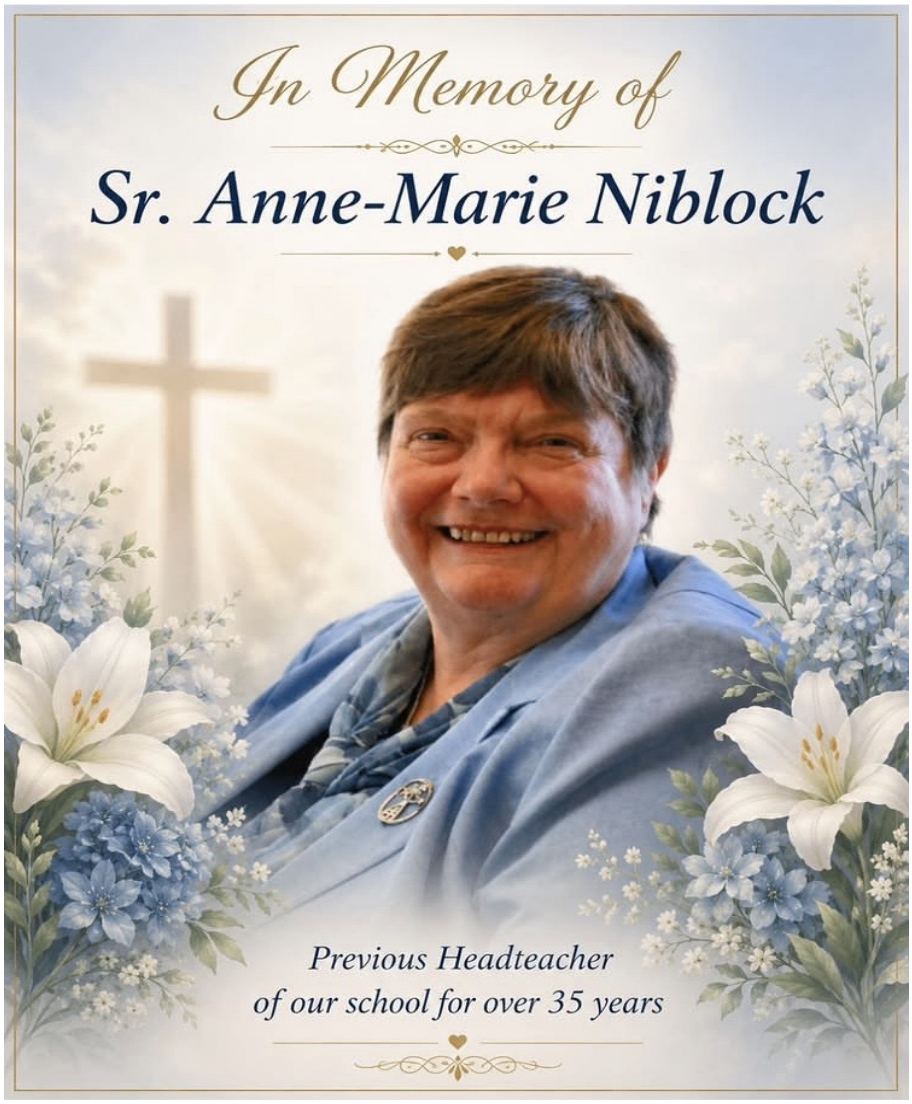

Photo credit to Notre Dame Catholic Girls' School

Sister Anne-Marie will be lovingly and gratefully remembered for her extraordinary legacy in Catholic education—a life poured out in faithful service, wisdom and devotion to the young people entrusted to her care. At the time of her retirement, she held the singular distinction of being the last Religious Sister in the Diocese to serve as a headteacher, a quiet yet profound testament to her dedication and vocation.

Her witness, both as an educator and as a Religious Sister, has left an indelible mark on countless lives and on the wider diocesan community. May her years of tireless service bear lasting fruit in the generations she helped to form.

May she now rest in the peace of Christ, whom she served so faithfully, and rise in the fullness of His glory.

More to come

Ofsted Key updates (from Sept 2026)

Governance & safeguarding
- Governors/trustees are now explicitly included in safeguarding leadership.
- No requirement for inspectors to meet the governance professional (optional instead).

Achievement & data
- Results will be compared with similar schools as well as national averages.
- New focus on:

1. Progress from starting points
2. Strong knowledge and high-quality pupil work
3. Inclusion of pupils with barriers

Inclusion
- Schools must actively engage with families to support pupils.
- An inclusion strategy must be published by 31 Dec 2026.

Safeguarding focus expanded
- Greater attention on mental health risks (e.g. self-harm, eating disorders).
- Allergy safety policy becomes mandatory.

Early years
- Stronger checks on safe sleeping and food preparation.
- Failures here can lead to urgent improvement judgments.

Attendance
- Inspectors will recognise that SEND can affect attendance, but expect clear improvement efforts.

Inspection process changes
- Inspectors must note if trustees aren't available.
- Fire safety and risks (e.g. adults living on site) get closer scrutiny.

Report cards
- Guidance will be improved.
- National comparisons removed for special schools.

Data Protection Complaints

There is a new requirement to have a process in place for handling data protection complaints by 19 June 2026. The Information Commissioners Office (ICO) has published guidance and key actions to take.

Schools must:
- Give people a way of raising data protection complaints
- Acknowledge each complaint within 30 days of receipt
- Take appropriate steps to respond without undue delay, including making any relevant enquiries and keeping complainants up to date on progress
- Provide an outcome to complainants without undue delay.

The ICO expects organisations to keep a record of the following, (which they or other industry bodies may request to see):
- The date the data protection complaint was received
- The school's acknowledgement of the complaint
- Any relevant conversations and documents

- The outcome of the complaint; and
- Any actions taken as a result of the investigation.

The board may wish to monitor the number of data protection complaints received, along with any recurring themes and trends. Privacy notices will need to be amended to explain the right to appeal and the process a complainant should follow. The School Complaints Policy may also need to be amended, to make clear that complaints relating to data protection fall outside the scope of that policy.

Tobacco and Vapes Act 2026

The legislation, described as a move towards a "smoke-free generation", introduces sweeping changes to the sale, promotion, and use of tobacco and vaping products. At the heart of the bill is a generational ban on tobacco sales. Anyone born on orafter 1 January 2009 will never be legally allowed to purchase tobacco products. This will be achieved by raising the legal age of sale by one year each year from 2027, gradually phasing out tobacco use across the population. Alongside tobacco restrictions, the legislation introduces tighter regulation of vaping products, particularly those that appeal to children and young people.

The bill enables the expansion of smoke-free and vape-free areas, with specific emphasis on environments where children gather. This is expected to include restrictions around school entrances, playgrounds, and other child-centred settings,reinforcing existing safeguarding expectations and public health messaging. For schools, this may require reviewing site policies, signage, and expectations for staff, visitors, and parents. Clear communication with parents will be important, particularly where new restrictions affect behaviour around the school gates, on trips or school events.

Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026

The bill received Royal Assent on 29 April, meaning that boards and schools need to take some actions now to meet requirements which will come into force from September 2026. These include:

School uniform
A provision within the Act will introduce the cost of school uniform statutory guidance from September 2026, meaning schools may only require three branded items of uniform, excluding ties.
A branded item is compulsory if a pupil is required to have or wear the item:

- for general use at the school
- to travel to or from the school
- to take part in any lesson, club or activity facilitated by the school.

This also applies to any after-school activities.

The limit on branded items includes any branded bags, such as book bags or rucksacks, and any items required only at particular times of year, such as summer dresses. If a school allows pupils to choose between different branded items, such as being able to choose between wearing a branded skirt or branded trousers, this would only count as one item, as the pupil is only required to have one of those items to be compliant with the school's uniform policy.

Actions for boards to take now include:

- Review the uniform policy to determine if any compulsory branded items need to be removed to adhere to the limit, or if any other changes are required
- Confirm as soon as possible which branded uniform items, within the limit, will be compulsory from September 2026
- Look at existing supply arrangements, and promptly discuss any changes with supplier(s) to give them appropriate notice and resolve any contractual implications
- Publish the revised uniform policy on the school's website and ensure it is easily understood.
- Inform parents of any requirements for generic alternatives (such as colour, shade, fabric or fit) so they can purchase appropriately
- Ensure that all parents, especially those of new starters, are made aware of where second-hand uniforms can be purchased, and make this facility available to all parents before the start of the new academic year. Information on second-hand uniforms should be published on the school website.

Medical conditions and allergy consultation

The introduction of proposed mandatory allergy safety provisions in schools:

- Requiring every setting to have a published 'medical conditions policy', reviewed annually, which should be published on the school website, plus a separate, published 'allergy safety policy', with a named member of the governing board and anamed senior leader responsible for each policy. While all children and young people with allergies should be supported under the medical conditions policy, a separate allergy safety policy is required because of the specific risk which anaphylaxis can pose
- Strengthening Individual Healthcare Plans (IHPs)
- Strengthening recording, reporting and learning from serious incidents and 'near misses.'

The governing board should ensure that all staff are aware of the medical conditions policy and understand their role in implementing it. This includes staff or volunteers responsible for before-school provision, free breakfast clubs and afterschoolclubs, whether delivered directly or through third-party providers operating on or in the vicinity of the school site.

The medical conditions policy should set out arrangements for the training of staff whose role is intended to include providing support to a child or young person with specific medical needs. Training should be sufficient to ensure that staff are competent and confident to fulfil the requirements set out in Individual Healthcare Plans.

The allergy safety policy should set out arrangements for whole-school allergy awareness training, so that all staff receive regular (at least annual) allergy awareness training. This training should cover all staff, including teaching staff, support staff, catering staff and others who may oversee children and young people at breakfast or after school clubs. Anaphylaxis reactions are unpredictable. In addition, up to 20% of anaphylaxis reactions in schools happen in children without a pre-existing diagnosis of food allergy. Therefore schools are expected to stock 'spare' in-date adrenaline devices for emergency situations.

It is proposed that medical conditions policies should set out:

- How the school, college or setting will ensure children and young people with medical conditions (including allergy) are both enabled and supported to attend as fully as possible, and to participate as fully as possible in all aspects of life in the school, college or setting, including trips

and extracurricular activities, and the role played by all staff in doing so
- How children and young people with medical conditions will be identified
- How staff (whether teaching staff, support staff or supply staff) will be trained in awareness of medical conditions
- Where children and young people have Individual Healthcare Plans, how relevant staff will be made aware of the arrangements and where necessary trained to provide the required support
- How the school, college or setting will respond in an emergency
- How the school, college or setting will put reasonable adjustments in place for children and young people whose medical condition constitutes a disability
- What arrangements and adjustments will be put in place to ensure children and young people are able to participate in visits, trips and extracurricular activities, and do so safely
- How Individual Healthcare Plans will be developed in consultation with the child or young person and their parents to document specific support arrangements, and how the effectiveness of the arrangements will be reviewed and (where necessary) amended)
- How medication will be managed, including safe storage and disposal
- How concerns should be raised and disagreements resolved
- How the wellbeing of children and young people with medical conditions will be promoted.

Other measures

The Act introduces a range of other measures, (some of which are subject to secondary legislation), These include a ban on mobile phones in schools; a register of children not in school; the roll-out of free breakfast clubs in primary schools for pupilsfrom reception to year six; measures to improve data-sharing to better safeguard children and young people – including the introduction of a 'unique identifier'; the requirement to employ qualified teachers extended to include academies; requirement for academies to teach the National Curriculum.
Read the DfE press release

Priest Identification

During a recent meeting with clergy, it was noted that some schools have been asking priests to present official identification, such as a celebret, before entering school premises. This has caused some concern, as many priests do not routinely carry this documentation.

It is not necessary to request identification from parish priests. They are formally appointed to their roles by the Archbishop, and all required safeguarding checks and vetting have already been completed.

The only exception would be in cases where a visiting priest from overseas is present, or where an unfamiliar priest arrives without prior notice. In such instances, it may be appropriate to seek verification.

CPD for 2026-2027

Please click here to view our CPD booklet for the 2026-2027 academic year.

Courses & Events

Details for out upcoming courses and events for this academic year are available on our website.
https://www.rcaoseducation.org.uk/governor-cpd/

Directors Keeping in Touch (KIT)
Thursday 16th July 2026. 8-8.30am.
Teams

Governors Gathering
Thursday 16th July 2026 4-5pm.
Teams