

Governor Support Team



*Ann Turner, Governor Support Manager (left).
Laura Robson, Governor Support Assistant
(middle) and Derek Gouldburn, Governor Support
Officer (right).*

Welcome to the Hartlepool Governor

Welcome to the first edition of The Hartlepool Governor. During the summer term we asked for your views on producing a termly newsletter for governors and if so what you would like to see in it. In response we received many messages of support and lots of ideas about what should be included.

Each term we will aim to provide articles which are topical and of interest and relevant to governors including updates on legislation and guidance, information on good practice, roles and responsibilities, useful contacts and links, training dates and items of general interest.

In this first issue we introduce the team – whose members most governors will know already. We also provide feedback on the recent evaluation survey of the Governor Support Service, information about the requirements of the national database (Edubase) and an article on succession planning.

We hope you will find the newsletter interesting and useful and would welcome further feedback on its content.



National Database of School And Academy Governors

The Department for Education has recently introduced a new national governors' database. The Edubase system, as it is called, is intended to reflect the Government's aim of ensuring transparency around governance of schools and academies. With effect from 1st September 2016 maintained schools will have a duty to provide the information required and to upload it onto the Edubase system. Schools will also be required to keep these records up to date to reflect changes in governors' details and the appointment of new governors.

Academies will also be required to provide this information including details of trustees, members and local governors. In line with the requirements of the Academies Financial Handbook (September 2016), academies will additionally have to provide details of any committees that operate between trust boards and school local governing bodies.

The following information should be added to Edubase and will be made publicly available. Some of this information will already be recorded on school and academy websites:

- full name (including title)
- appointing body
- date of appointment
- date term of office ends/ended, if in the last year
- for maintained schools:
 - whether they are the chair of governors or a member of the governing body
- for academies:
 - whether they are a trust member, a trustee, the chair of the trustees or a local governor on a local governing body.

In addition to the above, further information will be collected in Edubase but will not be made publicly available. This information will be encrypted and will only be accessible to a small number of users for official purposes:

- postcode
- date of birth
- previous name(s)
- nationality
- direct email address for chair (which will be made available to Regional School Commissioners)

Governor Support

Civic Centre, Level 4, Victoria Road, Hartlepool, TS26 8AY
Tel: 01429 523766 (Ann), 01429 523767 (Derek) and 01429 523120 (Laura)

Email: governor.support@hartlepool.gov.uk

Website: www.hartlepool.gov.uk

Succession Planning

Succession planning is an essential part of the process of maintaining and developing the strength of your governing body. The Governors' Handbook recommends that chairs of governors should serve for no more than six years. We are aware that a number of experienced chairs are planning to step down from their roles in the next year. It is important that governing bodies plan ahead to ensure that their expertise is not lost and that their successor is properly prepared. Even if your chair or vice-chair is not planning to leave just yet, it is important to start the process of developing future leaders early. Indeed it is good practice to undertake succession planning on an ongoing basis.

As a starting point, governing bodies may wish to pause and consider what the role of the chair actually involves and for the chair to share their experiences. Whilst a governing body should act collectively the chair:

- has a key role in the leadership of the school
- works closely with the headteacher to promote and maintain high standards of educational achievement
- ensures that the governing body sets a clear vision, ethos and strategic direction for the school
- alongside the governing body, holds the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils and for the performance management of staff
- ensures oversight of the financial performance of the school and effective use of the school resources

In preparing for succession you may wish to:

- encourage other skilled governors to volunteer to be a chair or vice chair of committees and include them in some of the chair's activities such as meetings with the headteacher
- establish a strategic planning committee to include chairs of committees to look at agenda setting and developing the vision and ethos of the school
- rotate the chairing of meetings to build experience of the role from within the governing body
- indicate a personal limit for the chair's term of office, and the chair to offer to remain on the governing body to give support should the new chair require this

- if necessary actively work alongside another governor to prepare them for the chair's role
- encourage governors to attend training in the role of chair

If you need further information around succession planning please contact the Governor Support Team. We would be happy to discuss training options or signpost to other sources of guidance.



Useful Publications

The Governance Handbook published by the Department for Education (DfE) is an essential read for governors of schools and academies. It provides lots of useful information and guidance to help you undertake your duties. Last published in November 2015 we are expecting a new version to come out this autumn. The Governance Handbook can be accessed through the following link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-handbook>

Another key document which sets out the financial management framework for academies is the **Academies Financial Handbook – September 2016**. Use the following link to access this document:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academies-financial-handbook>

Two further important publications are **Keeping Children Safe in Education statutory guidance for schools and colleges –September 2016**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>

Schools That Work for Everyone – a government consultation document which includes proposals for the creation of new grammar schools. You may wish to respond to the consultation.

<https://consult.education.gov.uk/school-frameworks/schools-that-work-for-everyone>



Share your Views and News

What do you think of the first edition of The Hartlepool Governor?

We would very much appreciate your feedback on the form and content of your newsletter. Let us know what you found most interesting and what other items you would like to see in future editions.

We would also welcome articles that you would like to share with other governors for instance celebrations of success at your school, helpful information or examples of best practice.

Drop us a line at : governor.support@hartlepool.gov.uk

Governor Support Questionnaire

At the beginning of the summer term we sent out questionnaires to all governors and trustees of Hartlepool schools and academies asking for your views on the School Governor Support Service. We wanted to know what you thought about the quality and effectiveness of the service and how we could improve. In all, 440 questionnaires were sent out and 111 were returned. A huge thank you to all who responded.

Questions were asked around what you thought of the team's performance in clerking and supporting meetings, and also about the broader support we provide to schools, for instance in managing governor vacancies and elections, and providing advice and guidance to headteachers and governors. We also asked you to rate the quality and content of our training and briefing programmes, and sought ideas for topics to be included in future sessions.

We were extremely pleased with the level of response. It was reassuring to know that the vast majority of respondents rated the service as either very good or excellent in areas including speed and efficiency in dealing with meetings and enquiries, quality and accuracy of minutes, advice, guidance and support, and attitude and professionalism.

We were also pleased with the suggestions offered as to how we can improve the service and we will look to address these where we can. For example, governors wanted more notice about training and events so we will publish dates and times of briefings for the whole year on the Governor Support section of the Council's website and in the The Hartlepool Governor. We will help to facilitate schools who wish to send out meeting papers to governors electronically either by email or on their websites. We will also liaise with schools in helping to make draft minutes available to governors earlier and in helping to set focussed agendas for meetings that meet Ofsted's requirements to aid effective governance.

We were rather disappointed with the level of governor attendance at our briefing and training sessions, particularly as governors have a responsibility to undertake training to help them carry out their role of supporting and challenging schools. Whilst it is acknowledged that governors may access training directly through their school and from other sources, we are looking to vary times and days of our sessions in order to encourage greater attendance.

To access the full evaluation report of the School Governor Support Service, go to the Governor Support section of the Hartlepool Borough Council website:

<https://www.hartlepool.gov.uk/governorsupportservice>



News in Brief

Looking to Recruit New Governors?

Finding new governors with the right skills and commitment is sometimes difficult for governing bodies. There are two organisations that offer help in recruiting governors:

- The School Governor One Stop Shop- a well established organisation which provides a database of people who are interested in being a governor - <https://www.sgoss.org.uk>
- Inspiring Futures- an organisation which works with education and employers - <https://www.inspiringgovernors.org>

Before appointing new governors you should undertake a skills audit of your governing body. This will help to determine where you have skills gaps and, by getting prospective governors to complete an individual skills audit, you should be able to assess whether they have the skills that you are looking for. Remember that when appointing new governors the headteacher and the chair should interview candidates and explain the role and commitment required of a governor. Of course if you know someone who is interested in becoming a school governor please let us know or contact your school.

Appeal from the Appeals Panel

The Child and Adults Services Department is seeking to recruit existing governors to sit as independent members on the Schools Admissions and Appeals Panels. For those who are interested, training sessions have been arranged for Thursday 9th March 2017 (Admissions Appeals) and Friday 10th March 2017 (Exclusions Appeals). If you are interested in becoming a Panel member please contact:

Angela.Armstrong@hartlepool.gov.uk or telephone (01429)244171


To book a place on the training, email:

admissionsteam@hartlepool.gov.uk or ring Kayleigh Spalding (01429)284368

Full details of the training can be found:

<https://www.hartlepool.gov.uk/governorsupportservice>

The deadline for registration on the training is 30th November 2016.



Is your website up to date?

One of the first things an Ofsted inspector will do before visiting your school is to look at your school website. It is important, therefore, that the website is kept up to date, is informative and includes all statutorily required information. Schools are required by law to include the following information:

- **school contact details** including name, postal address and telephone number along with a contact name for enquiries
- **admissions arrangements** including selection criteria, oversubscription criteria, an explanation of what parents should do if they want to apply for their child to attend the school and details of how parents can find out about the school's admission arrangements through the local authority
- a link to the school's recent **Ofsted inspection** and the **DfE's Performance Tables**
- specified details of the most recent **Key Stage 2 or Key Stage 4 results**
- **curriculum information** for each academic year group
- **school policies** on Behaviour, Charging and Remissions and Complaints Procedure
- details of how **Pupil Premium** funding and, where appropriate, **PE and Sports Premium** is spent and its impact on pupil attainment
- information on **Year 7 Catch-up Premium** funding and its impact
- a **Special Educational Needs (SEN)** report published by the governing body including specified information.

Schools may wish to delegate responsibility to a governor to keep a check on your website.

Upcoming Training 2016-17

Governor training is now available for 2016-17 and will take place at the Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning (CETL).

Governor Briefings are an opportunity for governors to find out about matters affecting our schools, hear about new initiatives and receive updates for Governors.

Governor Induction is a session designed for those new to governance where you will learn more about your role as a governor.

Governor Induction Follow On is an opportunity to meet to reflect on first year as a Governor and what they have learned and to help identify further training needs.

These sessions normally last no more than two hours.

Autumn Term

Governor Briefing	2 nd	November 2016	at	3.30pm
Governor Briefing	2 nd	November 2016	at	6.00pm
Governor Briefing	3 rd	November 2016	at	9.30am
Governor Induction	14 th	November 2016	at	6.00pm
Governor Induction	15 th	November 2016	at	9.30am

Spring Term

Governor Briefing	20 th	February 2017	at	6.00pm
Governor Briefing	23 rd	February 2017	at	9.30am
Governor Briefing	23 rd	February 2017	at	3.30pm

Summer Term

Governor Briefing	15 th	May 2017	at	6.00pm
Governor Briefing	17 th	May 2017	at	9.30am
Governor Briefing	17 th	May 2017	at	3.30pm
Governor Induction	26 th	June 2017	at	6.00pm
Follow On				
Governor Induction	30 th	June 2017	at	9.30am
Follow On				

Training sessions for governors on Pupil Disciplinary Procedures are available on the following dates:

19th October 2016 at 9.30am

8th November 2016 at 1.30pm

An evening session is to be agreed.

Help us save some trees

The Hartlepool Governor will be sent out to every governor and trustee whose details we have on our database - there are presently around 450. We would like to save on paper and production costs by sending the newsletter out electronically rather than by post.

The evaluation questionnaire that you received in May asked governors to let us have your details so that we could email the newsletter to them and many of you have agreed to this.

We will still send a paper copy to those who want to receive the newsletter in this way, but we would encourage governors to consider letting us email it to you instead.

Please forward your details to:

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