

Welcome to the May Monthly Bulletin. Our bulletin has been produced with the aim of keeping governors and clerks informed of the latest educational developments as they happen. The most effective way of using this briefing is to have it as an agenda item as part of your governing body meetings.

### [School condition allocations and devolved formula capital: updated for 2017 to 2018](#)

The DfE has released the details of school capital funding allocations for 2015 to 2018 for: local authorities and local-authority-maintained schools; local voluntary-aided bodies and voluntary-aided schools; academies and large multi-academy trusts and sponsors; sixth-form colleges; special schools not maintained by the local authority and specialist post-16 institutions. For more information [click here](#).

### [Pupil absence in schools in England: autumn term 2016](#)

The DfE has released the information on the levels of [overall, authorised and unauthorised absence](#) in: state-funded primary schools; state-funded secondary schools; pupil referral units. It includes information on: reasons for absence and persistent absence. It should be noted that the absence information in this release is for autumn term 2016 only. Findings from individual terms can be volatile and therefore figures and trends in this release should be treated as indicative only. As a board, how are you monitoring the attendance in your school? Do you receive the data broken down into vulnerable groups?

KCC has reviewed the attendance Code of Conduct and made some changes to the wording in relation to the 10% Persistent Absence threshold. The revised Code of Conduct will remove the requirement of “lower than 90% overall attendance rate (also known as the ‘Persistent Absence rate’)” during the past twelve months as a criterion for issuing a Penalty Notice. In light of the revised Code of Conduct, schools may wish to review their attendance policy and the relevant letters to parents. Updated model policy and code of conduct can be found on [Kelsi](#)

### [Clerking Competency Framework](#)

Clerking competency framework was released by the DfE on the 21st April which sets out the knowledge, skills and behaviours required to provide professional clerking to school and academy governing boards. The DfE recognises that professional-quality clerking is critical to the effectiveness of a governing board in fulfilling its core strategic functions. Professional-quality clerking is about much more than taking minutes to record the discussions and decisions of the board. It is also about providing governing boards with expert advice on governance, procedures and compliance and directly contributing to its efficient conduct.

#### ***The framework should be read alongside the:***

Governance Handbook, particularly the section explaining the key features of effective governance; the Academies Financial Handbook, and the Competency Framework for Governance, given professional clerking will support the role and development of those directly involved in governance.

#### ***This competency framework may be used by governing boards to:***

- understand the role of professional clerking and how it can improve the quality of governance in an organisation
- help with recruiting a clerk
- set their clerk’s objectives and inform their performance appraisal process
- identify where improvement may be required in the services they receive from their clerk.

The Framework explores how professional clerking can support the work of governing boards by returning to the ‘six features of effective governance’ as set out in **A Competency Framework for Governance**. The guide looks specifically at the role clerks can play in supporting each feature of Strategic leadership; Accountability; People; Structures; Compliance and Evaluation.

The Framework goes on to detail the specific knowledge, skills and behaviours for clerks, grouped under the following competencies:

1. Understanding governance: understanding the board’s duties and responsibilities including governance legislation and procedures
2. Administration: ensuring that the processes and procedures of governance are administered efficiently
3. Advice and guidance: Access to timely and accurate advice and guidance, or signposting to expert advice where appropriate
4. People and relationships: ensuring that the board has accurate records of its people and their skills

This [framework](#) needs to be read by ALL governors, so that there is thorough understanding of the role of the clerk especially as the professional advisor.

Governor services holds Clerks briefings twice a year across the county. Does your board ensure that they are given time allocated to go to the briefings as part of their CPD? Does your clerk cascade the updates to the board?

### [Changes to constitutional arrangements for maintained school governing bodies](#)

The government has published the School Governance (Constitution and Federations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2017 which will enforce changes to the constitutional arrangements of maintained school governing bodies, including federated governing bodies. **From 1 September 2017**, maintained school governing bodies will have the power to remove elected parent and staff governors in the same way as they can remove co-opted governors – that is, by majority decision of the governing body. See NGA’s guidance on the appointment, election and removal of maintained school governors for the process of removing a governor.

**From 1 May 2017**, any person who has held office as an elected parent or staff governor and removed from the governing body during their term of office, will be disqualified from serving or continuing to serve as a school governor for five years from the date of their removal.

Governing boards must ensure that their code of conduct provides a clear framework for basing decisions to remove individuals from the governing board, regardless of whether they have been elected or appointed.

The NGA will be updating its model code of conduct to reflect the changes in legislation. All Governing Boards should ensure that they review theirs for the 1<sup>st</sup> September. Have you planned for the annual review of your code of conduct to be on the agenda for the start of new academic year?

### [Introduction of Academy Conversion Charges](#)

Unlike many other Local Authorities Kent has not previously required schools converting to become an academy to meet any of the costs in undertaking the work to change status. Despite there being no dedicated grant or funding stream available to Local Authorities KCC has paid all of these costs since 2010. At the County Council on 9 February 2017 KCC Members decided to introduce a charge for converting schools as a contribution towards the costs. The charge will apply to all schools in receipt of an academy order issued **after** 1 April 2017 and will be set at a standard rate of £7,000 irrespective of phase, designation, or conversion route. This sum is expected to be met from the £25,000 conversion grant awarded to all converting schools by the DfE. Under exceptional circumstances we may require an increased level of contribution, for example, if there is more complicated legal work required. The LA will continue to offer the same comprehensive level of advice and support to converting schools and acquiring trusts throughout the conversion process. Tailored advice and guidance to Governing Bodies wishing to explore academy status will still be offered **free of charge** along with support to evaluate a range of possible future strategic directions.

### [The Child Sexual Exploitation and Operation Willow](#)

The Child Sexual Exploitation Team (CSET) is a multiagency team based in Kent Police Head Quarters in Maidstone. Operation Willow, launched in December 2015, is the name of our information gathering and awareness raising campaign. CSET gathers information and intelligence about incidents that appear to be linked to child sexual exploitation (CSE). These incidents are then investigated with a view to safeguarding the victims and disrupting and prosecuting those involved in the exploitation. The effectiveness of our information gathering is dependent on people recognising the signs of CSE, being aware of our team, of what we do and how to contact us. As part of our awareness raising the Children, Young People and Education Representative on the team visits schools to talk to staff and governors especially those with safeguarding responsibilities. Visit our Operation Willow page on KELSI <http://www.kelsi.org.uk/child-protection-and-safeguarding/cse/operation-willow> to find out more and find suggestions on how your school could raise awareness and safeguard your students.

### [Safeguarding policy updates](#)

The EYFS 2017 was implemented on 3rd April 2017 and contains some minor changes in relation to the safeguarding of children. The exemplar [Child Protection/ Safeguarding policy](#) on KELSI has been updated to reflect these changes and schools and settings should also revise their policies. Have you got the safeguarding policy on your next Full Governing Board agenda?

### [LA Governor](#)

We thought it may be helpful to aid your governance administration to inform you of the next closing dates for LA governor nominations. These are 02/06/17, 16/09/17 and 28/10/17. Please ensure that all nomination forms are signed by the Chair as well as the nominee. KCC aims to ensure that no potential conflicts of interest will arise between the personal interests of the local authority governor and the local authority. Accordingly, a candidate is unlikely to be successfully nominated for appointment as a local authority governor if s/he: is a member of staff in a Kent funded school: is a parent of a child attending the school: is related to a member of staff, or a member of the school's governing body: has worked at the school in the past: has worked at a school in the same area in the last 2 years: has made a complaint of a vexatious nature to either the school or the local authority.

### [National Chairs Development Programme- Have you signed up?](#)

We still have some spaces for this cohort. This will be the last licensed course that the National College will run. The programme is suitable for aspiring chairs, those new to the role and experienced chairs. For more details and to apply for the course click [here](#). As a part of succession planning how as a governing body are you going to use this opportunity?

### [National Clerks Development Programme. Has your clerk signed up?](#)

For more details and to apply click [here](#). Chairs are you going to recommend this course to your clerk?

### **For further support and guidance, please contact your Area Governance Officer**

North Kent (Dartford, Gravesham, Sevenoaks): Joanne Beale [joanne.beale@kent.gov.uk](mailto:joanne.beale@kent.gov.uk)

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