

Head Teachers' Bulletin – 23rd Sept 2022

Events this week

Governor Hub Training Sessions – Wed 28th Sept 5pm (Zoom)

This is a repeat of last week's training session.

Heads' Forum – Friday 30th September 9.30-11am – Sacred Heart School

Upcoming Events

School visits

St Ann's – Mon 3rd Oct 10.30

Emmaus – Wed 5th Oct 10.30

St Thomas of Canterbury – Thu 6th Oct 10.30

Chairs' Orientation Meeting – Wed 5th Oct 6.30pm at the Pastoral Centre

Trauma Informed Conference – Fri 14th Oct 9am-3pm Niagara Conference Centre Sheffield

This is a Learn Sheffield Conference that a number of Heads from our family are attending.

Actions from this Bulletin

Contact Anita:

- To book a date for Steve to visit if you haven't done so already
- To confirm the number of safer recruitment trained governors and/or staff you have in school – this is relevant to schools who have adopted the Trust Safeguarding policy as the Trust board need to be able to confirm compliance and we want to be able to help coordinate training where it is needed

Please follow us on twitter @stclarecma and tag us in to your posts, we love to see the great work happening in our schools.

New Updates (since last bulletin)

St Clare Family Heads' meeting (Heads' Forum) 30th September – Sacred Heart School

With last week's bulletin I sent out the agenda and some supporting documents for our Heads' meeting on 30th September. Thank you to Kate Kelly and colleagues at Sacred Heart School Hillsborough for agreeing to host our meeting.

Head Teachers' Bulletin – 23rd Sept 2022

As we discussed, we will rotate meetings around schools as a way to help us to get to know each other better. Part of that will be an opportunity at each school to hear and see a little bit of what they do. Kate will be sharing with us a brief look at the fantastic work that Sacred Heart have been doing on the 17 Global Goals for sustainable development in our world. I hope that colleagues are able to get a bit of inspiration at the end of our meeting.

Chairs' Orientation Meeting – Wed 5th Oct 6.30pm at the Pastoral Centre

This is a Chairs' forum, with a focus on working through the governance plan for the year ahead and picking up together any queries or good ideas about how Local Academy Committees plan to adapt their work with the CMAT. This clearly has most immediate relevance for schools who have already joined St Clare, but as always, all chairs for the St Clare family are welcome to join if they feel it would be helpful to hear practically how things are developing. This will be an 'in person' meeting, but we can make provision for chairs' to join remotely if that is helpful.

Trauma Informed Conference – Learn Sheffield

This is a Learn Sheffield organised conference, but we have places for Heads from our family beyond Sheffield. It will showcase some of the work that has been happening in schools in the City and there will be a range of speakers providing some inspiration about Trauma informed practice in our schools.

This is an area that I know a number of schools are working on at the moment and the conference provides a helpful opportunity for us to plug into a wider network, while sharing together as a family what we are doing and what we might be able to do together that supports our individual work.

If you are interested in attending, but haven't booked a place, please do let me know as soon as possible.

Get Information About Schools (GIAS)

Schools who joined St Clare CMAT at the beginning of September appeared to have lost all details that were held in the governance section of GIAS. We contacted the DfE who investigated and gave us an update this week. The data has not been lost; it is a technical detail that the DfE need to resolve with their system. They hope that soon all data should be retrieved and advised that we do not need to re-input the information.

Final Notices

Thank you to all colleagues involved in the Finance system training over the last week and for all the ongoing work to get the new system up and running. I really appreciate the patience, commitment and the ideas. It is a big undertaking, but it will give a really important foundation for us to be able to work together

Head Teachers' Bulletin – 23rd Sept 2022

effectively as a trust, so that we can take advantages of the opportunities that come from a collaborative approach.

I will be asking for feedback on thoughts about a St Clare's Heads' Conference, likely in the Spring of 2023. Please do come with your thoughts and ideas. Some colleagues and our directors have also asked whether we should look at a mass together this term, perhaps with heads, directors and chairs of governors. We could look at an opportunity to follow that with lunch and a bit of time together. Is this something you would welcome?

Finally, we have been promised some input from the ESFA this week around rising costs for schools, both in areas such as energy and with pay awards. I am not holding my breath for a lot of extra money, but I will certainly update you on anything that comes out of that which could help.

Items copied from previous weeks' bulletins for reference

Governance pack – FAQs

The following are the questions we have fielded so far from colleagues in relation to the governance pack. I share them in case the answers are helpful more widely. I have also attached a copy of the governance pack with this bulletin for convenience and for information for schools who have not yet joined the trust.

Can we still have committees?

Local Academy Committees cannot delegate any powers to further committees, so all formal business has to be done in fully meetings of the Local Academy Committee. However, you can choose to have working groups and these could be, for example, some or all of the committees you have previously had in your governing body.

Those groups could do more detailed work on policy review, reviewing school data, etc. They could then report their work as an agenda item on the Full Academy Committee for formal approval and to make sure that there has been a chance for all governors to ask questions. This may be a way to reduce the time needed for individual agenda items and allow there to be fewer Local Academy Committee meetings.

It is for each group of governors to decide what will work best for you in your context, but our general steer is to maintain as much of what has worked well for you in the past as possible. Slower evolution is generally safer in making sure we don't miss anything or lose things that were strong.

Do we have to have 2 meetings in the Autumn term? Do we have to follow the template agendas?

Head Teachers' Bulletin – 23rd Sept 2022

You do not have to have 2 meetings in the Autumn term and you do not have to follow the template agendas. As long as all the work that is set out on the schedule has been covered somewhere, you can arrange that in whatever number of meetings works best for your board. If, for example, you have working groups, you may need fewer meetings of the full Local Academy Committee. Governors at other schools may prefer to have more regular but shorter meetings of the full Local Academy Committee.

The template agendas were set out as a way of covering business that could be used as they are or amended if that is helpful. They can also be ignored. In putting them together, I worked on the basis of both meetings happening in the first half of the Autumn term as there is quite a lot of compliance work to do early on. This would then more likely settle to a pattern of one meeting per half term, of a similar length agenda if a local academy committee chooses to work that way, with everything happening within the full meeting.

When do the trust policies have to be approved and adopted? Is there a deadline?

No, there is not a deadline. The general guidance here is move as quickly as you can, but keep your existing policies until you have been able to adopt the trust policies.

The policies that need to be prioritised are the GDPR suite (particularly the Data Protection Policy), Complaints and Whistleblowing. That is because the lines of responsibility formally changed from the moment schools joined the trust. For example, the registration number with the Information Commissioners Office and the overall Data Protection Officer is now the same for the whole trust and it would be good to make sure that this is correct in published policies.

The Safeguarding policy would also be good to prioritise since the revised KCSIE came into effect from 1st September and therefore any policy should be updated to reflect the changes. The trust policy has been drawn up inline with the changes to KCSIE so adopting it will make sure that you are working in line with those updates.

Finally, the pay and teacher appraisal policies would make sense to adopt as soon as possible as we will quickly be into appraisal review and pay recommendation. However, under TUPE and the commitment of the trust to ensure 'no detriment', it is entirely reasonable to apply your previous policies on this round to ensure no change from previous practice.

Wider queries and suggestions on policies

Thank you for the more general questions and observations about trust policies. Many of these will be sensibly picked up as we review the policies through the year. To help with this, Anita has set up a spreadsheet on SharePoint which you can have access to. It has a place, for each policy, to log any questions, suggestions or observations that we can pick up together through chairs forum and future policy review.

Head Teachers' Bulletin – 23rd Sept 2022

Can clerks and other staff in school access the governor hub training?

Yes, this training is open to anyone in school to join who would benefit from being able to use Governor Hub. Link at the top of this bulletin.

I have attached a copy of the governance pack with this bulletin for convenience and for information for schools who have not yet joined the trust.

Cyber Security and RPA

Thanks to Heather at Notre Dame for flagging up one of the conditions of the RPA insurance in relation to cyber security. This is relevant to all schools who have joined the trust and indeed to any school insured through the RPA.

If you have joined the trust and have any queries or concerns about your school's compliance with any of these conditions, please let Steve know.

Even if you're not in the trust but are in the RPA and you are concerned about any of these conditions, do get in touch as it would be sensible to help each other out.

Conditions for RPA cyber cover?

To make sure your school is covered for Cyber Incidents we want to remind all RPA members that the following four conditions must be met:

1. Must have offline backups
2. All employees or Governors who have access to the Member's information technology system must undertake [NCSC Cyber Security Training](#)
3. Must register with [Police CyberAlarm](#)
4. Must have a Cyber Response Plan in place

For more information, see the [Cyber Guidance note](#).