

Head Teachers' Bulletin – 30th Sept 2022

Events this week

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

Upcoming Events

School visits

St Catherine's – Mon 3rd Oct 11.00

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

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)

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.

Clerks are more than welcome to the evening, but we have asked chairs to invite them or to ask us to invite them on their behalf.

Governor Hub

As noted in my email on Monday, I have had a couple of queries about Governor Hub. I have included the information that I sent in the email on Monday below for convenience. If you have read it already, you can

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ignore this!

We are in discussion with Learn Sheffield about buying a package centrally that will give all St Clare schools access to Governor Hub, NGA membership, Subscription to the Key Governors, School Leaders and Safeguarding and access to clerking services if needed and the Learn Sheffield/ROSIS governor training package.

This will come from CMAT central funds and, where schools have some element of this already, it will lead to a re-fund. It is the straightening out of all the difference combinations of contracts and subscriptions that schools already have that is taking time.

What will governor hub be used for and do we have to use it?

The aim is to trial governor hub as a way of sharing common governance documents (policies, etc), and to make communication between the trust board and local academy committees easier, using features like the calendar, noticeboard, etc.

For now, we are recommending that governors begin exploring governor hub to manage their own local academy committee business, so that people begin to get familiar with it. This has been discussed in chairs' forum.

As always, if moving to governor hub would be more disruptive at the moment than beneficial, we understand and would like the feedback. Where possible, however, we are encouraging governing bodies and their clerks to begin to use this as the means for sharing meeting documents, etc. That will give us a platform to begin developing how we can use Governor Hub as a way of working together more efficiently across the trust board and all of the local governors.

Access Education Budgets

All schools should now have access to their financial planning software (Access Education Budgets). The software will be updated by Wednesday 5th October to reflect the new finance system coding (nominal account combinations) which are aligned to the ESFA standard COA (Chart of Accounts). Guide documentation and exemplars will be made available next week to help SBMs code up their school budgets. Those schools who are new to Access Education Budgets will be provided with additional support.

Once budgets have been coded and checked they will be uploaded into the new finance system and will be reflected within all relevant functions i.e. Purchasing (budget availability) and reporting.

Monthly Management Accounts (MMA)

The process and procedure for MMA is currently being developed but will follow a standard financial format which is compliant with the requirements of the Academy Trust Handbook. MMA for September will not be available until the end of October which will allow time for the following action to take place without which MMA cannot be produced:

- coding and subsequent import of your schools' budgets into the new finance system,

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- processing of prior period supplier payments,
- processing of non-order invoices post 1st September
- reconciliation of control accounts

As you will appreciate we are setting up a system from scratch with lots of new elements and as such this will take an additional element of time and effort to configure correctly, time spent now will hopefully result in the delivery of timely MMA going forward.

Supplier Payments

We have put in place processes/procedures to support the payment of suppliers at this early stage of our finance system launch:

- Suppliers with outstanding balances as at 31st August
We have provided supplier payment templates for SBM to complete and return. Payment files will be prepared and processed on the details provided. **We would like to remind colleagues to check the details provided, mistakes will be time consuming to rectify**
- Suppliers with outstanding balances post 1st September and prior to go live
These invoices and their associated coding should be forwarded to the finance email address for processing unless otherwise agreed with Gillian Hodgson or Adnan Bashir. These outstanding items will be managed as non-order invoices and processed for payment.

If you should have any material issues regarding the payment of invoices, please do not hesitate to contact finance colleagues via finance@stclarecma.org.uk

IRIS User Account – Configuration/Amendments

We are aware that a number of staff have encountered problems with the new finance system ranging from login to access permission. We would refer you in the first instance to the first two pages of the guidance notes, which cover what you need to login in to the system. Issues in regard to access permission are being resolved as when identified. Omissions in the original data submitted by schools in regard to users and permissions have also been identified, these are much more time consuming to resolve and may require referral to IRIS Financials.

We ask for colleagues to bear with us while we work through the volume of queries raised to ensure we address all genuine errors and omissions first.

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Responding to some feedback from Heads, Adnan and I plan to include a summary version of his weekly briefing with Business Managers in this bulletin each week, as a way of keeping you in the loop about what is happening with finance systems.

In addition, Adnan and I would like to suggest a weekly drop in 'clinic' via Zoom where Adnan and I will be available to pick up any queries that have cropped up during the week. Unless we get clear feedback about a more helpful approach, we will put details about the drop-in clinic into next bulletin.

Final Notes

Last week I flagged up a session I was booked on to attend where the ESFA promised some guidance around managing rising costs (energy, salaries, etc). I was then not able to attend as I was needed in a school that was being inspected, however I have been promised the slides and a recording. As soon as I receive these I will share anything that appears to be of use.

Items copied from previous weeks' bulletins for reference

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.