

Head Teachers' Bulletin – 9th Sept 2022

Events this week

School Visits

All Saints – Wednesday 14th September 11am

Chairs' Forum (drop in clinic only if needed) – Wed 14th September 6.30pm

Upcoming Events

Finance System Training (more details in Adnan's briefing paper)

Finance Training Days 1 -3	-	16th – 20th September
Admin Training Day	-	21st September
Go Live – General User Access	-	22nd September

School Visits

St Catherine's – Mon 19th Sept 11.00

St Mary's – Wed 21st Sept 10.30

St Teresa's – Thu 22nd Sept 10.30

Governor Hub Training Sessions – Tue 27th and Wed 28th Sept 5pm (Zoom)

These are repeated sessions for anyone who wants to have a run through on how to use Governor Hub. A link to the meetings will be shared closer to the time.

Heads' Forum – Tue 27th September 9.30-11am – Please note that some potential clashes with this date have been identified so we may need to re-schedule

Actions from this Bulletin

Send expressions of interest for the secondment to headship of Sacred Heart to Anita by 12pm on Fri 16th Sept

Contact Anita:

- To book a date for Steve to visit if you haven't done so already
- If you are thinking about consultation this term, with a view to joining St Clare
- 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.

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New Updates (since last bulletin)

I have moved publication of the bulletin to a Friday each week so that for those who like to know what's coming before the weekend. If you like to go into Friday enjoying blissful ignorance, feel free to ignore it until Monday!

Message inviting expressions of interest for headship secondment

This week, Kate Kelly shared with colleagues and parents her decision to retire as Head Teacher of Sacred Heart at the end of this term. We wish Kate well and we will certainly want to take time to thank her nearer the end of term.

The immediate focus for the governors of Sacred Heart School is securing continued great leadership at the school. They would like to offer a fixed term secondment as Head Teacher from 1st January until 31st August 2022.

In the first instance, we are seeking expressions of interest from any colleague who would like to explore the role, where their school would be able to support their release for the secondment.

We ask for expressions of interest to be sent to Anita Bray (abray@stclarecmat.org.uk) by 12pm on Friday 16th September. We appreciate that this is a very short timescale and want to reassure you that we understand that any expression of interest does not indicate a firm commitment. We are asking for this quick turnaround so that we can plan the next steps with the governors in a timely way, as we aim to make an appointment with as much time as possible for everyone involved to prepare.

School visits

Thanks to everyone who has been in touch with Anita to find a date for me to visit. If you haven't been in touch yet, Anita will begin making some follow up calls to make sure we have something in the diary.

Starting Consultation

We have at least one school that we want to be able to take to the November Advisory Board to seek approval for conversion to join St Clare CMAT. I am mindful that there were other schools keen to move on with consultation. If we are to be able to hit deadlines for the November board, then we need to start consultation and begin some preparatory work for application very soon.

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If your school is thinking about consultation this term, please do let me know ASAP so that I can look at timescales with you and make sure we are putting into place preparation to support you.

The DfE have asked that as far as possible we take groups of schools together to the board, rather than one at a time. This does also help us to manage things at our end.

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?

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.

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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 the Phase 1 School Business managers have access to (access will be shared further at a later date). 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.

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. We will circulate the link to the training when we receive it from Learn Sheffield.

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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](#).

Items copied from previous weeks' bulletins for reference

Website

Thanks for sharing your photos to go on the new St Clare website. This is now up and running and can be found at www.stclarecmat.org.uk Please do encourage staff, governors and parents to visit if they want to know more about the trust.

I am also keen for the website to develop as a place to share good news from across the schools and, in time, to make it a hub for shared resources etc. As with all things related to the development of the CMAT, I would love to keep hearing your ideas and feedback.

School representatives at trust board meetings

The directors are keen to find as many practical ways as possible to get to know all of the schools in a

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more human way, beyond reports and data. One thing they have discussed is the possibility of inviting representatives from schools to attend trust board meetings, to share a bit about their school.

This could work by, for example, representatives from the school who is hosting the board gathering with directors to talk about their school prior to the meeting. Representatives would then be welcome to stay on for the meeting or, if that isn't filling them with excitement, they could leave.

They have made no firm plans as they wanted me to check with you whether you feel this is worth exploring. They don't want to do something that just adds another burden to schools.

Please let me know if you think this is worth pursuing and if so, sharing any thoughts you have about how it might work best in practice. Please be honest. If you think this is not the way to go, let me know too.

Plans for consultation and application to advisory board

If your governors are considering consultation with parents and staff this term, please do let me know. The DfE have asked for an update on likely applications with advisory board this term as it helps with their planning.

As noted above, if it would be helpful for me to come into school to talk through the process or discuss any other questions you may have, I'd be more than happy to come out. Please just let Anita know.

I have noted below an indicative timescale that I have discussed with a number of you, for a consultation and application that would reasonably lead to transfer/conversion on 1st April 2023.

September and early October; Governing body consultation with staff and parents (4 to 6 weeks)

Consultation concludes with a governing body meeting to consider making a resolution to join St Clare CMAT. The resolution is needed before an application can be made to the Regional Director's Advisory Board to approve transfer/conversion to join St Clare.

10th October – Likely deadline for applications and paper work to be submitted for consideration at the November Advisory board

We would be working with the school prior to this date to pull together the information needed in the application form prior to this date. We would need to be working on the application while consultation is still running, to make sure that we're ready to hit the deadline if the governing body resolve to join.

8th November – Advisory board

If an application is approved at this advisory board, work can begin on transfer/conversion. This includes work with school on preparation to move across to the CMAT finance system, policies, etc. It also includes the TUPE process, which should last 4 to 6 weeks and so could run through November and December, or which could be deferred to January & February.

Behind the scenes, there is a lot of legal work to manage transfer of contracts, funding and land. This will mainly involve solicitors, the DfE and Local Authority, though there will be some interaction with school. The DfE advise giving around 5 months for all of this work to be done comfortably, which leads to a **target**

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date of 1st April for transfer/conversion if we're at the November advisory board.

If we are working toward advisory boards after November, then it begins to become more sensible to look at 1st September as a target transfer date.