

The DCSF has revised the guidelines on exclusion from schools and PRUs. (Publication 00611-2007: search on that number on <http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/>; you can then order or download.). The main changes are:

- When deciding to exclude a pupil the head teacher should ensure a record is kept of his actions and those of other staff (paragraph 21 f)
- Further guidance on breach of school rules on appearance (paragraph 24 e)
- Revised guidance on what actions a school should take following a fixed period exclusion (paragraphs 35-38)
- New material on reintegration interviews (paragraphs 39-41)
- Changes to the guidance on what actions should be taken following a permanent exclusion (paragraphs 48-49)
- Revised guidance on Parenting Orders and Contracts for behaviour (paragraphs 42-44)
- Revised guidance on looked after children (paragraphs 64-70)
- Revised model letters
- New guidance for exclusions panels on combined hearings and factors to consider when deciding whether or not to uphold an exclusion (paragraphs 111, 112, 147, 148)

One of the actions a school must take is that, where a pupil is given a fixed period exclusion of a duration of six school days or longer, the school has a duty to arrange suitable full-time educational provision from and including the sixth school day of the exclusion. In the Autumn 2007 issue of the National Governors Association News, there was an article suggesting that, for secondary schools, there was an alternative to using worksheets marked in school to give this provision – that schools could buy 'seats' at a virtual school where students could 'access an archive of pre-recorded lessons', thus both enhancing the student's chance 'to achieve valuable GCSEs' and ensuring that 'stress is removed from those deputy heads and heads of year responsible for exclusion'.

The author of the article is the head teacher of an organisation providing such virtual lessons, and I'm not competent to decide whether it is a good idea, but if anyone is interested, I'll pass on her details.

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## NEW GUIDANCE ON THE EXCLUSION PROCESS

**TEACHERS' TV**

Have you had a look at Teachers' TV? As you'd expect, it concentrates on educational issues, but also provides a **Governors' Hour** (Mondays at 7pm, Sundays at 10am). Programme information can be found at: [www.teachers.tv](http://www.teachers.tv)  
**TTV can be found on Sky 880, ntl 803, Virgin TV 240, Tiscali TV 845 and Freeview 88 (though only 4-5 pm). Programmes can also be viewed online.**

### ENCOURAGING PARENTS TO BE INVOLVED IN THEIR CHILD'S EDUCATION

There's been an interesting discussion recently on the National Governors' Association forum about how best to encourage parents to engage in their children's education.

It was suggested that governors might want to start with a self audit of existing practice:

- Does your school have a 'Parents Matter' Culture?
- Does your school share its aims with parents?.
- How do you work with parents to achieve these aims?
- Do you treat parents as co-educators?
- How do you involve parents in their child's school life at times when there is not a crisis? Which parents?
- How do you know what your parents really think about the school?
- Do you ask them what they think and then listen and do something?
- Do you encourage parents to help their child learn through telling them about the curriculum?
- Do you give them more than 5 minutes a year with teachers?
- Can you point to work that the school has done to engage with parents?
- Can you show that this work is grounded in an understanding of the habits, cultures and lifestyles of the parents rather than requiring parents to fit in with the structures that suit the school?
- Can you show that this work influences the school as well as seeking to influence the parents?

### SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT THROUGH ICT

The most recent survey about the use of ICT in schools, carried out by PricewaterhouseCoopers for the DfES, indicates that less than 50% of schools are enthusiastic adopters of ICT and an even smaller number are using it effectively. There is a need for governors to monitor what is being spent on ICT, why it is being spent and whether the spending has been effective. NGA has worked with Becta to produce guidance for governors and a self-review framework. Copies of the leaflet are available from NGA or can be downloaded from the website: [www.nga.org.uk](http://www.nga.org.uk)

*(from the newsletter of the National Association of Governors)*



## MIND YOUR BUDGETS!

At its autumn meeting, the Schools Forum agreed to claw money back from four schools that had exceeded guidelines for the amount of delegated money they had unspent at the end of the 2006/7 financial year after earmarking for specific projects (the guidelines give 5% for secondary schools, 8% for all others).

The monitoring of balances **at all schools** will continue, and at the end of the current financial year will probably include

- monitoring spending against proposals / projects identified this year
- seeking information about changing costs / delays / changed plans (the Forum will be looking for robust answers)
- challenging proposals where the LA has identified "real gaps" in the delivery of the current education to the pupils in the school.

If your school has a large balance, make sure you can identify how it is to be spent.



## HOW CAN GOVERNING BODIES WORK BETTER AS A TEAM?

(Some tips from the AGG Conference in June)

It is very evident that effective (and outstanding) Governing Bodies are made up of governors who work well together as a team. But how can we do this when governors are all volunteers and when there are frequent changes to the membership?

One of the focus groups at the AGG conference discussed this & below are some of the suggestions that were made:

#### Be inclusive:

- Make all new governors welcome as soon as possible, using a mentoring or buddying system and /or having an in-school induction programme.
- Encourage all governors and particularly new members to get involved.

#### Common purpose:

- Have a clear common focus of what the governing body is trying to achieve & share this.
- Focus on the core goal of improving the educational opportunities & achievements of the children & young people in your particular school.
- Celebrate successes (both small & large!)

#### Be supportive:

- Don't let just one or two people carry all the responsibility – offer to do tasks. Look out for governors who are finding it difficult to understand what's happening.
- Support parent / staff governors who might find it difficult when certain decisions are taken.

#### Meet informally:

- Have a governors' meal out or share a snack before or after a governors' meeting.

#### Encourage a learning culture

- Encourage governors to ask questions in meetings.
- Encourage all governors to visit the school and to go to curriculum presentations.
- Encourage governors to undertake borough training & development.
- Plan in school governor Inset and /or invite governors to whole school training days and staff meetings when appropriate

#### Share Good Practice

Let us know what your governing body does that is making you an effective team. Write or email the editor and we'll share your ideas.

In 2007 there were 5 governors from across the country who appeared on the New Year's Honours List. As you probably know, since 1993 members of the public have been able to make nominations for the Honours List. If you know of a governor who has:

#### DOES SOMONE ON YOUR GOVERNING BODY DESERVE TO BE ON THE NEW YEAR'S HONOUR LIST?

- made a difference to their community or field of work
- brought distinction to British life and enhanced its reputation
- exemplify the best sustained and selfless voluntary service
- demonstrated innovation and entrepreneurship
- carried the respect of their peers
- have changed things, with an emphasis on achievement
- improved the lot of those less able to help themselves

You can nominate them. Details can be found at [www.honours.gov.uk/nominate.aspx](http://www.honours.gov.uk/nominate.aspx)



## THE AGG MET WITH THE ACTING DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

In December, Jim Draper and Margery Nzerem from the AGG met with Christine Whatford, Acting Director of Children's Services and Linda Callaghan, Head of Governors' Services (Jacky Smith, Lead Member for Children's Services had sent her apologies)

The AGG had posed the following questions:

### How can governors be involved in improving Greenwich results?

In particular, we noted that a lot of data gets sent to the headteacher and the chair of governors, and suggested that there was a need for all governors to receive a précis in order for them to be fully briefed on how their school was performing. Christine Whatford agreed to contact the statistics team to ask that this be done. Also discussed was how guidance could be given to new Heads on preparing informative Head's reports to governors. It was agreed that a template for head's reports to be issued and given to new headteachers

### How can the AGG be more involved at the Local Authority level?

We spoke about the committees that governors used to be part of and pointed out that there used to be termly meetings of headteachers, chairs, and officers.

In order to restore links between governors and the Authority, Christine Whatford offered to have a termly meeting with AGG. In addition, it was agreed that, if departments wish to involve governors, they should, where possible, recruit these through AGG.

### Casual Admissions

We had submitted a list of problems about casual admissions and the delay in children being offered a place in a school. The delay appears to be getting the information from previous school/authority. Christine Whatford offered to raise the issue at Partnership meeting with Heads with a view to changing the system they originally asked for.

### Children and Young People's Plan

Copies of the draft Plan are to be sent to AGG for comment.

## DCSF CONSULTATION ON GOVERNANCE

The DCSF will be launching a consultation about governance in the spring. Watch out for it – make sure your views are submitted.

## THE SCHOOLS FORUM THOUGHTS FROM THE CHAIR

We had a very full agenda for the January meeting of the Schools Forum, including a decision on the SEN Funding proposals, so I knew I would have to keep a tight control on the debate to prevent a very late night!

We knew that the proposals to introduce new arrangements for SEN funding in mainstream schools had caused considerable concern. For this reason, although members of the public are not normally allowed to speak, the Forum did agree to allow two members of the public five minutes each on this occasion. The fact that those who opposed the proposals indicated that they felt that they had a fair hearing gave me satisfaction that the balance of debate had been about right.

Members of the Forum represent all the categories of school within the borough (except Academies!). We obviously fight for the interests of the particular category that we represent, but I am always very impressed by the fact that Forum members bear in mind that, when making decisions, we try our hardest to represent what we feel are the best interests of all the students in our schools. This is not always easy, particularly when we know that change will impact more on some schools than others.

Governors will need to keep a careful eye on how the new SEN funding arrangements work and, particularly, how effectively the new clusters operate. The Forum will be keen to receive feedback.

Roy Moore

## HELP AND ADVICE ABOUT RECRUITING HEADS

The online conference, *Tomorrow's Leaders Today*, in which the National Governors' Association participates, has just been launched at [www.ncsl.org.uk](http://www.ncsl.org.uk). Click on *Tomorrow's Leaders Today* for some excellent and thoughtful advice about the challenge of appointing a new Head.

As an alternative, 'Recruiting Headteachers and Senior Leaders' from the National Council for School Leadership outlines a seven-stage process, which provides a governing body with the practical guidance needed to find success in recruiting a headteacher. The publication can be ordered in hard copy from NGA (£7.50) and can be downloaded free from the NCSL website: ([www.ncsl.org.uk/publications](http://www.ncsl.org.uk/publications))

## ATTENTION: ALL GOVERNORS! THE GREENWICH IMPROVING LEADERSHIP PROGRAMME

A very exciting new development in Greenwich is the Improving Leadership Programme (ILP), which will have a big impact on all Greenwich schools over the next few years.

**Why has the Improving Leadership Programme been set up? There is the obvious aim of improving leaders and so improving standards within schools. However, like most areas of the country, Greenwich is facing a shortfall of school leaders. Currently 45% of Heads in the Borough are aged 55-65 years. So in the next few years nearly half of all schools in Greenwich will be looking for a new headteacher. Those of you who have been involved in recruiting a new headteacher will already be very aware that there is a shortage of good candidates. At present, two out of every three headship vacancies in Greenwich have to be re-advertised due to the poor quality of candidates.**

However we already have a large number of successful teachers who have the potential to develop into equally successful Heads. The aim of the ILP is to identify, support and develop these potential leaders, so that we can provide a pool of home-grown Heads of the future. The programme also supports new Heads and will supplement the excellent induction and support programme already in place. The programme will provide a range of opportunities including termly set piece events with renowned speakers, half-day workshops focusing on different areas of school leadership and support groups designed to share good practice across the Borough.

I recently attended the launch of the Programme and was so impressed by the numbers of enthusiastic heads and potential headteachers who attended to hear challenging and encouraging presentations, one by the Director of Succession Planning at the National College of School leadership and another by Jan Beames, a fairly new Greenwich headteacher who gave an inspirational talk on her first year of headship. The potential leaders I was sitting with were all really enthused by this and were eager to book onto the next training event.

### How can governors help?

1. Find out from your Headteacher how many of the staff in your school are involved in the programme and encourage full participation.
2. Get staff involved to report on the programme to your governors' meeting
3. Look out for some of these potential leaders applying for positions in your school
4. Get involved yourselves if your school is likely to have a headship vacancy in the near future. Mock interviews for potential headteachers are being arranged and the Board would like governors to be panel members (contact Les Craggs if your governing body would like to be involved).

In order ensure that governors views are represented Steve Piper, Chair of Conway Primary and I are members of the Programme Board and Mark Jones, a governor at Eltham Hill is a member of the Future Leaders Group. As part of our role we will keep governors abreast of developments and let you know how, as governors, we can support and encourage the next generation of Greenwich Heads to take full advantage of all that the programme has to offer.

Margaret Wasdell,  
Chair of Governors,  
Eltham Hill Technology College

### Quote:

No bird soars too high, if he soars on his own wings. - William Blake



## HEADTEACHERS AND GOVERNING BODIES

A recent issue of the NGA (National Governors' Association) news contains a book review recommending 'Headteachers and Governing Bodies: a practical guide to making the partnership work' by Martin Pounce, at £9.00. The review says

'Martin Pounce has written a book which is more than a good read; each of the chapters include practical activities to be used by headteachers and governing bodies in evaluating how they work together, identifying and developing strengths and addressing weaknesses. It includes good source materials for trainers and is a book which can be dipped into over and over again. A must for anyone serious about developing effective governance.'