

JULY 2 MEETING WITH THE NEW DIRECTOR & AGG AGM

ON WEDNESDAY 2 JULY
IN THE OLD LIBRARY, CHARLTON HOUSE, CHARLTON ROAD, SE7
7PM TO 9PM. (COFFEE AVAILABLE FROM 6.45)

AGENDA

1. Apologies for absence
2. Minutes of the last meeting
3. Matters arising
4. Chair's report
5. Financial report
6. Election of the committee and officers
7. AOB
8. Speaker: **GILLIAN PALMER, NEW DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES, WILL SPEAK AND ANSWER QUESTIONS**

- TEACHERS' TV -

WANT TO BE A TEACHERS' TV ASSOCIATE?

Governors who become Teachers' TV Associates can watch online previews of future programmes. Teachers' TV Associates are the channel's first point of contact at schools. By helping to promote the channel they get access to free previews, online discussion forums and invitations to special events, among other benefits. To learn more, go to www.teachers.tv/associates. Associates can access the previews through this web link.

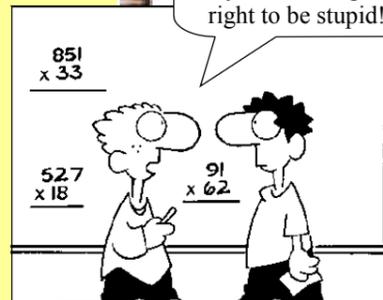
Programme information can be found at www.teachers.tv/programmeguide.

TTV can be found on

- Sky Guide 880
- ntl 240
- Telewest 240
- Home choice 845
- Freeview 88.

Freeview viewing time has changed; it is now from 11.00am until 1.00pm

I would like to sue the school because they're violating my right to be stupid!



THE CRITICAL FRIEND GOVERNOR VISITS: A HEAD'S VIEW

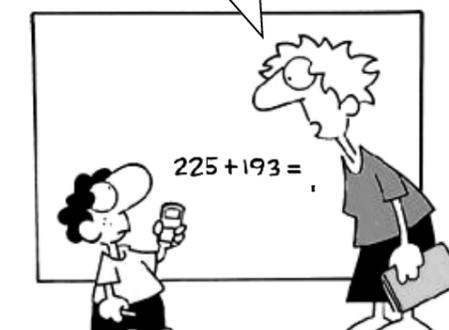
One important aspect of school that I think quite often is underused and in some cases feared are the governor visits. In my experience however it is a useful and helpful way of supporting the headteacher by looking critically at aspects of the school from a different perspective. In this way the headteacher can ensure that a neutral eye can identify any concerns. Furthermore, by focusing on different development areas within the school, governors can support by practical help, or by attending meetings and courses provide another view as well as reminding the school about statutory duties and ensuring these are met.

Their role is often described as that of 'critical friend' however one difficulty with the title 'critical friend' is that a lot of focus is given to the term 'critical' which can have negative connotations. For headteachers and governors alike it can be seen as an opportunity to criticize and without the 'friend' part of the title this can develop into poor relationships and suspicion between the school and governors. This is not helpful for the school or the governing body and can be damaging.

For the role of governor to be successful emphasis must be put into the 'friend' part of the role. For the school/governor role to be effective there must be trust, honesty and openness. Within the role of governor they have a responsibility to look critically at areas of the school and raise their concerns with the headteacher. They must ensure that the school is serving the pupils and the community as it should do and that the head is leading effectively. The success of this role is in the development of the friendship between the governors and the school staff. By building trust, honesty and openness the governors can carry out their role effectively and relationships can develop. Friends are able to talk honestly to each other accept criticism, negotiate how to move on and continue to develop a stronger and more effective relationship. This in my experience is how an effective governing body works and I find their input invaluable.

Tim Baker
Head, Charlton Manor School

You have to solve this problem by yourself. You can't call Tech Support.



The AGG is desperately in need of a secretary. or a minute taker. Ideally, it's a secretary that's needed, but we recognise that it would be a substantial responsibility, especially if you're new to the Committee. So someone who would do the paperwork - take minutes, send out agendas, etc, would be most welcome as well.

MINUTE
TAKER?
SECRETARY?

If you're interested, contact Jim Draper at jim.draper@hotmail.co.uk, 8311 0429, or just volunteer at the AGM on 2 July 2008.

ISSUES WITH PROCESSING APPLICATIONS FOR SCHOOL PLACES

(We asked Admissions for an article highlighting some of the problems they face)

The biggest problem for officers within the Council's School Admissions team is the lack of supporting documentation for applications for school places. Applications are often submitted without one or more of the following:

- A copy of the child's birth certificate
- Proof of address
- Passport/visa/Home Office letter
- Confirmation that a child is 'looked after'
- Evidence from relevant professional to support any medical/social reasons
- QCA scores (for secondary transfer).

We are also concerned that, despite information being widely available, a number of applications are still being submitted after the closing date. As late applications may only be considered after those received on time, it could mean that some children are unable to obtain a place at their local school. Late applications are made for a number of reasons, such as:

- Families with children who do not attend a nursery or early years setting may not be aware of the closing date for applications
- Parents and carers assume that if their child attends a primary school with a nursery, they will automatically move up into the reception class
- Similarly, parents and carers who already have a child attending the preferred school may feel that do not need to apply for the younger child
- There may be a family history of failing to engage
- Applicants do not fully understand how the application process works.

Each year, we receive applications from parents and carers who have not made informed and realistic preferences for schools.

In an effort to address these issues, the Council has introduced a Choice Advice Service. This service offers independent advice and assistance to all families with children of school age in the Greenwich area. For more information, please contact Jean Seddon on 020 8921 6921, email jean.seddon@greenwich.gov.uk.

Jane Lawley

The best training sessions for governors are the courses organised by Greenwich Governors' Service, where governors can train in the Greenwich context with other Greenwich governors. If, however it's not possible for a governor to attend that training, the National Governors' Association, in partnership with Educare, offers a First Certificate in Governance (£9.50 + VAT for the pack of learning materials or £36.75 + VAT for complete interactive learning programme).

This distance learning programme is suitable for both new governors and existing governors, who require a refresher or update. It consists of a pack of four modules with accompanying questionnaires. The questionnaires may be submitted for assessment and a score of 70% on each questionnaire is rewarded with a certificate to evidence the achievement. The pack can act as an introduction to governance for a new governor and give the confidence to attend training courses to further develop knowledge.

For a copy of the programme, ring 01926 436209 or visit www.educare.co.uk

TRAINING FOR GOVERNORS

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 and 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 (margery@nzerem.com / Margery Nzerem, 20 Beaconsfield Road, SE3 7LZ) and we'll share your ideas with other governors.

DOES YOUR PTA KNOW ABOUT THE NATIONAL CONFEDERATION OF PARENT TEACHER ASSOCIATIONS (NCPTA)?

Membership of the NCPTA costs from £60 a year. Its benefits include comprehensive public liability insurance, help with charity registration, extensive range of information sheets, local support through a network of NCPTA advisors, magazines and newsletters, free training events, an advice line, and free access to a trust funding website. For more information visit www.ncpta.org, e-mail info@ncpta.org.uk, or ring 01732 375460.

Quote: Who dares to teach must never cease to learn. - John Cotton Dana

HOW CAN GOVERNING BODIES WORK BETTER AS A TEAM?

(Some tips from the AGG Conference in June)