

# GOVERNOR HEADLINES

Welcome to issue #18 of Governor Headlines. This edition is something of a recruitment special, featuring a link to our new Recruitment Toolkit; developed to assist governing bodies with the identification and appointment of new governors, a step-by-step guide to recruitment and advice on how reconstitution could help solve the problem of long-standing vacancies.

Also included are an update on the Suffolk Travel Policy, guidance on flu immunisations and notification of several training courses that you might find of interest, including Understanding ASP and Pupils' Achievement in 2018 and the Development for Chairs programme.

As always, if you have any thoughts or suggestions regarding Governor Headlines please contact [governorheadlines@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:governorheadlines@suffolk.gov.uk).

## What's New This Month – November 2018

### The Knowledge

Please find the latest edition of **The Knowledge** for November 2018 [here](#).

Please note that The Knowledge is a half-termly document and therefore not included in every monthly issue of Governor Headlines.



## Recruitment Toolkit



As you'll be aware our Suffolk County Council Leadership and Governance Team has been leading on the Govern Suffolk campaign, which seeks to attract more individuals into governance roles across the county.

Govern Suffolk is ongoing and has been successful in recruiting talented candidates from the wider community. However, the governor pool is ever fluctuating and governing bodies have a responsibility for trying to fill their vacancies, as well as to ensure succession planning for the future.

To aid you with this we have put together a Recruitment Toolkit. The Toolkit includes guidance on what to consider when thinking about recruiting new governors, how to advertise your vacancies, how to introduce prospective candidates to the governing body and how new governors should be appointed depending on the position they are filling.

The Toolkit can be found [here](#) and is also available on the Resources page of our Govern Suffolk website at <http://www.stssp.co.uk/governors/resources> and on our Suffolk County Council governance page at <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/children-families-and-learning/schools/govern-suffolk/>.

If you have any queries about the Toolkit, or governor recruitment, please contact the Leadership and Governance team at [governance@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:governance@suffolk.gov.uk) or on 01473 263972

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# Identifying and Appointing New Governors

## A Step-by-Step Guide

**Written by Angela Gage, Chair of Governors at Dale Hall Community Primary School**

One of the tasks listed on our governance structure, under the remit of the Chair of Governors at Dale Hall, is “attracting governors with the necessary skills”. A few short words but it takes time and energy. But if you put some work into the recruitment and settling process, you will be rewarded with strong, capable, committed governors and if you don’t have a recruitment strategy then you are at the whim of fate...

### **1. Try to keep the governors you have!**

All governing bodies need some turnover, but if you are losing governors regularly you need to understand why. It’s time for some honest conversations and some changes in practice, as otherwise it will only get worse. Ask one of your governors to have a quiet chat with some of the recent leavers as a starting point.

### **2. The school website**

Have a look at the governance section of your website, could you add something explaining who you are and what you do as governors? This will start the process of low-level advertising, treat it as your shop window. If people are considering joining your governing body they will go on the school website and they will check out the governance section. Is it friendly and inviting? Perhaps you could have an ongoing statement asking interested people to get in touch. If someone comes along when you are full, and they look good, appoint them as an associate member until you have a vacancy that they can move into.

### **3. What do you need?**

Identify the skills you are lacking in by completing a Skills Audit of your existing governing body. If someone has left, what skills did they have? Do you need to replace these skills or appoint someone with a different skillset? Do you have an overabundance of a particular skill and do you therefore need to avoid any candidates with a similar skillset? Are you over filled with educationalists or HR people? Consider what else you need from prospective candidates; do they need to be available during school-time hours? Is being time rich important?

### **4. Shout about it!**

Write a bulletin about governance to parents; notify them of parent governor vacancies or ask them to spread the word about a co-opted vacancy. Tell staff, remind all the governors, write to local companies to see if they can help by advertising governance to their employees. Do they have someone who is retiring and looking for a retirement role or an up and coming leader? Talk to nearby schools and ask them to advertise it to their staff. Consider the recruitment strategies that have proved successful in the past? Where did your current governors come from? Can anyone put up a notice at work? Talk about it together and get ideas.

One of the most successful ways to recruit new governors is through encouragement from existing governors. People are much more likely to agree to join if they are personally approached. This may help to focus your recruitment and fill the skills gap you identified when you realised you had a vacancy. Ideally, your governing body should also reflect your school community and have a mix of gender, age, ethnicity etc. Advertise with a billboard at parents evening and be prepared to chat about it. If I have a parent vacancy I go to parents' evenings to talk and be seen. I also ask teachers to help identify suitable candidates and offer to meet with parents who may be considering a governance position. Review the letter the school is sending out to parents for parent vacancies, could it be a little friendlier or explain better? Consider wider family members; grandparents make great co-opted governors, they have time on their hands, are committed to the school and often their past careers make them very successful governors.

### **5. Get help and widen the net!**

Use the various organisations that will help you source a governor and tell them all about your vacancy. Be clear about your needs and the level of commitment you require. I use [www.inspiringgovernance.org](http://www.inspiringgovernance.org) which is a great website and I have had much success with it. I like that you manage your own vacancy.

[www.governorsforschools.org.uk](http://www.governorsforschools.org.uk) is another website I have used successfully.

Contact Suffolk County Council's Leadership and Governance team at [governance@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:governance@suffolk.gov.uk) and let them know you have a vacancy.

Don't use just one strategy, use as many as you can. If you're the Chair of Governors, get other governors involved for support. Be proactive.

### **6. You have a stirring of interest**

Arrange for **two** governors to talk to candidates about your school and its governance. Make sure that you contact them quickly and don't leave them waiting, otherwise they may be put off or think that you don't take the role seriously. If you have a bite, start the ball rolling. Ask them why they want to be a governor and what they know about the role. Tell them about the available training and what they can personally gain from the role. Invite candidates to observe a full governing body meeting, they can be asked to step-out if you need to discuss anything confidential. Be up front about timing of meetings and the level of commitment you require. There is no point recruiting someone whom you later find can't meet your requirements.

### **7. Do the due diligence**

**Always, always** have 2 governors meet and interview new candidates before recommending to the wider governing body, for the sake of safeguarding and ensuring the candidate has the necessary skills. Mention the importance the school places on safeguarding and the subsequent requirement for a DBS, but reassure them that the check is free and arranged by the school. Don't agree to someone joining without first carrying out some checks. Ask new candidates to complete an application form and skills survey and always collect references. You can either formulate your own application form or use the one provided by Suffolk County Council's Leadership and Governance team at which can be found at

<http://www.stssp.co.uk/governors/resources> . You won't put candidates off by being careful, instead they are much more likely to value the role.

### **8. Act in haste and repent at leisure**

If in doubt about a candidate, turn them down. There **is** someone else coming along in a few weeks. Have confidence and don't accept someone just because they are willing. Your school and your governing body are worth more than that. I find that it is easier to form an opinion with two governors interviewing, particularly if I have doubts about a person.

### **9. You have done it but it's not over yet**

New governors are easily spotted, they can look like a deer in the headlights. Treat your new governors kindly and make them feel welcome. Appoint them with a mentor, explain the acronyms during meetings and spend some time explaining priorities to them. Get them involved, do a joint monitoring, show them what a good monitoring report looks like. Show them how to arrange training and insist that they do the induction and safeguarding training. Talk to them about their training afterwards. At the end of each of their first few meetings, ask them how it is going.

It is a lot of work but if you put the work in at the beginning and build a strong team, you can delegate more to them and have a succession plan because you are surrounded by capable people and, happily.... they are much more likely to stay!

Good luck!

Angela Gage  
Chair of Governors - Dale Hall Primary School  
National Leader of Governance  
Co-ordinator of the Ipswich Chairs Support Group

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## Instruments of Government

Every maintained school should have an Instrument of Government (IoG), as stated in section 20 of the Education Act 2002. This document determines the constitution of the governing body; how many governor positions are allocated to each governor type and the term-of-office length for each of these governors. A copy of the document should be held by every governor and supplied to new governors on appointment.

Please could we ask that you consult your IoG before appointing new governors. We have had several instances recently where a governor has been appointed outside of the governing bodies' specified constitution, for example a fifth co-opted governor has been appointed where the IoG only allocates four. In such an instance the newly appointed governor sits outside of the legal constitution and isn't recognised as a governor, therefore their vote on governing body decisions isn't valid.

If you cannot locate a copy of your loG, or would like to amend it, please contact the Leadership and Governance Team on [governance@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:governance@suffolk.gov.uk) .

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## Reconstitution

If you have an excess of vacancies on your governing body but your governing body composition is within the legal requirements and is working effectively, you may not feel the need to recruit. In which case you may want to think about reconstituting and changing your Instrument of Government (loG) instead. To do this you'll need to discuss the proposed amendments and agree to them at a minuted full governing body meeting. Your changes can then be sent to [governance@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:governance@suffolk.gov.uk) so that we can redraft your loG and send it to our legal team for processing. If you are a Church school your new loG draft will also have to be approved by the Diocese.

If you would like to find out more about how reconstitution can work for your governing body please contact us at [governance@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:governance@suffolk.gov.uk) or by phone at 01473 260063.

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## Retirement News

As you may be aware Carol Hitchman, Strategic Lead for Leadership and Governance, will retire at Christmas after a long and successful career in Suffolk schools and in the county council. Carol will be missed greatly for her knowledge, skills, experience and huge commitment to education in Suffolk. Her own teams and the Education and Learning Leadership team will particularly miss Carol's thoughtful, measured and insightful leadership. We also know that many school leaders will miss Carol's advice and counsel. For Carol though we are all delighted that she will start a new chapter and I know you will join us in wishing her a very long and fulfilled retirement.

In order to ensure important work continues I am pleased to announce that Paul Calver has been appointed to lead Carol's areas of work from January to Easter in the first instance. To ensure continuity Paul will start working with Carol immediately after half term, so that he is fully briefed when he takes the lead on this work in January

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## Changes to School Transport Policy and Sustainable Modes of Travel

Suffolk County Council has changed its School Travel Policy following consultation with a wide range of stakeholders. Travel will now be a factor for many parents when considering their child's school preferences.

The changes take effect from September 2019. To assist schools to ensure that parents are aware of the changes whilst applying for school places, please use the following link which provides new [Frequently Asked Questions](#).

### **How do your pupils get to school?**

It is good practice for a school to operate an up to date school travel plan. The Sustainable Modes of Travel (SMOT) document has been refreshed following changes to the School Travel Policy.

Governing bodies are encouraged to take time to become familiar with the updated SMOT and the many workable travel options available to your school, parents and the local community. The governing body may want to consider this for the update to your School Travel Plan.

[A bitesize SMOT summary for headteachers and governing bodies can be found here](#) . This includes information about the free online resource Modeshift STARS which all schools can use to update their school travel plan. The full SMOT can be found at the following link: [www.suffolkonboard.com/smot](http://www.suffolkonboard.com/smot)

The free Modeshift STARS online resource will be a helpful tool for governing bodies to use to survey families.

[Click here for details of how to make enquiries](#)

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## Flu Immunisation

The School Immunisation team have started the Flu immunisation programme in Suffolk schools. We are a small team of 8 nurses, 2 clinical support workers and 8 administrators. We are offering the Flu immunisation to all children from Reception to Year 5 in all Suffolk schools before Christmas. For the first time, we are using online consent forms. This will hopefully make it easier for parents, school administrative staff and our team. Parents access the link to the online consent form via an email from school and can submit without the need to print and sign.

Due to a very tight schedule that was agreed with schools during the summer term, it is often impossible to meet the last minute changes requested by schools. Most schools are working very well with us but we have had a few challenges this term with some schools needing to change dates at very short notice, or needing us to move rooms in the middle of sessions, or not sending the link to parents.

We are only able to visit each school once before Christmas, but we are offering a variety of clinics across Suffolk that are mainly held within Children's Centres after school and on Saturday mornings. The clinics are for parents to bring children who missed the immunisation session at school.

The Flu vaccine is the best protection we have against this unpredictable virus. There are serious complications with the Flu virus that include painful ear infections, acute bronchitis and pneumonia. The vaccine cannot cause Flu. As well as helping to protect children who are vaccinated, the infection is then less able to spread, and so helps to protect other family members and friends. The uptake is much better when given in school than in a GP setting. The Flu vaccine also has the benefit of leading to fewer absences in school for both pupils and teaching staff.

We welcome queries however small from schools and parents as we rely on good partnership working for this programme to be successful. If a school is having problems with the online method, we can provide paper consent forms.

For further information, please visit [www.nhs.uk/child-flu](http://www.nhs.uk/child-flu)

Chris Wheeler, School Immunisation Nurse Team Leader  
Tel: 01473 554247 or 07779426648  
Email: c.wheeler4@nhs.net

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## Suffolk SACRE Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education

All publicly funded schools must teach Religious Education (RE); it is a mandatory subject which stands outside the National Curriculum.

The government requires maintained schools to publish their curriculum for each year group and recommends this for academies and free schools. Suffolk SACRE is consulting school websites to see what RE is being taught in different year groups, to celebrate good RE and check whether pupils are receiving their entitlement.

We recommend Headteachers /RE leaders / Heads of Department ensure this information is published.

Please see below the guidance from the Department of Education, together with the relevant links.

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Maintained schools must: publish the content of your school curriculum in each academic year for every subject, including Religious Education even if it is taught as part of another subject or subjects, or is called something else

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-maintained-schools-must-publish-online#curriculum>

Academies should publish: the content of the curriculum your school follows in each academic year for every subject, including for mandatory subjects such as Religious Education even if it's taught as part of another subject or subjects or is called something else

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-academies-free-schools-and-colleges-should-publish-online>

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## Ipswich Chair's Support Group

The next meeting of the Chairs support Group will be held at **5pm on 31 January at Whitehouse Primary School, Ipswich.**

We will have speakers attending from the Ipswich Opportunity Area to discuss progress and opportunities and to share our own schools' involvement to date.

We also intend to discuss the new Ofsted Framework announced by Amanda Spielman on 11 October but will probably return to it in more depth in the Summer term.

The group welcomes Chairs, Vice Chairs and future Chairs of both maintained schools and academies. Chairs based outside of Ipswich are also welcome.

For more information or to be put on the mailing list, please contact Angela Gage [angela.gage@dalehallprimary.net](mailto:angela.gage@dalehallprimary.net)

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## Understanding ASP and Pupils' Achievements in 2018 Governor Training

**The Lark Teaching School Alliance**

**Governors: Understanding ASP and pupils' achievements in 2018.**

**Monday 3rd December 2018 5pm - 7pm £20**

**Venue: All Saints' CEVCP School, Lawshall (IP29 4QA)**

We will be offering data training for school governors on the latest ASP information that all schools have received. As you are all aware governing bodies are expected to have a thorough understanding of a school's outcomes in relation to the performance of the pupils in their annual tests and assessments. Also the data this year will be very different in presentation as RAISE online has been replaced with ASP. All of this will be explained in the training.

Please click [here](#) for further information.

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## Development for Chairs Programme

The National Governance Association (NGA) is a not-for-profit organisation with a strong track record of delivering governance leadership programmes in cooperation with partners across England.

The Development for Chairs programme is funded by the Department for Education (DfE) and provides Chairs, Vice-Chairs, committee Chairs and future Chairs opportunities for developing leadership skills and confident governance.

If you are interested in the programme further information can be found [here](#) .

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## Worth a Mention

Governors for Schools are running a number of e-Learning courses that you may find useful. Topics covered include Driving School Improvement, Performance Data for New Governors and Finance for New Governors. The courses are free of charge but you will need to register your details as an e-Learning user.

Please click [here](#) for further information.

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