



SEVERN ACADEMIES EDUCATIONAL TRUST

Autumn 1 Edition | Governor Newsletter

Message from Chris King

Dear Governors,

Firstly, I'd like to thank you all for your continued support of our schools this term. It has, as we know, been a challenging term for our staff in schools and a time where we all have needed to get used to working in a different way.

As you may know, we have had several instances of Covid within our schools this term and we would expect that to continue in the run up to Christmas. Each time we have worked closely with Public Health England, to ensure that the correct measures have been put in place to ensure the safety of both students and staff. I must again thank all our staff for their work this term in ensuring that we have opened to all students and have maintained a good level of provision overall, throughout this time.

Thank you also for continuing to work in different ways, I appreciate the desire to get into schools but we continue, if at all possible, to reduce the amount of visitors and people in schools over this period of time both for your safety and for those in the building. It is likely that our new ways of working will continue into the new year but, as always we will monitor the situation and keep you posted.

In the meantime, I hope that you have managed to touch base with Jill Walker, our Governance & Compliance Officer, this term. Jill is working full time with us now to support the function of governance across the Trust and will be your first port of call for any queries or questions.



I hope you enjoy this term's newsletter and also our parental and staff ones that are available. We wish you all a safe half term break.

Updates from Jill Walker



Firstly, thank you all for embracing the shift to using technology to hold out meetings virtually. Whilst the Virtual Governor Briefing didn't quite go according to plan, it was heartening to see that many of you had attempted to join me and I thank you for this.

As Governance and Compliance Lead for the Trust, my role is to support you all in your role as local governors. Your schools rely very heavily on the expertise that you bring to the table and as I know your time is precious, I have read through the education publications for information that I can share with you to support you in your role.

The governing body has three core functions and these apply both to the Board of Directors and the Local Governing Boards. The Directors Board cannot function properly without the LGBs who are the eyes on the ground. It is clear that following centralisation of finance, HR and some aspects of Premises, the LGBs must focus on School Improvement.

You have all adopted the draft agenda plan. It is evolving, but it hopefully helps you focus your time in the key areas of focus.

We have all been tested by Covid, it has been a very difficult time, however, as a Trust, we have seen superb support for our Head Teachers and teaching staff who are our frontline workers. We have embraced change to enable us to continue with strong governance across the Trust and we will need to continue

until we can embrace a new normal.

Finally, only 67% of our governors felt they had built strong collaborative links with other members of their governing body. This is an area we need to work on together.

Thank you for your support, it is greatly appreciated.

Governing boards' core functions

All governing boards have three core functions:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction
- Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the effective and efficient performance management of staff
- Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent

Welcome Wendy!



Wendy Taylor was elected Chair of the Directors Board and was appointed at their first meeting on the 12th October.

Here is a bio on Wendy:

Wendy is a retired middle school Headteacher. She has amassed a wealth of experience during her 38 years within the education profession. Wendy spent 19 years as a Headteacher. Firstly at Birchen Coppice Middle School, Kidderminster; an area of significant deprivation, where Wendy and her team achieved good Ofsted outcomes. Wendy also spent 9 years as Head of St John's CE Middle School where she moved the school from good in 2009 to outstanding in 2012.

Updated Governance Documents



Correspondence School governance update: October 2020

Updated 8 October 2020

Various governance documents have been updated in October.

Updated Government Guidance for School Governors



Governance handbook

Academy trusts and maintained schools

October 2020



Academy Trust Governance-Structures and Role Descriptors

October 2020

A competency framework for governance

The framework is made up of 16 competencies underpinned by a foundation of important principles and personal attributes. The competencies are grouped under the headings of the six features of effective governance, which are set out in the [Governance Handbook](#): strategic leadership; accountability; people; structures; compliance and evaluation.

1. Strategic leadership



Tools at your Disposal

GovernorHub

Governors are beginning to use Governor Hub as a communication tool—this will help to build collaboration between your LGB members.

Top Tips, Questions to ask and blogs to read—Jill will signpost you to the relevant information.

TheSchoolBus



Click the images above to access them!

Governor Recruitment - Interview Questions

Click [here](#) to read an interesting article which may help you if you are recruiting a new governor!

How do I carry out my role effectively?

Being a governor at this time poses new challenges.

- **Emphasise your support.** This is a tough time for those involved in running schools. As a governor, you're in a great position to offer your thanks, support, and encouragement.
- **Keep asking questions.** There is no such thing as a stupid question, particularly at a time like this.
- **Keep up to date.** There is a huge amount of guidance and resources online. Keeping up to date with this will help you to ask relevant questions.
- **Attend online training.** This is a great opportunity to attend online training sessions or complete eLearning.
- **Remember your role.** While you may feel like you want to provide more hands-on support, the role of the governors remains to seek assurance rather than get operationally involved.

T'was the week before half term and all through the land
 The teachers were tired of washing their hands
 Of cleaning the desks, and the drawers and the pens
 Of reminding their class not to cuddle their friends
 Of handgel and soap, of bleach and of wipes
 Of passwords and google and all things that swipe
 Of trying to stand at the length of a lion
 From friends whose shoulders they wanted to cry on

T'was the week before half term and all through the land
 The parents were trying to make an great plan

Esther Nzenza 26

the parents that try to make up green places
That don't involve meeting, or greeting, or places
That in these strange times don't resemble safe
spaces

They look to the teachers, and all they have done
To make school inviting, inspiring and fun
To see past the problems, the issues and rules
To bring back the joy and excitement of school

Thank you being the safe place, the learning
For standing there strong with the children
returning
For finding solutions that don't feel so strange
With no funds or magicians to help you arrange
For stories and spellings and phonics and play
For taking the fear of this moment away

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