

Governor

Headlines

Governor Headlines is a regular newsletter produced by Suffolk County Council's Governor Services team to support you in your role as governors and keep you informed of the latest updates.

Welcome To Governor Headlines #51

This is a short start of term bulletin; the next full newsletter will be sent in November.

Just where has the summer gone to? It seems just yesterday we said 'bye' to the children going off to secondary school, college and university! And yet here we are in another new academic year, with all its exciting opportunities and real challenges that lie ahead. We hope you have all had a wonderful, gloriously hot summer and plenty of enjoyment and rest, ready to take on whatever the year will throw at our schools.

Talking of opportunities and challenges, my name is Veronica Mwondela (pronounced *Mon-dé-lah*) and I took up the role of LA Senior Governance Advisor, from 1st September. I am relishing the opportunity to work with you. I have over 20 years' teaching and management experience in both further education and primary school. I also spent 4 years as a governor in my local secondary school. As Governors, I am sure we share a passion for education and the importance of our role in supporting our children and young people in their journey to becoming the best people they can be. I am looking forward to meeting you, working together and supporting you in the best way we can.

Please do get in touch, even if just to say 'hello' and to give us suggestions and feedback on how we can improve our service. In this newsletter, we will be asking you specifically on how we should best be communicating and engaging with you. Your feedback is always invaluable, and I hope you will take a few minutes to respond.

Here's to 2022/23, full of promise and success for all our children and young people!

The Governor Services team looks forward to hearing from you. Our contact details are:

Email: governance@suffolk.gov.uk

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Suffolk
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Please find the latest edition of **The Knowledge** for September 2022 [here](#).

Regional Leads for Education and Standards and Excellence Partners

As the local and national education landscape changes, different ways of working become necessary so that the LA can continue to fulfil its statutory roles and responsibilities. This has led to a recent redesign in the leadership of the Standards and Excellence team. The leadership team has changed from five Lead Standards and Excellence Officers (LSEO); three Senior Standards and Excellence Officers (SSEO); one Head of School Leadership Development to five Regional Leads for Education (RLE)- more detail is below. We have also retitled the role of Standards and Excellence Office (SEO) to Standards and Excellence Partner. We have listened to the views of school leaders as well as using our evaluation and monitoring in our redesign. We recognise that promoting educational excellence will be achieved through promoting collaboration across schools as well as support for school leaders in individual schools to achieve their school's vision / ambition.

The Regional Lead for Education role is a new role. The role provides education oversight for a group of schools in a geographical area, deploying, managing and quality assuring the work of the team; supporting leadership development including governance for schools in the area and working with school leaders to facilitate collaboration and networks. The role also involves deputising for the Head of School Improvement. The Standards and Excellence Partner role is to work with school leaders, including governors, to support accurate, evidence-based self-evaluation and to support with planning and actions for improvement. Reflecting our responsibility and commitment to every child in a Suffolk school or setting as well as the Local Authority's statutory roles and responsibilities, this support is available for children and young people in all schools, regardless of whether they attend LA maintained schools or academy schools. **Please see information in this link about the work of the Regional Leads and the Standards and Excellence Partners as it is this strand of work that was the focus of our redesign.** The team also supports other teams in the Council and brings a quality of education and school improvement perspective to strands of work such as the Inclusion team's work as commissioners; admissions issues and to the process for opening new schools.

Planning for the Year

What better time to plan the annual calendar than at the start of the year. The link below takes you to a model planning calendar that prompts you of tasks that need to be completed in each term. The second tab gives guidance of agenda items, sources, and resources. The third tab outlines the statutory and recommended policies and the final tab is the schedule to keep a record of updates from meeting to meeting. This may be a helpful resource for recently appointed governors or anyone else.

[Local Authority Governing Board Annual Planner](#)

New Requirements for Governing Boards

There have been several important changes to governing board responsibilities that have come into effect at the start of this term. These include:

[Behaviour in Schools Advice](#) – new guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) lays out what effective behaviour management looks like and what should be included in your school behaviour policy.

[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) – the latest version of the statutory guidance sets out new training requirements for governing boards.

[Statutory Suspension and Exclusion Guidance](#) – updated statutory guidance from the DfE gives new requirements on who Headteachers should notify when deciding to suspend or permanently exclude a pupil.

[Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#) – the DfE guidance states that all schools should have an attendance policy and details expectations for boards to review attendance data.

Communication Survey

All of us have no doubt found that our way of working and communicating has changed as a result of the pandemic. We want to ensure that our medium of communication and the content works for you. To help us meet your needs we would be very grateful if you could please complete the communication survey by clicking the link at the bottom of this article. Please be brutally honest in your answers and suggestions. The more we know, the better we can support you.

Thank you for taking the time to give us feedback.

[Communication Survey Link](#)

Headteacher Performance Management

Governing boards of maintained schools have a legal duty to ensure that effective performance management, including an annual appraisal, is carried out for the teaching staff and Headteacher. The Headteacher is responsible for carrying out the performance appraisal of teaching staff. The governing board is responsible for the performance appraisal of the Headteacher, which usually takes place during October and November.

The governing board must appoint an external advisor to carry out their Headteacher's performance appraisal. It's important that this is a decision made by the board and not based on a recommendation from the Headteacher. The Local Authority must also remain impartial and cannot advise on external advisors to appoint. If you're unsure of how to find an external advisor we suggest speaking with other local governing boards to enquire who they use, or have used in the past, and whether they would recommend them. It is recommended that you replace your external advisor every 2 -3 years.

It is usual for two or three governors to form the Headteacher Performance Review Panel and, whilst it is up to the Chair of Governors to decide how much input they want to have, it's good practice for the Chair to be involved in the appraisal and conversations with the external advisor as they are arguably the governor with the strongest relation to the Headteacher. Headteacher performance itself should be measured against objectives or success criteria.

Governing Board Membership

We are aware that the start of the new school year can be a time of change for governing boards and many of you will have had members of your board step down over the summer. Over the next few weeks, you may gain new members and elect new parent and staff governors. You may also use your first full governing board meeting as an opportunity to elect a new Chair and Vice-Chair of Governors.

We ask that if there are changes to the membership or Chairing responsibilities on your governing board that the changes are promptly communicated to the Local Authority (LA) Governor Services team. Maintaining current information on board membership is critical to our team being able to support governing boards effectively.

If your board is clerked by a Schools' Choice, clerk updates will automatically be shared with the Schools' Choice team, but not with the LA Governor Services Team unless specifically requested by the Chair of Governors. Alternatively, you can drop us an email at governance@suffolk.gov.uk or complete the following forms and return them to us at the same email address.

[Report a New Governor Appointment](#)

[Report a Governor Resignation](#)