

**GST**

# Newsletter

**Issue 4 January 2022**



As we welcome in a new term, may we wish you all a Happy New Year! We hope you managed to take a restful break over the Christmas period, and had the chance to reflect on all you have achieved in a very challenging year. In this edition we have included information on finance, pupil premium and school websites.

## **National Governance Association: e-learning for school governors, trustees, chairs and clerks**

As part of the Learning Improvement Service's support to our governing boards, all schools in Cumbria have been gifted 12 months free subscription to the National Governance Association Learning Link. **This offer ends in April 2022.**

We encourage all governing boards to keep a training record of the modules that have been undertaken by each member of the board.

## **National Governance Association: e-learning for school governors, trustees, chairs and clerks**

In preparation for the Spring term and submitting budgets, we suggested in the last newsletter (Issue 3) to consider completing the following finance modules:

- Understanding Schools Finance
- Finance: Making the most of what you've got
- Using Integrated Curriculum and Financial Planning

If you have not yet completed them, it is not too late. The first two modules outline the funding and types of funding schools should receive, how this should be used, managed and the strategic and compliance function of the governing board. The third module is a bitesize module providing an introductory exploration into integrated curriculum and financial planning.

In preparation for the Summer term, the following modules may be helpful:

- The Role of the SEND Governor
- Working Together: Building the team and improving the organisation
- Succession Planning

In addition to the above modules and thinking about the development of the board, you may find it helpful to watch the NGA webinar **June 2020 - Succession Planning: Is your board future-proofed?**

The webinar is a good starting point (along with the Working Together and Succession Planning modules), for your board to have a discussion/review around succession planning arrangements.

## Schools Financial Value Standard

Local authority maintained schools must submit the **Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS)** to their local authority annually. The SFVS helps to provide schools with assurance that they are meeting the basic standards necessary to achieve a good level of financial health and resource management.

Local authorities use this information to inform their programme of financial assessment and audit. Local authorities submit an assurance statement every year to cover all the maintained schools in their area.

For the financial year 2021 to 2022:

- Schools in Cumbria should submit their SFVS to the local authority no later than **28 February 2022**
- Local authorities should submit their assurance statement to DfE within 6 weeks, no later than 31 May 2022

The SFVS checklist asks a number of questions of governing bodies in six areas of resource management to provide assurance that the school is managing its resources effectively. The checklist can be used to identify possible areas for change to ensure resources are being used to support high-quality teaching and the best education outcomes for pupils.

Academies should use the **school resource management self-assessment tool** and submit their 2021 to 2022 checklist by **15 March 2022**.

## Pupil Premium

Pupil premium is funding provided to schools to improve education outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in schools in England. Governing boards are responsible for ensuring that pupil premium funding is spent effectively and in a way that improves the attainment of eligible pupils.

Local authority maintained schools and academies must produce and publish an **online strategy statement** every year using the Department of Education (DfE) strategy statement template. For 2021- 2022 your strategy statement needs to have been published on the school website by 31 December 2021.

For more information about pupil premium visit: **Using pupil premium: guidance for school leaders**.



## School Websites: What Schools Must Publish Online

Every local authority maintained school must publish specific information on the school website to ensure compliancy with DfE.

The DfE provide statutory guidance '**What maintained schools must publish online**'.

Academies, free schools or FE colleges refer to '**What academies, free schools and colleges should publish online**'.

Prior to a school being notified of an inspection, Ofsted inspectors may view your school website to check compliance and use it as a contributing factor to the final result. It is important to ensure that all statutory policies required are published on the school website, are up-to-date and have been reviewed within timeframes set. For example, admission arrangements must be determined annually. If you are a foundation or voluntary aided school, you must publish your admission arrangements on the school website each year and keep them on your website for the whole school year.

As part of the board's role in monitoring, governors should ensure the school website is compliant and this monitoring activity can be conducted remotely by a designated governor or governors.

## Statutory and Non-Statutory Policies

The DfE provide a list of the statutory policies required for maintained schools and academies. In addition, the document covers how often the policy should be reviewed and the level of approval required (not all policies need to be signed off by the full governing board).

Where there's a change in the law or circumstances, schools will need to revise their policies or documentation earlier than planned.

As an example, your school may have a non-statutory school uniform policy which is reviewed every three years. However, DfE amended the statutory guidance '**Cost of School Uniforms**' in November 2021. This means that schools and their governing boards must have regard to it when developing and implementing their school and trust uniform policies. It should be read alongside the non-statutory guidance on **school uniforms**.

Governors should be monitoring that statutory policies are in place, up-to-date and published online, where necessary. The NGA Learning Link module '**Compliance: Assuring your organisation and keeping it safe, secure and solvent**' will support governors in understanding their roles and responsibilities.

## School resource management webinars

The DfE is funding a new series of **schools resource management webinars** aimed at governors, trustees and school and trust leadership teams.

The webinars are running up until March 2022 and cover the following topics:

- ICFP Metrics
- ICFP Tools
- Introduction to Benchmarking
- Estate Management
- Introduction to Procurement
- Joined up Leadership for Effective Schools Resource Management

For further information and to book your place visit the School Resource Management **website**.



## Governor Computing Webinar

Following the recent National Centre for Computing Education (NCCE) webinar, GST would like to remind governors that the DfE have funded NCCE and its network of computing hubs, including The Cumbria Computing Hub.

The NCCE, through its local computing hubs, have a number of programmes available to support school leadership teams to improve and develop their computing provision. The programmes cover curriculum support, funded teacher CPD, initial needs analysis, bursaries and free curriculum resources.

For further information and support on how to apply for funding, please see the slides **here** from the webinar, which include the contact details for the primary and secondary hub leads.

## Recruitment of Governors

Following the article in the last GST newsletter, we would encourage all boards to sign up to with **Inspiring Governance** and to register **vacancies**.

## Governing Board Membership update

To help GST ensure efficient communications with boards, could we please ask clerks to inform GST of any changes (change of role, resignations, contact details) to details of the chair, LA governor and clerk. Thank you.



## Contact

GST continues to offer advice, support, and guidance, specific to your boards needs and can be contacted as follows:

**Jane Lees** (Barrow and South Lakes)  
E: jane.lees@cumbria.gov.uk M: 07768 027 244

**Faith Matthews** (part-time), (Carlisle and Allerdale)  
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**Kellie Fricker** (part-time), (Copeland and Eden)  
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There is also a wealth of information on the Governor Support Team **website**.