

AUTUMN TERM BRIEFING SESSIONS FOR CLERKS

NOTES FROM SESSIONS

Good morning – I hope you have all had a good break and are now rearing to go for the new term.

For those who don't know me, I am Tina Weavers, the Chair of the ECA and an experienced clerk in both mainstream and academy primaries – I will be the first to admit that I have not clerked in secondary schools for many years so I apologise now if I might stumble if anyone asks me about anything post-primary.

The reason that you have me and not Pam Langmead is that she is now devoting all her time to EPHA and, after discussions with the LA, it was agreed that the ECA would provide new presenters. So, apart from Chris Orme who is doing a couple of these sessions as usual, I am the first new presenter and I hope that more will follow from the Executive. With the introduction of new presenters, we have also introduced a slightly different format – we have listened to what you have told us and we hope that this format fits the bill. We want more 'talking with' than 'talking to' – we hope that you will ask questions as we go along – and, as importantly, add your experiences and pearls of wisdom. Let us know what you think on the evaluation sheets – your feedback is how we can ensure that we are giving you the information you need in the format that you want.

So – let's get started –

From your packs you will see that there are four agendas – two for mainstream and two for academies – this is because many schools these days have two FTB/LGB meetings in the Autumn Term – therefore, this is one for a 'business only' meeting and one for a full meeting including the 'business' bit.

In the past we have gone through these agendas line by line and, for the more experienced clerks, it has been somewhat tedious. Therefore, we plan now to only look at the 'exceptions'. We appreciate, however, that there might be new and inexperienced clerks who might benefit from going through these in more detail. Please don't worry if you fit that bill – we have a couple of suggestions in a minute which might help you to become more confident.

So – to the agendas – let's start with the mainstream business only agenda – **MAINSTREAM BUSINESS ONLY MEETING** (notes as per attached agenda).

Agenda 2 is for the main meeting with the business bit included. I don't plan to go through this in any detail unless there are any specific questions or you have some useful input.

So let's move on to the academy versions – perhaps the most important document to review before putting together this agenda is the briefing paper on Admissions – we will discuss this under Item 3. There will be more to follow about academies later on the agenda.

So let's move on to the next few sections – and this again is where we are changing this slightly – you have the information in the pack or I can tell you where to find it – we don't therefore want to go through huge amounts of detail – the information is there for you to refer to if and when you need it – we are just going to give a few headlines where necessary.

ITEM 3 ADMISSIONS AND ADMISSIONS COMMITTEES – This applies to Academies (including Free Schools), Foundation Schools and Voluntary Aided Schools. This includes the Terms of Reference for the Admissions Committee and a model agenda. You will need to remember that for 2018 entry the arrangements must be determined by 28 February 2017 and published on the website by 15 March

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2017 with a copy to the LA. This has to include a six week consultation period as well. This has to be done irrespective of whether there have been any changes to the admissions policy.

ITEM 4 NATIONAL DATABASE OF GOVERNORS & TRUSTEES –

From September 2016 all details of governors and trustees must be uploaded on to EduBase.

For academies there has already been pre-populated by the DfE and therefore it only needs to be checked and kept up to date.

However, for mainstream schools it has to be started from scratch and then kept up to date.

EduBase is accessed by Secure Access and therefore it is unlikely you that most clerks will be asked, or would be able to, complete this task. However, as a clerk, you must give all up to date information to whoever in the school is uploading it and remember to share any new information.

ITEM 5 – HEADTEACHER RECRUITMENT –

This is for maintained schools only. It is a useful document to keep in the event of new headteacher recruitment for guidance on advertising and interviewing single candidates.

ITEM 6 INFORMATION UPDATE

This is part of the Briefing when we look at a number of useful updates. However, it is not the plan to go through these one by one but to alert you to the updates and as to where you can find the information.

- KEEPING CHILDREN SAFE IN EDUCATION – now in place – a briefing paper in your pack - please read this and pass this on to your Lead Governor for Safeguarding to use as an aide memoire; particularly relevant is the section on DBS checks.. This also mentions Section 128 – (briefing in pack) – this is for academies only and is an additional check for those individuals who have been delegated management responsibilities – unfortunately there is no definition of the word ‘management’ so one must assume that it is anyone who is part of the senior leadership team or on the board – it is not necessary to check existing staff, members of the Trust Board etc – there should now be an additional column on the Single Central Record to include this. It would be useful to send the KCSIE briefing paper to your governors
- SCHOOL FUNDING REFORM – the new Secretary of State for Education, Justine Greening, recently stated the following:

It is the Government’s intention to introduce a national funding formula for 2018-19. This will be based on the needs of schools and children rather than on a historic level of funding. There will therefore be no reduction to local authority funding for next year. The current minimum funding guarantee will also be retained for 2017-18 and so no school will face a reduction of more than 1.5% per pupil next year in what it receives through the LA funding formula.

- OFSTED UPDATE – briefing in pack –
 - Section 5 & 8 inspections: inspectors in a MAT will want to meet with those governors or trustees who are directly responsible for exercising governance of the school and for overseeing its performance
 - Meetings with those responsible for governance should take place without the headteacher or senior staff

- At the feedback in a MAT, at least one representative of the Board should be there
- Inspection will consider how committed governors are to their own development in order to improve their performance – therefore, important that that is reflected in the minutes
- The rest on the list of Information Updates are as links on the back of the agenda – there is a briefing in the pack on the definition of coasting schools and thus a school causing concern and very probably in line for being converted to academy status through the auspices of the Regional Schools Commissioner

ITEM 7 – HOW DO YOU This is now a totally new introduction to the Briefing agenda. The plan is that, over the next three briefings in this academic year, we look at the role of the Clerk .

The NGA model job description of a clerk breaks the role down into these major responsibilities:-

- Provide guidance to the GB
- Effective administration of meetings
- Membership
- Managing information
- Personal development

So today we would like you to look at the first – PROVIDING ADVICE TO THE GOVERNING BODY (HAND OUT THE PRINTED SHEET WITH THE LIST (DOCUMENT 23)). From this you will see a breakdown of what the NGA think you should be providing – please talk about in on your tables – share good practice, ask advice, say what works and what definitely doesn't. Where do you get your information from? Do you think it your role to advise the GB outside of meetings? Do you need more help?

Get more coffee if that helps!!

GIVE THEM 15-20 MINUTES DEPENDING ON HOW YOU FEEL THE DISCUSSION IS GOING AND THEN OPEN IT UP TO THE FLOOR FOR ANY GOOD IDEAS

SUGGESTIONS FOR KEEPING UP TO DATE:-

DfE	School Improvement	NGA	RMA Gov Support
Modern Governor	UK Gov Chat	The Key	Academy Today
Clerks Associates UK	Governor Hub	My academies	NASBM
EFA Bulletins			

ITEM 8 – ACADEMY MATTERS – IF IWONA IS THERE, HAND OVER TO HER FOR THIS ITEM

- PERSON WITH SIGNIFICANT CONTROL – briefing in pack – this came into effect on 6 April 2016 – and thus should have been dealt with already and the information should have been submitted to Companies House by 30 June 2016 – it should have been minuted at either the Members or Directors meeting that it had all been completed. This is not a clerk's responsibility unless you happen to be the Company Secretary
- ACADEMIES FINANCIAL HANDBOOK 2016 – briefing in pack with the changes – probably most important thing for clerks is the first paragraph under Financial Control: *Trustees and*

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chief financial officer must have a clear understanding as to why variances exist and how they should be addressed. This rule indicates that EFA expects to see good challenging questions from trustees and good clear coherent responses from the chief financial officer during trustees meetings. Also important to note that trusts are now required to have a whistleblowing procedure in place – this is now a mandatory requirement. And it is also mandatory to publish a MAT's Scheme of Delegation on its website

- ACADEMIES ACCOUNTS DIRECTIONS: again in your packs – this has little changes since last year – personally I would just ensure that your Audit Committee has a copy of this
- WHAT QUESTION SHOULD BE CONSIDERED WHEN JOINING OR FORMING A MAT? - briefing paper in your pack to share with your Governing Body
- Section 128 – already covered above

ITEM 9 CLERKING MATTERS

- National Clerks' Development Programme Cohort 4 and 5 (IF IWONA THERE HAND OVER TO HER) – This is a national programme which is seeking to 'professionalise' the role of the clerk and is a certified programme from the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL). It has been designed for new and experienced clerks in all school settings – for further information, you need to contact Iwona Bainbridge
- Who should be doing what? (LET THE AUDIENCE PARTICIPATE AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE)
There is always a big debate (especially at this time of year) as to whose responsibility it is to update information – let's name a few:-
 - EduBase – we have already said that this is the school's responsibility as it is a secure access site but clerks must supply the up to date information
 - Attendance Registers – again the clerk should have responsibility for gathering the information and then passing it on to whoever needs it
 - Business Interest Information – hopefully you all hand this over the completed forms to the School Business Manager who will upload on to the website – remember that this information must be readily accessible – in my opinion, it is only the clerk's responsibility (if not working in the school) to make sure that all the forms have been completed and that it is minuted that they were all passed over for uploading
 - DBS checks – again it is the school's responsibility but the clerk should minute at the meeting at which a new governor is appointed that this appointment was subject to satisfactory checks and then, at the next meeting, minute that these checks had been completed
 - What else? Anything else that is causing concern about whether it is the clerk's responsibility?? OVER TO THE AUDIENCE
- Update on NGA Clerks Advisory Group – had their first meeting in February 2016 with 40 clerks attending from across the country. They met again in April with a smaller group. They talked long and hard about qualifications for clerks and about pay. There is a full account of their discussion on the NGA website. We already have several representatives from Essex on the Advisory Group so we can keep you all fully updated.
- NGA Clerks Pay & Employment Survey 2016 – as I mentioned above, the topic of pay was raised at the Advisory Group with concern about both the rate of pay and the lack of consistency. In response to this the NGA conducted a survey on the remuneration of clerks. They had 1450 responses – the survey was mainly focussed on pay but also covered clerking duties, training and terms of employment. The key findings were:-

- General administrative duties eg preparing the agenda and taking minutes were predictably the most selected duties – although nearly 25% did not select giving legal advice as a core duty
 - Academy clerks were paid more irrespective of how they were paid ie per meeting, per week, annually
 - Academy clerks, however, did spend more hours on clerking tasks per week
 - 52% of clerks responded that they did not receive an annual appraisal
 - There was a general consensus that clerks worked more hours than they were paid for
- There were interesting comments about the differences between clerks who work in schools and those who were independent or worked for an agency – this is going to be the basis for next term's HOW DO YOU .. session

The NGA concluded that the discrepancies in pay needed to be addressed and they will be setting out some guidance in the near future on pay and annual appraisals – watch this space!!

- NGA Clerking Matters – this is a useful resource base, born out of the now defunct Clerk to Governors website – unfortunately Sheena Lewington has now retired. The July edition of Clerks News is part of a termly newsletter with lots of useful information and guidance
- 2017 NGA Outstanding Governance Awards – this is for both governors and clerks – anyone can self-nominate – the closing date is 1 December 2016 with the awards ceremony in May 2017 – make sure that you let your governors know!!
- And, finally, the ECA website – due to some technical difficulties, we have had to move our site on to a new platform and then we are going through some changes to bring it more up to date. This is quite time consuming as there were thousands of documents on the old site – mainly of them redundant. So please bear with us as we get it up and running again – we will still have the 'enquiry' facility – so please always remember that one of the Executive Committee is always at the end of a click of a button and we will do our best to answer your queries.