



Buckinghamshire Education
School Support & Training
(BESST)

BESST Newsletter for Governors – December 2022

Seasons Greetings!

As 2022 draws to a close we reflect on a year of grit and determination in the face of growing challenges, locally and all around the globe. We thank you, our Buckinghamshire School Governors, for continuing to passionately dedicate your time and support in promoting high standards and continuous improvement across Buckinghamshire Schools. **“Thank you,”** as always, and we wish you all festive cheer over the winter period.

Earlier this month we welcomed over 100 headteachers and governors to the Side-by-Side conference about Ofsted inspections, where local headteachers shared their experiences of recent inspections. This free event was enthusiastically received, with attendees commenting how useful the honest learnings had been to hear. If you missed it, look out for the recordings which will be circulated soon; and do save the date of the next conference on 30th March about Safeguarding.

Strep A

We have been deeply saddened to read about the tragic deaths of children across the country from invasive Group A Streptococcus (iGAS) infections. Group A “Strep” is a bacteria which often lives harmlessly on our skin but can also cause a variety of illnesses, most of them mild and non-invasive. Scarlet fever is a common type of Group A Strep infection, which is currently circulating at higher levels than is usual for the time of year.

Buckinghamshire Schools have been provided with links to government guidance on managing scarlet fever outbreaks and guidance for people with symptoms of a respiratory infection. The local Public Health team has also provided a written message for schools to provide to parents if they wish and a public health consultant is joining scheduled Huddle meetings with headteachers during December to provide an opportunity to access support and guidance where needed.

Supporting schools to get the best outcomes for every child



Governor Training and events

We have been pleased to welcome over 200 governor bookings onto BESST governor training and Side by Side conference events this term, and to have received positive feedback with an overall satisfaction rating of 8.5 (out of 10) for the training events. Comments have included, *“I now understand the safeguarding questions I should be asking,”* *“the presenter was enthusiastic and lively,”* and *“I’m disappointed not to see more governors joining this course!”*

We strongly encourage all governing boards to audit your boards’ skills annually and to consider the skills development your board members need. In the Spring term, training topics from BESST include:

- The Governing Board’s role in Overseeing SEND (24th January)
- Preparing for an Ofsted Inspection (21st March)
- Allegations, a guide for governors (31st January)
- Trauma Informed and Attachment Aware Schools (21st February) (FREE)
- Exclusions & Re-integration (28th February)
- Being Strategic, What Good Governance Looks Like (7th February)
- Safeguarding in Schools – An Introduction for Governors (2nd March) (FREE)
- And more!

Visit the [BESST website](#) for the full course schedule and to book your place. Training can be booked on a pay as you go basis at £25 per person per session. A 10% discount is available when 4 or more governors from a single school attend the same session.

We are now looking ahead to the summer term and next academic year. If there are training topics you would like to see in future, please email us your suggestions to BESST@Buckinghamshire.gov.uk

Reminders

- Governors of maintained schools are reminded that Headteacher Performance Management reviews should be completed by the end of this term.
- Governors of maintained schools are also reminded that the Schools Financial Value Statement submission deadline will be 28th February 2023. This self-assessment return is for governors to complete alongside school staff and the Excel template will be sent out to school business managers via AnyComms.

Clerking matters

Experienced governors, as well as the DfE, recognise that professional-quality clerking is critical to the effectiveness of a governing board in fulfilling its core strategic functions. To support the continued professional development of all governance professionals, it is recommended that governing boards review the governance professional's role and undertake a performance appraisal in accordance with the Clerking Competency Framework.

No matter whether your governance professional is self-employed, employed by a school or trust, or employed by another agency / organisation, it is good practice for them to receive an annual appraisal. The annual appraisal may be carried out by the Chair of Governors or by a relevant line manager, depending on the nature of the employment arrangement in place. As with any other performance appraisal, this conversation should include what is going well, areas for development and support required to address these. The conversation should also consider objectives for the next year (or appropriate period) and pay. It is good practice to keep a record of performance appraisals.

For schools that have membership to the NGA or The Key, there is a growing wealth of resources available to you and your governance professional, including role descriptions, appraisal templates, clerking training information and more. The NGA have also newly launched a dedicated area for Governance Professionals, including Learning Link modules, a [Find me a clerk service](#) – a free website for advertising clerking vacancies, and a [career pathway for Governance Professionals](#).

The Role of the Governance Professional:

All governing boards of maintained schools and academy trust boards must have a clerk appointed, and the clerk cannot be a governor / trustee on that board, or the headteacher / chief executive leader in the school or academy trust.

The role of the governance professional is to:

- Provide governing boards with expert advice on governance, procedures and compliance and directly contributing to its efficient conduct.
- Professional clerking has a vital role to play in meeting the administrative and procedural requirements of boards and enabling efficient and effective discussion and decision making.
- Depending on the role description you have in place for your governance professional, they may also support your board in tracking progress on actions, running governor elections, finding new governor volunteers, inducting new governors, and clerking ad hoc panels and meetings too.

It is good practice to work with your governance professional to make sure the board and the governance professional are both satisfied that the arrangements you have in place are appropriate for your board's circumstances.

NGA (National Governance Association) presentation for Buckinghamshire Chairs of Governors and Governance Professionals

We are delighted that Jackie Sweeting, NGA Regional Lead for the South East, will join the Governor Priorities Briefing Session on 10th January. This session is free for Buckinghamshire Chairs of Governors and clerks to attend and is co-presented with Buckinghamshire Council School Improvement team and Buckinghamshire Association of School Governors. At the end of the usual priorities session, Jackie will give a short presentation about topical issues in governance and guidance on making the most of NGA membership. Book your place on the [BESST website](#).

Therapies Strategy Consultation

The Prevention in The Community Team at Buckinghamshire Council would like to hear your views on a draft strategy to support children and young people's therapy needs in Buckinghamshire. The draft strategy and the online consultation survey can be found at buckinghamshire.gov.uk/therapies-strategy. The consultation runs from Monday 21 November 2022 until Monday 9 January 2023.

Overview

The draft Therapies Strategy proposes a shared approach to therapy provision and support across Buckinghamshire. We want to ensure that:

- Children and young people's needs are identified as soon as possible
- Children and young people can access therapy support at the earliest stage

This will reduce demand for, and dependence on, the limited specialist provision available. It will also improve access to specialist provision for children and young people with more complex needs.

Guidance and best practice describe a move away from referring all children and young people to an expert therapist for support. For Buckinghamshire, we are proposing to:

- Move towards a better balance of support across universal, targeted and specialist levels of support
- Install a whole school approach to the delivery of therapy support
- Support the role of community delivery in supporting children and young people's development

This approach would develop expertise within a child or young person's everyday environment. The benefits of this are:

- Children and young people would receive support with their development at the earliest point of intervention
- Reducing the level of escalating need being seen in Buckinghamshire
- Improving outcomes for children and young people

The final strategy will guide continuous improvement in therapy provision and support up to 2026. We look forward to hearing your views through the consultation period.

BESST Governor Training Schedule

The training schedule for BESST governor courses for the spring term is now available on the BESST website. Don't forget to discuss governor development needs at your board meetings and ensure that all governors know what training and support your board has purchased for them to participate in, and from which provider. BESST courses are available on a pay as you go basis, at £25 per person per session and can be booked on the [BESST website](#).

Spring Term courses:

Session Title	Date
Governor Priorities for the Spring Term (FREE) Including presentation from NGA	10.01.23
Building Effective Relationships with your School Leadership Team	12.01.23
Financial Control and Fraud Awareness – NEW DATE	17.01.23
Overseeing Educational Visits, the Governor's Role	19.01.23
The Governing Board's role in Overseeing SEND – NEW DATE	24.01.23
Allegations - A Guide for Governors	31.01.23
Appointing an Executive Leader – A Guide for Governors	02.02.23
Being Strategic, What Good Governance Looks Like	07.02.23
Trauma Informed and Attachment Aware Schools (FREE)	21.02.23
Drop-in for New Governors (FREE)	23.02.23
Exclusions and Reintegration - A governor's guide	28.02.23
Safeguarding in Schools - An Introduction for Governors (FREE)	02.03.23
Championing High Quality PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education) - The Role of the PSHE Governor	09.03.23
Preparing for an Ofsted Inspection – A Guide for Governors	21.03.23
Setting the Culture, Values and Ethos for your School	23.03.23

About BESST

BESST is the traded school improvement and governor support service from Buckinghamshire Council. Led by our experienced team, BESST services will enable school leaders to keep up to date and support the implementation of best practice across Buckinghamshire. Our services will continue to develop in the coming months based on feedback from school leaders and governors.



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Please see [BESST](#) online for more details of our training courses and services.