



BESST Newsletter for Governors – February 2023

We were pleased in January to welcome chairs of governors and clerks to the governor priorities briefing session with the NGA and BASG. Jackie Sweeting from the NGA spoke about current governance challenges, including the difficulties of setting a balanced budget and recruiting volunteers. She signposted a multitude of resources for further reading and the slides were circulated to Chairs of Governors, so be sure to check out the resources Jackie provided.

Industrial Action by the NEU

The National Education Union (NEU) has announced that its ballot of teacher members in England has met the thresholds required to commence industrial action. Buckinghamshire is within the Eastern region, and as such the following dates for action will affect Buckinghamshire schools.

- **Wednesday 1 February 2023:** all eligible members in England and Wales.
- **Wednesday 1 March 2023:** all eligible members in the following English regions: East Midlands, West Midlands, Eastern.
- **Wednesday 15 March 2023:** all eligible members in England and Wales.
- **Thursday 16 March 2023:** all eligible members in England and Wales.

Guidance on Handling Strike Action in Schools has been shared with Buckinghamshire headteachers and Chairs of Governors. ‘Huddle’ meetings are held every Wednesday and Thursday as informal opportunities for headteachers to ask for guidance and support from the LA.

Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS)

Governors are reminded that the deadline for maintained schools to submit the SFVS is 28th February. The schools financial value standard (SFVS) is a mandatory annual return which helps to provide governing bodies with assurance that schools are meeting the basic standards in six key areas of resource management to achieve a good level of financial health and resource management. It can be used to identify possible areas for change to ensure that resources are being used to support high-quality teaching and the best education outcomes for pupils.



A culture of Safeguarding

A recent survey of 70,000 pupils from Year 3 to Year 13 by The Key and Edurio, reported that 8% of pupils reported not feeling safe in school. Of those who reported having felt unsafe, only 25% said they spoke to an adult at school for help or support. The report identified links between feeling safe / unsafe and demographic traits, including sexuality and gender identity. A link was also identified between feelings of safety and attendance.

Governing board's safeguarding responsibilities are set out in [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#). The governing board meets its responsibilities by leading a safeguarding culture and ensuring that culture is embedded across the whole school. In an effective culture of safeguarding, safeguarding and child protection underpin all aspects of school life; pupils are confident to approach staff with worries or problems; and all staff across the whole school are vigilant to and act upon safeguarding concerns.

Governors must undertake appropriate safeguarding training at induction and regularly thereafter. If your safeguarding training is not up to date, please join Georgina Masefield (Buckinghamshire Council School Improvement Advisor) on 2nd March for a free Safeguarding in Schools Introduction session. Book via the [BESST website](#).

BASL Conference

Headteachers are invited to attend the Bucks Association of School Leaders (BASL) conference on 9th & 10th March. Governors are asked to be supportive of headteachers taking the time out of school to attend the conference, in support of their continuing professional development. This year's theme is 'The Power of Partnerships; Exploring Possibilities'. The conference is an excellent opportunity for Headteachers to hear inspirational speakers from a variety of backgrounds and to network with Headteachers from all over Bucks.

Purchasing Governor Support for 2023/24 from BESST

The BESST governor support and training offer for 2023/24 for Buckinghamshire schools will be circulated after February half term. We will continue to be a re-seller of discounted Governor Hub, Governor Hub Knowledge (formerly The Key for School Governors) and NGA memberships as well as offering governor training solutions via the NGA's Learning Link and events hosted by local expert LA officers. BESST will also continue to offer traded support packages in headteacher performance management, headteacher recruitment and school improvement.

If your board has not yet attended a governor training session from BESST, we encourage you to join at least one before the end of the spring term. Sampling a session will help you

to make an informed decision when purchasing governor training and support packages for the next year - to ensure you get best value for money by purchasing support and training that best meets your school's needs.

Governor Training and events

The BESST spring term training schedule is below. All BESST courses are delivered by officers from Buckinghamshire Council, meaning governors hear from local experts who understand the local context for Bucks schools. Visit the [BESST website](#) to book your place.

| Session Title | Date |
|---|----------|
| 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.



Buckinghamshire Education
School Support & Training
(BESST)

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