**BRIEFING PAPERS FOR**

**SPRING TERM 2024 GOVERNING BODY MEETINGS**

**Prepared by the Governor Services Team,**

**Education Performance Service**

**Spring 2024**

**SPRING TERM 2024 BRIEFING PAPER FOR GOVERNING BODY MEETINGS**

**PAPER 1**

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| **Title/Topic** | **Staff Health and Wellbeing** |
| **Target Group** |  **All schools**  |
| **Status of Item**  |  **Discussion and Action**  |
| **Key points** | **Background** School leaders and governing boards have significant responsibilities to support the wellbeing of those employed in their schools, including their work-life balance. These responsibilities are underpinned by health and safety law and statutory pay and conditions. The judgement of leadership and management in the current Ofsted education inspection framework also considers how governing boards and school leaders review and address issues relating to staff workload and wellbeing, including the removal of unnecessary workload associated with data and evidence collection. The [Governance Handbook](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-handbook) states that governing boards should have "due regard for the wellbeing and mental health of the school leadership team and teaching staff more broadly" (page 98).  But the concept of 'wellbeing' is hard to define, made trickier by the need to approach wellbeing strategically, not operationally.**Wellbeing Culture and Strategy** It is important for governing boards to understand the legal frameworks, and all of the requirements with which they must comply. However, it is just as important to look beyond this and to reflect on the culture of wellbeing that exists in the school/trust. Effective wellbeing strategies: * encourage school leaders to lead by example by prioritising their own wellbeing and self-care
* provide mechanisms for highlighting and responding to specific pressure points and risks
* use effective communication to demonstrate the commitment to priorities (e.g., reducing working hours)
* allocate sufficient resource, including resource for providing confidential external support, for those who need it
* are monitored through reports from your Headteacher that are discussed by the board alongside other evidence and wider feedback received
* evaluate/gather evidence from staff on the culture of health and wellbeing via staff questionnaires

**The Wellbeing of School Leaders** Governing boards have a clear statutory responsibility for the work-life balance of the Headteacher/senior leader. The Headteacher has the responsibility for ensuring that their staff achieve the same. Senior leaders work in an increasingly challenging environment with limited resources and higher levels of accountability. In this context, it is important for the Headteacher to feel supported by a governing board that plays its part in limiting unnecessary stress, challenging excessive working hours and maintaining a healthy work-life balance. **Action Points for Governing Boards*** **Establish a school or staff**[**wellbeing policy**](https://schoolleaders.thekeysupport.com/policy-expert/staff/staff-wellbeing-policy-model-and-examples/?marker=content-body)
* **Monitor Staff Wellbeing**

Unlike how the Chair supports the Headteacher’s wellbeing, the way governors support staff wellbeing is more hands-off.As a governing board, governors need to make sure that:* Relevant policies and processes are in place which:
	+ Facilitate a healthy work-life balance among staff
	+ Don't put undue pressure on workload
* The school adheres to the working time limits set out in the [Working Time Regulations 1998](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1998/1833/contents/made)
* Governors don't make unreasonable demands on the time of school staff, including the Headteacher
* Governors support the headteacher and teachers to achieve a satisfactory work-life balance. This is a requirement for maintained schools, but good practice for all school types (see page 19 of the [Governance Handbook](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-handbook))
* Governors provide appropriate challenge and support to the headteacher, including:
	+ Asking appropriately probing questions
	+ Setting targets for improvement where feedback shows there are staff wellbeing issues

**Monitor wellbeing initiatives**The governing board’s role is a strategic one so governors should **monitor** initiatives to make sure they’re having an impact and show how wellbeing is being embedded in the school’s culture.This can be done by:* **Asking questions during board meetings**
* **Undertaking learning walks to see wellbeing initiatives in practice**
* **Looking at data**

To ensure that initiatives are having an impact, sources of data could include:* Staff Surveys
	+ Positive or negative comments can give governors and school leaders insight into how individuals feel about an initiative and if they think it's working/has worked
* Staff absence rates and spend
	+ If staff feel happy and healthy, they're less likely to be off sick due to anxiety, stress or burnout
* Feedback from conversations senior leaders have had with staff
	+ For example, governors would want to know if a new staff workload initiative had been effective. The Headteacher reported that they had spoken to 5 members of staff who all said they'd seen a huge reduction in workload since the school introduced the initiative. One staff member said they hadn't needed to take work home with them since the initiative started.
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| **Sources of further information /** **Lead Officer Contact Details** | Further resources are available on the Schools Extranet, including a template for a health and wellbeing survey for staff in Leicester City schools.[School's Extranet (leicester.gov.uk)](https://schools.leicester.gov.uk/your-council/communications/health-and-wellbeing-plan-in-schools/) |

**SPRINGTERM 2024 BRIEFING PAPER FOR GOVERNING BODY MEETINGS**

**PAPER 2**

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| **Title/Topic** | **Schools Financial Value Standard** |
| **Target Group** |  **All maintained school governing bodies** |
| **Status of Item**  | **Action** |
| **Key points** | **Background** Local authority maintained schools, including Pupil Referral Units, are required to conduct an assessment against the Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) once a year.  Assessments must be signed and dated by the Chair of Governors and submitted to the local authority by 31st March each year. The Director of Finance will inform the DfE each year of how many schools have submitted a SFVS self-assessment to the local authority by 31st March 2024 and will confirm that there is a system of school audits in place to provide assurance over their standards of financial management and the regularity and propriety of their spending.  Internal Audit will undertake a programme of SFVS spot checks each summer term to confirm the accuracy of the content of the self-assessments and to make the Governing Board and the local authority aware of discrepancies in judgement.**Action Points*** Governing board to review the SFVS before it is signed by the Chair of Governors.
* To return the signed statement by 31st March 2024
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| **Separate Document**  | Click [here](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/schools-financial-value-standard-and-assurance-sfvs) to access the **2023/2024** SFVS Assessment Form  |
| **Deadline for Response** | To be returned to the LA no later than 31st March 2024. |
| **Sources of further information**  | [Schools financial value standard (SFVS) and assurance - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/schools-financial-value-standard-and-assurance-sfvs)  |

**SPRING TERM 2024 BRIEFING PAPER FOR GOVERNING BODY MEETINGS**

**PAPER 3**

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| **Title/Topic** | **Governing Body Annual Planner - Tasks for the Spring Term**  |
| **Target Group** |  **All governing bodies and local governing boards with delegated responsibilities** |
| **Status of Item**  |  **Action** |
| **Key action points** | **Background** The attached planner details tasks that should be undertaken by either the governing body or its committees during a specific term or anytime during the academic year.**Action Point**The governing body should ensure that all appropriate items for the Spring Term are undertaken – see **attached** Annual Planner – Maintained Schools and Academies  |
| **Sources of further information** | Learning Link– Governors’ E-LearningDfE Website – <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education>Leicester Governors’ On-Line Centre[www.leicester.gov.uk/governors](http://www.leicester.gov.uk/governors) |

**SPRINGTERM 2024 BRIEFING PAPERS FOR GOVERNING BODY MEETINGS**

**PAPER 4**

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| **Title/Topic** | **REMINDER: Private Fostering** |
| **Target Group** | **All schools/governing bodies** |
| **Status of Item**  | **Information**  |
| **Key points** | **Background** A privately fostered child is a child under 16, or under 18 if the child has a disability, who is being cared for and living with someone else who is not a parent, close relative or someone who holds parental responsibility. A close relative is considered as a grandparent, step-parent, brother or sister, uncle or aunt. A private fostering arrangement is one which is expected to last 28 days or more. Private foster carers are legally required to notify the Local Authority, but it is expected many private fostering arrangements remain unknown and unregulated. Leicester City Council Social Care and Early Help Service have a duty to ensure that the care arrangements are suitable for the child and that the child is safe. They will assess the private foster family including health checks and accommodation checks.**Action Point**To note that Headteachers have been asked to consider the care arrangements for children and young people who attend your school and notify the Local Authority of any private fostering arrangements they may be aware of. This should be done via the Social Care and Early Help Service by contacting the Duty and Advice Service on 0116 454 1004.  |
| **Sources of further information**  | Duty and Advice Service – Leicester City Council – 0116 454 1004 |

**SPRING TERM 2024 BRIEFING PAPERS FOR GOVERNING BODY MEETINGS**

**PAPER 5**

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| **Title/Topic** | **REMINDER: Prevent in Education**  |
| **Target Group** | **All schools/governing bodies** |
| **Status of Item**  | **Information** |
| **Key points** | **Background** The Counter Terrorism and Security Act (CTS) 2015 includes a duty on named statutory bodies to have due to regard to the risks associated with radicalisation. The Prevent Duty - DfE Guidance for schools and childcare providers June 2015: * Explains what the Prevent duty means for schools and childcare providers.
* Makes clear what schools and childcare providers should do to demonstrate compliance with the duty; and
* Informs schools and childcare providers about other sources of information, advice and support.

Ailsa Coull is the Prevent Education Officer, Ailsa.Coull@leicester.gov.uk for Leicester City Council and is the point of contact on Prevent within education settings.  Ailsa’s role includes supporting schools in how they can deliver the Prevent duty effectively, assisting schools with classroom resources around the Prevent Duty, delivering staff Prevent training and acting as the conduit for any Prevent related updates from the DfE and Home Office.  Please don’t hesitate to contact Ailsa for any Prevent related support needed, including referral advice. |
| **Sources of further information**  | Ailsa Coull. Prevent Education OfficerAilsa.coull@leicester.gov.ukThe Prevent Duty - DfE Guidance for schools and childcare providers June 2015<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protecting-children-from-radicalisation-the-prevent-duty>LCC Schools Extranet[www.educateagainsthate.com](http://www.educateagainsthate.com) |