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# INTRODUCTION

Governors have always played an important role in giving schools a sense of direction and in supporting Principals and staff in their work with pupils. All educational partners including Governors share a common purpose – to see that the children for whom they are responsible are educated to fulfill their potential and become well adjusted responsible young adults, able to meet the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Governors have been given new powers and responsibilities. To enable you to meet these obligations you do not need to know everything about the curriculum, finance or employment legislation. You do need to know where to turn to for support and advice. The Principal will often be able to guide you on these important areas. However other sources of advice and support are available to Principals and Governors alike.

Support will be available through training, expertise from the Department of Education, the South Eastern Education and Library Board (and for maintained schools the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools - CCMS) and through guidance material. This handbook has been designed as an independent, useful initial guide on a wide range of key topics. It is written, as far as is possible, in layman's language and is designed to be used as a source of reference to be dipped into as and when the need arises. **It must not be regarded as a definitive guide to the law.** If Governors are faced with a difficulty and wish to obtain definitive information they should, where appropriate, seek advice and guidance from officers of the Board and/or CCMS.

This handbook is being produced in loose-leaf form so that it can be added to or amended as necessary. In addition the Board of Governors of each school is provided with key documents covering in more detail areas such as the appointment and promotion of staff, child protection etc. Additional relevant material will be provided as it becomes available.

## **SECTION 1      EDUCATION IN NORTHERN IRELAND**

As a Governor you will realise that your school does not exist in isolation but is part of a much wider educational system, parts of which may impinge upon and affect your school. Some of the statutory bodies which will affect you include:

THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (DE)

THE BOARD (ELB)

COUNCIL FOR CATHOLIC MAINTAINED SCHOOLS (CCMS) - in the case of Catholic Maintained Schools.

### **Other Bodies**

Your school may have links with one of the following:

The Governing Bodies Association (GBA)

The Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE)

Conhairle na Gaelscoláirí (Irish Medium Schools)

### **THE DEPARTMENT**

This is a short form of the title of the Department of Education (DE). It is responsible for such matters as:

- the capital cost of building work in controlled schools;
- capital grants towards the building costs of maintained and voluntary schools;
- allocating finance to Education and Library Boards;
- the content of the curriculum;
- the inspection of the delivery of the curriculum in schools;
- the issue of circulars containing government information for schools.

### **THE BOARD**

This is an abbreviation for the Education and Library Boards. There are five Education and Library Boards in Northern Ireland (see appendix 1). The South Eastern Education & Library Board covers the five Council areas – North Down, Lisburn, Castlereagh, Down and Ards.

In addition to education, the Board has statutory responsibility for the provision of library and youth services within its area. There is a population of 387,500 and currently there are approximately 66,600 pupils enrolled in schools in the area covered by the Board.

Each Board is responsible for securing the provision of nursery, primary, secondary and special education in its own area. It is the employing authority for teachers in controlled schools and the non-teaching staff in all controlled and maintained schools. Its officers have statutory responsibilities for providing an advice and support service to all grant aided schools. It provides a number of services ranging from transport to the educational psychology service.

## **CCMS**

This is the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools. It is responsible for the co-ordination of the Catholic Maintained School system in Northern Ireland and is the employing authority for teachers in all Catholic Maintained Schools. The CCMS is empowered to

- a. promote and co-ordinate effective provision of education
- b. promote the effective management and control of Catholic maintained schools by the Board of Governors.

The remit is as stated in Article 142 of the 1989 Education Reform (NI) Order.

## **CATEGORIES OF SCHOOL**

Schools generally fall into particular sectors reflecting the ages and needs of the children involved. These sectors are:-

- Nursery schools (pre-school);
- Primary schools (age 4 - 11 years);
- Post primary schools (age 11 - 18 years);
- Special schools (age 4 - 19 years).

Within each sector of education a variety of types of schools are to be found. Each type of school is characterised by its particular management arrangements. The following types of schools operate within this Board's area:

### **Controlled Schools**

The buildings are owned and managed by the Board. The Board is the employer of the teaching and non-teaching staff, expenditure associated with running such schools is met from the school budget. There are nursery, primary, special, secondary and grammar schools within this category.

### **Maintained Schools**

#### **Catholic Maintained Schools**

The buildings are owned by their Trustees and administered by their Board of Governors. The non-teaching staff are employees of the Board. However, the teaching staff are employees of the CCMS. The running costs associated with such schools are met through the school budget. Capital costs of, for example, new buildings and extensions are grant-aided by the Department of Education.

### **Voluntary Grammar Schools and Grant Maintained Integrated Schools**

Under current arrangements recurrent costs are funded by DE and the non-teaching and teaching staff alike are employees of the Board of Governors. The buildings are owned by the school's trustees and capital costs of new buildings and extensions are grant aided by DE.

## SECTION 2                      **BOARDS OF GOVERNORS**

Governors, because they are local people, are able to express the community's interest in its school, develop and strengthen the school's links with the community and promote mutual understanding within the whole community.

### **CATEGORIES OF GOVERNOR**

As a Governor you are representing one of these groups which have a direct interest in the school. These groups include:

- parents;
- transferors;
- trustees;
- teachers;
- ELB;
- DE.

*Whilst you will be aware of the feelings and wishes of the group which you represent, you are not a delegate of that group nor are you accountable to it. You cannot be instructed by it as to how you will act as a Governor. Once appointed you must put the interests of the school and its pupils first.*

### **The Principal**

- the Principal is a non-voting member of the Board of Governors;
- the Principal's attendance does not contribute to a quorum.

### **Parent Representatives**

- parent representatives are elected at meetings of parents held for that purpose;
- they must be parents of pupils attending the school at the time of election, but if their child ceases to be a pupil of the school they may continue until the end of their term of office;
- in maintained schools one of the trustees nominees must be a parent of a pupil attending the school.

### **Transferors Representatives (controlled primary and secondary schools)**

- these Governors represent the churches and other institutions whose schools were transferred to the state or were superseded by state schools since 1930. They are usually nominated by their churches.

### **Trustees Representatives (maintained and other voluntary schools)**

- the trustee representatives are nominated by the legal trustees of the school.

### Teachers Representatives

- are elected from among all the permanent full-time assistant teachers in the school other than the Principal.

### Board Representatives

- are appointed by the Board, and may or may not be members of the Board.

### Department of Education Representatives

- are nominated by Department of Education

### Co-opted Governors

- the voting members of a Board of Governors of a grant-aided school may co-opt not more than 3 members from the local business community. Co-opted members do not have a vote.

## COMPOSITION OF BOARDS OF GOVERNORS

The number of Governors on each Board varies according to local circumstances but the proportions are fixed. The following table indicates the size of Boards in the SEELB.

	<i>CONTROLLED</i>			<i>MAINTAINED Nursery/Primary/Special</i>		<i>GRANT MAINTAINED INTEGRATED</i>
	<i>Primary Secondary</i>	<i>Nursery Special Grammar</i>	<i>Integrated</i>	<i>With 85% Capital Funding</i>	<i>With 100% Capital Funding</i>	
DE		2	4		1	4
Foundation Governors						6
Parents	2	2	4	1	1	4
SEELB	2	3	4	2	2	
Teachers	1	1	2	1	1	2
Transferors	4					
Trustees				6*	4*	
Principal	1	1	1	1	1	1
<b>Total Voting Members</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>16</b>

The total numbers on Boards of Governors listed are exclusive of the Principal who is a non-voting member. The Composition of the Board of Governors of Grant-maintained Integrated schools is detailed in Schedule 5 of the Education Reform Order, 1989 and of Voluntary Grammar Schools in Schedule 2 of the Education and Library Order 1993. \*One of these Trustee nominees must be a parent.

## THE ROLE OF THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS

Regardless of sector or type, all schools seek continuous improvement for themselves and for their pupils. The education system in Northern Ireland aims to promote higher standards in all schools. One way in which this can be done is by raising expectations of what can be achieved by all the pupils and by strengthening the involvement of parents and the local community.

Among the measures employed to raise educational standards are the following:-

- the formulation of a **school development plan**;
- a **common curriculum** with associated attainment targets and assessment arrangements;
- ensuring equal access to a **broad and balanced education** for all pupils of compulsory school age;
- greater **involvement of parents** in their children's education through better information about each child's progress, and through fuller participation in school governance;
- a greater **freedom for parents** in choosing the school which their children should attend;
- **information for parents** about the performance of schools;
- a greater degree of **autonomy for schools** in managing their financial resources under Local Management of Schools (LMS).

The Board of Governors has a vital part to play in this process.

**One of the most fundamental responsibilities of Boards of Governors is to ensure that the Northern Ireland curriculum is provided within their schools.**

Information on the school's success can be gained from:

- the Principal;
- the assessment procedures for pupils;
- school inspection reports.

The school must have a **written statement of its curriculum policy**. The Board of Governors in collaboration with the Principal has the responsibility to ensure that the school curriculum policy is regularly reviewed and updated.

Boards of Governors are also responsible for:

- ensuring that parents receive full information about the school in their **Annual Report** and that they are given the opportunity to consider this report at the **Annual Parents' Meeting**;
- drawing up an **Admissions Policy** for the selection of pupils to the school if oversubscribed;
- making sure that parents have access to information about the **educational performance** of their children's schools;
- ensuring issues **raised in inspections** are addressed by the school.

## **YOUR ROLE AS A GOVERNOR**

Governors make a vital contribution to school life and development. This may require you to further develop knowledge and skills which will enable you to carry out your duties effectively.

**You should know :**

- the school and the educational system of which it is a part;
- the agreed procedures for example on staffing related matters such as the employment of staff;
- the broad thrust of education policy and development both locally and nationally;
- the school's management plan which will include the school's development plan and financial plan.

You can acquire knowledge of your school by:-

- meeting the staff;
- hearing regular reports from the Principal;
- reading school inspection reports;
- reading materials produced by the school;
- becoming familiar with the school buildings;
- attending school functions;
- attending parents' meetings;
- visiting the school - this must be pre-arranged with the Principal [and Staff].

**It should be made clear that the purpose of the visit is to become better informed about the school and how it functions. Governors do not have any right to inspect the work of teachers in the school.**

## **Procedures**

There are clearly defined procedures and guidelines on many topics such as the deployment of staff, redundancies, discipline and grievance. Guidance on procedures will be available within the school.

Advice and guidance will be offered by the Education and Library Board/CCMS/DE as required.

## **Educational Policies**

The school will have a range of educational policies. Should you need further information regarding their implementation this may be obtained from:-

- the Principal;
- Board training programmes;
- SEELB/DE/CCMS information;
- educational journals;
- members of staff who are invited to talk to you;
- ELB / CCMS officers.

## **The School Development Plan**

In order to ensure that the school continues to improve and provide high quality education for its children, it is necessary to have a School Development Plan.

This plan evolves from an audit of the schools needs and priorities and takes account of staffing, curriculum development, staff development and finance. You need to have knowledge of the plan and be confident that the plan meets the needs of the children at the school.

## **SKILLS**

Each Governor makes an individual contribution to the work of the team. You, as part of that team, will continue to develop skills in a variety of situations including:

- working closely with the Principal;
- working with fellow Governors;
- selecting members of staff.

## **Working with the Principal**

Your relationship with the Principal is of crucial importance. The Principal is a fellow Governor though he/she has no voting rights. He/she is nevertheless the executive Governor who sees that Governors are informed and that their decisions are carried out. He/she will act as a professional adviser to the Governors.

The Principal's job can be a lonely, and at times, a difficult one. Your informed support will be essential to enable the Principal to undertake his/her role efficiently and effectively.

## **Working with Fellow Governors**

You will wish to develop collaborative and harmonious working relationships with your fellow Governors. This will mean, among other things, accepting and being bound by majority decisions as well as maintaining confidentiality.

## **Appointing Staff**

The success of a school depends, to a large extent, on the quality of its staff. The appointment of staff to meet the school's needs will be related to the school development plan. It will demand a knowledge of both the current and future staffing requirements of your school and skill in making the right choice. Procedures and advice are available from the Board/CCMS and must be followed.

**Being an effective Governor requires a commitment of both time and energy in further developing appropriate knowledge and skills. It will at the same time offer you much satisfaction in serving your community and in particular its children.**

## **STATUTORY DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Under the Education Reform Order (NI) 1989, a number of statutory duties have been given to you as a school Governor. When the word "duty" is used it means you have a legal obligation to carry out a particular task.

Some of these duties are listed below:-

### **The Curriculum**

It is the duty of a Board of Governors to:

- ensure that the curriculum of the school satisfies the requirements of the Order; [Article 4];
- determine and keep under review its policy in relation to the curriculum of the school and keep up-to-date a written statement of that policy; [Article 10];
- take account of the findings of any inspection of the school; [Article 10 (4)(a)(i)];
- consider any representations made to it regarding the curriculum by the Board, CCMS or any other body or person connected with the community served by the school; [Article 10 (4)(a)(ii)];
- consult the Principal of the school before making or varying any statement; [Article 10 (4)(b)];
- ensure that Religious Education is provided; [Article 11 (1)(a)].

### **Open Enrolment**

It is the duty of a Board of Governors to:

- make arrangements for the admission of pupils to the school; [Article 36 (2)(a) & (b)];
- draw-up admissions criteria [Article 38];
- ensure that the school's admissions number is not exceeded; [Article 41];
- ensure that the school's enrolment number is not exceeded [Article 39];
- comply with the directions of an Appeals Tribunal; [Article 37];

### **Governor Membership**

It is the duty of a Board of Governors to:

- appoint a parent(s) as Governor(s) where there are insufficient nominations for existing vacancies [Article 121];
- to co-opt a member of the business community if it is felt that the Board of Governors is lacking in business expertise; [Article 122].

## Parental Involvement

It is the duty of a Board of Governors to:

- prepare an Annual Report and to ensure that parents are given a copy at least 2 weeks before the Annual Parents Meeting; [Article 125];
- hold an Annual Parents Meeting at which the above report will be considered; [Article 126].

**In addition, because Governors have a general responsibility for the effective management of the school, you will be involved in a number of other important activities such as:-**

- approval of the school development plan;
- approval of a financial plan arising from the school development plan;
- the appointment of staff - teaching and non-teaching;
- other human resource issues - disciplinary and grievance procedures, redundancies, dismissal, making internal promotions;
- inspection and maintenance of school premises;
- approval of school policies - health and safety policy, charging policy, discipline policy, admissions policy, homework policy, pastoral care policy, etc;
- approving the procedures for management of privately raised funds;
- promoting community use of school premises;
- monitoring of LMS budget.

## INSURANCE

The Employing Authority is responsible for ensuring that there is adequate insurance cover. The usual policies carried on an annual basis by the Board on behalf of both controlled and maintained schools are PUBLIC LIABILITY, EMPLOYERS' LIABILITY and PERSONAL ACCIDENT. The trustees of Catholic maintained schools have a PREMISES insurance policy covering the structure and contents of the premises. The Board acts as its own insurer in respect of the structure and content of controlled schools.

The Board's PUBLIC LIABILITY INSURANCE cover has been extended to include among others, Governors, committees, parents, parent teacher associations.

There are occasions when injury may occur where there is no legal redress, for example, a sporting accident. Governors might consider it prudent to arrange an insurance policy to cover such risks or, alternatively, request parents to arrange appropriate cover for their own children if they believe it is desirable.

Specific insurance cover will be required for particular purposes, for example, school owned mini-buses, school holiday trips, and loss or misappropriation of private school funds.

## **GOVERNOR LIABILITY**

**Governors will not incur any personal liability in respect of any action taken in good faith in the exercise of their delegated powers under the scheme for financial delegation.**

There are no hard and fast rules on what constitutes good faith, but broadly speaking it may be regarded as any act which was undertaken honestly and with no ulterior motive in the light of the information available at the time.

The common law duties of Principals and other school employees are in substance unchanged by Local Management of Schools (LMS). They will be individually liable for any negligent acts; but if they have acted in the course of their employment, their employer will also be liable.

Governors are advised if they have any doubts or queries to seek advice and guidance from the Board/CCMS.

## **SECTION 3 GOVERNORS' MEETINGS**

Since the duties and responsibilities of Governors can only be exercised collectively at a properly convened meeting of the Board of Governors it is important that you make every effort to attend meetings. It is only by regular attendance that you can keep yourself fully informed of what is happening in the school and make an effective contribution to its management.

**Governors will meet not less than once in each school term.** However most Boards of Governors will need to meet more often than this. In order to accommodate Governors' other commitments, the chairman and secretary should plan such meetings as far in advance as possible and vary starting times if appropriate. Much time and effort can also be saved by appropriate use of sub-committees.

**A meeting cannot take place unless a quorum (ie enough of the members to enable the Board legally to conduct business) is present. Details will be found in the Scheme of Management.**

**You must be given 7 days advance written notice of the time and place of the meeting.**

At the first meeting of a new Board of Governors the voting members will elect a chairperson and vice-chairperson and appoint a secretary.

### **The Chairperson (or in his/her absence, the vice-chairperson)**

The Chairperson is responsible for the overall conduct of the meeting aiming to ensure that its business is carried out in an effective and efficient manner and that all views are heard.

The Chairperson and secretary should agree the date, time, place and the agenda of the meeting.

The Chairperson has, in certain prescribed circumstances, the authority to act on behalf of the Board of Governors if urgent matters arise between meetings. A report will be given on these actions under "Chairperson's Business" at the next meeting of the Board of Governors. Regular liaison with the Principal is an essential part of the job.

Where there is an equal division of votes on an issue the Chairperson may chose to exercise a second or casting vote.

### **The Secretary**

The Secretary will:

- arrange the date of the meeting (in consultation with the chairperson);
- prepare the agenda (in consultation with chairperson);
- ensure that the notice of the meeting, agenda and any relevant papers are received in time by members;
- minute the meeting;
- receive correspondence and (on instruction of the Board of Governors) deal with it;
- prepare documentation for meetings.

## The Agenda

The agenda lists and gives the order of business and enables members to prepare in advance for the meeting. It ensures that business is dealt with in an efficient and structured manner.

The chairperson and the secretary should agree on the agenda items. These should be listed in order of priority according to the importance and/or urgency of the subject matter.

Members may propose agenda items. The chairperson will rule if they are within the responsibilities of the Board of Governors.

**Each member of the Board of Governors should be sent minutes of the previous meeting and notice of the agenda for the next meeting seven full days in advance.**

Every agenda should include:

**Apologies**  
**Minutes of last meeting**  
**Matters arising**  
**Correspondence**  
**Chairperson's business**  
**Principal's report**  
**List of separate items of business**  
**Any other notified business**  
**Confidentiality**

## Conducting The Meeting

The Chairperson should:

- establish that there is a quorum;
- ask for apologies which the secretary should record;
- ask that the minutes of the previous meeting be read (if they have not been previously circulated). If the members agree that they are true and accurate they should be signed by the chairperson;
- ask (if necessary) the secretary to note any corrections for inclusion in the minutes of the current meeting;
- identify (or ask members to identify) any matters arising from the minutes which are not listed on the agenda. These matters should be dealt with at this point.

## Minutes

Minutes should be word processed or typewritten. The decision as to whether minutes should be circulated is one for individual Boards of Governors. (Circulation of minutes enables members who may have missed a meeting to be kept fully informed).

Minutes are draft minutes until ratified at the next meeting and signed by the Chairperson. At this stage they become the official record of the meeting.

**All minutes** should be forwarded to the Board within 14 days after the meeting. In the case of Catholic Maintained schools an **additional** copy should also be sent to the Diocesan Office within 14 days.

Minutes should give:

- **the date, time and place of meeting;**
- **the names of members present;**
- **a list of apologies;**
- **the names of those in attendance (eg Education and Library Board Officers). Their time of entry and leaving the meeting should be noted.**
- **the time of closure of the meeting.**

Minutes should be as brief as is compatible with conveying the necessary information. They should be:

- a record of decisions taken;
- a summary of discussions and significant views expressed;
- a record of what actions are to be taken and by whom.

It is good practice for the minutes of Boards of Governors to be numbered consecutively for record purposes.

### **Correspondence**

**Not all correspondence must be read.** Routine items and circulars may be recorded in a list in the minutes. **Circulars requiring detailed consideration should be separate agenda items (if received in time)** or alternatively they may be tabled at the meeting.

### **Principal's Report**

This should contain among other things:

- **an update on school matters;**
- **information which has been requested by Board of Governors;**
- **financial report;**
- **information on equipment and maintenance particularly where Health and Safety is involved.**

There should also be an annual written Principal's Report.

### **Main Items**

These should be taken in order.

The chairperson should allow a reasonable time for discussion.

Where a decision has to be made:-

- **chairperson seeks a proposer and seconder of the motion;**
- **amendments requested - which must be proposed and seconded before acceptance;**

- amendment put to meeting;
- if accepted it becomes the substantive motion;
- if rejected the original motion is voted on.

### **Any Other Notified Business**

Any items which do not appear on the agenda and which you feel should be raised, need be given to the chairperson a number of days in advance of the meeting.

### **Closure**

When the meeting is declared closed the time should be recorded in the minutes.

### **Confidentiality**

**A moral duty of confidentiality is placed on Governors. It would be prudent for Boards of Governors to reach an agreed position as to which items are confidential and for this agreement to be rigorously adhered to by all members.**

### **In-committee**

Sometimes business may arise that is of such a nature that members consider it should be dealt with in a confidential manner. In such a case the Governors will agree to consider the matter 'in committee'. The secretary makes a separate record of the proceedings. This record is not circulated or accessible to any person without the permission of the Board of Governors.

### **Sub-Committees**

To expedite business the Board of Governors may delegate some duties to a sub-committee which will report back to the Board. The Scheme of Management will give guidance on matters which may properly be delegated to sub-committees to be ratified by the Board of Governors.

### **Withdrawal From The Meeting**

Any Governor who has a family relationship with a candidate for employment or who has a pecuniary or family interest in any matter being considered should withdraw from the meeting and this withdrawal should be noted in the minutes. Refer to the Scheme of Management for further guidance especially in relation to Principals and teacher Governors.

Family relationships for the purposes of this paragraph are set out in the Scheme of Management.

Any Governor who has a family relationship with an existing member of staff should inform fellow Governors and have the fact recorded in the minutes.

It is essential, that all members familiarise themselves with the appropriate Articles within the Scheme of Management.

## **SECTION 4 THE ROLE OF THE PRINCIPAL**

The role of the Principal is central to the work of the Governors. It can be best viewed as a **PARTNERSHIP**, with Principal and Governors working closely and harmoniously together.

**While the Governors have a general responsibility for the effective management of the school they will not be required to take detailed decisions about the day-to-day running of the school - that is the role of the Principal.**

The duties and responsibilities of the Principal are set out in detail in **the Terms and Conditions of Employment of Principals**. Nevertheless it would be useful for the purpose of role clarification to group and summarise the main functions of the Principal under specific headings.

### **The Principal as a Governor**

Although the Principal is a Governor and can participate fully in the business of the meeting he/she has no vote.

- the Principal is the executive Governor and he/she has the duty of seeing that the decisions of the Board of Governors are translated into action;
- the Principal will advise the Governors on educational issues;
- the Principal will submit to the Governors a written Annual Report on the achievements and progress of the school;
- the Principal will submit regular reports (verbal or written) to the Governors.

### **The Principal as Manager of the Curriculum**

The Principal is in charge of the day-to-day management of the school and is responsible for the delivery of the curriculum policy. He/she will keep the Governors fully informed about:

- policies of the school;
- the organisation of the school;
- the progress of the school;
- the management of the school.

While the Governors will be responsible, in consultation with the Principal, for agreeing the school's Curriculum Policy, it will be the Principal's responsibility to ensure that it is implemented and to determine the methods and organisation used to deliver it.

The Principal should make sure that the Governors are aware of the educational philosophy behind the methods used and should be willing to explain them if asked to do so.

### **The Principal as Manager of the Budget**

Boards of Governors are responsible for their own budgets. They must determine how the budget will be allocated for specific purposes. The responsibility for the administration and implementation of the budget plan is normally delegated to the Principal who will be responsible for the day-to-day decisions on spending and on the monitoring of expenditure. The Board of Governors has responsibility to

ensure that the school budget is not exceeded. The Principal must ensure that full financial records are kept in relation to **all** school funds and that these records are presented to the Board of Governors.

The Board of Governors' central aim will be to match expenditure with the delivery of the school's curriculum. This will necessitate the Principal in consultation with the Board of Governors, specifying in the School Development Plan:

- the school's curriculum objectives;
- how it proposes to achieve these;
- the resources required.

This plan will then be costed and will include the four cost elements:

- employee costs;
- premises costs;
- school requisites;
- transport costs and other costs.

These are detailed in the Finance Section.

The total estimated costs will then be matched against the school's budget. If there is an overspend then priorities will have to be identified and the plan revised so that expenditure falls within the limit of the budget.

The Principal will be responsible for seeing that this plan is implemented and will monitor spending on a continuous basis.

### **The Principal as Human Resource Manager**

Governors are responsible for ensuring that the school has the necessary resources to deliver the curriculum. The most important and costly resource is that of staff, both teaching and non-teaching. It is essential that the school has sufficient teachers with the appropriate qualifications to deliver the statutory curriculum.

The Principal will advise Governors on:

- current staffing requirements;
- current deficiencies, if any;
- anticipated staffing trends;
- the promotion of existing staff;
- the suitability of applicants for vacancies.

The deployment of all staff, teaching and non-teaching, is a matter for the Principal.

## **The Principal as Manager of the Building**

The Principal is responsible for ensuring that the general physical condition of the school is satisfactory.

In carrying out this responsibility the Principal should:

- keep the Governors aware of the state of the building and grounds;
- enlist their support in requesting maintenance and improvements.

This information may be given to Governors:

- in oral reports at meetings;
- at special emergency meetings;
- in the Principal's Annual Report;
- at the Governors inspection of premises (at least yearly).

## SECTION 5 SCHOOL MANAGEMENT AND PLANNING

Governors have a general responsibility for the effective management of the school, acting within the framework set by the legislation and the policies of the employing authority. It does not mean that they are expected to take detailed decisions about the day-to-day running of the school - **that is the role of the Principal.**

Each school will have to prepare a **School Development Plan**, mapping over a three year period what the school hopes to achieve. Priorities will have to be identified and planned in detail for Year 1. Priorities for years 2 and 3 should be in outline.

The School Development Plan will provide a co-ordinated approach to all aspects of planning, including **curriculum and assessment, teaching, management and organisation, finance, resources, use of premises and staff training.**

### SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

In formulating a School Development Plan the following steps might well be taken:

- "taking stock" of where the school is now - identifying the school's strengths and weaknesses;
- setting objectives for the school - what the school needs to do and wants to do;
- planning how to achieve these objectives - what course of action is to be taken;
- setting a matching budget - costing the proposals to be incorporated into the school's financial plan;
- seeing that the plan is carried out - monitor implementation and report progress;
- adjusting the plan as necessary.

### School Financial Plans

The purpose of LMS is to delegate financial control to the school so that it can determine how resources are to be employed to meet the children's needs. The Principal has executive authority for day to day school management including financial matters, however it is the Board of Governors who has the final responsibility for the school's management including the budget.

Setting aims and objectives have become common practice in most areas of management and schools are no exception. The school is encouraged to develop plans for a minimum of three years in order to bring a systematic approach to the process of forward planning. While the main emphasis is on the curriculum and staffing, most plans do have a financial implication and it is important that the school's present and future finances are put to the optimum use. The main advantages of having a school development plan which embraces the budget are:

- to take LMS budgeting and monitoring beyond annual budgets and monthly reports;
- to assist the school in planning expenditure beyond the current financial year
- to make the best use of potential savings and to flag potential deficiencies;

- to ensure that expenditure is planned, controlled and reviewed;
- to advocate regular monitoring and to highlight anomalies and errors;
- to avoid the accumulation of uncommitted resources.

The financial plan should reflect, in monetary terms, the school's aims and objectives within the resources available over the same three year period as the development plan. The biggest pressure on any school budget is the staffing expenditure and it is wrong to think that just because an item of expenditure is inescapable that it is not worth monitoring. The financial plan must identify for each year the proposed expenditure for:

- inescapable costs
- variable costs;
- planned expenditure (ie earmarked expenditure).

**All school development and financial plans should be evaluated on a regular basis.** The evaluation can determine if the original aims and objectives are being met and establish the necessary corrective action. The financial plan needs to be monitored regularly to ensure that:

- sufficient resources exist to meet expenditure;
- any carry over is identified and planned.

The planning process begins by identifying what should be charged to the school and continues via the monitoring of the Budget and Expenditure Reports issued by the LMS unit to ensure that the estimates match the expenditure. The onus is on the Board of Governors and Principal to ensure that the financial plan is carried out and that these reports are closely monitored to ensure that all expenditure does not get out of line as this could create severe budgetary pressures.

As a school becomes experienced at Local Management, the Governors and Principal may develop a more ambitious plan which will specify in detail how resources will be best used to increase the range of opportunities and the quality of education for all pupils.

## **THE GOVERNORS' ANNUAL REPORT**

The Governors must prepare and issue an Annual Report to parents and, after two weeks of the report being issued, hold a Parents' Meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to allow the report to be discussed and to consider any other relevant issues.

The Annual Report should contain a summary of the steps it has taken to carry out its responsibilities during the period since its last report.

The Report should also include:

- the date, time, and place of the Annual Parents' Meeting, its agenda;
- a brief description of the purpose of the meeting;
- the names of Governors and their categories;
- the date of the end of each Governor's term of office;
- the name of the Chairperson and Secretary;
- information about the next election of parents to the Board;
- a financial statement;

- steps taken by the Board of Governors to develop or strengthen community links and in particular, to promote the objectives of Education for Mutual Understanding;
- information relating to:-
  - the curriculum of the school;
  - the education provision made by the school and any syllabuses followed;
  - the educational achievements of pupils at the school (not individuals).
  - Code of Practice

**Copies of this report must be sent to the parents of all registered pupils at the school.**

### **THE ANNUAL PARENTS' MEETING**

Once a year the Governors of every school must hold a meeting for parents so that they can discuss the Annual Report and any other matters concerned with the Governors work at the school.

Parents/Guardians of all registered pupils at the school **must** be invited to the meeting.

The Governors may, if they choose, invite other people to attend, including assistant teachers at the school. The Principal will, of course, attend in his/her role as a Governor.

The meeting must provide an opportunity for parents to discuss with the Governors and the Principal what has been happening in the school over the last year. In general this will mean discussion of the Governors' Annual Report to parents.

Parents must be given the opportunity to raise matters concerning the way the Board of Governors, the Principal, DE and the ELB/CCMS have carried out their responsibilities for the school.

The Chairperson should not permit any discussion of individuals or of issues which could identify individuals. If a parent has an individual grievance the Chairperson should direct how such a complaint may be dealt with.

## **SECTION 6 DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN RELATION TO FINANCE**

Practically everything that goes on in school involves decisions about finance or how resources are to be used. Teachers, books, equipment and buildings all cost money. The amount of money available to each school, is calculated on the basis of an objective formula set out in the Board Scheme for the Local Management of Schools. This financial allocation is referred to as the **school budget share**.

### **SCHOOL BUDGETS**

All schools (except special schools) have been funded on the basis of a formula determined by the Board and approved by the Department of Education.

This means that the South Eastern Education and Library Board allocates funds to each school on the basis of a common formula which is set out in the approved LMS scheme.

The most important element in this formula is the number of pupils attending the school. The sum allocated to the school by this element is calculated on the basis of **Age Weighted Pupil Units (AWPU)**.

Pupil numbers, however will not be the only element in determining the amount of money allocated to a school. The particular circumstances of a school may give rise to additional costs. Additional funding may be provided for:

- children with special educational needs;
- curriculum support for small schools;
- social deprivation;
- premises costs;
- certain schools specific factors eg split site campus.

As the size of the school budget share will mainly be determined by reference to the number of pupils on roll it may be said that the budget share is "pupil driven". Pupil numbers, therefore, will obviously assume an important position when you are considering the future development of the school.

All nursery, primary, secondary and grammar schools are allocated a formula funded budget known as the **school budget share**.

Financial delegation does not mean that a sum of money will be transferred to the school's bank account, but rather that the school will make the spending decisions and payment will be made on its' behalf by the South Eastern Education and Library Board.

As a member of the Board of Governors you will be responsible for decisions involving large sums of money and you will be expected to show the same prudence in these decisions as you would in handling your own finances.

Schools with a declining enrolment may have to make savings in their budget share. In such circumstances difficult decisions perhaps involving reductions in staffing will have to be taken. In this

you will be offered help and advice from the employing authority who will outline the possible alternatives open to you. If you are to decide wisely then you must be as fully informed as possible about the issues involved.

Article 52 (6) of the Education Reform Order makes it clear that the Governors of a school will not incur any personal financial liability in respect of any action taken in good faith in the exercise or purported exercise of their delegated powers.

The list below which is not exhaustive, gives some idea of the range and scope of the activities for which Governors will assume financial responsibility within the school's budget share.

- |       |                            |   |
|-------|----------------------------|---|
| (i)   | <b>Employee Costs</b> -    | salaries of teaching and non-teaching staff.<br>employers' superannuation and national insurance costs.<br>modern language assistants.<br>short term substitute/supply teacher costs.<br>recruitment costs. |
| (ii)  | <b>Premises Cost</b> -     | internal repairs and maintenance.<br>cleaning and decorating.<br>grounds maintenance.<br>water charges.<br>energy. (fuel and light)<br>use of premises.   |
| (iii) | <b>School Requisites</b> - | all classroom materials.<br>furniture.<br>office equipment.<br>telephone and postage.<br>examination fees.  |
| (iv)  | <b>Transport</b> -         | educational visits.<br>(other than home to school).   |

Other costs including home to school transport, the Psychology Service, certain capital expenditure, long term substitution costs, advisory and support services will be funded centrally by the Education and Library Board.

The delegated budget scheme allows for **Virement**. This means that the money allocated by the Governors to specific headings can at a later date be transferred to other headings.

Delegation does not mean, however, that you as a Governors have been given a completely free hand in spending decision. You will be bound by the same regulations that have applied to the Education and Library Board on such matters as:

- the efficient spending of public money
- European Community regulations
- Health and Safety regulations

Advice is available from the Board on these matters and Governors should always be careful that their decisions are consistent with existing regulations and schemes.

## **Self Generated Income**

In connection with any monies accruing from the above or other similar activities:

### **The Principal is responsible for ensuring that:-**

- all private (ie raised by school) funds are under the control of persons at the school;
- all such funds have been approved by the Board of Governors;
- financial records are accurately kept and that arrangements concerning them are regularly reviewed;
- each fund is properly audited in line with the advice given by the employing authority;
- private school funds and ELB funds are kept rigorously apart;
- if one person is in charge of several private funds these are always kept clearly apart;
- an annual report on the state of the school funds is presented to the Board of Governors.

### **The Board of Governors is responsible for:**

- receiving details of the annual statement of accounts;
- making sure that any income generating activities are authorised by it;
- ensuring that there is a secure and efficient system for the custody and control of such funds;
- report to parents in the Annual Report on how such funds are used.

## **SECTION 7 SCHOOL STAFF**

Every school has a Principal and a complement of teaching and non-teaching staff. In special schools staffing levels are determined by the ELB but in others the Governors decide the numbers of staff.

The Boards of Governors of schools are the employers of staff and are accountable under employment law for the way in which they exercise their staffing powers under local management. It is essential therefore that they conform with the relevant employment legislation, the recommended advice and guidance from the Board and within the powers delegated to them.

### **THE APPOINTMENT OF STAFF**

#### **TEACHING STAFF**

One of the most important tasks that a Board of Governors will be required to undertake is the appointment of teachers. The success of any school is largely dependent upon the quality, professionalism and expertise of its teaching staff. Since they are the most valuable and expensive resource in any school, it is vitally important that when a vacancy occurs the best person is selected for the job.

Boards of Governors must proceed in accordance with the Scheme for the Appointment of Teaching Staff drawn up by their Employing Authority.

#### **Appointment Of Principals And Vice-Principals**

The Board of Governors must proceed in accordance with their employing authority's Scheme drawn up under Article 143 or 153 of the 1989 Order.

#### **Management Allowances and Special Needs Allowances**

The recommended procedures for promotions are essentially the same as those for initial teaching appointments. In the case of internal promotions based on duties and responsibilities Management Allowances and Special Needs Allowances should be advertised among the staff.

#### **Salary Policy**

Boards of Governors are required to have a salary policy in place for all staff. This policy must be reviewed annually by the Board of Governors. Employing authorities issue clear guidance on the procedures to be followed. Salary decisions have a significant effect on the structure of the school and on school finance. The Principal's, and Vice-Principal's salary can only be raised by one point each year after performance targets have been met.

## **NON-TEACHING STAFF**

In controlled and maintained schools appointments of non-teaching staff are made by the Board of Governors and ratified by the Board. Appointments must be made in accordance with the procedures outlined by the Board.

## **GRIEVANCE AND DISCIPLINE PROCEDURES**

The handling of grievance and disciplinary issues is complex and Governors should seek advice from the Board/CCMS as appropriate.

Both grievance and discipline procedures are aimed at resolving problems. Grievance arises where a member of staff feels dissatisfied, for example, with working conditions or considers that he or she has been a victim of harsh or unfair treatment.

Neither the grievance nor the disciplinary procedures should be conceived as negative activities, since in many cases the outcome will be a significant improvement which will be of benefit both to the member of staff concerned and the school.

The Board of Governors is responsible for making known to all members of staff the rules and procedures of both their grievance and disciplinary procedures.

## **HARRASSMENT**

Harrassment or bullying of staff can constitute a threat to a member of staff's health, safety and welfare. A complaint of this nature is invariably sensitive and complex to deal with. Governors should seek advice from the Board/CCMS.

## **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

The Board has produced an Equal Opportunities Policy Statement and it is recommended that the Governors adopt this Policy for the school. It should be the policy of the school that all eligible persons will have equal opportunity for employment and advancement in the school irrespective of perceived religious belief, political opinion, gender, disability or race.

## **REDUNDANCIES**

When the possibility of a redundancy becomes apparent, whether teaching or non teaching, it is essential that the correct procedures are followed.

Boards of Governors of schools with fully delegated budgets have responsibility for decisions on redundancies. Governors should carefully study the Redundancy Scheme before proceeding in this direction and should seek guidance from the Board/CCMS.

## **PREMATURE RETIREMENT OF TEACHERS**

Boards of Governors of schools with fully delegated budgets have responsibility for decisions on premature retirement within the terms of the Premature Retirement Scheme. Further details may be obtained from SEELB/CCMS.

It should be clearly understood that the Premature Retirement Scheme is a management tool and is not a mechanism for enabling teachers who wish to retire early, to do so. Governors should carefully study the Premature Retirement Scheme before proceeding in this direction and should seek guidance from the Board/CCMS as necessary. This is particularly important in schools with fully delegated budgets since the Board **may with good reason offset certain costs against the school budget share**. The Board will not approve the reemployment of teachers who retire under the terms of this Scheme.

## **STAFF DEVELOPMENT**

The staff in a school is its most valuable asset. A school's success depends mainly on the quality of its staff (both teaching and non-teaching). Staff can be helped to achieve their full potential if they are given opportunities and encouragement to participate in training and other developmental activities which are aimed at :

- improving their effectiveness;
- broadening their experience;
- keeping them up to date;
- preparing them for different or increased responsibilities;
- providing job satisfaction and improving morale.

A well trained and motivated staff will improve the overall performance of the school and enhance its educational provision. It is essential, therefore, that a school have a **Staff Development Policy** which incorporates an in-service training and induction programme.

Every school should regard the continued training of its teaching and non-teaching staff as an essential part of its task for which all members of staff share responsibility. It is recommended that the professional, advisory and support services of the Board be consulted when such a training programme is being planned.

## **STAFF DEVELOPMENT DAYS**

Since 1987, under the Teachers' Pay and Conditions Regulations, schools can use 5 days a year exclusively for staff development. These days may be used in a variety of ways for example, reviewing curriculum, school policies, organising school based workshops etc. Pupils do not attend schools on these days.

## **TEACHERS' STAFF DEVELOPMENT AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT**

Teacher performance management should be viewed as an integral part of a staff development programme and is designed to help improve the individual performance of teachers.

## SECTION 8 GOVERNORS AND THE CURRICULUM

### CURRICULUM AIMS

The Education Reform (NI) Order 1989 requires schools to provide a **balanced and broadly based curriculum** which aims to:

- promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, intellectual and physical development of pupils and thereby society;
- prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

The Order requires that **all** elements of the curriculum are applied to **all** pupils. Schools will not be free to pick and choose, or decide to modify the requirements for some pupils, except in exceptional circumstances.

As a Board of Governors you must ensure that the written **Curriculum Policy** of the school includes a statement that all elements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum **will** be delivered to **all** pupils.

The curriculum is common to all pupils in Northern Ireland. This means that all primary schools offer the same programmes of study and that both secondary and grammar schools have the same curriculum. You as a Governor will know what is to be taught in your school.

### KEY STAGES

The definition of compulsory school age has been set so that **all** pupils will have **twelve full years in school** divided into 4 Key Stages as set out below.

Key Stage	Description	Pupil Age (Years)
1	Year 1	5
	Year 2	6
	Year 3	7
	Year 4	8
2	Year 5	9
	Year 6	10
	Year 7	11
3	Year 8	12
	Year 9	13
	Year 10	14
4	Year 11	15
	Year 12	16

The Elements of the Northern Ireland Curriculum are:

- 6 Areas of Study
- 6 Educational Themes
- Religious Education (RE)

The table below shows the 6 areas of study and the compulsory subjects.

<b>COMPULSORY SUBJECTS IN THE NORTHERN IRELAND CURRICULUM</b>			
<b>AREAS OF STUDY</b>	<b>PRIMARY SCHOOLS</b> Yrs 1-7 P1-7	<b>POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS</b> Yrs 8-10 (Forms 1-3)	<b>POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS</b> Yrs 11-12 (Forms 4&5)
<b>ENGLISH</b>	<b>ENGLISH</b>	<b>ENGLISH</b>	<b>ENGLISH</b>
<b>MATHEMATICS</b>	<b>MATHEMATICS</b>	<b>MATHEMATICS</b>	<b>MATHEMATICS</b>
<b>SCIENCE &amp; TECHNOLOGY</b>	<b>SCIENCE</b> Technology & Design	<b>SCIENCE</b> <b>TECHNOLOGY &amp; DESIGN</b>	<b>SCIENCE</b> Technology & Design
<b>THE ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIETY</b>	History Geography	<b>History</b> <b>Geography</b>	<b>History</b> <b>Geography</b>
<b>CREATIVE AND EXPRESSIVE STUDIES</b>	Art & Design Music Physical Education	Art & Design Music Physical Education	Art & Design or Music or Drama Physical Education
<b>LANGUAGE STUDIES</b>	<b>IRISH</b> (in Irish speaking schools only)	<b>FRENCH OR GERMAN OR ITALIAN OR SPANISH OR IRISH</b>	<b>FRENCH OR GERMAN OR ITALIAN OR SPANISH OR IRISH</b>

As well as the compulsory subjects in the post primary curriculum may also include contributory subjects for instance:-

English Literature  
 Craft, Design and Technology  
 Home Economics  
 Classics  
 Road Traffic Studies  
 Media Studies

Community Studies  
 Business Studies  
 Political Studies  
 Biology  
 Chemistry  
 Physics

The Northern Ireland Curriculum requires six educational themes to be included. These themes are not additional subjects and are meant to be delivered through the teaching of other subjects across the curriculum.

The educational themes are:-

- 1 Education for Mutual Understanding (EMU)
- 2 Cultural Heritage
- 3 Health Education
- 4 Information Technology
- 5 Economic Awareness
- 6 Careers Information

Primary schools are not required to include Economic Awareness and Careers Information. Governors have a specific responsibility to report on the work done on Education for Mutual Understanding in the Annual Report (Article 125(2)(h) Education Reform Order 1989).

Schools may also provide time-tabled provision for such areas as Personal and Social Education as part of its pastoral care provision. A school may also wish to build into its curriculum for example a European or Citizenship dimension.

## ASSESSMENT

Assessment is an integral part of the Northern Ireland Curriculum. Teachers have always monitored, assessed and recorded pupils' achievements and progress and will continue to do so. Under the new legislation formal assessment will have to be carried out at, or near the end of each Key Stage, that is, at ages 8, 11, 14 and 16. This will show what pupils actually **know, understand and can do** at each stage.

The starting point for the Assessment System will be the **Attainment Targets** for each subject. Each attainment target will have 10 levels of attainment. On average each level represents two years of progress.

The majority of pupils, on completion of Key Stage 1 at 8 years of age will have covered levels 1 - 3, Key Stage 2 at 11 covers levels 3 - 5, Key Stage 3 at 14 covers levels 4 - 7 and Key Stage 4 at 16 covers levels 5 - 8. There is no requirement for pupils to have attained a prescribed level by a particular age.

To comply with the law, parents must be given information about their own child's progress. They will not be given information about the results of any other child.

The overall results for pupils at ages 8, 11, 14 and 16 must be made known to the Governors who will include it in their Annual Report.

## **REPORTING INDIVIDUAL PUPIL ACHIEVEMENT**

### **(i) Annual Report**

The 1991 regulations require all grant aided schools, except nursery schools, to give parents a written annual report on their child's progress and achievements. This report should contain brief particulars of the child's achievements in all subjects and school activities and in those years when the pupil has been formally assessed, ie the end of each Key Stage, his/her assessment results.

### **(ii) Records of Achievement**

At the completion of both the primary and post primary stage of education schools are required to issue Records of Achievements. These are issued to the parents of children leaving primary school at the end of Key Stage 2 and provided to pupils on leaving post primary schools. The contents of the Record of Achievements are based on a variety of records and aim to provide, in a positive way, a concise yet comprehensive picture of the pupil in terms not only of academic ability but also of his or her talents, skills and interests. It includes details of the pupils formal assessment results.

## **SECTION 9 PUPILS AND THEIR PARENTS**

**Governors are charged with duties in four areas relating to pupils:**

- Admissions;
- Discipline;
- Entry for Examinations;
- Special Educational Needs.

In addition, Governors now have particular responsibilities in relation to Child Protection.

### **Admissions**

The legislation lays a duty on Boards of Governors to take account of parental preference in the choice of schools.

There are some restrictions on this exercise of parental preference ie:

- if the year group in the school has reached its admissions number;  
or
- if the school is a grammar school and if granting the preference would be detrimental to the educational interests of the child.

When more pupils apply for places than are available under the school's admissions number the places should be allocated using the school's admissions criteria.

### **Admissions Criteria**

It is the duty of the Board of Governors to draw up the school's admissions criteria. Before doing so, however, Governors must consider the advice which has been given by the ELB/CCMS on the matter.

### **Limits on Admission**

Each school will be given two numbers by DE:

- the enrolment number;
- the admissions number.

The enrolment number refers to the total number of pupils at the school and the main determinant of this number is the accommodation available. From this number is calculated the admissions number for each year and the Board of Governors should ensure that the yearly admissions should not exceed the number who may be admitted. If the number of prospective entrants exceeds the admissions number the Governors must apply the school's admissions criteria to determine which of the applicants will be given places.

After having considered the views of the ELB/CCMS on the matter, Governors may wish to make application to the Department of Education for a variation in either the enrolment number or the admissions number. Both numbers are determined by the Department of Education.

Boards of Governors must ensure that parents are aware of the admission arrangements for their school and so either they or the ELB must publish each year:

- the school's enrolment number;
- the school's admissions number for that year;
- the functions of the Board of Governors and Principal in relation to admissions;
- the criteria for admission.

## Discipline

the Education Reform Order (Northern Ireland) 1989 requires Governors to:-

***"..... ensure that policies designed to promote good behaviour and discipline .... are pursued at the school"***

*and*

***to make and review a statement of general principles regarding pastoral care and discipline.***

While Governors should be familiar with the school's discipline policy and procedures it is important to remember that it is the Principal of the school who is in charge of its day-to-day management. He/she is the person who should first be informed of all complaints and problems, and who should attempt to resolve them. The Governors play a useful role in supporting the Principal in resolving complaints and helping him/her to overcome problems.

(Add ref to Scheme for Suspension and Expulsions)

## Child Protection

Detailed information and guidance for all schools is set out in the DENI Circular of March 1999 'Pastoral Care in Schools CHILD PROTECTION'.

Governors must ensure that within the school's pastoral care policy there is maintained a child protection policy statement which reflects both the school's legal duties and its pastoral responsibilities.

There should be clear procedures in place to be followed where the school has been alerted to possible abuse (including bullying), drawing on guidelines contained in the circular and, as appropriate, on that provided by the Area Child Protection Committee the Education and Library Boards and CCMS.

All schools should maintain a summary of their child protection arrangements within their pastoral care policy, including arrangements for how parents can make known to the school any concerns they may have about their child's safety; the summary should be circulated to parents at least once every two years.

Every school should designate a teacher to have specific responsibility for child protection matters and all staff, teaching and non-teaching, should know who this is: a second teacher should also be named to assume the responsibilities of the designated teacher in case of absence. These staff should be known by members of the Board of Governors.

The school must also maintain a Record of Child Abuse Complaints, which should be made available to the Board of Governors at least annually. The Education and Training Inspectorate will ask to see the Record during inspections.

### **Entry for Examinations**

*It is the duty of the Board of Governors to:-*

Ensure that pupils are entered at the appropriate times for approved examinations for which they are being prepared, unless there are educational reasons for not doing so or where the parents request in writing that they should not enter a child.

### **Special Educational Needs**

*It is the duty of the Board of Governors to:*

- ensure that a policy in relation to the provision of education for pupils with special educational needs is determined, kept under review and implemented;
- endeavour to ensure that the necessary special educational provision is made for those pupils;
- ensure that the needs of those pupils are made known to all who are likely to teach him/her;
- ensure that the teachers in the school know the importance of identifying and providing for those pupils;
- ensure that those pupils join in the activities of the school with other pupils;
- allocate special educational needs funding;
- report annually to parents on the school policy for pupils with special educational needs with regard to admission arrangements, equality of treatment, and access to facilities.

## **SECTION 10                      FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **1.        If I have no educational experience what contribution can I make?**

You have not been appointed or elected as an education expert, but as a trusted lay person. There will be some questions requiring expertise and here the Principal will advise. In most cases a common sense approach is sufficient. There will be times when your experience of life in the world beyond school will be very valuable and appreciated.

### **2.        How can I get to know the school?**

You will be given much information about the school by the Principal in oral and written reports to the Governors. As well as this the discussion of issues at meetings will inform you very quickly. It is useful if new Governors are given a tour of the school so that they understand the physical layout of the building and you will make an annual tour of inspection of the premises.

The best way to know a school is to see it in action and you should take up every invitation to school functions. If you are available, you may wish to discuss with the Principal the possibility of making a visit to the school during a normal working day.

### **3.        May I drop into the school to check on how things are going?**

This is the function of the Education and training Inspectorate and not the Board of Governors. If you do call in unexpectedly the Principal will probably make himself/herself available for a discussion, but do remember that he/she has many other duties and an appointment would be helpful.

### **4.        Am I adequately insured?**

The world of insurance and litigation is a very complex one, but the advice received by the ELB's suggests that where Governors act in good faith they will not be personally liable.

### **5.        How often should our Board of Governors meet?**

**The Scheme of Management** requires you to meet at least once in each term. This is the minimum requirement and experience has shown that with the many responsibilities of Governors this number of meetings is not sufficient. It might be useful to allocate at least two occasions in each term for meetings, so that busy people can enter these in their diaries.

If you consider that a further meeting is needed, a third of the Board can requisition a meeting. Where the Board of Governors as a whole does not wish to meet too frequently, sub-committees can do certain aspects of the work.

### **6.        What can the Board of Governors do about an unsatisfactory teacher?**

A procedure has been agreed between teachers' representatives and employers. The Principal has a copy of the procedure and should be consulted.

**7. Why have I a vote when the Principal has none?**

The Principal is a non-voting member of the Board of Governors. In all crucial matters he/she can give advice to the Governors, and it would be odd if this advice were not taken.

The Principal of a maintained school does have a vote if he/she is a member of the appointment's panel.

**8. Why should teachers as professionals have to submit to the jurisdiction of outsiders?**

Our type of society is governed by laymen. The Minister of Health is not a doctor, and the Minister of Defence is not a soldier: verdicts in court are given by juries and not judges. In the world of business, companies are run by boards of directors, most of whom know little about the processes carried out in their plants.

We do not question an architect's choice of materials, but we do tell him/her if we want to have a bathroom or a kitchen.

In a school everyone has a place and Governors should not interfere in the professional role of the teachers. They should, however, ensure that the school is aware of the desires and needs of the community it serves and that it attempts to meet these needs. Where the relationship is right, a school will operate on the basis of a clear agreement on its objectives between Governors, staff and the whole school community.

**9. If our funds are short can we levy any charges on the pupils?**

Ours is a free educational system and no charge can be made for any activity carried out wholly or mainly in school hours except instrumental tuition in music.

Parents can make a contribution to school funds but this must be entirely voluntary and no child may be disadvantaged because a parent may choose not to contribute. Charges may not be made for educational visits that are essential for the delivery of the curriculum except for board and lodging. Even here, board and lodging charges cannot be imposed if the parents are in receipt of income support or family credit.

Transport during school hours must be free, as must ingredients and materials used in practical subjects unless the parents have previously indicated a desire to own the finished article.

The only charges that can be made are for optional extra provision (ie; where the pupil will not be disadvantaged by not participating) which are carried out mainly outside school hours.

**10. How do we decide the salaries of the Principal, vice Principal and assistant teachers?**

Each Board of Governors must have a Salary Policy which is reviewed annually. It involves providing information about the school's staffing structure and the intentions of the Governors as to increases for particular duties.

The information on which Governors base this policy is issued regularly by the Employing Authorities.

## APPENDIX

### Department of Education for Northern Ireland (DE)

The Secretary  
Rathgael House  
Balloo Road  
BANGOR BT19 7PR  
**(028) 9127 9279**  
[www.deni.gov.uk](http://www.deni.gov.uk)

### Council for Catholic Maintained Schools (CCMS)

The Chief Executive  
160 High Street  
HOLYWOOD  
Co Down BT18 9HT  
**(028) 9042 6972**

### Belfast Education and Library Board (BELB)

The Chief Executive  
40 Academy Street  
BELFAST BT1 2NQ  
**(028) 9056 4000**  
[www.belb.org.uk](http://www.belb.org.uk)

### North Eastern Education and Library Board (NEELB)

The Chief Executive  
County Hall  
182 Galgorm Road  
BALLYMENA  
Co Antrim BT42 1HN  
**(028) 2565 3333**  
[www.neelb.org.uk](http://www.neelb.org.uk)

### South Eastern Education and Library Board (SEELB)

The Chief Executive  
Grahamsbridge Road  
Dundonald  
BELFAST BT16 2HS  
**(028) 9056 6200**  
[www.seelb.org.uk](http://www.seelb.org.uk)

**Southern Education and Library Board (SELB)**

The Chief Executive  
3 Charlemont Place  
ARMAGH BT61 9AZ  
*(028) 3751 2200*  
[www.selb.org](http://www.selb.org)

**Western Education and Library Board (WELB)**

The Chief Executive  
Campsie House  
1 Hospital Road  
OMAGH  
Co Tyrone BT79 OAW  
*(028) 8241 1411*  
[www.welbni.org](http://www.welbni.org)

**Advisory Body for Irish Medium Schools**

Conhairle na Gaelsoláiochta  
216 Falls Road  
BELFAST BT12 6AH  
*(028) 9032 1475*  
[www.scoil.org](http://www.scoil.org)

**Governing Bodies Association of Voluntary Grammar Schools in NI (GBA)**

Clerk to the GBA  
c/o Belfast Royal Academy  
3 Cliftonville Road  
BELFAST BT14 6JL  
*(028) 9075 0610*

**The Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education (NICIE)**

The Chief Executive  
44 University Street  
BELFAST  
BT7 1HP  
*(028) 9023 6200*  
[www.nicie.org.uk](http://www.nicie.org.uk)

**Transferor Representatives' Council**

Honorary Secretary  
The Education Centre at St Nicholas'  
1-3 Cadogan Park  
BELFAST BT9 6HG  
*(028) 9068 2946*