



BRENTWOOD DIOCESAN EDUCATION SERVICE

“Supporting Catholic schools to provide excellent education where pupils flourish, and Christ is made known to all”.

Governor News – February 2025

This is a monthly summary to help governors keep up to date with key themes of national education policy, the local Diocesan context, research and good practice.

Get ready to celebrate the Year of Jubilee 2025!

Pope Francis has called the global Church to celebrate a Jubilee Year, Pilgrims of Hope. **During the Jubilee year the whole school community will stand in solidarity with the world’s poorest communities, sharing hope that’s rooted in love, deepening faith, and taking action to build a better world for everyone.**

CAFOD is part of a unique collaboration with CES, CSAN, and CYMFed, supporting schools as you embark on your journey. There are 2 more key dates throughout the year for schools to celebrate the Jubilee Year together. Make sure to mark them in your calendar!

Pledge day June/July 2025 – make a Jubilee Pledge, a long-term commitment to the common good and look outwards, advancing justice and harmony.
Celebration day 21 Nov 2025 – celebrating all that was achieved together during the Jubilee year and looking to the future with hope!

Education Secretary outlines plan to modernise education sector:

Education Secretary to announce plans for digital revolution in schools at the Bett Show in London at [Education Secretary outlines plans to modernise education sector](#)

Amendment to the Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Bill is published, setting out academy pay rules. The amended bill now reflects the need for academies to observe minimum pay rates and to follow the rest of the STPCD unless they have “good reason” not to [[Schools Week](#)].

[Ofsted sets out proposals for fairer education inspections and new, more detailed report cards](#) Ofsted is consulting on a new approach to inspecting education providers and the introduction of report cards. (3 Feb 25)

DFE Updated Guidance

This guidance aims to help schools and colleges understand their duties in relation to asbestos management. It provides:

- further clarity on the role of duty holders and employers
- practical information about what duty holders are required to do to manage asbestos effectively.
- an updated section on what to do if things go wrong.

[managing asbestos in your school](#)

DFE Advice - School Admission Requirements: Foreign Nationals

The CES have been asked by the DfE to circulate the information below.

‘Information schools: Foreign nationals’ rights: school admissions

The Department for Education continues to receive reports of a small number of schools refusing to admit foreign national children, including refugees and asylum seekers, or delaying admitting them whilst they seek immigration documentation.

This practice breaches admissions and equalities law.

Whilst they reside in the UK all children have a right to attend school, irrespective of their immigration status. We encourage you to review the guidance provided on [school applications for foreign national children and children resident outside England.](#)

Whilst they are in England all parents are under a statutory duty (section 7 of the Education Act 1996) to ensure their children, if they are of compulsory school age, receive a suitable full-time education.

Their parents have a right to apply for a school, and school admission authorities are under a duty to comply with that preference unless ‘prejudice’ applies, as defined in section 86 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (SSFA), and to comply with the rules about processing applications and not seeking unnecessary personal information set out within the School Admissions Code.

Also, under section 86 of the SSFA, LAs are under a duty to provide advice to all parents in their area on their preferences.

We have published information [on our website](#) that:

‘Admission authorities for state-funded schools:

- must not refuse to admit a child on the basis of their nationality or immigration status nor remove them from the roll on this basis
- must not ask to see passports or other immigration information as a condition of admission (this would be a breach of paragraphs 1.9(a) and 2.8 of the [school admissions code](#))
- [with the exception of children who are Irish nationals](#), must not actively recruit foreign national children who are still resident overseas as pupils’

We continue to receive reports of some schools refusing to admit refugees and asylum seekers and some refusing to admit children until their parents provide immigration documentation. Separately, we have found, from time-to-time, a small number of others recruiting cohorts of students, living abroad, from the EEA to study in their sixth forms (which would, since Brexit, be in contravention of those students’ visa/visitor rights and could lead to immigration enforcement action against them).

It is unlikely that every school will seek advice from the CES website before responding to applications from foreign nationals and so **we would appreciate it if you could ensure that your schools – and other admission officers - are aware of school admission authority duties in respect of applications relating to such children.”**

[Free School Meals](#)

Updated guidance for school leaders, governors, local authorities and academy trusts about managing asbestos in schools.

Updated - Guidance for schools and local authorities about providing school meals including information on free school meal eligibility.

Number of pupils going hungry in the UK is likely to rise, according to a new report from the [Joseph Rowntree Foundation](#). Challenges faced by families due to the increased cost of living could lead to a jump in the number of hungry pupils, and a decrease in learning and attainment

[Head scores victory as Google agrees to delete school reviews](#)

Tech giant says all school reviews will now be deleted because of ‘consistent off-topic and harmful’ comments.

[National Education Union \(NEU\) is polling academy staff](#) over proposed walkouts [Schools Week]

[Teachers’ pension scheme](#) confusion leaves trust CEOs of Academies in danger of losing benefits.

Chair and Vice Chair

Please note that only Foundations Governors can be appointed as the Chair or Vice Chair of a Governing Board.

Foundation Governors can only serve for 3 terms of 4 years at the same school.

Governor Development

Upcoming Training and Events - for all training and events see website <https://www.dioceseofbrentwood.net/departments/education/events/>

Governor Vacancies

Please see the list of [current vacancies](#)

Online Learning

Gift-ED

The Gift-ED library of online courses, supporting governors in their role, has been funded for 4 years but [there is now a subscription for this valuable training](#).

You will not be able to access Gift-ED courses without a subscription. **Does your school subscribe?** Completed order forms should be returned to info@anspear.com

Diocesan communications are issued solely to support you to carry out your education functions as a Catholic school leader on behalf of your diocesan bishop. They may contain sensitive information and must be respected as private communications and not be shared with any third parties.