

School & Governor Support

Supporting Schools, Headteachers and Governors to deliver excellent outcomes for children and young people

Service Offer
2018-19

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CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
<i>Letter to Schools.....</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Introduction.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Service Guarantees.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Advice.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Guidance.....</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Consultancy.....</i>	<i>8</i>
<i>Subscriber Events.....</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Additional Services.....</i>	<i>10</i>
<i>Terms and Conditions.....</i>	<i>11</i>

LETTER TO SCHOOLS

Welcome to the 2018-19 Service Offer from School and Governor Support (S&GS). This brochure, which provides an overview of the services offered to subscribing schools and academies together with the information you will need to access them, is also available at:

www.birmingham.gov.uk/SGS.

As before, our support is focused on all aspects of school leadership and management other than those relating to the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning. However, the 2018-19 Service Offer has been given a new and updated look and sets out more clearly the core elements of the service: advice, guidance and consultancy. We continually review our offer to subscribing schools and the invaluable feedback given by headteachers, governors and trustees helps ensure that the service continues to meet your developing needs in the changing educational landscape and crucially provides excellent value for money.

S&GS is a fully traded service and is, therefore, required to recover 100% of its operating costs. For the period 2017-18, 80% of the family of Birmingham schools (both maintained and academies) made the decision to subscribe to S&GS. Your continued support is much appreciated and will only enhance our ability to respond to the wide range of issues that you face on a day-to-day basis.

As a service we appreciate the pressure on school budgets and remain committed to keeping our costs as low as possible. However, in line with the recent Budget Consultation and for the first time in five years, there will be an increase of £100 in our subscription. The subscription charge for 2018-19 will therefore be **£2,050**. Maintained schools and recently converted academies will be invoiced early in the new financial year. Existing academies will be invoiced, as usual, during September 2018 in line with their own funding arrangements.

We urge you to take a really good look at our updated service offer laid out in this brochure. We also hope that you will continue to subscribe to S&GS which, you tell us, is highly valued by school leaders and governing boards.

Best wishes,

Karen Davies

Interim Head of Service

School and Governor Support

Birmingham City Council

INTRODUCTION

School and Governor Support (S&GS) is available, through Birmingham City Council (BCC), to maintained schools and academies for an annual subscription. It provides a range of services that support schools, academies and their governing boards to deal effectively with day-to-day leadership and management issues and create strong governance.

The service is for school leaders, school staff, governors, trustees and clerks.

Subscribers have access to the following core elements of S&GS:

- **advice** on routine matters relating to the day-management and governance (see page 7);
- updated **guidance** on managing key roles and responsibilities (see page 8), and
- **consultancy** in more complex and challenging situations that require a tailored solution leading to a satisfactory outcome (see page 9).

Subscribers also have access, **at no extra cost, to a number of S&GS events** organised throughout the year (see page 10).

S&GS provides **a range of additional services that are not covered by annual subscription**. They include a comprehensive programme of governor training (see page 11), as well as bespoke, personalised and specific consultancy on a wide range of topics (see pages 9 and 11). The additional services are aimed at meeting your unique requirements at any given time and can be tailored to individuals, schools/academies and even groups of schools working together. **Please contact us at any time to explore your options.**

S&GS is both proactive and responsive to the needs of its subscribers. It also works collaboratively with other BCC education services and partners to ensure that subscriber needs are met in a consistent and timely manner.

Schools and academies that subscribe to S&GS and purchase its additional services can expect the same high standards, level of expertise and empathy that has been valued by school leaders and governing boards over many years. However the team behind the service is also committed to further improvement, to gaining a better understanding of and adapting to the changes you face. Your feedback is vital in helping us to achieve this – ***please do let us know what you think*** and how you believe the service can be improved.

Thank you for all that you do on behalf of our children and young people.

SERVICE GUARANTEES

Our team are contactable by phone during the core service period of **08:15 - 17:15** (Monday to Thursday) and **08:15 - 16:15** (Friday) during school term time.

Our service complies with and works within BCC's procedures for the handling of comments, compliments and complaints.

We co-operate with other services to ensure that, as far as is reasonably possible, the advice, guidance and consultancy given to our subscribers is both consistent and collaborative.

Our advice, guidance and consultancy provided to our subscribers will be factual, impartial and consistent with BCC's commitment to equal opportunities.

Our subscribers emailing enquiries to school.support@birmingham.gov.uk and governors@birmingham.gov.uk will receive a response within three working days during school term time.

All our team members have an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service Certificate.

ADVICE

Subscribers to S&GS have direct access to expert advice on day-to-day school management issues as well as on all matters relating to the governance of maintained schools and academies. Our advice is typically shared with you by telephone or email and is delivered by experienced professionals, with a wealth of knowledge that are able to apply this to the needs of your education setting.

We pride ourselves on being approachable, adaptable and knowledgeable in school leadership and governance matters. The advice offered aims to enable you to focus on your key roles and responsibilities, and wherever possible, we will ensure that the same person will support you with your query until its conclusion.

Our advice, for example:

- is solution-focused and directed towards supporting you to arrive at logical conclusions;
- has been developed, over time, through close collaboration with a range of expert services;
- supports compliance with local procedures, statutory regulations, non-statutory guidance, and aspects of education law;
- draws upon and reflects our published guidance that is updated regularly to reflect current effective practice;
- supports you when faced with unforeseen circumstances so that risk is minimised and safeguarding is assured;
- encourages a proactive approach to resolving any concerns so that escalation less likely, and
- includes supporting correspondence between the school and parents on matters relating to any concerns.

GUIDANCE

S&GS provides subscribing schools/academies and their governing boards (GBs) with a range of useful, up to date guidance that supports them in their role. The guidance is regularly updated, adapted and added to in consultation with subscribers and to reflect statutory and regulatory changes. Our guidance is often tailored with an eye to a Birmingham perspective – we know our schools well and have an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the uniqueness and diversity of the city.

Every term subscribing governing boards are provided with an **Agenda Briefing** to help plan their business and carry out key tasks.

Every year subscribing governing boards are provided with a **comprehensive self-evaluation document (Audit Tool)** to help them review their effectiveness and aid improvement. For 2018-19 this will include an **Annual Planner** for GBs.

The guidance documents that are available on request to subscribers include:

- Guidance on dealing with school complaints that includes a framework school complaints procedure.
- Framework code of conduct for parents and visitors whilst on school premises.
- Guidance and role descriptions for governors allocated key roles such as SEND governor, Pupil Premium governor etc.
- Guidance that covers key requirements and compliance areas for GBs such as the publishing information on the school/academy website.

Subscribers also request **tailored and/or specific guidance** to help them understand and manage the latest education legislation and procedures. **Contact us** and we will work with you to provide it.

CONSULTANCY

Subscribing schools and academies, including their governing boards (GBs), are able to consult S&GS on issues that are more complex or challenging and require a clear strategy and sustainable outcomes. These include, but are not restricted to, the strategy and approach for issues:

- arising from school complaints or concerns, such as conflict resolution, persistent and serial complainants - including tailoring correspondence and advice on the conduct of meetings;
- presenting reputational risk and avoiding escalation of these issues;
- impacting upon the on-going, effective operation of the GB, such as unforeseen resignations, succession planning, attendance and participation issues;
- impeding business management and decision making, and
- relating to governor conduct and applying the required procedures.

The S&GS team has considerable experience of conflict management and of working with schools and academies in diverse and challenging situations. We are sensitive to the circumstances of your school/academy and will maintain levels of confidentiality as appropriate.

S&GS consultancy is based on the principle that the **school/academy leads** on resolving the issue and achieving a sustainable outcome. Our aim is always to build resilience in leadership and maximise your school/academy's ability to deal with any situation.

Please note: *Consultancy support does not usually extend to attendance at meetings convened under adopted procedures or relevant regulations, unless there is a clearly prescribed role for S&GS at these meetings. Requests will be considered on a needs basis and with an assessment of risk.*

SUBSCRIBER EVENTS

Schools and academies that subscribe to S&GS can attend the following events at **no extra cost**.

Termly briefings for Chairs of Governing Boards (GBs)

These popular briefings are delivered by the Corporate Director and senior officers in Birmingham City Council. They cover the latest news in governance and timely reminders for the GB as well as providing a valuable (and rare) opportunity for lead governors to come together and share the work that they are doing in their schools that makes a real difference to children and young people.

Meetings take place in the evening (18:15-20:15) and are currently held at the Midland Arts Centre (MAC), Canon Hill Park, Birmingham B12 9QH.

Termly briefings for Clerks to Governing Boards

The briefings are an excellent way for clerks to share their good practice, to keep abreast of the latest developments in governance and issues that affect their role, such as regulatory changes, updated guidance etc. As well as news items and discussion briefings also include a bespoke CPD activity that is based on the National Competency Framework for Clerks, and is selected using feedback received from previous briefings.

Meetings take place in the daytime and in the evening (09:30-12:00 or 18:00-20:30) and are currently held at the Birmingham and Midland Institute (BMI), Margaret Street, Birmingham B3 3BS.

Induction and refresher courses held for Chairs and Clerks to Governing Boards

Whether you serve at a maintained school or an academy, these courses provide invaluable induction training for newly appointed Chairs and Clerks. They also act as a useful refresher for those experienced in the role of Chair or Clerk.

The **Introduction to Chairing a GB** course provides an overview of the work and main responsibilities of the Chair and how to ensure the effective functioning of the GB through the following: leading governors and building an effective team; leading the business; meeting management and working with the clerk; the relationship with the Headteacher, and making school improvement the focus of the GB's work.

The **Introduction to Clerking** course covers: the management of meetings; minute taking; providing advice to the GB (legislation and procedure); providing effective administrative support, and information management.

Courses take place from 18:00-20:00 and are currently held at the Midland Arts Centre (MAC), Canon Hill Park, Birmingham B12 9QH.

Look out for the dates of our 2018-19 subscriber events, which will be published in the summer term 2018.

ADDITIONAL SERVICES NOT COVERED BY SUBSCRIPTION

Governor Training

S&GS provides a comprehensive programme of high quality training that develops the skills and knowledge needed for effective governance in maintained schools, academies and multi-academy trusts. The training is provided through centrally held courses that take place throughout the year **and are offered at a discounted rate to subscribing schools**. The course programme includes the following:

- Induction training.
- Training for the core functions of the GB: strategic governance, effective challenge; managing financial resources and preparing for Ofsted.
- Training for statutory, committee and allocated governor roles such as safeguarding, SEND, Headteacher appraisal and curriculum areas.
- Training for extended skills and leadership including induction for Chairs, data analysis, and evaluating pupil premium spend.

To view the programme visit www.birmingham.gov.uk/school-governors

In addition to the programme of published courses, S&GS also provides **bespoke training to governing boards and groups of schools/academies on request**. Bespoke training is designed to meet the needs of your school/academy governors at this time. **It is delivered locally and at a time to suit you.**

Email us at governors@birmingham.gov.uk to arrange bespoke training and explore your options.

Bespoke Consultancy

The S&GS team are able to provide bespoke, personalised and specific consultancy on a wide range of leadership and management issues to both **school leaders** and their **governing boards**. These might include, for example:

- Governance reviews/health checks.
- Training focused on the effective management of complaints and conflict resolution.

If you are interested in something tailored to your individual needs and delivered in a setting organised by you, please contact us to discuss your requests. This work will be charged on a flexible scale according to length of session and number of people involved. We are committed to remaining competitive and providing good value for money.

Email us at governors@birmingham.gov.uk to arrange bespoke consultancy/training and explore your options.

Terms and Conditions

Annual Service Subscription

Any references to 'school(s)' are intended to cover all educational establishments that subscribe to our traded service.

1. In order to access the services referred to throughout the service offer document, the school must be a subscriber to S&GS. The school must have paid the subscription charge for the current subscription period within 30 days of being invoiced for it.
2. The S&GS subscription year for maintained schools runs from 1 April, and for academies from 1 September.
3. Where a new school subscribes part-way through the year, the subscription fee may be negotiated. Any such negotiation as to the discount will be entirely at the discretion of S&GS.
4. New or in-year subscribers to S&GS i.e. subscribing after the 1 April, may cancel their subscription within 30 days of their subscription date, otherwise they will incur the full year subscription charge. Cancellation notification must be sent in writing by email to school.support@birmingham.gov.uk.
5. All existing subscribers will have their subscription automatically renewed and will be deemed as re-subscribed on 1 April (maintained schools) or respectively 1 September (academies) each year, unless the subscription is cancelled in writing, by email to school.support@birmingham.gov.uk, within 30 days of the applicable renewal date. In the event that the subscription is not cancelled in accordance with this paragraph, the school will incur the full annual subscription without a further right to cancel.
6. The subscription services and options are only available and valid during the current subscription year and may be subject to change. Subscribers will be given 30 days' notice of any changes to services that may be necessary within the current subscription year.

Additional Services Not Covered by Subscription

7. Cancellations must be confirmed by email to governors@birmingham.gov.uk. S&GS is liable for cost of venue hire as well as facilitators and will therefore charge the full cost for booked places even if delegates do not attend on the day, unless S&GS receive at least 10 working days written notice by email of cancellation to the email address stated in this paragraph.
8. S&GS reserves the right to amend or cancel should it, for whatever reason, be unable to deliver an advertised governor training course. In these circumstances S&GS will endeavour to provide adequate notice. A full refund will be given to the delegate's school in the event of cancellation. S&GS will also endeavour to provide adequate notice and to reschedule the course as soon as feasible.
9. From time to time S&GS may facilitate services on a paid for consultancy basis using third-party providers. Such provision will be delivered in line with S&GS service guarantees and S&GS retains responsibility for the quality of the service provided.
10. Concerns about the quality of service provided should, in the first instance, be directed to the Interim Head of Service, School and Governor Support, who will investigate and respond to the concerns within agreed timescales.