



The Vale of Glamorgan Council and Maintained Schools: Partnership Agreement

September 2018 – August 2021



Directorate of Learning and Skills

CONTENTS		PAGE
The Maintained Schools (Partnership Agreements) (Wales) Regulations 2007		3
Council LA/Schools Partnership Agreement		5
1.	Targets for pupil progress, attendance and exclusions	9
2.	Targets for Learner Participation and Attainment for Schools	11
3.	Monitoring, Challenge, Support and Intervention	12
4.	Governing Body Training and Reports	26
5.	School Premises	27
6.	Effective Transition	30
7.	Health and Safety Matters	34
8.	Council support for school staff appointments and redundancies	38
9.	Complaints and Disciplinary Matters	39
10.	Policy on Provision for Pupils with Additional Learning Needs	40
11.	Communication and Consultation	41
Review of Council LA/Schools Partnership Agreement		48

The Maintained Schools (Partnership Agreements) (Wales) Regulations 2007

Section 197 of the **Education Act 2002** requires local education authorities to enter into a partnership agreement with the governing body of each school maintained by the Council. The **2007 Regulations** impose duties upon all Councils in Wales and governing bodies of schools maintained by them, including maintained nursery schools, but excluding pupil referral units, to enter into Partnership Agreements. In the case where the Council and governing body cannot reach agreement then the Council is entitled to draw up a statement setting out how it and the governing body are to discharge their respective functions.

The agreement must set out how a Council and a governing body will carry out their respective functions in relation to a school. The purpose of partnership agreements is therefore to sustain and enhance existing partnership working between Councils and school governing bodies.

There are **11 Statutory Functions**, which will form the mandatory element of the Agreement. In addition, this partnership agreement contains a number of **non-statutory functions**, as recommended by the Welsh Government.

Overview of Functions

	Statutory functions	Non-statutory functions
1.	Agreeing targets 1.1 Pupil progress. 1.2 Attendance.	1.3 Targets for exclusion.
2.	Targets for learner participation and attainment for schools and sixth forms.	
3.	Monitoring, Challenge, Support and Intervention 3.1 Action the Council will take to monitor schools. 3.2 Factors the Council will take into account in identifying schools giving cause for concern. 3.3 Support the Council will offer to schools giving cause for concern, to turn them around and to prevent them from becoming failing schools. 3.4 Support the Council will provide to schools in need, or	3.5 Providing, maintaining and using data. 3.6 Council role in supporting school staff development.

	Statutory functions	Non-statutory functions
	in special measures, or requiring significant improvement.	
4.	<p>4.1 Responsibility of the school and Council for governor support and training.</p> <p>4.2 The reports that the governing body provides to the Council on discharge of its function.</p>	
5.	<p>Responsibility of the school and the Council for:</p> <p>5.1 the control of school premises and</p> <p>5.2 their maintenance and repairs.</p>	<p>5.3 Building developments on school sites.</p> <p>5.4 Caretaker properties.</p>
6.	<p>Roles of school and Council to develop effective transition:</p> <p>6.2 from KS2 to KS3.</p>	<p>Roles of school and Council to develop effective transition:</p> <p>6.1 nursery school to primary school</p> <p>6.3 Foundation Phase/KS1 to KS2</p> <p>6.4 KS3 to KS4</p> <p>6.5 KS4 to Post 16</p>
7.	Health and safety matters.	
8.		Council support for school staff appointments and redundancies
9.		Complaints and disciplinary matters
10.	Policy on provision for pupils with SEN.	
11.		Communication/consultation arrangements - minimise bureaucratic burdens on schools

Council LA/Schools Partnership Agreement

This agreement sets out how the Vale of Glamorgan Council (the Council) and school governing bodies will carry out their respective functions in relation to schools. The purpose of the partnership agreement is to sustain and enhance existing partnership working between the Council and schools.

Although the governing body of a maintained school is responsible for the conduct and standards of the school, the Council shares the responsibility for standards in schools and discharges strategic responsibilities for the overall provision of education services in the Vale of Glamorgan. The Council provides governing bodies with strategic and support services that help to create a level of common policy planning practices that all schools share.

The Council recognises the significant role that Headteachers, school leadership teams, and all school staff play in the provision of education in the Vale of Glamorgan. However, this partnership agreement sets out the respective responsibilities of the Council and governing bodies only. Headteacher, senior school management team, and school staff responsibilities form a partnership agreement between the governing body (and other relevant body in the case of voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools) and school employees.

The Partnership Agreement applies to all maintained schools. However, in areas of governance, staffing and buildings development, a voluntary aided school (VAS) will have a distinctive relationship with the Diocesan Authorities. Voluntary aided schools are distinct from community schools in that the governing body is both the employer and the admissions authority. The premises are held on trust by a foundation, usually a church, and the governing body employs the staff and is responsible for the religious education. Due regard will, therefore, need to be taken of the responsibilities of the governing body of a voluntary aided school in respect of the Government of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations (2005) and the Staffing of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations (2006) and of the particular role of foundation governors in this context.

On the basis of this Partnership Agreement and in consultation with schools, the Vale of Glamorgan Council commits to review School Service Level Agreements (SLA's) as prioritised by the Headteacher Steering Group. A Standards Board comprising officers and Headteacher representatives monitors performance against standards set out in the Council's SLAs. This will also provide a forum in which feedback from schools can be shared directly with officers across the Council who carry managerial responsibility for specific services.

The essential duties and responsibilities of governing bodies:

The conduct of each maintained school is under the direction of its governing body, and the governing body is required to conduct the school with a view to promoting high standards.

The governing bodies of all schools must exercise their functions with a view to fulfilling a largely **strategic role in the running of the school**. Governing bodies should establish the strategic framework by:

- setting aims and objectives for the school;
- adopting policies for achieving those aims and objectives; and
- setting targets for achieving those aims and objectives.

Individual governors have a responsibility to ensure that they have an understanding of the legislation and role of the governing body and governors. Governors should act at all times with honesty and integrity.

The governing body should be ready to explain its actions and decisions to staff, pupils, parents and anyone with a legitimate interest in the school.

Governing bodies in consultation with the school's senior leadership team are expected to:

- agree the aims and values of the school;
- agree policies relating to the aims, purposes and practices of the school;
- consider and approve the School Development Plan (SDP) or School Improvement Plan (SIP) and approve and monitor the allocation and expenditure of the budget of the school;
- make sure the national curriculum is taught and there is sufficient staff to teach it;
- monitor and review their school's progress;
- ensure individual pupils' needs are met, including additional needs;
- recruit and select staff and ensure effective arrangements for the management of school staff;
- agree and monitor its budget;
- give parents information about the school;
- produce action plans for improvement following school inspections which in most cases will form part of the SDP/SIP;
- establish and maintain positive links with the local business community and the wider community;
- support the day-to-day operational decisions taken by the Headteacher; and
- promote the effectiveness of the governing body.

The essential education duties and responsibilities of the Council:

- Strategic management of education;
- School improvement and tackling low achievement through:-
 - monitoring performance, agreeing targets, challenge, intervention and support;
 - contribution to school improvement and management of the national strategies;
- Special Educational Needs statutory functions;
- Education welfare and education of excluded pupils and other pupils unable to attend school;
- Access (including Admissions) and School Transport;
- Strategic planning of school places - sufficiency, suitability and condition;

- Strategic Capital Investment; and
- Strategic education management [capital and revenue].

The essential education duties and responsibilities rest within the remit of the Director for Learning and Skills and with the relevant Head of Service in her absence.

Community maintained, Foundation, Voluntary Aided and Voluntary Controlled Schools:

The respective functions of the Council and governing bodies vary according to the school category. The main differences are summarised below:

	School premises / capital issues	Staffing	Admissions authority
Community and Community Special	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Premises owned by Council. ➤ Capital funding provided by Council. 	For schools with delegated budgets, the governing body is accountable for staff recruitment, pay, discipline and dismissal. Some obligations remain within the Council, e.g. statutory redundancy payments.	Council
Voluntary Controlled	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Premises held on trust by a foundation. ➤ Capital funding provided by Council. 	As Community and Community Special Schools above.	Council
Foundation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Premises held on trust by a foundation. ➤ Capital funding provided by Council. 	Staff employed by governing body	Governing body
Voluntary Aided	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Premises held on trust by a foundation ➤ 15% capital funding provided by relevant diocesan authority, 85% WG funded. Council responsible for 	Staff employed by governing body	Governing body responsibilities in respect of admissions are outlined in the Council's Guidance on developing school policies

	specified areas (refer to the Voluntary Aided Schools Capital Programme: a guide for Governors)		
--	---	--	--

The Council commissions statutory school improvement functions such as monitoring, support, challenge and intervention through the regional Joint Education Service (JES) for Central South Consortium (CSC). The Council monitors work carried out by the JES very closely. However, under these commissioning arrangements, accountability for effective school improvement remains with the Council.

Each school has an allocated Challenge Adviser who delivers the statutory school improvement functions on behalf of the Council.

The school's Challenge Adviser will work closely with the Governing Body, the Headteacher and the School's SLT to deliver effective school improvement functions in inverse proportion to the success of the school.

A dedicated Senior Challenge Adviser monitors the progress and performance of schools in the Vale.

The Council works closely with the JES to ensure that a differentiated programme of challenge, support, monitoring and intervention is delivered to schools in the Vale of Glamorgan.

The School Standards and Organisation Act (Wales) 2013 and the National Model for Regional working underpins operational arrangements across the Central South Consortium and Vale of Glamorgan.

1. Targets for pupil progress, attendance and exclusions

1.1 Pupil Progress (*statutory function*)

A core function of the Council is the promotion of standards, continuous improvement, and best practice. The Council must report annually on attainment at the end of each key stage. The statutory performance indicators determined by the Welsh Government (WG) set out the nature and types of targets that must be reported.

Targets must:

- provide appropriate challenge for all children and young people;
- be based on reliable and secure evidence of performance and prior attainment of children and young people individually and as a cohort; and
- inform the school improvement process.

Council responsibilities:

- Promote standards, continuous improvement and best practice across all schools.
- Agree targets with governing bodies for pupil attainment at the end of each key stage against a range of national indicators and also local performance indicators as agreed between the Council and governing bodies collectively. This is undertaken by challenge advisers on behalf of the Council.
- As part of the Challenge Adviser visits in the autumn term, they will engage the headteacher and/or SLT in professional dialogue about the appropriateness of the school's targets and expectations for pupils' progress and future achievement.
- Additionally, individual school targets will be sent electronically to the Central South Consortium (CSCJES) for their approval and also for the approval of the Council.
- Facilitate training for governors and school staff on raising attainment and sharing good practice.
- Through the CSCJES, provide differentiated support to schools for raising attainment in line with the Council's policy for monitoring, support and intervention in schools. Procedures for doing this are set out in this document and the CSCJES's *Challenge and Support Framework* [<http://www.cscjes.org.uk/About-Us/Framework-for-Challenge-and-Support.aspx>]

The Welsh Government has directed that schools' targets should be used to support self-evaluation and no longer aggregated to a local authority performance measure or target.

Governing body responsibilities in consultation with the senior leadership team:

- Approve sufficiently challenging and ambitious targets based on the recommendations of challenge advisers, progress, prior attainment and national benchmarking data (key stage 4 only).

- Agree targets with the Council by 31st December each year, and use the performance data to support school improvement initiatives.
- Ensure that whole-school targets are provided to the Council electronically within timescales set by the CSCJES.
- Continuously monitor, discuss and analyse performance information in order to review targets for improvement.
- Targets set annually during the autumn term will be the targets used by Challenge Advisers to guide and support school improvement activities.

1.2 Attendance (*statutory function*)

Council responsibilities:

- Approve whole Council targets for attendance at Primary and Secondary phase.
- Discuss targets with Headteachers for attendance against a range of national indicators and also local performance indicators as agreed between the Council and governing bodies collectively.
- Set 3-year rolling targets with schools, to be reviewed annually.
- Monitor, discuss and analyse attendance data in order to review target setting process.
- Publish annual attendance data for schools on the council's performance management software.
- Provide advice to schools on attendance data.
- Facilitate training for governors and school staff on raising attendance and sharing good practice.
- Provide support to schools for raising attendance in line with the Council's policy for monitoring, support and intervention in schools.

Governing body responsibilities in consultation with the senior leadership team:

- Ensure the school enters attendance data on the register.
- Provide attendance data for the Learning and Skills Directorate electronically every half term.
- Work with the Learning and Skills Directorate to discuss suitably challenging targets for attendance informed by current attendance and benchmarking data.
- Provide electronically to the Council, 3 year rolling targets for school attendance on an annual basis.
- Monitor, discuss and analyse attendance data to support targeted interventions to raise attendance in the school.

1.3 Exclusions (*non-statutory function*)

Council responsibilities:

- Approve whole Council targets for reducing exclusion at primary and secondary phase.
- Provide training, advice and support on the correct use of the exclusion process and the promotion of alternative strategies to exclusion, including exclusion strategy meetings and managed moves.

- Support secondary and primary schools in carrying out managed moves as a recognised Welsh Government alternative to permanent exclusions.
- Support governing bodies in considering the decision to exclude pupils and provide further support once the decision is made to exclude.

Governing body responsibilities in consultation with the senior leadership team:

- Work with the Council to agree planning for reducing exclusions using current exclusion data and local targets.
- Ensure that all incidents of exclusions are recorded immediately on the schools database (preferably SIMS).
- Monitor, discuss and analyse exclusion data to support targeted interventions to reduce exclusions in the school.

2. Attainment for Schools

Outcome measure	Performance 2018
% of pupils achieving Foundation Phase Outcome Indicator (FPOI)	87.5%%
% of pupils achieving Key Stage 2 core subject indicator (CSI)	94.9%
% of pupils achieving Key Stage 3 core subject indicator (CSI)	92.3%
% of pupils achieving Key Stage 4 level 2 including English and mathematics (L2+)	66.3%%
% of all pupils (including those in Local Authority Care) and in any Local Authority maintained school aged 15 as at the preceding 31 st August and leave compulsory education, training or work based learning without an approved external qualification.	0.7%

3. Monitoring, Challenge, Support and Intervention

3.1 Monitoring schools (*statutory function*)

a) Quality of education provision and standards of performance

The Council has a statutory role in monitoring the quality of education provision and standards of performance in all schools and Council maintained learning settings. In September 2012, the Council commissioned the Central South Consortium (CSCJES) to deliver these functions to all schools on its behalf.

The CSCJES Framework for Challenge and Support School Improvement Service Handbook clearly details the monitoring, challenge, support and intervention that will be provided on behalf of the Local Authority.

A few summary points are:

All schools are categorised for additional support and challenge against a national categorisation model. The aim of the model is to enable consortia and schools to ensure that the right, timely support, challenge and intervention secure improvement in outcomes for all learners. It takes into account standards of achievement and the school's capacity to bring about improvement, the latter of which includes judgements about teaching and leadership. The resulting support category (red, yellow, amber or red) identifies the level of support the school requires, as outlined in the regional Challenge and Support Framework.

Schools categorised as green and yellow will require a measure of challenge and support appropriate to their performance profile and quality of education provided.

Schools categorised as amber and red will require additional support and challenge, the nature and extent of which is agreed with the headteacher, challenge adviser and senior challenge adviser.

All Challenge Adviser meetings with the school are reported to the Senior Challenge Adviser.

The Senior Challenge Adviser works closely with the school and the challenge adviser to monitor the progress of schools.

This work is effectively carried out through close partnership working between the school and the dedicated Challenge Adviser. The Council, through the work of the Challenge Advisers has a role in supporting schools' self-evaluation and improvement through a programme of monitoring, evaluation and review.

The differentiated programme of challenge, monitoring, support and intervention is delivered through meetings between the school's Challenge Adviser, the Headteacher and the school's leadership team.

The school improvement and local authority school inclusion officers, working in partnership with schools, play a key role in monitoring the quality of education provision and standards of performance and in providing the support necessary to improve the school.

Council responsibilities:

- Duplication of functions delivered by the CSCJES will be avoided.
- Collation, analysis and timely distribution of a range of school performance information including academic standards, attendance, inclusion and financial information.
- Sharing of analysis and commentary on performance including the identification of issues and their relative significance through the School Meetings and Challenge Adviser Reports and correspondence with schools.
- Monitoring of progress towards meeting agreed performance targets and school improvement priorities.
- Evaluation of school documentation as appropriate to the particular monitoring activity.
- Evaluation of a range of reports from agencies such as Estyn inspection reports and audit reports as and when required.
- A programme of regular visits, including the Director of Learning and Skills and Lead Officer for School Improvement visits, Challenge Adviser visits, inclusion link team visits, financial officer visits, and officer visits from other Council service areas to monitor school performance, planning for improvement and progress against planned actions.
- A programme of Council monitoring and reviews in individual schools which may include subject, aspect, or whole school reviews as agreed with the governing body, and involving evaluation of pupils' work and school documentation, discussion with staff and pupils, and observation of lessons as appropriate. This programme is always arranged in partnership with the school.
- A programme of Council commissioned targeted support in individual schools which is based on data analysis and is inversely proportional to success. This programme is always arranged in partnership with the school.
- The school category determines the extent and nature of commissioned support required.
- A programme of moderation activities, usually cluster based, to establish consistency in teacher assessment and understanding of end of key stage teacher assessment levels in relation to pupils' work.
- Support a programme of professional development for practitioners and school leaders.
- Review of progress in schools in respect of national initiatives and requirements. These will be included as the focus for Challenge Adviser visits.

Governing body responsibilities in consultation with the senior leadership team:

As partners within the monitoring process, and through close partnership working with the school's Challenge Adviser and with Council officers, will make available to the Council if requested:

- The school staffing plan / staffing structure.
- The school curriculum policy.
- The school budget.
- The school development or improvement plan.
- The school action plan following school inspection, although in most cases this will form part of the SDP/SIP.
- The school self-evaluation report.
- The school special educational needs policy.
- The school child protection policy and Safeguarding Policies e.g. Physical Intervention, Time-out, Behaviour and Disciplinary.
- The school complaints procedures.
- The school anti-bullying policy.
- The school disability equality scheme and accessibility plan.
- The school race equality policy / equal opportunities policy.
- The school sex and relationship policy education policy as appropriate (statutory for secondary schools only).
- The Governors' annual report to parents.
- The school health and safety policy (for VA and Foundation schools).
- The school admission policy (for VA and Foundation schools).
- The school staff discipline, conduct, capability and grievance procedures (in the case of a Voluntary Aided School, schools should refer to guidance issued by the National Society or C.E.S).
- The school charging policy.
- The school freedom of information publication scheme.
- The school transition plan.
- The school's investment plan.
- Other school policies as required and if requested.

Where possible, it would be helpful if documents were made available in electronic format.

Following Estyn inspections, reports are summarised and presented to the Cabinet Member for Learning and Culture and the Director of Learning and Skills and Lead Officer for School Improvement by the Challenge Adviser. The school also presents its post-inspection action plan to the Challenge Adviser and Council, via the Challenge Adviser. It is recognised that in most cases this plan will form part of the School Improvement Plan (SIP), The Challenge Adviser and inclusion team subsequently have responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the school action plan and that outcomes sufficiently meet the inspection recommendations. In most cases this is done via Challenge Adviser meetings with the Headteacher and becomes part of routine professional dialogue about school improvement. This process is also captured on the completed Statement of Action for the school if the school is placed in a statutory follow up category.

Universal services, as well as targeted and differentiated provision, is provided according to the school's category.

Universal services include the following:

- Routine school visits to provide statutory challenge, monitoring of progress, support and if necessary, intervention (CMI Programme).

- Additional school visits to provide more targeted support as required necessary by the school's category and as set out in the Statement of Action.
- Sufficiency of progress meetings for those schools requiring additional support.
- Support for senior school appointments.
- Support for school reorganisation.
- Support for Newly Qualified Teachers.
- Support for school Governors by way of providing an external perspective of school's performance data.
- Governor training in school as required.
- Support to devise school's Post Inspection Action Plan (PIAP).
- Support to devise school's Self-evaluation report pre inspection.
- Writing the pre inspection Briefing Report for Estyn.
- Headteacher Performance Management support to the Governing Body panel.
- Support with post inspection follow-up work in school.

For primary, secondary and special schools, visits will also be made by the Director of Learning and Skills and/or Head of Service as appropriate.

Information relating to individual school performance and the quality of provision is shared between Council officers in a variety of ways.

- Challenge Adviser reports in relation to particular aspects of school performance are always sent to school, the CSCJES and the Senior Challenge Adviser. These are viewed by identified local authority based officers only. The Director of Learning and Skills may request to view any report, on any school, at any time.
- The Heads of Standards and Provision and ALN and Wellbeing meet regularly with the Senior Challenge Adviser and at the end of every term with all Challenge Advisers to review school improvement and to consider the progress of schools.
- Where particular issues have become apparent, review meetings are more frequent.
- Progress of schools causing significant concern is reviewed weekly by the Directorate Management Team and Cabinet Member for Learning and Culture.
- The support work of the Inclusion team and progress made in individual schools is also fed into the review of the work of all schools.

Cross-Directorate review meetings of schools causing concern are conducted every half term.

These processes bring together the Heads of Service within the Directorate to consider School reports and share information across the team. Discussion with this team and the school leads to a determination or confirmation of the nature and type of support provided in each school.

As in all organisations, there are matters of sensitivity where it would be inappropriate for information to be shared widely. In such cases, sensitive information would be disseminated on a need to know basis only. The Council recognises the importance of maintaining appropriate levels of confidentiality in such matters, and as such, details of these particular matters would fall outside the normal half-yearly review process.

b) Finance

The Council's Scheme for Financing Schools provides details of the underlying principles of local management of schools. This document covers the financial and managerial responsibilities of both governing bodies and the Council under the Scheme.

Section 4 of the scheme confirms how surplus and deficit budgets are dealt with. The details behind the specific guidance outlined in the Scheme for Financing Schools, including Financial Regulations and Standing Orders, form part of this partnership arrangement, whereby the Council and its schools work closely to identify and resolve emerging financial problems / issues.

The Council offers all its schools an opportunity via a formal Service Level Agreement, to buy into Finance Support package to support them in their financial / budget management role. Visits are arranged and agreed in advance with each participating school.

Financial Training

Headteacher/Acting Headteachers

Once appointed and in post, new/acting Headteachers induction training covering all aspects of the service, including finance, will be offered. This will be delivered through a training session for a number of Heads or through specific on-site training on an individual basis.

Ongoing training is provided by the School Finance Support Team as part of the routine visits as outlined in the SLA.

Finance support (admin) staff

Finance support (admin) staff within schools will be provided with initial training when first appointed to the post as follows:

- training provided by the School Finance Support (SFS) Team is provided "on site" as part of the SFS Team member's visit to the school in accordance with the Service Level Agreement; and
- training provided by SIMS/One Support Team on the financial (SIMS FMS) system. This will be either on site or in a group, depending on numbers to be trained.

Additional training needs will also be identified as part of the SFS Team member's routine visits to schools or requested by the school support (admin) staff. This will be addressed either on an individual or group basis depending on the issues raised and the numbers involved.

Ongoing training is provided by the SFS Team as part of the routine visits as outlined in the SLA.

3.2 Factors the Council will take into account in identifying schools giving cause for concern (*statutory function*)

The Council has a duty of care for all its schools and will provide support for its schools relative to their need.

This will obviously necessitate a differentiated programme of targeted support, which is located on a continuum, delivered in partnership with the school and is clearly supportive of identified need.

The Council commissions the Central South Consortium (CSCJES) to deliver its statutory school improvement functions, to all schools, on its behalf.

The Categorisation Model and resultant Challenge and Support Framework clearly set out the nature and extent of a differentiated programme for schools.

The categorisation process and consequences in terms of extent of additional support delivered, is applied to all schools in the Vale of Glamorgan.

The Council and the CSCJES are mindful of the criteria provided by Estyn through the inspection framework relating to schools causing concern and of its duties as described in the legislation for schools in need of improvement and schools requiring special measures and as such, will intervene directly when an individual school is giving cause for concern.

Because, however, it needs to prevent schools from failing, the Council, via the CSCJES, will intervene when the potential for failure begins to become evident. The Council, through the CSCJES, will work with schools, in partnership to address identified areas of concern.

Therefore the factors governing the Council's intervention and resulting targeted programme of support for schools will be determined by the need to fulfil the Council's duty of care for all its schools, coupled with the need to support schools in their drive for school improvement and the requirement to intervene when a school is failing to provide a satisfactory standard and quality of education for its pupils.

The following are examples of contexts that will be taken into account when determining the level of support offered to schools:

- Where the safety of children and young people is in jeopardy.
- A significant decrease in standards, a pattern of deteriorating standards or a pattern of slow or unsatisfactory rates of improvement across a range of aspects and indicators including attendance and exclusions.
- New leadership, new staff also new to leadership, significant staffing changes and/or instability, management and leadership which are experiencing difficulties or challenging circumstances, management and leadership which is ineffective.
- Schools experiencing financial difficulties, schools that need specific financial support, ineffective financial management.
- Provision that is in need of specific improvement, instability of provision due to volatility of staffing, poor and deteriorating quality of teaching and learning.

- Schools experiencing difficulties in effective working relationships amongst staff, the breakdown of effective working relationships amongst staff.
- Failure to comply with statutory regulations.

The above are examples of schools' contexts that can occur from time to time, which are not exhaustive and can necessitate the Council to provide support to facilitate improvements in these key areas. Contexts such as those aforementioned will be used as criteria to determine the appropriate level of support required, which will always be located on the continuum.

The Categorisation Model exemplifies further detail and provides criteria in each of the key areas of outcomes, provision and leadership, which will be taken into account when considering the category within which to place a school.

3.3 Support the Council will offer to schools giving cause for concern, to turn them around and to prevent them from becoming failing schools (*statutory function*)

Levels of Council support

The National Categorisation Model determines the school's support category (green, yellow, amber or red), depending on the level of support required.

The Challenge and Support Framework appended illustrates the additional allocation or resource, in broad terms, for each support category.

Schools identified as in need of green or yellow support

Schools where the support category is green or yellow are encouraged to participate in peer enquiry. The peer enquiry model seeks to establish disciplined procedures by which knowledge is moved and shared between schools within a culture of trust and mutual accountability. The approach has the potential to make a critical contribution to a school's self-evaluation cycle and its capacity to achieve further improvement in particular aspects of its work. Peer enquiry might be undertaken because a school wishes to: focus on exploring a specific area or initiative; enhance its self-reflection processes; address one or more improvement priorities or post-inspection recommendations. For schools not participating in peer enquiry, there should be some collaborative activity with the school that will contribute further to its capacity building and self-evaluation. In discussion with the challenge adviser, the school will initiate an evaluation for improvement process related to its priorities for improvement. These may well be shaped from the areas for improvement identified in the national categorisation process. In normal circumstances the evaluation would incorporate activity including direct contact with learning and teaching and pupils' work. The evaluation will usually involve the challenge adviser and should where possible, also involve a peer from another school and/ or a specialist within the system and or other personnel in the school in addition to the headteacher. The flexibility with regard to who is involved in the evaluation for improvement process is designed to ensure a bespoke solution to the challenges faced by different schools. The important point is that the challenge adviser works with others to develop capacity within the system whilst addressing the needs of the school. The outcome will be a written evaluation setting out strengths or positive features and areas for further improvement.

The school will be able to use the outcomes of the evaluation activity as part of its self-evaluation processes and self-evaluation report.

Schools identified as in need of amber or red support

For schools where the support category is likely to be red or amber the challenge adviser will make an initial identification of support needs in the summer term. S/he will agree with the school a process to diagnose needs in more depth prior to finalisation of the support plan at the earliest opportunity where necessary. This may involve a more in-depth review of the current position in partnership with the school using a range of expertise. Working with the service's strategic advisers, the challenge adviser will broker the support required to meet needs at least provisionally. It will be expected that the school will direct its own resources to achieving the agreed priorities for improvement so as to have maximum impact on securing improvement at an appropriate rate. Any allocation of additional resources will be contingent on this. In all circumstances, the service will need to manage its support and challenge activities in line with the available resources. Work to support the school's improvement, including any in-depth review activity will begin immediately. It will not be necessary to await the review, challenge and support meeting with the headteacher and governors. However, it will be important to discuss and confirm the support at this meeting. It will be vital that there is an unambiguous and agreed view of the school's key priorities from the outset and a strong focus in the school's single improvement plan on raising achievement. For schools where the category is amber or red, a succinct support plan will be prepared by the challenge adviser detailing the additional support to be provided, by whom, the timescales and resource requirements. This will sit alongside the school's improvement plan and make a clear connection between the support provided and the intended impact on those aspects identified as needing improvement in the school's improvement plan. The consortium's intervention strategy contains a number of resources that challenge advisers should consider when determining the strategies for improvement to be implemented in schools. For schools requiring significant improvement or in special measures, the challenge adviser will work closely with the senior challenge adviser and local authority's senior officers to prepare a statement of action setting out how the local authority will support the school. At the review, challenge and support meeting the challenge adviser will agree with the headteacher and chair of governors the arrangements for monitoring and reporting the school's progress during the academic year. This will include:

- the expectations of the headteacher and chair of governors for providing evidence of progress at the planned meetings to review progress;
- the arrangements for carrying out these meetings in conjunction with the local authority; and
- how progress will be monitored and recorded by the challenge adviser and other personnel supporting the school.

Should the performance review conclude that insufficient progress has been made or that there is little or no confidence that the school will improve in line with set targets, the school will be issued with a formal warning letter.

The formal warning letter will be written by the Director of Learning and Skills and copied to the Cabinet Member for Learning and Culture, the Managing Director, the Leader of the Council, the Head of Standards and Provision, the Head of ALN and Wellbeing and

the Managing Director of the Central South Consortium Joint Education Service (CSCJES) as well as to Welsh Government. The formal warning letter will set out how the Council will intervene in the school to bring about the improvements necessary.

Formal intervention will comply with legislation as set out in the School Standards and Organisation Act (Wales) 2013 and supportive guidance.

The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) (Section 20) Act 2013, places a duty on all local authorities in Wales to have regard to any guidance given by Welsh Ministers in exercising their functions in respect of intervention in schools causing concern as set out in Part 2 of the 2013 Act. The Schools Causing Concern Statutory Guidance for schools and local Authorities document number 129/2014, provides such guidance. It also sets out the approach the Welsh Ministers will take in exercising their own intervention and consent function.

All work to improve schools will always be carried out in partnership with diocesan officers where appropriate to ensure that any support meets the needs of the school effectively.

All reports of intervention, monitoring and evaluation will always be shared with school and will be saved on the School Secure File and reviewed as a part of the half yearly performance review process as well as the half-termly cross-service case conference meetings.

3.4 Support the Council will provide to schools in need, or in special measures, or requiring significant improvement (*statutory function*)

If, as a result of an Estyn Inspection, a school is deemed to require significant improvement or special measures, there is a statutory requirement for the Governing Body of the school to submit a post-inspection action plan (PIAP) within forty days of the publication of the inspection report.

Such a school will be categorised as a school in need of red level of support in the national categorisation model and, as such, trigger the maximum level of support illustrated in the Support and Challenge Framework.

Additionally the Council will work with the leadership of the school and the CSCJES in the following ways:

- The Council will assist the school's governing body and headteacher in drawing up the action plan and will approve the action plan prior to its submission to Estyn. The Challenge Adviser will provide this support. The Senior Challenge Adviser will coordinate LA support and the development of an LA support Plan which will be appended to the PIAP, will devise an LA Support Plan and append to the PIAP.
- The action plan will detail the actions to be taken by the school to address the issues raised in the report, and will summarise the support and intervention to be provided by the Council. The plan will report the timescales involved, resources required and outcomes expected from each of the actions.

- A half termly reporting timetable for formal monitoring of progress in implementing the action plan by the Challenge Adviser and reporting to the Senior Challenge Adviser and Head of Standards and Provision will be implemented.
- The PIAP will set out clearly what needs to be done to improve the school, who is going to provide the support and how the support programme is going to be coordinated. The school's Challenge Adviser will coordinate the plan overseen by the Senior Challenge Adviser and Head of Standards and Provision.
- The PIAP will set out the nature and extent of support to be provided by the JES, the LA and other providers. It will include the LAs Plan of Support for the school. It will set out the monitoring schedule which will be every half term.
- The Challenge Adviser will work with Estyn during the termly re-visits to support the work of the Estyn team.
- The Challenge Adviser will provide all progress and pre re-visit briefing reports.
- The Challenge Adviser will update the PIAP and provide up-dated progress reports to the Head of Standards and Provision in the Council.
- The Challenge Adviser will work with the Lead Officer in the LA to monitor pupils' progress and improvements in provision and the quality of leadership and management in the school.
- The Lead Officer in the LA will work closely with the Challenge Adviser to coordinate LA based support e.g. HR, finance, Governor Support, accommodation, building support etc.
- The Lead Officer in the LA will provide half termly progress reports to the Director of Learning and Skills.
- The school will be the focus of Directorate Management Team half termly monitoring of progress meetings which will include the Cabinet Member for Learning and Culture;
- Half termly progress reports will be presented to the Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet.

Estyn will re-visit a school in Special Measures on a termly basis - these progress reports will be presented to Learning and Culture Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet. When the school is removed from the category, the school will continue to undertake half termly monitoring meetings until such time as full confidence is restored in the school's own ability to provide high quality education to all pupils.

For schools placed in an Estyn category as requiring significant improvement or special measures, and in accordance with legislation set out in the School Standards and Organisation Act (Wales) 2013, the Council may decide to exercise its statutory powers of intervention. The nature and extent of such intervention will be determined in accordance with the statutory framework and will be proportionate to the extent of need prevalent in the school.

School Budgets with Surplus Balances

Officers within the Learning & Skills Strategy, Community Learning and Resources Finance Team work closely with any school holding a balance which is in excess of the maximum detailed within the Scheme for Financing Schools.

This involves each school with an excessive balance receiving a formal letter and pro forma requesting plans of the intended use of the surplus.

Once approved the plans are monitored throughout the year. Explanations will be required for plans that have not been adhered to and if necessary new plans requested. If the reason for not spending or the revised plan is not accepted then the school could be directed on how to spend the surplus balance. Failure to comply with the direction to spend could result in the school being referred to the Head of Service who will consult with the Schools Budget Forum and claw back the excess balance in accordance with the Council's Clawback Scheme for Schools.

School Budgets with Deficit Balances

Where a school is unable to balance its budget, the Council will work closely with the governing body and Headteacher to provide appropriate advice, guidance and support to ensure that it is able to plan appropriately to bring the budget back to balance. This support will consist of advice and guidance from Senior Council officers, finance and HR professionals. Whilst this partnership arrangement is viewed as fundamental to successfully managing difficult budget situations, legal responsibility for management of the budget, does however remain with the governing body, as per legislation under the Education Reform Act 1988.

Circumstances might occur when a governing body finds itself in a situation where, despite the advice and support referred to above, still unable to balance its budget. In these instances the Governing Body is required to submit an agreed Budget Recovery Plan for approval by the Director of Learning and Skills. In such instances, the Council will work closely with the school to enable them to produce a Budget Recovery Plan to bring the budget back to balance. This may include input from a range of Council officers. Where this is the case, meetings will be co-ordinated by the Council between representatives from both the Council and the school to ensure there is regular dialogue regarding the budget situation and that the recommendations outlined in the recovery plan are deliverable and achieved.

3.5 Providing, maintaining and using data (*non-statutory function*)

The Council will provide services working in partnership with schools and outside agencies to promote the effective and efficient use of Capita SIMS/FMS and the provision of support for both statutory and non-statutory data collections. However, the responsibility for delivery of statutory school data remains with the school.

Some services will be provided as part of the standard Council functions at no additional charge and other services will be provided via an ICT and Data Support Service Level Agreement and are chargeable. Where necessary and appropriate, some services will be charged for (e.g. training courses requiring external trainers and services that require additional resources - equipment/people).

Support for schools opting to use additional management information software for example, Inserts, Emerge, Bromcom, Pars, will not be provided by the ICT and Data Team.

The Council will provide advice and support for schools in:

- the use of Capita SIMS (Schools Information Management System);
- the use of Capita FMS (Financial Management System);
- delivery of data via the s2s and DEWI websites;
- advice on hardware specification requirements to host SIMS software;
- installation of Capita SIMS/FMS Upgrades and patches as required;
- the administration and management of performance data; and
- the administration of standardised assessment programme(s).

The following support services will be provided to schools:

- Report development on school and pupil performance, support will be provided for core, curriculum and the resources suite of modules within the Capita SIMS software.
- A telephone helpdesk facility will be available for all management information and pupil or curriculum led enquiries during normal office hours in term time.
- Training courses will be scheduled as necessary and will be clearly advertised to schools.
- Advice to Headteachers and school staff on the development of the management information systems.
- Monitoring and evaluating the use of Capita SIMS software.
- Advice and support to Headteachers and school managers on the implementation, development and use of the software.
- Assisting with the day to day use of Capita SIMS suite of software.
- Comprehensive advice and support in relation to Welsh Government statutory data collections that impact on the use of Capita SIMS software including PLASC, Post 16 PLASC, National Data Collection and Wales Attendance Returns.
- Liaison with Capita Education Services for query resolution and in relation to the future development of the Capita SIMS software.
- Provision of advice and support on the development of Capita FMS software.

Information Monitoring and Data Collection Service Provision:

- Support in the administration of the standardised assessment programme(s), including baseline assessment, Teacher Assessments at Foundation Phase, KS2, KS3 and KS4 results, A and AS level results, NEETS figures etc.
- Liaison with the Central South Consortium in the analysis and presentation of school performance data and school targets.
- Interpretation of data relating to school and pupil performance, in conjunction with the Central South Consortium.
- Monitoring and evaluation of data collection throughout the education service
- Identification of the information needs of the service.
- Development of initiatives for the management of information across the service.
- Provision of pupil level performance data for schools in accordance with agreed schedules.

A training programme will be maintained:

- The service will offer a comprehensive training programme covering the use of management information systems and the administration and management of

performance data. Courses will be available for governors, Headteachers and deputies, teachers, and school administrative staff.

- The cost of attending these courses may be charged to schools.

The following services are provided in relation to the strategic management and planning of the education service:

- The provision of data in fulfilment of the Council's statutory obligations.
- The provision of performance indicators.
- Liaison with the Welsh Government, the Central South Consortium, other Councils, the WJEC and other agencies on performance data on behalf of schools and the Council.
- Reporting pupil performance information to the Heads of School Improvement and Inclusion.
- The establishment and maintenance of connectivity with schools - This is provided by Corporate ICT and not the Learning and Skills Directorate.
- Co-ordination of departmental training requirements.
- Development and implementation of the Council information systems strategy.

Governing body responsibilities in consultation with the senior leadership team:

- To ensure the school complies with any statutory obligations relating to information or data e.g. Data Protection Act, Freedom of Information Act.
- To ensure the school enters and maintains all pupil data in a secure, timely and accurate manner on the school information management system to include LAC and SEN status and religion, ethnicity and language data.
- At least annually and upon admission to the school to verify with parents/guardians pupils' personal details including legal and preferred names and maintain accurate addresses (pupils and other contacts).
- Data to ensure anti-discrimination monitoring and analysis by minority group type (e.g. religion, ethnicity, language etc.).
- To ensure the school maintains its computer systems, taking reasonable precautions against malicious software and hackers. This includes using only software which is current, supported by its supplier and properly licensed.
- To ensure the school provides data to the Council, parents or other authorised bodies (e.g. Welsh Government) by reasonably requested (or statutorily directed) dates and relating to pupils, their attendance, assessment results, courses etc.
- To ensure the school uses the Common Transfer File mechanisms to forward data when pupils move from school to school.
- To ensure the school uses tools and web sites provided by the Council and WG as required and in the appropriate manner.
- To ensure the school uses data and tools relating to these data in an efficient and cost effective manner.
- To ensure the school complies with data security and facility use policies
- To ensure the school retains education records data for the recommended periods and disposes of it appropriately.
- To ensure the school maintains the skill and training levels of data and management information system users appropriate to the needs of their job role in order to fulfil the above obligations.

3.6 The Council's role in supporting school improvement and school staff development in order to promote high standards (*non-statutory function*)

As a part of its regular programme of Challenge Adviser visits to schools and the Council's commissioning of LA wide support programmes from the regional Service or elsewhere, the Council will work with schools to monitor the quality of performance management and workforce development arrangements. In supporting schools to provide quality staff development programmes and improve the quality of provision, the Council will:

- Work with the CSCJES, through Challenge Adviser school visits and reports, to support schools planned use of grant funding grants Development to identify and support staff development needs and to plan programmes of professional development;
- Monitor and evaluate the impact of grant spend on pupil outcomes and wellbeing, ensuring grant spend is sharply focused on specific areas of need;
- Provide schools with Authority wide performance priorities and strategic objectives to secure further improvement. This includes reducing the achievement gap between pupils who are eligible for free school meals (eFSM) and those who are not, particularly at above the expected level and further improving standards at key stage 4;
- Implement the National Model for Regional working;
- Keep Governors informed of school performance across the LA;
- Keep Governors informed of school performance priorities across the LA;
- Liaise closely with schools and the CSCJES to secure an appropriate level of delegated grant funding for schools;
- Ensure schools are fully aware of LA performance objectives through regular discussion, presentation and attendance at Cluster headteacher meetings;
- Ensure schools are kept up to date with regional developments regarding developmental opportunities;
- Support appropriate professional development of teachers and all school staff at all stages of their careers, including support for newly qualified teachers (NQTs), learning support assistants and aspiring leaders;
- Support the induction and professional development of newly appointed headteachers, senior and middle managers in schools;
- Provide opportunities for the sharing and promotion of best practice between schools via headteacher meetings, conference events and increased school-to-school working;
- Provide a range of support and development programmes to support the inclusion agenda via the ALN development programme;
- Provide opportunities for headteachers and school staff at all levels to participate in professional and career development events such as workshops, network meetings, conferences; and
- Provide a range of early intervention strategies and catch-up programmes;
- Use short term and long term evaluations to inform the development of future programmes;

4. Governing Body Training and Reports

4.1 Responsibility of the school and Council for governor support and training (*statutory function*)

The Governor Support Unit (GSU)

- provides a professional advisory and support service to governing bodies on all aspects of school governance;
- maintains a framework of best practice via GSU publications i.e. various guidance booklets, and a Handbook for Governors;
- devises and co-ordinates a termly governor training programme that includes the mandatory elements of Induction, Chair, Clerk and Data sessions where necessary as well as legislative updates and topical issues;
- creates and distributes a termly Governor Training Newsletter including mandatory training and training on legislative updates and topical matters;
- creates and distributes a termly Newsletter to all governors and clerks with updates and important information;
- recruits, trains and supports all clerks to governing bodies;
- supports the Vale School Governors' Association (VSGA);
- facilitates all Council and parent governor recruitment and appointment processes;
- establishes governing bodies, prepares and updates the instruments of government;
- seeks to maintain a very low governor vacancy rate; and
- liaises with Diocesan Authorities relating to specific areas of governance in the voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools.

4.2 The reports that the governing body provides to the Council on discharge of its function (*statutory function*)

Although the governing body of a maintained school is responsible for the conduct and standards of the school, the Council shares the responsibility for standards in schools and discharges strategic responsibilities for the overall provision of education services in the Vale. The Council provides governing bodies with strategic and support services that help to create a level of common policy planning practices that all schools share.

Governing bodies will therefore need to have regard to the roles and responsibilities of the Council in the way in which they conduct themselves and in the course of the decisions that they take.

The governing body must provide the following reports to the Council on the discharge of its function:

- Signed minutes for all meetings of the full governing body and all committees, statutory and non-statutory
- Targets for pupil performance and attendance
- School Self-Evaluation

- School Improvement Plan (SIP) or School Development Plan (SDP)
- Annual Finance report
- Private Fund Account Statement
- Governors' Annual Report
- Post inspection action plan following Estyn inspection which will in most cases form part of the SIP/SDP
- Governing bodies must make available to the Council on request copies of all statutory and, where available, recommended non statutory policies and documents (full list available on SchoolNet).
- The governing body must respond to written concerns raised by the Council regarding the performance of the school or the Headteacher and notify the Council of any action the governing body proposes to take in light of such reports.

5. School Premises

5.1 Responsibility of the school and Council for the control of school premises (*statutory function*)

Section 40 and Schedule 13 of the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998 and The Control of School Premises (Wales) Regulations 2008 set out arrangements for the control of school premises.

School premises are a resource not only for pupils **but also for the wider community**. This links in with The Vale's Community Strategy and the aim of contributing to the overall development and engagement of all our citizens. The role of schools is an integral part of the overall pattern of community provision. Schools are encouraged to promote and maximise availability. This should include the continued use of and further development of school buildings within their local community, so as to make cost effective provision for an increased level of community activity within them.

The Council and schools should seek out opportunities to develop their community role, not least because appropriate community use can improve pupils' attainment and help to bring about amongst parents and other local people a sense of ownership of, and belonging to, the school. In seeking out such opportunities, the Council and schools should therefore give priority to activities that support and promote pupils' learning, health and well-being and that of the wider community generally, such as sporting activities, homework and after-school clubs, and other study support activities, basic skills courses, adult education, youth service activities and family learning opportunities.

The Council also encourages multi-agency use of school facilities in each community so that adults, children and young people will have ease of access locally to services such as Primary Health, Social Services, Childcare and Early Learning, and a range of leisure and community learning communities.

Council responsibilities:

- The Council may give directions about the use of premises to schools, e.g. this will include advice and guidance from the Welsh Government, Council policy, Scheme for Financing Schools, health and safety advice etc.

- In issuing any such direction, the Council should take account of, and aim to avoid any conflict with, activities already planned by the school.
- The Council should recognise the important role that schools can play in their local communities when, for example, schools ask Councils to authorise transfer of control agreements affecting the use of school premises during school hours.

Governing body responsibilities in consultation with the senior leadership team:

- Schools have control over the occupation and use of school premises for all categories of maintained, Voluntary Aided and Voluntary Controlled schools, both during and outside school hours (subject to any provisions of a school's trust deed conferring rights on trustees or others)
- In exercising that control, schools of all categories must have regard to the desirability of making the premises available for community use outside school hours
- Schools of all categories may make transfer of control agreements giving third parties control of the premises for certain purposes, if the objective, in whole or part, is to promote community use
- Schools should recognise the validity, as well as the legal right, of the Council to make directions in accordance with council policies about community use
- Schools should have regard to the Council's recommended guidelines for charging for resources.

5.2 Responsibility of the school and Council for maintenance and repair of school premises (*statutory function*)

The Vale of Glamorgan Council has adopted definitions recorded in 'Fair Funding Schemes' under Section 48 of the 'Schools Standard and Framework Act 1998' as the basis for the Fair Funding Scheme for Financing Schools, in relation to maintenance and repairs.

School premises and building stock must be maintained to an acceptable level in order to complement education provision. Where a significant improvement is made to a school and/or additions to a building or school site, specific capital monies prioritised and allocated by the Council can assist. For maintenance and repair work, guidance on responsibilities can be taken from the Vale of Glamorgan document Fair Funding Scheme for Financing Schools.

Council responsibilities:

- To provide advice and support to schools on the expenditure and management of their delegated budget for property maintenance resulting through Fair Funding
- The in-house service provider (Building Services) operates two separate Service Level Agreements; one for responsive and planned property maintenance and another for building compliance for schools upon acceptance of the relevant Service Level Agreement.

Specific detailed advice is available in the aforementioned 'Fair Funding Document'; some important points to note are as follows:

- School meals: for areas in the school used exclusively or whose primary purpose is for the provision of school meals the Council will retain responsibility for all structural building maintenance whilst Vale Catering or the catering provider is responsible for non-structural repairs. Schools are responsible for the maintenance of shared assembly / dining halls
- Asbestos: the Council will be responsible for the repair, removal, replacement and encapsulation of asbestos including panelling, ceilings, tiles and laggings etc. in accordance with recommendations from the Asbestos Management Unit. Schools are responsible for the removal or management of asbestos encountered during projects funded by the school
- Capital expenditure: the Council retains capital funding to be expended and prioritised by the Council in accordance with agreed criteria.

Governing body responsibilities in consultation with the senior leadership team:

Specific detailed advice is available in the aforementioned 'Fair Funding Document'; some important points to note are as follows:

- Glazing: Schools are responsible for all glazing.
- Records regarding maintenance of assets must be retained and may be subject to audit.
- Asbestos: Schools are responsible for maintaining the asbestos register and ensuring all staff are made aware of the asbestos register and ensuring that contractors who attend the site are made aware of and sign the asbestos register.
- Emergency repairs: Schools are responsible for emergency repairs to prevent the problem from escalating. Funding for these repairs is delegated to schools via the funding formula.
- Holding repairs pending capital expenditure: schools are responsible for funding repairs required to ensure continued building integrity awaiting prioritisation of capital renewal works by Council. Where the extent and cost of holding repairs are deemed to be beyond the funding capacity of a school, the Council in consultation with the school and the Managing Director/Director of Resources will consider providing financial support.
- Costs associated with performing statutory maintenance services are delegated to schools. Examples of statutory maintenance services include boiler and gas appliance annual safety checks, testing of fire alarms and emergency lighting, periodic testing of power and lighting circuits, legionella control and lightning conductors. Catering equipment is to be maintained by the catering provider. A list of inspections to be completed and their frequency is available on request from Building Services or the School Planning and Buildings Officer.
- For items which are the separate responsibility of governors in voluntary aided schools, guidance within the 'Voluntary Aided Schools Capital Grant Programme, A Guide for Governors', can be followed.

5.3 New building developments on school sites (non-statutory function)

Governing Bodies **must** consult the Council (and in the case of Voluntary Aided or Voluntary Controlled schools, the relevant body) when consideration is given to a new build on school land, or to seek external grant funding for additional facilities. Procedure to be followed is set out in the Fair Funding Document.

5.4 Caretaker properties (non-statutory function)

Where a school has caretaker's accommodation on site, the school is responsible for the maintenance of the property and will receive funding through its formula allocation. The Council must be consulted before schools agree tenancy. The Council will provide the appropriate Service Occupancy Agreement following agreement of terms.

6. Effective Transition

Effective transition of pupils between key stages has been recognised by Welsh Government, Estyn and Councils as having a major impact on pupil wellbeing and standards of achievement. This is particularly crucial when pupils transfer between schools and learning providers.

The following provides an outline of the roles of schools and the Council, working in partnership, to ensure effective management of transition between the key stages.

6.1 Roles of school and Council to develop effective transition for pupils from nursery school to primary school (non-statutory function)

Children enter the Foundation Phase from the age of 3. Therefore, responsibilities to develop transition should be shared by school governing bodies for school based nursery classes, governing bodies of maintained nurseries and registered providers with reception classes.

Council responsibilities:

- Make available information on the admissions process to parents, including providing parent information booklets and application forms through schools, maintained nurseries and the council website.
- Process school admission requests in accordance with the Council's admissions policy and within the timescales published in the parent information booklet.
- Provide a legal right of appeal in cases where admission requests are unsuccessful.
- Provide training to school, nursery, and registered provider staff on the Foundation Phase pedagogy and philosophy.

- Provide support, advice and guidance to governors and staff on implementing the Foundation Phase.
- Provide skills progression documents for use by pre-school settings and schools to help providers evaluate progress of children.
- Provide materials to support the implementation of the Foundation Phase, including planning and evaluating progress.
- Provide specialised support, advice and guidance to pre-school settings and schools for pupils with additional needs.
- Provide 10% link teacher time to registered providers to ensure all settings are given up to date and personalised professional development for practitioners.
- Provide training, support and demonstrations for parents on a number of parent programmes to promote Basic Skills e.g. Language and Play and Numbers and Play.

Governing body responsibilities in consultation with the senior leadership team (maintained nursery schools and infant/primary schools with nursery classes):

To ensure the school develops best practice in transition and endeavours to:

- monitor carefully the transition between home and setting and between different settings to support everyone involved;
- provide information about the child, including interests, and areas for development, to the relevant primary school;
- pass on information about children's progress to next setting, including teacher assessments; and
- use pupil portfolios, if appropriate to individualise each pupil's progress, including likes and dislikes.

Governing body responsibilities in consultation with the senior leadership team (all maintained, voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools):

To ensure the school develops best practice in transition and endeavours to:

- monitor carefully the transition between home and setting and between different settings to support everyone involved;
- liaise with nursery or pre-school provider;
- set up visits from parents and care givers to build up personal relationships;
- invite parents and care givers to events e.g. learning sessions, play activities;
- provide parents and care givers with an information pack including daily routines, staff information and policies;
- establish feelings of trust and respect with parents/care givers and children;
- establish links with feeder playgroups/Flying Start/Non Maintained settings;
- make use of a number of parent programmes provided by the Council to strengthen the tie between home and school learning;
- promote self-confidence and positive attitude to learning in all children whatever their gender, ethnicity, home language, special educational needs, disability or ability by valuing all children and their families;
- be aware of and use the knowledge and interest of pupils in order to follow their interests and build next steps learning;

- develop flexible settling in strategies to lessen the trauma of leaving the home or previous setting;
- arrange school welcome meetings – introduce the Foundation Phase pedagogy and philosophy explaining the new emphasis on the ‘play curriculum’ and how parents and care givers can help; and
- arrange open days at various junctures throughout the year to involve parents and care givers in the progress of own child.

6.2 Roles of school and Council to develop effective transition for pupils from the Foundation Phase to Key Stage 2 (*non-statutory function*)

Transition from the Foundation Phase to key stage 2 is recognised as an area that requires attention, from within existing resources.

Governing body responsibilities in consultation with the senior leadership team:

- Identify and develop transition as part of the School Development Planning process in areas where development is needed.
- Where possible ensure continuity and progression in the delivery and planning of the curriculum across key stages.
- Ensure proper availability and use of pupil transfer data.
- Identify and target specific support at those pupils considered to be vulnerable and/or at risk of under achieving.
- Ensure parents/carers/families are fully informed of the transfer process.
- Evaluate the impact of improved transition arrangements on learners’ progress.

6.3 Roles of school and Council to develop effective transition for pupils from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3 (*statutory function*)

The importance placed on the transition from primary to secondary school has been reflected in its inclusion in The Vale of Glamorgan’s Children and Young People’s Plan as a strategic priority. The rationale for this focus has been a statutory requirement that schools develop transition policies in order to improve KS3 performance.

Council responsibilities:

- Make available information on the admissions process to parents and care givers, including providing parent information booklets and application forms through schools and the council website.
- Process school admission requests in accordance with the Council’s admissions policy and within the timescales published in the parent information booklet.
- Provide a legal right of appeal in cases where admission requests are unsuccessful.
- Facilitate the transfer of performance, attendance and other appropriate data/information to enable secondary schools meet the needs of learners.

- Support and develop curricular initiatives which create continuity of experiences for learners moving across phases and offer advice and support to individual departments and subjects in order to meet particular needs and priorities.
- Provide targeted support where there are significant challenges in raising standards.
- Facilitate cross phase cluster assessment and moderation meetings and promote the sharing of subject expertise and continuity in curriculum planning from key stage 2 to key stage 3.

Governing body responsibilities in consultation with the senior leadership team:

- Produce a plan which addresses the action that will be taken against the core requirements set out in guidance by the Welsh Government.
- Identify and develop transition as part of the School Development Planning process if this is an identified area for development.
- Ensure continuity and progression in the delivery and planning of the curriculum across key stages.
- Ensure proper availability and use of pupil transfer data.
- Identify and target specific support at those pupils considered to be vulnerable.
- Ensure parents/carers/families are fully informed of the transfer process.
- Ensure the impact of improved transition arrangements is maintained and evaluated.

6.4 Roles of school and Council to develop effective transition for pupils from key stage 3 to key stage 4 (*non-statutory function*)

Council responsibilities:

- Work with schools, and other relevant agencies to coordinate the production of an appropriate menu of alternative learning pathways.
- Support and develop curricular initiatives which create continuity of experiences for learners moving across phases and offer advice and support to individual departments and subjects in order to meet particular needs and priorities.
- Provide targeted support where there are significant challenges in raising standards.

Governing body responsibilities in consultation with the senior leadership team:

- Make available an appropriate menu of qualifications and learning pathways in line with statutory requirements.
- Encourage the planning of an individual learning pathway for each pupil entering year 10 and have mechanisms in place to support and amend this pathway choice.
- Ensure continuity and progression in the delivery and planning of the curriculum across key stages.
- Identify and target specific support at those pupils considered to be vulnerable.

6.5 Roles of school and Council to develop effective transition for pupils from key stage 4 to post 16 provision (*non-statutory function*)

Council responsibilities:

- Work with schools, the FE sector and other relevant agencies to coordinate the production of a full options menu of opportunities post 16.
- Promote the triangular relationship between the school, careers service and the pupil that is central to maintaining in education, employment or training those individuals who are likely to reject formal learning post 16.
- Encourage all post 16 providers to offer access to ongoing support and coaching for young people with the aim of improving retention or providing direction into better matched provision.

Governing body responsibilities in consultation with the senior leadership team:

- Make available access for pupils in years 10 and 11 to independent careers advice and guidance. This should include collective information sessions on post 16 opportunities as part of delivered curriculum and one to one interviews with careers professionals at the request of the pupil.
- Arrange access for all pupils to the common application process through school IT systems and local authority information centers.
- Arrange access for all pupils in year 10 and 11 to the full options menu at post 16 across the authority area which includes information on possible access routes to the FE sector and training providers as well as school based opportunities in the parent and other schools.
- Provide access to a trained Learning Coach for pupils as a source of guidance and learning support.
- Encourage the planning of an individual learning pathway for each pupil from year 10 onwards and have mechanisms in place to support and amend this pathway choice.
- Liaise with Engagement and Progression Coordinator, training providers and the voluntary sector in identifying year 10 and 11 pupils unlikely to continue in education or training post 16 prior to the end of formal education and adopt strategies that forge links between these pupils and this provision.
- Promote access to HE and FE institutions, training providers and employers through programmes of visits, careers fairs etc. and strive to provide pupils with the maximum amount of information on post 16 opportunities in schools, the FE sector and training organisations.

7. Health and Safety Matters (*statutory function*)

The Vale of Glamorgan Council recognises and accepts its responsibilities under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and other safety related legislation, to conduct its affairs so that risks to the health and safety of employees and other people who may be affected by work activities are properly managed and controlled.

The Council has delegated responsibility for the implementation of its Health and Safety policy to the Director of Learning and Skills, Heads of Service and other managers (which includes Headteachers) in respect of the work activities they control.

This element of the partnership agreement sets out how the Council implements this policy and outlines the responsibilities of governing bodies and school managers. It should be noted that voluntary aided and foundation schools are given the same level of support as maintained and voluntary controlled schools, even though these governing bodies have the responsibilities of the employer under Health and Safety Law. However, although the Council provides support to voluntary aided and foundation schools, the legal responsibility under Health and Safety Law remains with the school governing body. Further details can be obtained from the National Society website.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

For simplicity, no distinction is made between the different types of school in this document, although necessary adjustments are made to advice and instructions in practice.

Council responsibilities:

The Council will take all reasonable steps to meet its legal duties, paying particular attention to:

- Ensuring workplaces are safe and without risks to health.
- Ensuring equipment and machinery is safe and safe systems of work are set and followed.
- Ensuring all articles and substances are used, stored and moved safely.
- Ensuring appropriate information, instruction, training and supervision is provided where necessary for reasons of health and safety.
- The Head of Strategy, Community Learning & Resources is responsible for co-ordinating health and safety matters throughout the service. They will ensure that procedures are devised and communicated to Headteachers to enable consistency in performance and application.
- Arrangements for the reporting of accidents, incidents, assaults and near misses.

The Director of Learning and Skills has overall responsibility for health and safety in schools and is responsible for ensuring the following standards are achieved. It is expected that some functions will be delegated to Headteachers and Governing Bodies:

- All hazards that present a significant risk to the health or safety of employees, pupils and other legitimate users of the premises and services of the Council will be subject to risk assessment.
- The significant findings of risk assessments will be recorded, reviewed periodically and revised if circumstances change.
- Following risk assessment, measures will be taken to eliminate hazards or to reduce risks to the lowest level reasonably practicable. Measures taken shall follow the preferred hierarchy of risk control as outlined in the Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999.
- Managers will ensure that arrangements are made to implement the health and safety measures that are identified in risk assessments and will monitor and review the effectiveness of those measures.

- Risk Assessments, Health and Safety Policies and other appropriate documents will be brought to the attention of all relevant employees.
- All accidents, incidents and near misses, including incidents relating to occupational health issues, will be investigated, recorded and reported with the aim of improving health and safety measures. Reporting accidents, incidents, assaults and near misses on the relevant Health and Safety corporate forms.
- All employees will receive comprehensible information, instruction and training relevant to the work they undertake and their knowledge, experience and abilities.
- Employees who are managers will be trained so they are competent to discharge their health and safety responsibilities.
- Emergency procedures will be devised and staff instructed accordingly.
- Adequate first aid arrangements will be made for all staff, pupils and other legitimate users of services and premises.
- The council will cooperate fully in the appointment of Safety Representatives by recognised Trade Unions and will provide them with sufficient resources to carry out their functions.
- Measures will be taken to ensure that appropriate work equipment is selected, used and maintained in such a way that risks to health and safety is minimized.
- The council employs specialist staff to provide advice and support to schools on Health and Safety matters. These include curriculum advisors, building construction and maintenance staff, and Health and Safety staff.

Governing body responsibilities in consultation with the senior leadership team:

- Governing bodies should ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that the premises they control are safe and offer no significant risk to health.
- Governing bodies should familiarise themselves with the council's Health and Safety policy and its implications, and should adopt their own Health and Safety policies to take account of the circumstances of their school.
- Legislation on the local management of schools confers significant local management functions for governing bodies including:
 - purchase and maintenance of equipment (including fire-fighting equipment)
 - non-structural maintenance and repair work falling within the governors' responsibility
- Cleaning (both indoor and outdoor, e.g. swimming pools).
- Governing bodies may wish to designate one governor to have particular responsibility for health and safety and to liaise closely with the Headteacher in respect of health and safety issues at their school.

Headteacher responsibilities:

- Headteachers are ultimately responsible to the Director of Learning and Skills for the health and safety performance of their schools. They are required to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, that all activities are safe, properly supervised and risks are reduced to an acceptable level; that all employees are adequately trained for the work they are required to do and are informed of any hazards to health and safety which

may be inherent in the plant, equipment, substances or materials they use and are aware of the principles of basic safety.

- Headteachers are responsible for ensuring, so far as is reasonably practicable, that arrangements are made for ensuring the health and safety of employees and other people affected by work activities at their schools.
- Headteachers should propose detailed statements of the organisation and arrangements they will make to implement the Council Health and Safety policy in their school, to be adopted by governors and included in the school Health and Safety policy. Headteachers should provide appropriate information on these policies for all staff and other people who may be affected by work activities at the school.
- Headteachers have day-to-day responsibility for ensuring that procedures for health and safety as advised by the Director of Learning and Skills are applied in their schools.
- Headteachers are responsible for monitoring local arrangements for the health and safety of staff and others using their premises, and for advising the Director of Learning and Skills and/or their governing body of any necessary improvements where these cannot be progressed through usual reporting procedures.
- Headteachers should encourage employees with delegated management responsibilities to observe high standards of health and safety and should review their performance regularly. Good communications are essential in this respect and this will extend to consulting and keeping employees and their representatives informed.
- Headteachers have responsibility for ensuring the following functions are carried out within their schools or services. It is expected that some of these functions will be delegated to Heads of Department, managers and other senior staff:
 - ensuring activities comply with health and safety legislation;
 - ensuring that risk assessments and safe working procedures are complete and up to date within their area of responsibility;
 - ensuring that all employees have job specific health and safety training, and receive appropriate information, instruction and supervision;
 - ensuring new employees receive induction training on health and safety;
 - ensuring employees for whom they are responsible follow safe working practices;
 - ensuring all accidents, incidents, near misses and possible cases of occupational illness are reported and investigated with the aim of improving risk control measures;
 - ensuring adequate first aid facilities are provided;
 - ensuring plant, machinery, tools, office equipment and any other items of work equipment for which the school has responsibility for maintenance are maintained in a safe condition; and
 - maintaining written records that satisfy legal requirements, e.g. for training, risk assessments, accident investigations, statutory tests etc.

8. Council support for school staff appointments and redundancies (*non-statutory function*)

8.1 Council's role in staff appointments

For Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher appointments:

- In all schools the Director of Learning and Skills or their representative(s) is entitled to attend relevant meetings of the Selection Panel to offer professional advice. The governing body has a duty to consider the Director of Learning and Skills' advice before making a decision.
- Governor support and human resources officers will attend governing body meetings to advise and support on all elements of the recruitment process. Governor support staff, the Senior Challenge Advisor and the school's Challenge Adviser will attend all Selection Panel meetings that involve shortlisting and interviews. In the case of voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools representatives from the appropriate Diocesan Office will also attend these meetings.
- Officers from the Council's Governor Support Unit (GSU) and human resources will attend governing body meetings to provide advice in relation to the job description, advertisement, selection criteria etc. Officers from the GSU and the Central South Consortium's Joint Education Service (JES) will attend the Selection Panel meetings where shortlisting and appointments are made. Detailed advice is given in the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher Appointments guidance booklet available from the GSU. In the case of voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools, liaise with Diocesan Authorities as appropriate.
- For schools buying into the Local Authority's HR SLA, Employee Services will place adverts, and One Vale will arrange the issue of application forms and further particulars to applicants. Schools will need to provide sufficient copies of the school information they wish to issue to applicants e.g. school prospectus, ESTYN inspection report, letter from Chair of Governors. The co-ordination of the pack of information is usually undertaken by Employee Services
- Application forms to be returned to GSU who will also undertake the administration of the short listing and interview process including the take up references if requested by the school.
- Employee Services will produce offer letters and undertake pre-employment checks on successful candidates and communicate the outcome to schools.

For all other staff appointments, the Council will produce and circulate recruitment policy guidance for Headteachers and governing bodies.

8.2 Council's role in school staff redundancies

- The Council does not delegate redundancy funding to schools; the funding of redundancy payments and pension release costs are subject to arrangements outlined in the School's Redundancy Policy and there being:
 - a genuine redundancy situation;

- the governing body following their school policy and the advice of Council Officers; and
 - has the approval of the Director of Learning and Skills or Head of Service.
- Human Resources will provide advice and guidance to Governing Bodies and members of staff prior to, during and following, a redundancy situation arising. This will include advice on the application of the Schools Redundancy policy if adopted by the Governing Body.
 - Human Resources may attend (as the Director of Learning and Skills' representative) meetings of the Staff Disciplinary & Dismissal Committee and Appeals Committee to provide advice to the Committee.
 - Human Resources will liaise with all schools to seek suitable alternative employment for employees under notice of redundancy.
 - The Council will support the governing body prior to and at employment tribunal stage where necessary, to include Human Resources and Legal Services support providing their advice has been adhered to. In the case of Voluntary Aided Schools where the governing body is the employer, the Council will liaise with the Diocesan Authority as appropriate.

9. Complaints and Disciplinary Matters (*non-statutory function*)

All schools will seek specific Council advice on complaints and disciplinary matters in the following instances:

- All complaints which are potentially of a Safeguarding/child protection nature.
- All disciplinary matters which could necessitate the suspension of a member of staff.
- All disciplinary matters which could potentially be gross misconduct.
- All complaints and disciplinary matters which relate to the Headteacher.
- All complaints and disciplinary matters which move to the stage of being heard by the governing body.
- Foundation, Voluntary Aided and Voluntary Controlled schools will also need to liaise with the relevant body.

In all the above, the Council will:

- Provide advice and guidance on the application of the Disciplinary Procedures, Schools' Complaints Procedures and Welsh Government Guidance on Complaints.
- Provide advice and guidance on investigatory processes.
- Provide guidance, advice and training on the protocols relating to allegations of a Safeguarding/child protection nature.
- Human Resources attendance (as the Director of Learning and Skills' representative) at disciplinary hearings/meetings of the staff disciplinary & dismissal committee (and disciplinary & dismissal appeals committee) to provide advice to the disciplining office/committee where requested/appropriate.
- Support the school prior to and at employment tribunal stage where necessary, to include Human Resources and Legal Services support provided their advice is adhered to.

- The Council will work with all other relevant bodies in respect to voluntary aided and voluntary controlled schools.

Governing bodies will:

- Publish complaints procedures.
- Ensure all pupils and parents are made aware of and are able to access the school's complaints procedure.

10. Policy on Provision for Pupils with Additional Learning Needs

Responsibilities of the Governing Body in consultation with the senior leadership team:

Governing bodies should, with the Headteacher:

- produce an SEN policy (statutory duty) and have due regard for the Special Educational Needs Code of Practice for Wales;
- meet their statutory responsibilities for Special Educational Needs (SEN) identified in the Education Act 1996 and subsequent legislation;
- report to parents on the effectiveness of their SEN Policy via the annual report to parents;
- ensure that the school has an Additional Learning Needs Coordinator (ALNCo) who is aware of his/her duties and performs these accordingly;
- appoint a school governor with responsibility for ALN/SEN who is aware of his/her duties and performing these accordingly;
- work collaboratively to secure effective partnership with other agencies and relevant stakeholders to provide inclusive and supportive environments which cater for individual children and young people's needs and offer them equal opportunity to reach their potential;
- operate a system for monitoring, evaluating and recording the progress of each child which is made available to all teachers who teach the child;
- ensure that any additional resource made available to the school to support pupils with complex additional learning needs is used effectively;
- prepare for the introduction of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act (ALNET) to ensure compliance by September 2020.

Responsibilities of the Council

The Council will seek to empower schools to provide:

- access for all pupils to a broad and balanced curriculum which embraces the National Curriculum;
- challenging educational experiences of a high quality;
- early identification of a child's needs;
- defined teaching objectives with intended outcomes for each child, based on the early assessment of need;

- a differentiated curriculum and in-class support where appropriate;
- partnership working with other agencies; and
- effective opportunities for parents to support their children with additional learning needs.

The Council will undertake to support schools in their statutory duty by providing advice and support through specialist teachers, outreach services and Educational Psychologists. The Council's central staff will also advise and contribute to in-service education, training and professional events organised by the school.

The Council has a responsibility to ensure that resources are being used effectively. It will therefore work closely with schools in monitoring provision made for children with SEN/ALN and ensuring full accountability for all resources allocated/received.

The Council recognises that for some children with complex or profound needs, supplementary provision may be required either through a Statement of SEN or through additional resources. Statements are for those with the most complex needs and these children are a small proportion of the totality of children with SEN.

In partnership with schools, the Council will seek to evaluate the effectiveness of the impact of intervention in raising the levels of attainment of pupils with SEN.

The Council will support the school to prepare for the introduction of the ALNET to ensure compliance by September 2020.

11. Communication and Consultation (*non-statutory function*)

11.1 Directorate hosted meetings involving governors and/or headteachers

This section sets out the regular meetings hosted by the Council, to which governors, Headteachers or their representatives are invited. For all groups requiring representatives from different sectors or clusters, the Council will seek nominations for representatives through the Vale Primary and Secondary Headteacher Cluster meetings.

Where possible the Council will endeavour to ensure that meetings are either at the beginning or end of the working day so that there is the least disruption for schools.

Director of Learning and Skills and Headteacher Steering Committee Meetings:

Half-termly meetings are held with Headteacher representatives from each Cluster. The purpose of these meetings is to enable effective consideration by the Directorate Management Team and Headteachers as progress achieved against identified strategic priorities for Education and Lifelong Learning. Also, to ensure a coherent and considered response to Welsh Government initiatives and other statutory requirements.

Director of Learning and Skills meetings with Primary and Secondary Headteachers:

- Termly meetings will be held with Headteachers from the separate phases - secondary and primary, as well as an annual Summer Conference with both Primary and Secondary Headteachers present.
- These meetings will involve the discussion of policy and consultation on new policies and strategies. Additionally, the purpose of these meetings will be to share new information - such as developments in teaching and learning, new legislation, WG guidance, new policy/procedures affecting schools, presentations from Council advisers and officers or other council staff e.g. HR, on appropriate topics.
- Meetings with Primary and Secondary Headteachers will last a half-day.

Membership:

- All schools (Headteachers or their representatives) - nursery, primary secondary, head of PRU and special school.
- Council representation at both meetings will be through the Director of Learning and Skills, Head of ALN and Wellbeing, the Head of Strategy, Community Learning & Resources, the Head of Standards and Provision and Senior Challenge Advisor, with appropriate additional advisers and officers depending on the topics to be discussed.

Procedures:

- All meetings will formally be set with dates for the academic year ahead.
- An agenda will be agreed with the Headteacher Steering Committee and circulated 5 days before the meeting.
- Formal apologies for school absence will be recorded.
- Items for inclusion on the agenda should be offered through the Headteacher Cluster Group Representatives, who are themselves members of the Headteacher Steering Committee.
- The Director of Learning and Skills or her representative will chair both meetings.
- Formal minutes of the meetings will be taken and shared via Headteacher Cluster Meetings.
- Headteacher representation will be expected at these meetings, although each Headteacher may delegate to their senior management team members as appropriate. Attendance and representation by every school will be key to ensuring good levels of communication and positive engagement in the further development of the Vale's education services.
- Subgroups will report back to the All Headteachers' Group on their work.

Budget Forum

The Schools Forums (Wales) Regulations 2003 required each Council to establish a Schools Forum. The Schools Forum is key to developing informed and confident dialogue between the Council and schools on budgetary issues, including schools' funding levels for the coming year, pressures on future years' budgets, changes to local funding formula and reviewing contracts / service level agreements to schools.

Forums have been set up to represent the views of schools and other interested bodies, on the Council's schools' budget and other matters related to school funding. The Forum is a consultative and advisory body, and not a decision taking body.

The Vale's School Budget Forum shall comprise not more than 25 members, of which not more than one quarter must be non-schools members. Schools members must include a proportionate number of representatives of community schools, foundation schools and voluntary schools, and at least one must be a representative of a special school.

Non-school members currently comprise representatives from the Vale's Committee, Cabinet Member for Learning and Culture, a Learning and Culture Scrutiny Member and the Head of Strategy, Community Learning & Resources.

The Budget Forum meets at least twice a term and the Forum constitution, agendas, minutes and papers are available on request.

Admissions Forum

The Education (Admission Forums) (Wales) Regulations 2003, which came into force on 1 December 2003, required the Council to establish an Admissions Forum to consider, discuss, monitor and consult on policy and procedures relating to school admission arrangements for all pupils residing within the Council's area.

The membership of the Vale of Glamorgan Schools Admission Forum shall comprise of 17 members as follows:

- Council (5)
1 Cabinet Member, 1 Scrutiny Member, 3 Local Authority Officers
- Church in Wales Diocesan Board (1)
1 place nominated by the Diocesan Authority
- Roman Catholic Diocesan Board (1)
1 place nominated by the Diocesan Authority
- Community/Voluntary Controlled Schools (3)
1 place for a Headteacher of a Vale secondary school
1 place for a Headteacher of a Vale Welsh medium primary school
1 place for a Headteacher of a Vale English medium primary school

Places nominated via Headteacher groups

- Foundation Schools (1)
1 place for Headteacher of a Vale Foundation School nominated via Headteacher groups
- Voluntary Aided Schools (1)
1 place for a Headteacher of a Vale Voluntary Aided School nominated via Headteacher groups

- Parent Governors (3)
 - 1 place for a parent governor from a Vale community primary school
 - 1 place for a parent governor from a Vale community secondary school
 - 1 place for a parent governor from a Vale Foundation School

Places nominated by the Vale School Governors' Association (VSGA)

- Local Community (1)
 - 1 place nominated by the Authority to represent the interests of any section of the local community

Chair and secretary of the Admissions Forum

The Forum must appoint a Chair and Vice Chair, who may or may not be members of the forum, and should be nominated by the Forum itself. At any meeting where both the Chair and Vice Chair are absent, the Forum shall elect, from the core members present, a person to take the Chair for that meeting only.

The Council shall appoint a secretary, who is not a member, for the Vale of Glamorgan Schools Admission Forum. The Secretary shall circulate the agenda and documents relevant to the meeting to members.

Other meetings likely to involve schools

School representatives are also invited to attend a number of other groups. The requirements for task and finish groups and other sub-groups may be revised during the course of this partnership agreement in response to national and local policy developments.

Panels currently include:

- Vale School Governors' Association (VSGA)
- ALNCo Forum
- Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)
- SEN Review Task and Finish Groups

11.2 Training for governors and school staff

The Governor Support Unit will provide a programme of training for all school governors to include the mandatory elements of Induction, Chair, Clerk and Data sessions where necessary throughout the academic year on a termly basis. Details are emailed or posted direct to all governors and clerks to governing bodies and the programme is also available on the Council's website.

The Professional Learning Offer from the CSC is a comprehensive directory of planned professional development opportunities for school staff which aligns with the national model for professional learning. It has been developed in partnership with schools from across the region, many of whom facilitate programmes.

11.3 Communication with Schools from Council

Formal papers, e.g. new policies

- No policy change will be made without first going through formal consultation with schools, Council staff and where appropriate wider council services, other agencies and voluntary groups
- A copy will be sent to the school administrator.
- A further copy will be placed on StaffNet under New Policies and Guidance.
- All Council policies will be available in Welsh. Ethnic minority language and accessible format versions will also be made available for key policies and advice to parents documents.

Please note

Employment policies which are commended to governing bodies for adoption are not subject to the consultation processes outlined above. These will continue to be subject to consultation with the relevant recognised trade unions and Headteachers via Human Resource officers. Schools are required to advise the LA of any decision by the governing body regarding adoption of HR Policies.

Full public consultation documents

- In many cases it will be appropriate for a policy document to have been worked up in a small group or working party and shared at the appropriate Headteacher Steering Group and/or Headteacher meeting before being considered a suitable draft document for wider and formal consultation.
- Consultation documents will be shared on the internet so that they are available to the widest audience.
- Copies will be emailed to the Chair of Governors and Headteacher of each school
- The formal consultation group for public documents will automatically include the following circulation list:
 - Chairs of Governors
 - Headteachers
 - Local Independent schools
 - Recognised Trade Unions representing Education based staff
 - Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE)
 - The local Roman Catholic and Church of Wales Archdiocesan Offices
 - Central South Wales Directors of Education
 - Local Health Board Executive
 - Head of Children's Services
 - Children and Young People's Partnership
 - Chair of the Vale School Governors' Association (VSGA)
 - South Wales Race Equality Council (SWREC)
 - and to any other relevant groups as and when required.
- Changes to policies that involve parents directly (such as the Council Admission policy and School Attendance Policy) will be made available in public libraries for the period of consultation.

- Formal consultation with children and young people is valued and will be facilitated on relevant documents through school councils, the youth service and the Youth Cabinet.

At the close of the consultation period we will ensure that a summary concluding statistical and formal analysis of the findings is made in writing and placed on the intranet. This evidence will be used to inform our final policy or decision-making process.

Written, email, and telephone correspondence with schools

Council and schools can expect professional correspondence and response from each other at all times.

For all forms of correspondence with schools, the Council will comply with the Vale Council's formal policies regarding written enquiry response standards, email communication guidance, and telephone response standards. Correspondence will also comply with the Council's most recent Welsh Language Scheme.

Information to parents

Published booklets and leaflets will be issued bilingually in English and Welsh, with any ethnic minority language available as required. We will also ensure that braille, large print or audio versions are available by request. The Council will also make all published information to parents available through the Council's website.

Council Staff Visits to Schools

- Will usually be prearranged formally by telephone or email/letter and will always be prearranged if staff observation in schools is the purpose.

11.4 Formal Complaints

The Council has agreed a Corporate Concerns and Complaints Policy, full details can be found on the Council's website. In simple terms:

If the complaint is about a Council issue or member of staff:

Complaints can be made verbally or in writing to the member of staff who has the best understanding of the issues involved - this would normally be the service manager for the relevant area. If this is not appropriate, or if the issue is not resolved at that stage, the complaint would be dealt with by the relevant Head of Service.

N.B. There are specific, separate arrangements in place for exclusions and admissions appeals, and SEN provision (these are outlined in the complaints policy).

If the complaint is about an individual school or a member of their staff/pupil:

Complaints should be made to the Headteacher of the relevant school, in the first instance to be dealt with in accordance with the school's complaints policy, and

subsequently escalated to the Chair of Governors if required. A complainant may request the Director of Learning and Skills or relevant diocesan authority to review the procedure used to reach a decision. However, the Director of Learning and Skills or relevant diocesan authority may not review the decision itself or act as an appeal mechanism.

11.5 Freedom of Information Advice

Freedom of Information

Under the Freedom of Information Act schools are regarded as separate public authorities from the Council and as such it is the responsibility of the governing body to ensure compliance with the statutory provisions contained within the Act.

A brief overview of requests and responses under the FOI Act is included below but a definition document for governing bodies of Maintained Schools in Wales can be found on the Information Commissioner's website.

http://ico.org.uk/for_organisations/sector_guides/education

This guidance gives examples of the kinds of information schools are expected to provide.

All staff that deal with the public receive requests for information on a regular basis. Much of this information is supplied immediately, or shortly afterwards, either verbally or in writing. The Freedom of Information Act does not change anything about these queries, but does explicitly deal with more in depth enquiries or situations where you are considering refusing to provide information.

Requests for information made under the FOI Act must:

- be in writing (letter, email, fax or even text message);
- contain the applicant's name and correspondence address; and
- describe the specific information requested.
- There is no need for the applicant to specify that the request is made under the FOI Act.
- The Act is retrospective so the information requested can be from some time ago.

Responses to these requests must:

- be compliant with the current FOI legislation at the time of the request;
- be made within 20 working days of the date of request; and
- not ask why the information is being requested.
- If information is being withheld, you must still confirm that information is held and the exemption under which it is being withheld.

Model Publication Scheme - making public information available

All schools must produce a Publication Scheme which outlines the information they make available to the public such as minutes of meetings, annual reports or financial

information. Specific guidance and a template that may be adopted by schools can be found on the Information Commissioner's website.

Data protection - looking after the information you hold about pupils, students and staff

As schools handle and store information about school pupils they are legally obliged to protect that information. Under the Data Protection Act schools must:

- only collect information that they need for a specific purpose;
- keep it secure;
- ensure it is relevant and up to date;
- only hold as much as they need, and only for as long as they need it ; and
- allow the subject of the information to see it on request.

Further information can be found on the Information Commissioner's website.

Pupils have rights to see their personal information. They can make a subject access request to see the personal information schools hold about them. They, and their parents, also have the right to see their educational records. More information on this and what you need to do can be found on the Information Commissioner's website.

11.6 Public Relations

The Vale Council receives numerous press enquiries on a daily basis. It is the role of the Communications Team within the Council's Performance and Development department to monitor and manage all enquiries regarding council services. However, Headteachers take responsibility for responding to press enquiries relating to their schools.

The Council's communications team can provide support and guidance to schools on responding to media enquiries and can also help with proactive media coverage.

Assembly Members and Members of Parliament: Visits and invitations

Governing Bodies should notify the Director of Learning and Skills of all visits by Assembly Members or Members of Parliament to schools in advance of the visit. The Director of Learning and Skills will notify the Cabinet Member for Learning and Culture and the Council Leader.

Review of Council LA/Schools Partnership Agreement

The duration of the Council School Partnership Agreements is three years from September 2017 – August 2020.

The Council will commence a review of the Agreements from September 2017 to ensure adequate consultation timescales. Partnership agreements will subsequently be

reviewed at intervals of no more than three years from the previous review. A review of agreements may also be triggered if:

- a school goes into special measures or the need for significant improvements are identified by inspection;
- the Council uses its power to appoint additional governors;
- The Minister for Education directs closure of a school;
- The Minister confirms proposals to restructure the provision of sixth form education;
- Statutory proposals are made and come into effect leading to
 - amalgamations of infant and primary schools;
 - changes to SEN provision;
 - introduction of permitted pupil selection arrangements (pupil banding);
 - alteration from single sex to co-education or vice versa;
 - change of language medium of the school;
 - introduction or ending of boarding provision;
 - where an Council makes, or Minister approves, school re-organisation proposals which could mean the establishment, alteration or discontinuance of schools;
- If the Council uses its power to suspend the governing body's right to a delegated budget; and
- Consistent and upheld complaints by stakeholders are made against a school.

If a review is triggered under any of the circumstances above, the Council will complete the review within 6 months and revise the Partnership Agreement if necessary. A review could lead to:

- no change;
- amendment of the Agreement or Statement;
- replacement with a new Agreement or Statement; or
- the Council drawing up a Statement if the school did not agree to changes to an Agreement.

When reviewing an Agreement due to one of the circumstances listed above, if another circumstance comes to light, this circumstance will be reviewed together with the first circumstance. The Council and school will then have one year from the date of the second circumstance occurring to carry out the review. If during this year, a third or more circumstances occur, the Council and School would have one year from the date of the later circumstance to carry out the review. If following a review, no change is made to the Agreement; up to four years may elapse after the circumstance which triggered the review took place before the Council and school have to review the Agreement or Statement again.