To: The Chair of the Board of Governors of all grant-aided schools

12 March 2018

Dear Colleagues

At this time when Boards of Governors are in the process of being reconstituted, I am taking the opportunity to highlight responsibilities of Boards of Governors in relation to pastoral care, safeguarding and child protection.

Boards of Governors of grant-aided schools have a legal duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils and you will appreciate that effective pastoral care policies underpin and support a child-centred approach in all aspects of school life. As Chair of the Board it is therefore important that you ensure that, in line with guidance from the Department of Education, appropriate pastoral care policies are in place and operating effectively within your school.

You may wish also to familiarise new and existing Governors with the ‘School Governors Handbook – Safeguarding and Child Protection’ guidance document (a link to which is available on the safeguarding section of the Education Authority’s website [http://www.eani.org.uk/schools/safeguarding-and-child-protection/](http://www.eani.org.uk/schools/safeguarding-and-child-protection/)) and to ask existing Governors to ensure that their child protection training is up to date.

It is the Department’s policy that Initial Child Protection Awareness Training is mandatory for all new governors, as part of their induction programme, and that the Chairperson and Designated Governor for Child Protection must complete Child Protection Training provided by the EA’s Child Protection Support Service (CPSS) during each term in office (every 4 years). Whilst online training packages are available on ESAGs TV at [www.esags.tv/](http://www.esags.tv/), this is intended to provide additional support, rather than act as a substitute for child protection training.
The Department’s statutory guidance also recommends that schools annually complete the Education and Training Pro-forma entitled ‘Guidance for the Review and Evaluation Of Safeguarding Arrangements’ (available at https://www.etini.gov.uk/publications/safeguarding-proforma-tier-4-educational-oversight) and to act on the associated outcome of the self-evaluation thereby ensuring for example that all vetting requirements are met and all required policies are up to date.

Finally, I would remind you that if you have any concerns in relation to any child protection and safeguarding issues, that the Education Authority’s Child Protection Support Service is available to offer advice in the first instance.

Thank you for your ongoing work in this important area.

I am copying this letter to all school Principals.

Yours sincerely

TOMMY O’REILLY
DEPUTY SECRETARY