

This matter is being dealt with by:

Name: [REDACTED] s.40

Reference: JM/invitationtospecialmeeting

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To all members of the governing  
body of St Giles Special School

Dear Member

18 January 2018

I am writing to formally notify you that Nottinghamshire County Council is issuing a Warning Notice to the governing body of St Giles Special School. The Warning Notice is being issued under Section 60 paragraph 2 (b) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006. This section provides that a Warning Notice may be issued to the governing body of a maintained school where the authority is satisfied that there has been a serious breakdown in the way the school is managed or governed which is prejudicing, or likely to prejudice, standards of performance. The office of the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) has been advised verbally of the intention to issue a Warning Notice and a copy of this letter will be sent to the RSC and Ofsted.

I must emphasise to you that the contents of this Warning Notice and the discussions at this meeting, including the minutes, are all confidential and must not be shared with any person outside of the Governing Body. To share this information would be a breach of the governing body code of conduct.

Nottinghamshire County Council Divisional Leadership Team has been made aware of a number of problems at the school. These include:

- the governing body, or individual members of the governing body expecting to have an excessive involvement in the day to day running of the school
- governors failing to seek external advice in managing parental complaints at an early stage, resulting in parents complaining to Ofsted, Integrated Children's Disability Service and the Director of Children's Services
- reports of breaches of the governing body code of conduct, which have not been appropriately managed by the chair of governors including inappropriate:
  - use of social media
  - comments made by governors within the school premises
  - sharing of confidential information
- the capacity of the governing body to deliver its statutory responsibilities is currently weakened by the resignation of the vice chair of governors, unavailability of the chair of governors for extended periods of time and a high level of governing body vacancies
- high levels of staff absence that have not been effectively managed within the absence management procedure, resulting in concerns raised by staff around:
  - health and safety
  - behaviour
  - safeguarding
  - teaching and learning
  - leadership and management
  - governance
- negative impact on the school budget as a result of the additional cost of regular supply staff required to cover staff absence

This has resulted in the governing body failing to deliver on one or more of its three core strategic roles, which include:

- ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- holding the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff; and
- overseeing the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

Nottinghamshire County Council therefore requires the governing body, and individual governors of St Giles Special School to undertake the following actions within 15 working days of receipt of this Warning Notice. The Governing Body may make representations to Ofsted against the Warning Notice during this period:

1. the governing body should consider the position of the chair of governors, giving due consideration to the requirements within the DfE document - A Competency Framework for Governance, the specific requirements of the role of the Chair of Governors and the severity of the failures of governance within this Warning Notice
2. all governors, including the Chair of Governors, to cease their involvement in the day to day management of the school with immediate effect, with any proposed visits to the school agreed with the headteacher, in advance
3. the Governing Body to fill the co-opted and LA vacancies with people who have the experience, skills and knowledge to support with the required actions within this Warning Notice (in line with the Competency Framework for Governance)
4. the Governing Body to ensure that the school website is compliant, which includes the uploading of all statutory policies, which must be approved by the governing body, following due governance processes
5. all governors to comply with the governing body code of conduct
6. all governors to support the headteacher to manage staff absence in line with the absence management procedure
7. all governors to co-operate fully and quickly with the External Review of Governance by arranging and completing individual interviews and providing all necessary documentation, as requested by the reviewer
8. Chair of Governors to ensure that the governing body understands and meets the requirements of the Competency framework for governance
9. Chair of Governors to seek advice on all outstanding complaints
10. the Governing Body must comply with all the recommendations and advice of any LA reviews currently taking place.

Should the Governing Body fail to comply, (within the 15 day compliance period), with any of the requirements of this Warning Notice, the LA will be exercising its power to apply to the RSC to replace the Governing Body with an Interim Executive Board (IEB).

Yours sincerely



Colin Pettigrew  
Corporate Director of Children, Family and Cultural Services  
Nottinghamshire County Council