

**Subject:****CHILD PROTECTION: VETTING OF SCHOOL GOVERNORS****Circular Number:**  
2006/25**Date of Issue:**  
6 December 2006**Target Audience:**

- Education and Library Boards;
- Council for Catholic Maintained Schools;
- Transferors Representatives Council;
- Association of Governing Bodies of Grammar Schools;
- Northern Ireland Council for Integrated Education;
- Comhairle na Gaelscolaíochta;
- Boards of Governors and Principals of all grant-aided schools;
- Proprietors of Independent Schools.

**Summary of Contents:**

This Circular provides guidance on the vetting of school governors from 1 January 2007 and supplements the guidance contained in Circulars 2006/06 and 2006/09 on Child Protection issues.

**Enquiries:**

Any enquiries about the contents of this Circular should be addressed to:

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**Governor Awareness:**  
Essential**Status of Contents:**  
Guidance and  
implementation**Related Documents:**  
Child Protection Circulars  
2006/6 & 2006/9**Superseded Documents:**  
None**Expiry Date:**  
Not Applicable**DENI Website:**  
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# **CHILD PROTECTION: EXTENSION OF THE PROGRAMME OF VETTING TO MEMBERS OF SCHOOL BOARDS OF GOVERNORS**

## **Introduction**

1. This Circular supplements the guidance contained in:

- Circular 2006/06 “Child Protection: the Recruitment of People to work with Children and Young People in Educational Settings”; and
- Circular 2006/09 “Child Protection: Criminal Background Checking of Staff in Schools”,

and fulfils the commitment given by the Minister on 3 March 2006 to issue further guidance on an extension of the programme of vetting to include members of school Boards of Governors.

2. This Circular offers guidance to the Education and Library Boards, CCMS, School Trustees, the Transferors Representatives Council, school Boards of Governors, school principals and other education sector organisations about the vetting of persons to be appointed as school governors from 1 January 2007.

3. This advice applies to all grant-aided schools. Independent schools are, however, also expected to apply the advice in relation to persons with responsibility for the governance of the school. The Circular gives guidance only, ie it is not an authoritative interpretation of the law which is exclusively a matter for the courts.

## **The Protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults (NI) Order 2003 (POCVA): Application to School Governors**

4. School Boards of Governors have a statutory duty of care towards registered pupils in the school and each individual school governor holds “a regulated position” under the POCVA Order 2003. In effect a post of school governor should not be offered to anyone who is:

- a. on the Department of Education’s List of persons considered unsuitable to work with children (UP List);

- b. on the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety's Disqualification from Working with Children List (DWC(NI) List); or
- c. the subject of a disqualification order by a court.

In addition, it is an offence for anyone:

- d. to whom a, b or c applies to accept or work in a position as a school governor;
- e. to knowingly offer a position or appoint as a school governor anyone to whom a, b or c applies;
- f. to fail to remove a person to whom a, b or c applies from a regulated position as a school governor.

### **Vetting Arrangements for New Governors Appointed from 1 January 2007**

5. Given these requirements, the Department has decided that from 1 January 2007, a pre-employment check should be carried out through the Criminal Records Office prior to the appointment of any new governor for the purpose of identifying anyone listed at paragraph 4 a, b or c. This will not apply to a teacher governor or a new principal who will already have been vetted because of their position on the staff of the school.

6. The Education and Library Boards will be responsible for initiating a Pre-Employment Check in relation to an appointment to the Board of Governors of a controlled and a non Catholic voluntary maintained school other than a DE governor. They will also be responsible for initiating a Pre-Employment Check on an ELB member or an ELB representative before their appointment to the Board of Governors of any grant-aided school.

7. CCMS will be responsible for initiating a Pre-Employment Check in relation to an appointment to the Board of Governors of a Catholic voluntary maintained school other than the appointment of an ELB or DE governor.

8. The Department of Education will be responsible for initiating a Pre-Employment Check in relation to an appointment to the Board of Governors of a grant maintained integrated and a voluntary grammar school other than an ELB member. The Department will also fulfil this responsibility for independent schools.

9. The Chair and the Principal of the Board of Governors of every grant-aided school will share responsibility for ensuring that any prospective new governor including a newly elected parent governor completes a Form DOR 02 and returns it to the relevant authority for processing before the appointment is ratified. The Chair and the Principal are also reminded that all governors involved in supervisory activities with children must be vetted prior to engaging in such work. They should ensure that a Form DOR 02 is completed and returned to the relevant authority.

#### **Interim Arrangements for Vetting Existing School Governors from 1 April 2007**

10. Vetting for all school governors will be mandatory at the next reconstitution of school Boards of Governors effective from the 2009/10 school year, when vetting responsibility will pass to the new Education and Skills Authority. However, because of the number of governor positions, these new arrangements will be introduced on a voluntary basis prior to the next reconstitution in order to enable the Criminal Records Office to manage the additional volume of work. The Department would therefore encourage existing governors to participate in a Pre-Employment Check on a voluntary basis during the period 1 April 2007- 31 March 2008 especially if they wish to continue in office at the next reconstitution.

11. A list of contact names and addresses is attached together with [Form DOR 02](#).

12. The Department will retain a secure list of those new and existing school governors who will have been vetted under these arrangements and the date of the vetting check and would advise education and library boards and CCMS to do the same. This information will be required at the next reconstitution of school Boards of Governors.

**BRIAN HILL**

## INTERIM ARRANGEMENTS FOR VETTING SCHOOL GOVERNORS:

Schools	Governor Category	Nominated Officer(s)
Voluntary Grammar, Grant Mt'd Integrated Independent schools	All except staff & ELB governors All except staff governors Not applicable	DE, Leisa Evans Phone 9127 9421 Email <a href="mailto:leisa.evans@deni.gov.uk">leisa.evans@deni.gov.uk</a>
All Schools	DE governors	DE, Leisa Evans, as above
<b>BELB</b> Controlled, Non Catholic mt'd, Catholic mt'd	All except staff & DE governors All except staff & DE governors ELB governors	Paula Maguire Phone 9056 4112 Email <a href="mailto:paulamaquire@belb.co.uk">paulamaquire@belb.co.uk</a>
<b>NEELB</b> Controlled, Non Catholic mt'd, Catholic mt'd	All except staff & DE governors All except staff & DE governors ELB governors	David Lewers Phone 9065 5387 Email <a href="mailto:david.lewers@neelb.org.uk">david.lewers@neelb.org.uk</a>
<b>SEELB</b> Controlled, Non Catholic mt'd, Catholic mt'd	All except staff & DE governors All except staff & DE governors ELB governors	Nicky McBride Phone 9056 6362 Email <a href="mailto:nicky.mcbride@seelb.org.uk">nicky.mcbride@seelb.org.uk</a>
<b>SELB</b> Controlled, Non Catholic mt'd, Catholic mt'd.	All except staff & DE governors All except staff & DE governors ELB governors	Lorraine Livingstone Phone 3751 2504 Email <a href="mailto:lorraine.livingstone@selb.org">lorraine.livingstone@selb.org</a>
<b>WELB</b> Controlled, Non Catholic mt'd, Catholic mt'd.	All except staff & DE governors All except staff & DE governors ELB governors	Angela McDermott Phone 8241 1291 Email <a href="mailto:angela_mcdermott@welbni.org">angela_mcdermott@welbni.org</a>
<b>CCMS</b> Catholic mt'd	School Trustee Representatives & Parent Governors	Angela Armstrong 9042 6972 Email <a href="mailto:angelaarmstrong@ccmsschools.com">angelaarmstrong@ccmsschools.com</a>