# Southwark Governors’ Association Thursday 25th of March

# The SGA held a lively and interesting meeting on Thursday evening, attracting governors from a wide range of Southwark Schools.

# Kevin Morris (Assistant Director of Education) updated governors on some of the current issues they are grappling with. School rolls are falling in many parts of the borough (and across London) and this has a knock-on effect, as funding is tied to pupil numbers. Where schools are in deficit they must look carefully and critically at their budget to identify where savings can be made. Kevin offered three sources of support for schools

# The RSC have finance advisors which the LA can invite individual schools to use.

# Two members of the School Improvement Advisory Team, Jim Eshelby and Terry Segarty are happy to work with individual Headteachers to look at their budget and give feedback on where savings might be made.

# It is the council‘s intention to recruit a team of financial advisors to work with schools.

# If your head teacher should be leaving, governors are asked to speak to Kevin Morris to consider the range of options and alternatives they have to recruiting a new Headteacher. These include amalgamation, federation or possible closure.

# The business of the AGM was conducted swiftly and confirmed membership of the management committee. Martin Deutz was re-elected as Chair and Maureen Gabbidon and Ian Ford as vice chairs.

# Southwark School Meals Transformation

# Myles Bremner and Becky Steele updated governors on the project to transform school meal provision. They highlighted governors’ responsibility for overseeing pupil physical and mental health and well-being, their financial oversight of the budget and their responsibility for the provision of food in their school. The program will launch in the summer and governors are asked to encourage and support their schools to get involved. Myles and Becky are keen to hear from governors who wish to share their insight and experience of school meals. There is much good practice and also much to learn.

# Governors were encouraged to complete the bespoke online training on Healthy Weight by 19 April which would give them entry into a draw for a Decathalon voucher for your school. <https://southwarkhealthyweight.com/ltao2/>

# The Impact of Covid 19 on Child Development, Achievement and Mental Health and Wellbeing

# The SGA was delighted to welcome speakers from within Southwark Council and beyond to share their experience and insight on this important theme.

# Marsha Douglas and Jesvir Dhillon from the Southwark Educational Psychology Service spoke about the rising concern regarding children’s mental health. They shared some of the signs children might show as a result of their experiences during the pandemic and the need to understand their behaviour in this context. Questions they suggested governors may wish to raise included

# How is the curriculum supporting children’s mental and emotional well-being?

# What measures are in place for children staff and parents to get the support they need?

# Is the cohort of vulnerable children changing?

# If there are changes in any policies what are the implications for vulnerable students?

# Children many not show or share concerns straight away, so what measures will monitor this?

# Cath Connolly (Systemic Psychotherapist) shared her clinical experience of working with children. The impact of COVID-19 has been unequal and has aggravated the triggers for worsening mental health. Issues she suggested governors raise included

# Current CAMHS thresholds and referral routes

# Access to help lines and local services

# Strategies for supporting young people with neuro developmental conditions

# Do you staff feel confident in responding to self harm, OCD, eating disorders?

# Shane Steere-Jones and Kelly Wilson from Southwark Family Early Help Team

* Permanent exclusions
* •Fixed Period exclusions  
  There is a clear link between pupils excluded for a fixed term and those who go on to be permanently excluded. There was concern that only 11.2% of fixed term exclusions are reported to the LA. Statistics re-exclusions highligh those groups who are more likely to be excluded.
* •Attendance and safeguarding of vulnerable children and families during lockdown (January –February)
* •Attendance of children post March 8th  
  By the second week in March attendance in Southwark was 92.8%
* •Work undertaken by the Back to School team  
  Continuing to offer a ‘first response’ intervention for young people failing to attend school citing Covid related issues

Offers advice, guidance and sign posting to families and schools.

* •Team Around the School Meetings  
  These meetings give schools the opportunity for children who need support to be identified at an early stage in a multi-agency forum.
* •100% Inclusion

# . Suggestions for governors to discuss

* How are schools are ensuring that support is available at the point that problems emerge (e.g. submission of FTE data to LA)?
* •Do staff have the training and awareness to provide trauma-informed responses to challenging behaviour?
* •How can we monitor that all possible options to prevent permanent exclusion have been explored including emotional wellbeing support, family support and managed moves?

# Governors had a range questions for the speakers and further information will be added to the website. The PowerPoint slides can be found here <https://schools.southwark.gov.uk/assets/attach/6532/SGA-25-March-2021.pdf>

# Don’t miss the next meeting of the SGA on 24th June.