

## **PAPERWORK**

As Clerk to the Governing Body, one of your most frustrating duties will involve trying to sort out the paper work. We hope this particular piece of paper will prove to be helpful in this context.

### **Where does it come from?**

Mainly from Bracknell Forest Local Authority (LA) and the DfES but you may also receive mailings from organisations like NAGM. Sometimes mail will be addressed directly to the Chairman, sometimes the Headteacher will get two copies of a document and be asked to pass one onto the Chairman. Keeping a check on what is received by whom is one of the most difficult areas of a Clerk's work. If you do not work at school, it is worth establishing a good relationship with the school secretary who can ensure that any mail arriving in school for governors is passed directly to you.

### **What do I do with it?**

There really is not a simple answer to this question. You will need to decide, along with your Chairman and the other governors, which system will suit all of you the best. Some Clerks maintain an information file for governors to peruse at their leisure, others keep a shelf available in the school library. Some place a "correspondence" item on the agenda of each meeting whilst others attach a circulation list to documents to ensure all governors see them. Some Clerks copy everything to everyone, but this is expensive.

The most important thing is to find a system that works for everyone concerned and then stick to it. Consistency is important - you will know where to find a document when and if you need it if you have developed a system that works and that is consistent. Make sure your governors are familiar with your system too, so that they can check documents for themselves and not have to rely on your memory.

The official set of governing body records should be kept at the school, not in your home office! Agendas, minutes and papers associated with all meetings of the governing body, including committees form part of the public record and should be available for anyone who wishes to see them. Confidential items should however be kept separately, but also at the school.

The register of business interests, governors' declarations and records of security clearances should also be kept at the school. Although they are not part of the public record, inspectors and auditors may need to see these.

### **How long should I keep it?**

Governing Body papers should be kept for at least three years. The LA recommends that they are kept for five years and anything relating to finance must be kept for seven years. However, before destroying papers you should consider whether they are worthy of being kept for archival interest and for reference if a history of the school or a record of the service of a long standing governor is ever needed.