

## NGA News Briefing 140510

The NGA weekly news briefing is an essential document for any governor, clerk or governor support officer. This briefing gives details of new research, government consultation papers, policy announcements and legislation, together with a summary of recent education stories in the media.

### **Election – it’s goodbye to the Department for Curtains and Soft Furnishings (or if you prefer Comedy and Science Fiction) and hello (again) to the Department for Education**

The new coalition government has resulted in yet another change to the name of the Department responsible for schools - at least this one is familiar, the good old Department for Education. Hopefully, the change to the letterheads and logos will be done at minimal cost. Despite its name change, so far the remit of the Department remains the same, for education, families and children’s services.

The new Ministerial team is:

- Michael Gove MP – Secretary of State for Education
- Nick Gibb MP – Minister of State for Schools
- Sarah Teather MP – Minister of State for Children and Families
- Tim Loughton – Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Children and Families

One thing that changed almost instantly was the website – the new website is still in its infancy and can be found via the attached link - [Department for Education](#). At the moment every page you click on carries the attached warning:

“A new UK Government took office on 11 May. As a result the content on this site may not reflect current Government policy. All statutory guidance and legislation published on this site continues to reflect the current legal position unless indicated otherwise.”

The coalition government has published an agreement covering policy matters. The agreement covers schools under three different sections: the spending review, education and civil liberties. This is what it says under those various headings:

- They will fund a significant premium for disadvantaged pupils from outside the schools budget by reductions in spending elsewhere.
- They agree to promote the reform of schools in order to ensure that:
  - new providers can enter the state system in response to parental demand
  - all schools have greater freedom over the curriculum
  - all schools are held properly accountable
- They will scrap the Contact Point database
- They will outlaw the finger printing of children at schools without parental permission

You can read the full coalition agreement via the attached link - [Coalition Agreement](#)

The Secretary of State set out his priorities in a message to his civil servants, which has been widely reported in the press. In his message he stated

“...So improving literacy, raising pupil attainment, extending parental choice, freeing teachers from bureaucracy, improving discipline and closing the widening gap between the richest and the poorest should be our shared goal....”

In the weeks ahead, I want us to offer all schools the chance to enjoy academy-style freedoms so that heads and teachers across the country can be liberated. This will be the focus of the legislation we hope to bring forward later this month...”

### **SATs Boycott**

Well at least the announcement of a new government took the SATs out of the headlines. Monday remained busy with lots of press coverage for the first day of the SATs (or not if your school was boycotting). We were disappointed with today’s TES coverage which quoted Emma Knights extensively on the issue of deductions of pay. Emma had explained the guidance we have given to governors on the legality of this, declining to say how many governing bodies would use their discretion to make such deductions, although you might have thought otherwise from the resulting article.

The NGA’s guidance remains on the website for any governors still grappling with the issue of whether to deduct pay or not. The guidance can be downloaded via the attached link [NGA SATs Boycott Guidance](#).

### **An invitation from Teachers TV**

Teachers TV are looking for governors to take part in their Primary Assessment debate on 17th May. It is being recorded from 1900-2100 at The London Studios, on London's South Bank. So clearly not good for people from too far away. They will pay for travel but not accommodation.

They are looking for a “wide range of people with differing views. They would be part of our invited audience and would have the opportunity to vote for their preferred method of primary assessment.”

If you are interested, you can contact [LAURA.TURNER@ITN.CO.UK](mailto:LAURA.TURNER@ITN.CO.UK)

### **Clare’s Blog**

This week Clare talks about the new Government – her latest blog can be read via the attached link - [Chair's Blog](#).

Contact NGA

By e-mail [governorhq@nga.org.uk](mailto:governorhq@nga.org.uk) - or by phone at 0121-237 3780

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