

4



Developing Community Focused Schools

This section looks at the practicalities relating to providing community focused services and activities. Many schools are already familiar with having adults on the school site during and after core school hours, and with running after-school activities for their students, and so are familiar with particular issues involved, such as those relating to health and safety, child protection and insurance.

The information here does not, and is not intended to, replace advice or information from your LEA. It is meant to raise awareness, answer some initial questions and trigger ideas about areas where governing bodies will need to get more advice.

General

? Do we need to put new policies and procedures in place to cover Community Focused Schools services and activities?

No, not necessarily. The starting point and process should always be to consider:

- What activities/services do we want to offer as part of our Community Focused Schools work?
- Do these activities or services bring new implications for the school?
- What policies and procedures do we currently have in place, which will also need to cover Community Focused Schools services and activities?
- Do they need to be adapted?
- Who needs to be involved in this?
- Do I need advice from the LEA or from other specialists?

There will need to be systems in place to ensure that all procedures and policies are clearly communicated to, and understood by, all school staff and others involved in delivering and managing Community Focused Schools services and activities.

The focus should be on reviewing and adapting current policies, procedures and systems to ensure that they cover Community Focused Schools, where appropriate, rather than creating new ones. Remember, each LEA has officers who can advise on issues such as health and safety, insurance, child protection, finance and accessibility, as well as on wider legal issues.



continyou

Health and safety

? What are the requirements for health and safety in delivering Community Focused Schools activities and services?

Schools cannot contract out statutory health and safety responsibilities, although they can delegate the function to another party. However, the headteacher, the governing body and, indeed, the LEA remain ultimately responsible. The headteacher and the governing body will need to feel assured that all potential risks have been considered and managed, and that staff have been appropriately trained.

Schools (that is, governing bodies) are responsible for ensuring the health and safety of:

- all school staff;
- students;
- visitors to the school site;
- those taking part in services or activities on the school site or arranged through the school;
- staff from other organisations and people who are delivering services or activities – both those that are on the school site and those that are off-site but arranged through the school.

In relation to Community Focused Schools, the Health and Safety policy should at least cover:

- insurance;
- risk assessment;
- guidance about behaviour;
- how the school will alert leaders to any child, young person or adult taking part who has an illness or disability and what guidance it will offer on this;
- the implications of working with partner agencies and organisations, with information about who is responsible for what;
- details of the nominated contact within the school for health and safety issues in relation to Community Focused Schools;
- the policy and procedure in an emergency, with relevant contact details;
- information about adequate first-aid cover and first-aid procedures, with relevant contact details;
- fire evacuation procedures.

Your LEA should be able to provide you with templates and good practice for carrying out risk assessments.

'Health and safety liability can derive from ownership of premises; responsibility for oversight of services provided on the premises; and through supervision of activities. It would not be possible therefore, for the school governing body to exclude all liability for injury to children on the basis that, if a child were injured, it would be the responsibility of the organisation supervising him. This is the case, even if there were an agreement to this effect.'

Governance Guidance for Sure Start Children's Centres and Extended Schools, DfES, 2007

? What are governors' responsibilities if students are attending Community Focused Schools services or activities, arranged through the school, off the school site, after core school hours?

Governors need to satisfy themselves that appropriate risk assessments have been carried out and that any actions arising from those risk assessments have been satisfactorily performed. The situation would be similar to that of the school undertaking a trip or school visit.

? What are governors' responsibilities if adults are attending Community Focused Schools services or activities, arranged through the school, off the school site?

Governors need to satisfy themselves that appropriate risk assessments have been carried out and that any actions arising from those risk assessments have been satisfactorily performed.

? What should pupil to staff ratios be for community focused activities?

This will depend on the results of the risk assessment, the experience of staff, the nature of the activity and the age of pupils taking part. Your LEA should be able to give you guidance on this.

'Management responsibility for premises remains with the governing body of the school during and outside school hours.'

'When offering additional activities and services that may affect the health and safety of staff and others, new health and safety risk assessments should be carried out. The assessment should assess the likely risks to staff, pupils, visitors and users of the premises.'

Community Focused Schools, Circular No: 34/2003, National Assembly for Wales, 2003

Premises

? What are governors' responsibilities over the use of school premises in relation to Community Focused Schools?

The governing body controls the use of school premises both during school hours and outside them. The exception is where a trust deed allows a person other than the governing body to control the use of the premises, or if a transfer of control agreement has been made.

Where a third party is delivering services or activities on school premises, the governing body needs to be clear about the basis on which the third party is using the school premises, and any agreement or contract should cover this – including, for example, any letting or licensing arrangements.

Schools can adopt a range of systems to manage the use of school buildings and facilities, including:

- **using an induction process** to give information about the running of the school, protocols, procedures and so on, to other professionals using the school, especially during the school holidays;
- **using booking forms:** these are legally binding and set out the terms and conditions of use, mainly for out-of-school-hours activities such as sports clubs and scouts;
- **setting up partnership agreements:** many schools are developing a basic document which sets out the school's responsibilities and those of the third party, and is signed by both;
- **making a transfer of control agreement:** governing bodies can enter into an agreement to share control of the school premises with another body. The governing body must obtain local authority consent before entering into an agreement that transfers control during school hours.

(The information above is taken from *Extended Schools – a Guide for Governors I*, National Remodelling Team, 2006.)

? My school is a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) school. What are the implications of developing Community Focused Schools for a PFI school?

The hours of opening of the school and other requirements will be set out in the PFI contract. If these hours are to be changed significantly, this needs to be negotiated by the LEA with the private sector partner. There may be a charge for the extra hours of opening. In the first instance, the governing body will need to discuss its approach with the LEA.

Community Focused Schools and community use requirements should always be considered from the outset when planning a new PFI build.

? Child protection What are governors' responsibilities for child protection/safeguarding in relation to Community Focused Schools

The school's child protection/safeguarding policy should be reviewed to ensure that it covers Community Focused Schools developments. This should then be the document for setting out and clarifying the school's approach to Community Focused Schools provision in relation to child protection/safeguarding.

It is essential that Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) clearance is obtained for anyone who works unsupervised with children and young people. The school is responsible for:

- carrying out CRB checks on people that it recruits directly, including volunteers, to deliver Community Focused Schools services or activities;
- checking and satisfying itself that anyone delivering services or activities through an external provider has been CRB checked as part of their current employment or volunteering role.

Existing staff at the school and those from other organisations who already work with children and young people should have been vetted for their current employment, but **it is the school's responsibility to check this**.

Where children are attending Community Focused Schools services or activities that are **organised by the school and provided by others off the school site**, it is the school's responsibility to check and satisfy itself that those providing those services or activities have been CRB checked to work with children and young people.

Where volunteers are recruited to deliver services or activities for children, the school will need to satisfy itself with the volunteers' parent organisation or the local Association of Voluntary Organisations (each local authority area has one) whether volunteers have been CRB checked, and who is responsible for carrying out these checks.

Systems should also be in place to ensure that senior staff at the school have checked the identity, qualifications and referees of all staff and volunteers, and verified that health checks have taken place.

Please note that information on the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 will be provided in due course.



What are governors' responsibilities when adults are on the site during the school day to attend Community Focused Schools services or activities?

Policies and procedures relating to this should be included as part of the school's child protection/safeguarding and health and safety policies. Many schools already welcome adults on to the site and have appropriate policies in place. Schools will want to make sure that:

- adults attending services and activities know where to find the reception area – for example, by giving them information beforehand and providing clear signs;
- if the school has a separate entrance for community use, participants/service users know where this is and how to get there;
- all school staff, but reception staff in particular, know that the services/activities are taking place and where they should direct service users;
- they consider whether someone needs to accompany service users from the reception area to the room they will be using;
- school pupils know that adults will be attending services/activities on the school site during the school day;
- access to facilities, such as toilets and the kitchen area, is clearly signposted.

These provisions should also cover situations when adults are on the school site after core school hours, but at times when children may still be around.

Insurance

? What responsibilities do governors have relating to insurance for Community Focused Schools activities and services?

It is the school's responsibility to ensure that appropriate insurance cover is in place. Those for whom the school will need insurance cover include:

- students (its own students and those from other schools) taking part in Community Focused Schools activities during and beyond core school hours;
- its own students taking part in Community Focused Schools activities off the school site;
- those providing services and activities, including volunteers, on or off the school site as part of Community Focused Schools work;
- others attending Community Focused Schools services or activities on the school site during and beyond core school hours;
- those attending Community Focused Schools services and activities, arranged through the school but off the school site.

Where services or activities are run by external providers, the school should ensure that any agreement makes clear who is responsible for insurance cover and the various liabilities. The school should always satisfy itself about what insurance cover external providers have in place, and make sure that providers arrange their own insurance, if they do not already have this. If the external provider does not have adequate cover, then the school should check whether its own policy covers external providers' liability.

'It is critical that governing bodies ensure that the insurance cover – including that arranged by external providers – is adequate and up to date. Failure to ensure adequate insurance cover could open the school to the risk of uninsured liability.'

Extended Schools – a Guide for Governors I, National Remodelling Team, 2006

Accessibility

? What are governors' responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 1995 in relation to providing Community Focused Schools activities and opening up the school to the wider community?

Please note that the information given here is only an overview and not definitive guidance. Schools should consult with their LEAs for advice and guidance on what the DDA means for their particular circumstances. Governing bodies need to be clear about the duties under Parts III and IV of the DDA and what these mean, as both will have an impact on the provision of Community Focused Schools services and activities.

Schools are subject to Parts III and IV of the DDA in respect of providing Community Focused Schools services and activities. Part III of the DDA makes it unlawful for a service provider to discriminate against a disabled person in relation to access to goods, services or facilities, which covers non-educational services. This covers services that schools provide to the public – for example, a PTA holding a fundraising event at the school, a private provider running education or training courses, or non-statutory youth services such as clubs and activities run by voluntary organisations or the scouts.

Part IV of the DDA makes it unlawful for schools to ‘discriminate against disabled pupils and prospective pupils in the provision of education and associated services’ (DDA Part IV: Schools Code of Practice, Disability Rights Commission). ‘Associated services’ can cover school clubs and activities, among other things, so schools need to be aware of this when offering out-of-school-hours activities.

You should refer to the school’s accessibility plan under Part IV of the DDA when planning your Community Focused Schools services and facilities.

Remember, accessibility also covers other issues, including:

- signs, instructions;
- furniture;
- transport to and from services and activities;
- appropriate parking;
- being a ‘welcoming school’.

Charging and finance

? Can we charge for Community Focused Schools activities and services?

The governing body will need to develop a charging policy, setting out what can and cannot be charged for. Charging is something that needs to be considered at the beginning of the planning process, as it will help schools to identify what services people are willing and able to pay for, and what charges are appropriate for local circumstances.

‘Out-of-school-hours activities – except where they are offered as part of regular childcare provision – are generally expected to be available free to pupils. Schools may of course charge for refreshments and for other materials, and for transport to activities.’

Out-of-School-Hours Learning: A Code Of Practice, ContinYou, 2006

Schools cannot charge for Out-of-School-Hours Learning activities which contribute directly to pupils’ attainment, to delivering the national curriculum or to preparing for a public exam.

Services which may be charged for include childcare, adult learning classes, access by the community to the school’s sports facilities and the hiring out of school facilities.

? Can the school's delegated budget be used to fund Community Focused Schools activities?

Only if the services or activities directly support pupils' attainment. The delegated budget cannot be used to fund childcare facilities, for instance. It is important to have the necessary financial systems in place to support and identify Community Focused Schools provision and funding. A number of safeguards have been built into the Education Act 2002, including giving the LEA the power to suspend a school's delegated budget in certain circumstances where the governing body is not managing it satisfactorily in relation to its Community Focused Schools services and activities.

Staffing

? How can governors justify developing a Community Focused Schools approach when schools have had to make teachers redundant?

Adopting a community focus is not intended to detract from the school performing its core business. Well planned and developed provision can support this. This is why Community Focused Schools development must be included in the School Development/Improvement Plan. This can raise the esteem of the school, which may stabilise or increase pupil numbers, producing a positive effect on the number of teachers who can be employed. If the school works with partners, they may bring resources – financial and/or human – with them. Or pupils from the school may be able to use services or activities provided by another school in the cluster, leading to economies of scale.

? Who is responsible for managing staff from other organisations who are based on the school site?

Some schools are starting to look towards housing multi-agency teams on their sites, in order to offer services and activities to the pupils of the school, their families and the wider community. It is likely that more local authorities and schools will be working in this way in the future. In planning such arrangements, it is important that these staff know to whom they report to, and that they have access to advice and appropriate development opportunities. This is especially important where there is shared responsibility for management between the school and another employer.

Written agreements should clarify responsibilities for the appointment, support, management and dismissal of staff. One model may be where day-to-day line management lies with the headteacher or Community Focused Schools co-ordinator, but where staff maintain supervision and training links with their 'parent' organisation (such as the local authority or health board, or a voluntary organisation). It is important that these staff are part of whole-school development so that they support, and contribute towards, pupils' attainment and well-being. It is important that all school staff are aware of the role of the multi-agency team and how it can support pupils.

? Doesn't the Community Focused Schools approach put more burdens on headteachers and other school staff?

The Welsh Assembly Government has made it clear that there is no expectation that teachers will be involved in the delivery of Community Focused Schools services within schools. If teachers are keen to take part in running activities such as after-school clubs, it will be important to ensure that this does not have a detrimental effect on their work/life balance or their capacity to perform their core teaching and learning duties.

Conversely, the effective delivery of community focused services and activities, in or through schools, can bring real benefits to teaching and learning when they help to address issues that may be affecting pupils' ability to learn. Community focused activities can also help to improve pupils' motivation and attendance and thus their readiness to learn. Such activities can also offer professional development opportunities for teachers.

Headteachers will, by the nature of their roles, always retain the overall leadership of Community Focused Schools work. They will have a role in monitoring developments in relation to the School Development/Improvement Plan and the school's vision for Community Focused Schools. However, they will not necessarily be involved in the day-to-day management of this work.

Other non-teaching staff may want to be involved. Community Focused Schools activities and services offer a great opportunity for school staff, such as learning support assistants, to develop new skills and experience.

Community Focused Schools can give schools the chance to harness the skills, knowledge and experience of people in the local community – such as parents, grandparents, other community members, volunteers or students from higher or further education institutions looking for work experience or wanting to volunteer. Schools should also consider the deployment of all staff within workforce reform developments. Some schools are already looking at more flexible contracts and ways of working.

Further support

- You will find help with planning your work in two annexes to this guide: 'Annex 1: Initial checklist for developing a Community Focused Schools approach' and 'Annex 2: Community Focused Schools pre-service/activity checklist'.
- For more information on the practicalities of developing Community Focused Schools provision, see 'Section 4: Community Focused Schools in action' in *Community Focused Schools – Making it Happen: a Toolkit*.