

**DE/2024-0008**

**Request**

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act I am seeking information in relation to the following;

- 1) Do Grant Maintained Integrated Schools in NI have access to Human Resource assistance and / or advice from the Department of Education?
- 2) If so, is this access limited / restricted in any way?
- 3) If so, does the access differ in any way to that available to non-GMI schools? If it does differ please describe how.
- 4) If they have full or limited access to Human Resource assistance and / or advice from the DENI does this access include assistance and advice in relation to employment matters, including those relating to non-teaching members of staff?
- 5) If Grant Maintained Integrated Schools in NI do not have full access to Human Resources assistance from the DENI, (i) where, and (ii) how can they access HR assistance and advice?
- 6) Please provide any documentation, including legislation, guidance or policies relating to Grant Maintained Integrated Schools in NI do not have full access to Human Resources assistance from the DENI.
- 7) Please provide any documentation, including legislation, guidance or policies relating to the Board of Governors of Grant Maintained Integrated Schools in NI duties and responsibilities as employers.

**DE Response**

wish to confirm that the Department has now completed its search for the information which you requested on 16 January 2024.

A copy of the information is enclosed.

In relation to questions 1, 2, 3 and 4, I should explain that the Department of Education (DE) does not provide Human Resource assistance or advice to schools of any management type; there is therefore no difference for Grant Maintained Integrated (GMI) schools.

In relation to questions 5 and 6, GMI is one of a range of management types that establish how a school is run. GMI schools are managed by their Board of Governors who are also the Employing Authority, therefore responsible for the employment of staff in the school and for HR. Every grant aided school in Northern Ireland, regardless of management type, is funded through the Common Funding Scheme and this Scheme provides an additional element of financial support to GMI schools, recognising that they may need to access specific professional support such as HR advice.

The Education Authority (EA) is one potential source of accessing this support, or GMI schools can choose to directly engage with any other provider of professional support, such as an HR consultancy firm or professional – in both cases the GMI school will pay for the service provided, supported through the Common Funding Scheme additional element. The EA is also working with GMI schools, and the Council for Integrated Education (NICIE) as the representative body for integrated schools, to establish longer term service level agreements for those GMI schools that wish to put these in place. Such agreements would set out the professional services, such as HR, that the EA would provide to the GMI school, as well as the costs associated with such provision.

Articles [66](#) and [67](#) and [Schedule 5](#) of the Education Reform (Northern Ireland) Order 1989 set out information on how a GMI school is managed and on the membership requirements for its Board of Governors.

In relation to question 7, GMI schools operate under Articles of Association (AoA) and a DE approved Scheme of Management (SoM). DE provides a model to assist this process but each SoM may contain variations. DE has no approval role over AoAs but they must not contain anything that runs contrary to the SoM or any existing Education legislation. A model SoM is attached.

[Part III](#) of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 sets out requirements relating to SoMs.

[Article 69](#) of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 provides that the Board of Governors of a GMI school shall be the employing authority.

[Part VI](#) of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986 sets out legal requirements about teachers qualifications and employment and includes specific reference to GMI schools when appropriate - [Chapter 2](#) of this part sets out a range of provisions relating to how GMI schools operate, those deemed most relevant to HR are referenced under the answer to the previous questions with links provided.

I hope the information provided is useful to you.