

## **GOVERNANCE DURING COVID-19**

On 25<sup>th</sup> March 2020, the DfE published a 'School governance update March 2020'.

[https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-governance-update?utm\\_source=c18f9456-d1b7-4a30-b99a-04030a5acd0d&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm\\_content=immediate](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-governance-update?utm_source=c18f9456-d1b7-4a30-b99a-04030a5acd0d&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate)

Key messages from this guidance state:

- Boards are advised against meeting in person and should adopt alternative arrangements (ie video or teleconferencing arrangements).
- It is not necessary for boards to meet in person in order to approve alternative meeting arrangements for this lockdown period, as required by The School Governance (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) (English) Regulations 2013.
- Meetings at this time should focus on urgent, time-bound decisions. Non-urgent agenda items can be deferred until future meetings.
- Priority should be given to supporting school leaders and staff where needed, to allow them to get on with operational matters.
- School leaders should stay in touch with the governing board, including providing information on the welfare of staff and pupils, so that boards can retain a strategic overview of the situation and the school.
- Governing boards should consider their own contingency plans in case the chair/vice chair/clerk become unavailable.

The NGA (National Governance Association) have produced some really helpful guidance for governing boards and clerks - March 2020 'Governing in challenging circumstances: business continuity and holding virtual meetings'

<https://www.nga.org.uk/getattachment/Knowledge-Centre/Executive-leaders-and-the-governing-boards/The-Coronavirus-Information-for-governing-boards-M/Covid-19-Guidance-on-decisions-and-meetings-March-2020.pdf?lang=en-GB>

### **Support from North Yorkshire Local Authority**

Governor Hub is an online portal which supports effective governance. In order to support governing bodies during this challenging time, the NYCC governor services team is working closely with Governor Hub colleagues. Our aim is to provide every LA governing board with partial access to Governor Hub (at absolutely no cost to the school) as soon as possible until the end of the summer term or until schools go back (whichever is the later). When we have more information about when this product will go live for your governing body, we will let you know.

Once our Governor Hub access is up and running, schools can use Google, Zoom or Teams through that portal - <https://help.governorhub.com/en/collections/2220162-video-meetings-on-governorhub> - to support the use of virtual meetings.

If you need to have a board meeting before Governor Hub is available to us, then we recommend that you set up your own Skype/Zoom/Google Meet/Microsoft Teams remote meetings for governors and clerks to attend. All of these systems should be available on the internet at no cost to the school. If schools choose to use Microsoft Teams and need/want support in setting this up, NYCC Schools ICT are able to provide this support as a traded service. Once the meeting system has been set up, schools need to let their clerk know, and a meeting can be called by the clerk.

Please contact the LA governor services team at [governor.support@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:governor.support@northyorks.gov.uk) for advice, support and guidance with any governance queries. We hope that you and your loved ones are in good health and send our best wishes to you all in this challenging time.