

# Governor

## School Improvement Update

### Summer Term – April 2020

Welcome to the North Yorkshire school improvement summer term update for all governors.

Since our previous update, the Coronavirus outbreak has had a significant impact on education and schools across the country. This update aims to provide governors in North Yorkshire with some key information and links to advice, in order to support you in your strategic role during these unprecedented times. The DfE update for governors can be accessed [here](#).

We would value your support in sharing this update with fellow governors in order that it reaches as many colleagues as possible.



## Support from the NGA

The National Governance Association is currently providing a wide range of advice and support, free of charge for all governors. The NGA GOLD Service is a team of experts who can answer a range of governance queries and if you have any questions (even if you are not a GOLD member) you can currently contact them at [gold@nga.org.uk](mailto:gold@nga.org.uk).

The NGA have also produced some useful information to support the work of GBs during our current challenging times: business continuity and holding virtual meetings, which can be accessed [here](#).

Key information included in the document:

- Current meetings should focus on urgent business only. Any non-urgent business can be deferred. Governors should take a pragmatic approach.
- Recruiting to the board during COVID-19 – where terms of office come to an end for elected governors during this period, governors could be asked to remain in office until such time as elections can take place. For appointed governors, the normal appointment/re-appointment process can be followed.
- Panel meetings – it is expected that most panels will be on hold during this time.
- Holding virtual meetings – see detail in the document.

Other useful information for governors during the COVID-19 outbreak can be found [here](#).

## SAFEGUARDING

The latest DfE safeguarding advice can be accessed through [this link](#) with additional DfE safeguarding guidance on remote learning [here](#).

The North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership regularly updates their webpage with key information and links: <https://www.safeguardingchildren.co.uk/coronavirus/> This will include an addendum for Guidance for Safer Working Practice– Covid-19 , along with the Child Protection Policy addendum.



The NGA has also produced a very useful safeguarding information sheet specifically for governing boards covering: safeguarding guidance during COVID-19, revising the child protection policy to reflect new arrangements and advice about what governing boards should do. That document can be accessed [here](#).

## VULNERABLE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN SCHOOLS – COVID-19

Schools were sent a letter (24<sup>th</sup> April) from the Secretary of State for Education regarding concerns over low attendance of vulnerable pupils: those who have a social worker, those with an EHCP and those who are otherwise vulnerable.

Governing boards hold a responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people and the DfE has advised school leaders to provide boards with updates on the welfare of staff and pupils.

## COVID-19 – NYCC Bereavement Guidance

This guidance has been collectively put together by Educational Psychologists, HR, Education Advisers and other LA colleagues. We sincerely hope that you never have a need to use it but as a local authority we thought that it was important to provide schools with a guide, should a tragic situation arise in your school during the coronavirus outbreak.

### NYCC Bereavement Guidance

If an incident occurs, it is important that schools and settings let the LA know as soon as possible, using the usual channels.

In the event of a child death, contact the Child Death Overview Panel, at [cdop@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:cdop@northyorks.gov.uk) (01609 797167 or 07967 469790) and inform the CYPS Director's Office, via Marion Sadler at [marion.sadler@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:marion.sadler@northyorks.gov.uk).

In the event of a staff death, please notify Stuart Carlton, Corporate Director, directly at [stuart.carlton@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:stuart.carlton@northyorks.gov.uk).

You should then be contacted by a member of the EPS (Educational Psychology Service) to identify what support may be required.

### School Complaints – COVID-19



The DfE updated the best practice guidance for school complaints procedures on the 9<sup>th</sup> April, regarding the handling of complaints during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

The DfE does not expect schools to handle new or existing complaints while they are closed. Schools should, however, still engage with parents and pupils where they can. Complaints can be considered once the government confirms schools can safely reopen.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-complaints-procedures/best-practice-advice-for-school-complaints-procedures-2019>

#### **What should the GB be monitoring at this time?**

This is currently being worked on by our school improvement team and we will provide governors with some guidance regarding monitoring in school and remote provision and learning for all pupils.

### Safer Recruitment Guidance during COVID-19

The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checking guidance will be changed for a temporary period to minimise personal contact ([link here](#)). This change will enable:

- ID documents to be viewed over video link
- scanned images to be used in advance of the DBS check being submitted

*Please note, this change should only be implemented for urgent cases where it is not possible to follow the normal identity checking guidelines.*

The applicant must present the original versions of these documents when they first attend their employment or volunteering role. These temporary changes relate to the document checking process, NOT to the DBS safer recruitment procedure

If staff from other schools are working at your school, a system must be in place to ensure that appropriate checks have been made, a record of staffing is kept and that all staff are clear who the named Designated Safeguarding Lead is, and how to raise a concern. The Child Protection policy, with Covid 19 addendum must be shared. NYCC Coronavirus Staffing Information for Schools provides more detail <https://cyps.northyorks.gov.uk/covid-19> .

## FINANCE – COVID-19

We very much recognise the significant challenges which schools are facing currently and that we need to take a pragmatic approach in the event of required information not being available. We would recommend that virtual meetings held for urgent business cover key governing board decisions in relation to school financial management during this period of disruption. The guidance from the DfE is being constantly updated. Further updates will be provided by the local authority as the situation evolves and more information becomes available. Updates are posted regularly at [cypsinfo](http://cypsinfo).

### Head Teacher Recruitment – COVID-19

Please discuss any HT recruitment during this time with your school SEA. The LA advice is for current recruitment processes to be put on hold following shortlisting - until such time as the government changes the 'unnecessary travel' and 'social distancing' requirements - and for new adverts to be discussed with school SEAs. April 30<sup>th</sup> is the cut off for resignation at the end of August so if any of your senior leaders do resign this month then please let your school SEA know as soon as possible.

### End of Year Data – Summer 2020

Following the cancellation of primary national assessments and secondary school exams, the DfE update regarding school and college accountability can be accessed [here](#).

Specific information about GCSEs and A' Levels can be found via [this link](#).

The Standards and Testing agency has stated that there will be no reporting for EYFS Profile, Year 1 Phonics Screening Check, KS1 teacher assessment, Year 4 multiplication Tables Check, KS2 tests or KS2 teacher assessment.

Any governors appointed to school and trust governing boards through the Inspiring Governance recruitment service will now benefit from additional support and expert guidance to provide the essential knowledge and skills they need to govern effectively, the National Governance Association (NGA) has announced.

**inspiring  
governance**

From 1 April 2020, these volunteers will be able to access all of the training modules on NGA's [e-learning platform Learning Link](#) which cover a wide range of topics and are of varying lengths. Each appointed volunteer will also be able to book a free place at one of NGA's annual regional conferences. This will apply to all new volunteers as well as volunteers currently receiving support. All existing benefits will remain in place including a monthly 'hot topics' email especially for new governors and trustees, a complimentary copy of one of NGA's induction guides and access to a dedicated email and telephone support service from a professional adviser to answer any queries new volunteers may have.

Inspiring Governance is a Department for Education funded online service that connects volunteers who are interested in becoming governors and trustees with schools that need them. Governing boards can sign up to use the service by visiting [www.inspiringgovernance.org/recruiting-governors](http://www.inspiringgovernance.org/recruiting-governors).

### NGA and Ofsted joint research project into the impact of COVID-19 on governance

This research project will look at the short and long-term impact of COVID-19 on governance: support and challenge of boards, managing business as usual, impact on school priorities, longer-term planning when schools re-open. Researchers would like to speak to governors/trustees in different types of schools across different age phases. If you are interested in taking part in this research, please contact [ResearchQuestion@Ofsted.gov.uk](mailto:ResearchQuestion@Ofsted.gov.uk).

### Coming Soon

Our Governor Support Team is very excited to let you know that from September 2020 we are aiming to offer all boards a full and comprehensive Service Level Agreement. We are working on securing a range of high quality packages within this SLA, including online learning for governors and a dedicated portal for news, support and clerking. Details of the SLA will be shared with you once they have been finalised.



### Who we are

**Antonia Praud – Governance Officer**  
**Elaine Trehitt – Governance Officer**  
**Chrissy Richardson – Head of Clerking Service**  
**Lindsay Miller – Senior Education Adviser**

You can contact us via email or phone:

[governor.support@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:governor.support@northyorks.gov.uk)

01609 798864