

Welcome to the latest version of our Governor Update. The role of school governors has never been more important as we all settle into 'the new normal'. Your priorities may be different and you will certainly be carrying out your role as a governor in a different way, but your support for our schools is vital at this time and very much appreciated.

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

## REMOTE EDUCATION



Department  
for Education

On the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2020 the government published a [Temporary Continuity Direction](#) regarding the provision of remote education in schools, under the Coronavirus Act 2020. The Direction, which will come into force on the 22<sup>nd</sup> October 2020 and continue throughout the academic year 2020-21, states that all state-funded school age children **must** be provided with "immediate access to remote education" should they miss school due to coronavirus.

Previous guidance stated that schools were "expected" to provide immediate access to remote education. This is now **must**.

The DfE have published [remote education good practice guidance](#) and have announced new remote education support to help children learn at home if they have to self-isolate, including an additional 100,000 laptops to be made available for those children most in need. There is also [get help with remote education](#) which provides information, guidance and support for teachers and leaders.

As a board of governors, you need to continue to ask questions about the full re-opening of schools and your head teacher's contingency and continuity plans, and this should include questions about provision for remote education. The NGA's [COVID-19 information and guidance](#) resources will support governors with this key aspect of strategic school leadership.

## GOVERNOR VACANCIES



Governing Boards function at their best when all places on the board are filled. It is more than likely that your next governor is already part of your local community. It may be that they are not aware that you are looking for governors, or they just don't know how to get

involved. There are a number of very simple ways that all board members can contribute to finding new volunteers:

- Advertise in the school newsletter and ask parents to use the networks that they have
- Advertise in the local shop and pub
- Contact local groups, eg WI, sports clubs, the church community
- Contact local employers (many encourage this type of engagement within the community and some give time off work to attend governing board meetings)
- Advertise your vacancy on [Inspiring Governance](#) – a service fully funded by the DfE that connects potential governors with schools that need them.

*Always ensure that you have completed a skills audit to identify any specific gaps that need to be filled on your board in terms of skills, knowledge and experience.*

If you are aware of potential governors that you are not able to accommodate, please direct them to the local authority at [governor.support@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:governor.support@northyorks.gov.uk) or Inspiring Governance.

# Safeguarding



Preparation work for the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NYSCP) School Safeguarding Audit 2020/2021 is currently being finalised. The audit tool questions have been revised and updated to reflect changes to legislation, statutory guidance and good practice. The tool will be circulated to all schools in November 2020 for completion no later than 31 March 2021. Following analysis of responses, a full report will be presented to the NYSCP Learning and Improvement Subgroup for final approval during 2021/2022, before findings are shared with schools.

The local authority has produced some safeguarding documents for schools with regard to parent, carer and visitor behaviours in school and possible access restriction procedures, if required. These can be found [here](#). The model policy is based on good practice derived from court judgements and government guidance.

It is strongly recommended that schools adopt the policy for the protection of staff and for the wellbeing of pupils.

To validate the process, a board of governors needs to undertake consultation with parents and carers – this establishes that the process is reasonable and will enable schools to resist any challenge that the policy does not comply with the law.

## Governor induction

*As most governing boards continue to meet virtually, your induction programme for new governors becomes even more important, even though it will need to be delivered in a different way. We recommend that you make contact with new governors as soon as possible to welcome them to your board; ensure that they have the key documents that they need to read and that they have the schedule of forthcoming meetings.*

*A model induction checklist can be found on the Governors page at [cypsinfo](#).*

## Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Governor

As SEND Governor have you asked questions about the following, to ensure that you have an appropriate overview of SEND in your school?

- The content of Chapter 6 of the SEND Code of Practice 2015?
- The content of your school's SEN information report, which must be updated annually, and displayed on your school website?
- The qualification required by all SENCOs?
- Your SEND policy and how it relates to the SEND Code of Practice; and your mandatory SEND information report for parents.
- The School's delegated budget?
- What the 'Local Offer' is and why there needs to be a link to it from your school website?
- How your school SEND cohorts compare with national and local data? What questions does this data raise about your school?

If you would like a refresher or to learn more about any of the above then do consider booking onto one of our SEND governor courses – for training see the last page of this update. We also offer bespoke 1:1 or 1:2 training for the SEND Governor and SENCO. Please contact Christine Noyes, Senior Education Adviser SEND [Christine.noyes@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:Christine.noyes@northyorks.gov.uk)

## National Association for Special Educational Needs (NASEN)

From 1 January 2021, membership of the National Association for Special Educational Needs will be free to all individuals. Membership will include access to shared information, research, training, webinars, and regular updates. For further information visit the NASEN [website](#). NASEN also hosts the SEND Gateway – a one-stop shop for all things SEND including resources for governors.

## The Governance Handbook for SEND and Inclusion

This new publication has been written by Dr Adam Boddison, Chief Executive of NASEN and a National Leader of Governance, to support governors and trustees in developing effective strategic practice, building on the principles of effective governance. It is due to be published in December 2020.

Interim visits have been taking place since 28th September 2020 and usually last for one day. Ofsted have published an operational note with details about how the visits will be carried out - [www.gov.uk/guidance/interim-phase-maintained-schools-and-academies](http://www.gov.uk/guidance/interim-phase-maintained-schools-and-academies). The education inspection framework (EIF) and school inspection handbooks will not be used during these visits.

Ofsted will carry out section 8 ‘no formal designation’ inspections when required. These will be used only in response to significant concerns such as safeguarding, and routine inspections remain suspended at this time. Ofsted intends to resume routine inspection activity in January 2021 but will keep the exact timing under review.

Inspectors will work collaboratively with leaders to understand:

**The barriers**  
in managing the return to full education for all pupils.

**How pupils are settling back**  
into expected routines and behaviour.



**How learning is resumed**  
in line with the DfE’s guidance, including plans for the use of remote education.

**SEND**  
how specific issues related to special educational needs, disabilities, health and well-being are being addressed.

**Safeguarding arrangements**

Safeguarding:

The visits are not inspections and inspectors will not be judging leadership and management in the school generally. However, as with any Ofsted visit to a school, inspectors will want to discuss with leaders how they:

- ❖ **Identify** pupils who may need early help and those who are at risk of harm or have been harmed;
- ❖ Secure the **help** that pupils need, and if required, refer pupils in a timely way to those who have the expertise to help;
- ❖ **Manage** safe recruitment and allegations about adults who may be a risk to children, pupils, students and vulnerable adults.

## Covid -19 Catch up premium



Core functions of governance include ensuring that schools spend funding appropriately and holding schools to account for educational performance. Therefore governors should scrutinise the school’s approach to potential loss of learning and catch-up, including plans for and use of the DfE premium. This should include consideration of whether schools are:

- Spending this funding in line with their catch-up priorities, and
- Ensuring appropriate transparency for parents.

This should be an item on full governing body meeting agendas and included in head teacher reports. Governors should know

- how the school is planning to spend the funding;
- the objectives and actions and how these link to the catch up priorities;
- how the catch up premium is supporting pupils to address learning gaps.

Click [here](#) for full DfE guidance.

An updated version of the Governance Handbook has been released alongside new governance role descriptors.

### [Governance Handbook](#)

The governance handbook defines the roles, functions and legal duties of governing boards in maintained schools, academies and MATS. It sets out the government’s vision and priorities for effective school and trust governance. Key additions to this update include

- Reference to the importance of boards reflecting the diversity of the school/trust communities that they serve.
- Emphasis on the clerk’s skills and knowledge to enable them to provide advice, guidance and effective administrative support.
- Reference to executive leaders knowing, understanding and welcoming the role of effective governance.



### [Governance Structures and Roles \(Maintained/Academies\)](#)



There are two new documents providing clear information about the different roles in governance and how they interact with each other. It includes role descriptors for school governing boards, individual governors and clerks.

## Governing Board Meetings

The DfE's School Governance Update issued on 8 October reminds governing boards that they must continue to fulfil their duties regarding the 3 core functions of governance. It also states that a pragmatic approach should be taken with regard to holding meetings and the expectation is that the board will agree how they wish to meet. The update goes on to say that 'if any board members do decide to meet in person, they would need to comply with social distancing, any local health and safety measures, and the school or trust's own risk assessments'.

This is to ensure the protection of visitors, pupils and staff.

## EXCLUSIONS UPDATE

Temporary arrangements that were put in place between 1 June 2020 and 24 September 2020 in relation to the process for all permanent and fixed term exclusions, have been updated with new arrangements. The 2017 exclusions guidance and legislation continues to apply. The latest changes relate almost exclusively to timescales and arrangements for holding meetings in the COVID-19 environment.

In summary:

- For exclusions occurring between 25 September 2020 and 24 March 2021, meetings of pupil disciplinary committees (PDC) or independent review panels (IRP) should be held via remote access if:
  - it is not reasonably practicable to meet in person due to coronavirus (COVID-19)
  - the other conditions for a remote access meeting are met.
- The deadline for IRP applications will be 25 school days from the date on which notice in writing of the governing board's decision is given.
- PDC and IRP meetings should take place within the normal timescales set out in the guidance on exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England.
- All reasonable steps must be taken to meet deadlines bearing in mind guidance on protective measures for the full opening of schools which includes the expectation that meetings should be arranged remotely where it is not practicable to meet in person.
- If the deadlines are missed because of coronavirus (COVID-19), meetings must be held as soon as practicable in person or via remote access (respecting the conditions for such a meeting).



## Promoting a culture of wellbeing in schools

School leaders and governing boards have significant responsibilities to support the wellbeing of those employed in their schools including their work-life balance. NGA have worked with Schools Advisory Service to create a wellbeing evaluation tool. This focuses on the wellbeing of school leaders, their self-care and how this is modelling throughout the school.

This tool allows you to look beyond the legal requirements and to reflect on the culture of wellbeing that exists throughout the school. Participants are invited to reflect of the approach taken towards staff wellbeing at board and operational level. It is recommended that the evaluation tool is completed as a joint activity involving the head teacher, and the relevant governor.

The evaluation tool can be found [here](#).

## Wellbeing for Education Return programme

North Yorkshire County Council and Compass BUZZ have teamed up to deliver the new free Wellbeing for Education Return programme to support pupils wellbeing on the return to school following partial school closures.

Places can be booked [HERE](#) for the virtual sessions, running throughout October and November.

Each North Yorkshire school can send up to 2 members of staff, with the training aimed at senior leaders and mental health leads. The programme has been created with input from health partners, mental health experts, local authorities, and schools and colleges.



## New Head Teacher Standards

The DfE have released [new head teacher standards](#) (13<sup>th</sup> October 2020) which are an important benchmark for head teachers and for those who hold head teachers to account. They are non-statutory and intended as guidance, designed to be relevant to all head teachers. They can be used to shape a head teacher's own practice, to support recruitment and to inform the performance management process.

## Parent governor elections

If you need to conduct parent governor elections it is for the school to decide how best to organise this, taking a pragmatic approach to balance safety and feasibility.

If you choose to use an electronic process you must be confident that systems are in place to ensure that:

- ✓ the process is fair and that safeguards are in place to ensure that one person cannot cast two votes.
- ✓ voter confidentiality is maintained
- ✓ the opportunity for postal voting is provided to eligible voters who cannot access an electronic process.



## Governor Training

Governor Training continues to be delivered remotely. Courses for the second half of the Autumn Term are set out below:

2 and 30 November 2020	4:30pm – 6:30pm	An introduction to Governance parts 1 and 2	SI-1120-T012
4 November 2020	6:00pm – 7:30pm	SEND for governors – what you need to know	IES-1120-T007
25 November 2020	4:00p, - 5:00pm	School Complaints – an overview for all governors and staff	SI-1120-T083
Various dates		Staff hearing and appeals: Governor panels parts 1 and 2	

Most courses will be repeated at least once each term or more often if necessary. For the full directory of courses please click [here](#). Courses can be booked for you by your school administrators.

We also continue to offer bespoke advice, support and training for whole governing boards to meet your individual needs. Please contact us at [governor.support@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:governor.support@northyorks.gov.uk) or your named Senior Education Adviser (SEA) to discuss your requirements.

## Leading Governance

In addition to the training on offer locally, the NGA continues to offer development training funded by the DfE: These programmes are now being delivered on-line which means that those that have not been able to access this training because of geographical restrictions now have the opportunity to sign up.



**Development for Boards** – designed for those governing federations or MATs. The programme will be tailored to your board's specific circumstances and aims to improve practice and outcomes. It also includes two places on the Development for Chairs programme. In some circumstances, it can be fully funded by the DfE.

**Development for Chairs** - fully funded by the DfE, this programme can be accessed by up to two members of your governing board. It is aimed at aspiring chairs and/or those who currently chair who wish to develop their leadership skills and will enable participants to demonstrate a clear understanding of strategic leadership within the context of governance.

**Development for Clerks** -subsidised by the DfE this is a nine-month programme resulting in a fully accredited Level 3 qualification in the Clerking of School and Academy Governing Boards.(£99 per delegate).

For further information about any of the above please click on the programme title.

## Coming Soon

The launch of our new Service Level Agreement for Governance Support has been delayed because of the current pandemic.

We are aiming to offer all boards a full and comprehensive service, to include a range of high quality packages including online learning for governors and a dedicated portal for news, support and clerking. Details of the SLA will be shared with you once this has been finalised.



## Who we are

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

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