

*Thank you for taking the time to read the final edition of the North Yorkshire School Improvement Service update for governors for 2020-21. As we approach the end of another challenging year, we again would like to thank you for your dedication and support for our schools and the pupils and communities that they serve. We hope you find time to have some relaxation over the summer and look forward to working with you in the next academic year.*

*Please share this newsletter with others on your board in order that it reaches as many colleagues as possible.*

## **SAFEGUARDING**

Safeguarding Week 2021 took place from the 21<sup>st</sup> – 25<sup>th</sup> June with the key message being that **'safeguarding is everybody's business'**. As a school improvement service we highly recommend that safeguarding is a standing agenda item on your full governing body meetings to ensure that it remains a high priority and that it continues to be everybody's business.



### **Ofsted**

The Ofsted handbooks have been updated for September 2021 (see Ofsted article) and from a particular safeguarding perspective it states that 'Inspectors will pay close attention to how school leaders adapted approaches to safeguarding during the pandemic to make sure that: vulnerable pupils were prioritised for face-to-face education in school; and whether safeguarding procedures remained effective for those receiving remote education, as well as those attending school.' The handbooks now also provide clarity with regard to how inspectors will assess how schools and colleges tackle sexual harassment, abuse and violence among children and young people ([paragraphs 306 – 310 section 5 handbook](#)). You can access more information here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/inspections-to-look-at-how-schools-and-colleges-work-to-prevent-sexual-harassment-online-sexual-abuse-and-sexual-violence>

### **Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) – update for September 2021**

In response to Ofsted's report on its investigation into child sexual abuse in schools and colleges, and following consultation, the DfE published a [draft of the revised Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance](#) on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2021. This guidance is FOR INFORMATION ONLY until 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021. **Until then, the [existing statutory KCSiE guidance](#) is still in force and is what schools must have regard to.**

The DfE have also published a draft of the revised [stand alone advice 2021](#) regarding sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges, which is also for information only until 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021. Until then the [existing advice](#) is still in force and schools should continue to have regard to this.

Key changes to KCSiE will be shared in our next edition of the NYCC Governor School Improvement Update, however a brief summary can be found [here](#).

### **Keeping up to date**

It is recommended that at least the named link safeguarding governor keep up to date with regard to safeguarding through such information as the [Andrew Hall](#) and [NSPCC CASPAR](#) weekly safeguarding briefings and the [North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children Partnership e-bulletin](#). The June e-bulletin can be accessed [here](#).

### **Virtual School Head Teacher Role**

Every local authority has a virtual school Headteacher whose role it is to promote the educational outcomes of looked after and previously looked-after children. From September 2021, virtual school HTs will also become the [strategic leader to champion the educational attendance, attainment and progress of children with a social worker](#).

### **Mental Health and Wellbeing resources - DfE publication June 2021**

The DfE have published non-statutory guidance to support staff and pupil mental health and wellbeing. The guidance includes links and sources of support on a range of topics in two sections:

- A list of resources that can be shared with pupils to enable them to seek support independently
- A list of resources aimed at teaching and other school staff for their own use.

The full document can be found [here](#).

### **Relationships and sex education (RSE) and health education reminder**

The new curriculum was originally to be compulsory from September 2020 but the deadline was extended as a result of the pandemic. Governors should ensure their school has adopted the new curriculum.

## Phonics Screening Check – Autumn Term 2021

Due to the cancellation of statutory assessments in 2021, Year 1 pupils did not complete the phonics screening check in June 2021. For the 2021-22 academic year, it is statutory for schools to administer a past version of this check to year 2 pupils during the second half of the 2021 autumn term and return results to their local authority.

Where possible, schools should administer the check at the beginning of the second half of the autumn term, allowing any pupil absent to be picked up in the final weeks of term. Year 2 pupils who do not meet the expected standard in the check will need to take the statutory check in June 2022, alongside Year 1 pupils.

Year 3 pupils, who were due to take the check in June 2021 (when they were in Year 2), are not required to take the autumn check. Schools should maintain a programme of phonics support for these pupils but do not need to return phonics data for Year 3 pupils to their local authority.

Governors need to probe school leaders regarding the attainment and progress in phonics, in order that the board is assured that all pupils are afforded the opportunity to catch up and keep up where required. This will ensure that schools can fulfil their determination that every pupil will learn to read, regardless of their background, needs or abilities.

## Academy Trust Handbook 2021

The Academy Trust Handbook 2021 has been released and comes into effect from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2021. Previously, this has been known as the Academies

Financial Handbook. The latest document can be found [here](#).

Updates include:

- Academies must assess the risk associated to cybercrime
- Changes to the appointment of newly appointed senior executive leaders as a trustee from 1<sup>st</sup> March 2022
- Approval mechanism for severance payments
- The trust should retender their external audit contract at least every 5 years
- The Board should review the scheme of delegation annually
- The Board should have an objective independent external review of its effectiveness on a regular basis
- Changes to names – eg “financial notice to improve” is “notice to improve” and the “Clerk” is the “Governance Professional”
- The Chair of separate Finance and Audit Committees cannot be the same individual

## Ofsted – key and recent changes



On 28<sup>th</sup> June 2021 Ofsted published an update to their [section 5 school inspection handbook](#) and [section 8 school inspection handbook](#) for September 2021. Each web link includes the a

summary of changes, including:

- the COVID-19 pandemic and transitional period;
- how the deployment of tutors is supporting the aims of the school curriculum, as part of the leadership and management judgement
- the use of external data and how ‘old’ it is and that inspectors will not expect or accept internal data nor will they use teacher-assessed grades from 2020 and 2021 to assess curriculum impact;
- the removal of EYFS disapplications from 31<sup>st</sup> August 2021;
- the change of inspection intervals;
- the removal of exemption for outstanding schools and academy convertor schools that were outstanding at the last inspection of the predecessor school;
- the term NQT has been replaced by ECT (Early Career Teacher);
- how the school have taken into account any transitional provisions when looking at a school’s curriculum;
- the good grade descriptor for quality of education clarifies that leaders should provide effective support for those teaching outside of their expertise;
- the inclusion of Ofsted’s position on career’s information, education, advice and guidance (CIEAG);
- the inclusion of a section about Ofsted’s position on sexual harassment, online sexual abuse and sexual violence;
- the good grade descriptor for leadership and management clarifies that vision needs to be maintained beyond recovery;
- the early years good grade descriptor now references staff teaching children the language of feelings; and
- the sixth form provision good grade descriptor has updated text with regard to relationships and sex education, bullying and harassment.

As referenced in the safeguarding article, the handbooks also reference inspectors paying close attention to how school leaders have adapted approaches to safeguarding during the pandemic and how inspectors will assess how schools and colleges tackle sexual harassment, abuse and violence.

## On-going Governor Monitoring

It is acknowledged how hard schools are working to continue to operate as normally as possible, whilst managing a blended approach for learning for pupils if individuals, bubbles and cohorts need to self-isolate or work from home.

Boards of governors need to continue to be provided with sufficient information with regard to health and wellbeing, the curriculum, remote education, pupils' progress and, of course, risk assessments and safeguarding children and young people.

### ❖ Health and Wellbeing

Discussions about health and wellbeing of pupils and staff should take place regularly with the board having an overview of what support is being provided and how effective it is in meeting the needs of the school community. Are key vulnerable groups being prioritised? Do pastoral policies reflect practice? How is information about staff wellbeing and work-life balance being gathered?

### ❖ Curriculum, Remote Education and Pupils' Progress

School leaders need to ensure that all pupils have access to the school's ambitious curriculum, whether in school, or accessing education and learning remotely. The board should have confidence that the curriculum is broad and balanced and should be made aware of any adjustments that have been made (or plans for possible adjustments) in response to required catch-up and accessibility for those learning remotely. Governors also need to be assured that remote education provision meets the [DfE's minimum requirements](#) in terms of number of hours and also regarding access to technology.

There is no national data for 2019-20 and 2020-21, but schools will have undertaken a range of assessments to find out what pupils know and can do. Governors should be informed about the analysis of this internal assessment information. Where there are gaps for identified groups, cohorts and subjects governors should question what plans are in place to support all pupils to make progress. There should be a continued focus on provision for pupils with identified special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and those eligible for pupil premium (disadvantaged).

### ❖ Risk Assessments and Safeguarding

Since March 2020, COVID-19 guidance has and continues to change according to the current situation. Risk assessments in school must reflect the on-going changes (nationally and locally) and the board of governors needs to be assured that relevant policies and risk assessments are continually up to date.

Where pupils are accessing education remotely, it is of particular importance that pupils and teachers are safe and [the DfE guidance](#) supports schools with this key aspect. As with all aspects of safeguarding, governors need to know that all staff and leaders adhere to the statutory safeguarding guidance [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#).

### ❖ Governor monitoring

Governor visits to schools will be determined by the school's current risk assessment based on government guidance. Examples of best practice over the last 16 months include a wide range of remote monitoring which has allowed governors to continue to gather the broadest range of evidence that they can in the circumstances. Nearly all boards are using remote video conferencing for governor meetings and some governors are also using this technology to meet staff and pupils e.g. curriculum leaders to discuss assessments, implementation and impact, observation of a work scrutiny discussion, a virtual learning walk around school, meeting with pupils, etc.

As with all governor monitoring, it is recommended that it links to current school priorities and a record of monitoring is completed and shared with the board/appropriate committee. That record should comment on what was seen/discussed, impact against the school improvement plan and any questions raised that require follow up information.

## **Applications for National Leaders of Governance (NLG) are now open**

NLGs support governance in schools and trusts, which are experiencing challenges. If you have a track record of improving governance and you meet the eligibility criteria the NGA would be delighted to hear from you.

NLGs are engaged and paid on a self-employed basis. The volume of work will depend on demand but it is expected that NLGs will take an average of between 6 and 8 reviews a year.

If you are interested in finding out more about the role, the application process and the appointment process please [click here](#).

## **Pupil Premium Funding**

Guidance on the effective use and allocation of pupil premium funding has also been updated. As part of the [pupil premium allocations and conditions of grant for 2021 to 2022](#), schools are now required to:

- demonstrate, from the next academic year, how their spending decisions are informed by research evidence (condition 7)
- use the strategy statement templates to publish their pupil premium strategy (condition 8)

Updated templates for use in the 2021 to 2022 academic year, will be published this month (July 2021.)

## Is your board looking to fill vacancies?

There are two services, free to schools, whose purpose is to match potential governors with boards that need them.



Inspiring Governance is a DfE funded programme which allows you to:

- search for volunteers based on skills, experience and location
- contact potential candidates directly
- advertise governor vacancies to registered volunteers in your area.

Inspiring Governance is affiliated to the NGA and any governors appointed through this programme will have access to NGA's e-learning training packages, and accesses to a telephone support service to answer any queries that new volunteers may have.

### Governors for Schools

is an educational charity working with schools

to identify potential governors. Their website allows you to register your governor vacancies and be specific about the skills and expertise that your board needs. A dedicated Partnership Manager will search for volunteers taking account of your requirements.

Given the recent change to the ways in which governors meet, you may wish to consider appointing a governor who is not based within your immediate local area, who will attend your meetings remotely.



## Local Authority Governors

In line with best practice guidance and the NGA's recommendation, a local authority governor **will not** be nominated to the same school for more than two terms of office. Where this situation applies and a local authority governor is keen to continue in a governor role, we would be happy to make a nomination to another school. If you are a local authority governor whose term of office is coming to an end, please contact [governor.support@northyorks.gov.uk](mailto:governor.support@northyorks.gov.uk) to confirm that either:

- you have only completed one term of office at your current school and are happy to be re-nominated;
- you are happy to be nominated to a new school;
- you are not seeking re-appointment.



### Clerks – we need your help

Where nominations for local authority governors have been made to your board, please could you ensure that, you notify Governor Support of the date of the next full governing body meeting at which the nomination will be considered, **and** the outcome of the nomination, with either the date of appointment or brief reasons why the nomination was not accepted.

## PE and Sports Premium



Since the last newsletter, it has been announced that the DfE have relaxed the need to spend any remaining PE and sports premium from the 2019 to 2020 academic year. On 17 June 2021, the Education Secretary announced a further relaxation of ring-fencing arrangements, allowing any unspent grant to be carried forward into the 2021 to 2022 academic year.

Any under-spends carried forward from the 2019 to 2020 academic year, and the 2020 to 2021 academic year, will need to be spent in full by 31 July 2022. Schools are recommended to factor this into their PE and sport premium spending plans to avoid any claw back. The guidance notes for maintained and academy schools have been updated to reflect this. [PE and sport premium: conditions of grant 2020 to 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pe-and-sport-premium-conditions-of-grant-2020-to-2021)



### Governance Support Service

**Antonia Praud – Governance Officer**  
**Chrissy Richardson – Head of Clerking Service**

**Elaine Trehitt – Governance Officer**  
**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