

Welcome to the latest edition of the North Yorkshire School Improvement Service update for governors. We hope that you find it informative and useful. This is the last issue that will be shared with **all** governors. From 1st April 2022, Governor updates will only be shared with those boards that buy into the Governance Support Service Level Agreement. Further information can be found in the article below.

Attendance and Safeguarding

Governing Boards are required to review attendance (pupils and staff) at regular intervals across the year, and to ask questions to understand:

- if there are dips/improvements in attendance data;
- reasons for the movements;
- trends over a period of time for attendance (by cohorts/ groups/ timing etc);
- what support is given to students, and families, where individual attendance has dipped;
- a breakdown of attendance so the impact of covid related and non-covid related absence is understood;
- updates about the number of children classed as a “Persistent Absentee” (triggered when attendance drops below 90%).

Governors should not just know what actions the school has taken but should ask to see what impact this is having and if any agencies are supporting pupils too.

The updated report on [Understanding Your Data](#) highlights a number of areas governors should review. It also highlights where governors can review DfE national data for comparative purposes and recommends the board also receive the ASP data.

All boards are recommended to read the [latest DfE report](#) which refers to some of the mistakes and pitfalls boards can fall into by taking the overall results at face value and not drilling into the data further. The DfE have also shared a [webinar](#) alongside this report that demonstrates approaches schools have taken to approve their attendance.

Dame Rachel de Souza, the Children’s Commissioner, recently (March 2022) published an Interim Findings Attendance Audit – [Where are England’s Children?](#) and confirmed the results were “stark and concerning”. The next step for her department is to carry out deep dives in 10 Local Authorities to understand children’s barriers to attendance, identify how to safeguard children effectively and what more can be done to encourage pupils back into school.

Where pupils are absent from school for extended periods, governors should also ask questions to receive assurance the pupils are not “missing in education” and reminds governors to ask questions when pupils leave the school in year e.g. if there are accepted reasons for their departure. Declines in attendance or higher turnover can highlight other concerns e.g. bullying/ behaviour/ wellbeing.

Governors are reminded that they should receive updates on attendance and behaviour reports on a termly basis and safeguarding should be a standing agenda item.

School Financial Value Standard

The 31 March 2022 is the DfE deadline for schools to submit their 2021/22 SFVS to the LA by e-mail to internal.audit@veritau.co.uk and copy in schoolfinancialgovernance@northyorks.gov.uk. Please ensure that you use the DfE’s latest version of the SFVS Checklist. There is also a new requirement for schools to append a complete list of related party transactions (RPT) for the year 2021/22 to the SFVS checklist document. Where they have no related party transactions for the 2021/22 financial year, a school should submit a nil RPT return with their SFVS.

The 2021/22 SFVS Checklist, the RPT template and the latest SFVS guidance can be found here: [Schools financial value standard \(SFVS\) and assurance statement - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)



Health and Safety Visits

A reminder for governors that termly visual inspection visits in relation to health and safety should have now resumed. Those schools buying into the HANDS service will find a checklist template in their pack.

DfE Updates



Department
for Education

The DfE has published a blog [found here](#) with the aim of helping schools and families talk to pupils about **the conflict in Ukraine**. The guidance covers how to talk about distressing news stories, and encourages teachers to be comfortable with the notion that there is not an answer for everything. Boards should be aware of any students who may be particularly affected because of their connections to Ukraine or Russian, or because of past experiences.

The **COVID-19 workforce fund** to support schools with the costs of staff absences due to COVID-19 has been extended again, to 8 April 2022. Guidance setting out the eligibility criteria and claims process can be found [here](#).

[Political Impartiality in schools guidance](#) New DfE guidance has been issued to help schools understand what to consider when teaching about political issues. It is based on existing legal duties and does not include any new statutory requirements.

Careers: Michelle Donelan, Minister of State for Higher and Further Education, has written to both parents and students to provide information on education, training and work choices for students finishing their GCSEs as part of Careers Week. Links to both letters can be found here. [Letters to parents and students from Minister Donelan for National Careers Week - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

State of the Nation Report: On 8 February 2022, the DfE released its third State of the Nation Report which provided a picture of the experiences of young people in 2020-21 and their wellbeing. [State of the nation 2021: children and young people's wellbeing - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)



North Yorkshire
County Council

North Yorkshire County Council

Governor representation in local democracy

Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

There is a vacancy on this committee for a parent governor representative. The main role of the committee is to scrutinise the planning, commissioning and delivery of service for children, young people and their families, including education, care and protection, and family support.

The committee meets four times a year and on average, meetings last for approximately 90 minutes. At the moment meetings are being held remotely, and it is likely that this arrangement will continue.

If you have been elected as (or appointed to) the role of parent governor and are interested in becoming a co-opted member of this committee, please contact patrick.duffy@northyorks.gov.uk by Friday 6 May 2022.

Elections will be held if more than one nomination is received.

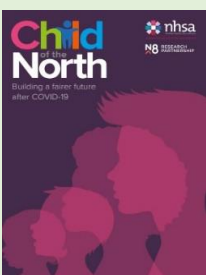
Schools Forum

The Children and Young People's service is seeking nominations to fill **four** governor representative vacancies that have arisen on the NY Schools Forum – 3 from the primary sector and 1 from secondary. The appointments are only open to governors in maintained schools, and would be for a period of four years.

The Schools Forum has a key role to play in school funding, particularly around High Needs funding. It is a representative statutory group which advises the local authority on some key issue, and are actually the decision makers on some aspects of school funding. The group has helped to steer schools through the introduction of the 'soft' national funding formula.

For further information please contact Deborah Wilbor deborah.wilbor@northyorks.gov.uk by Friday 6 May 2022.

Elections will be held if more nominations are received than there are places.



Child of the North report – building a fairer future after COVID-19

The Northern Health Service Alliance (NHS) have recently published this report which reveals a stark picture of inequality for children growing up in the north of England compared to those in the rest of the country, with the COVID-19 pandemic making this situation worse. The report looks a range of factors from child poverty to children in care, and sets out 18 recommendations that can be put in place to tackle the widening gap between the north and the rest of the country.

The full report can be accessed [here](#).

Thinking about federation?

Please ensure that you access the NYCC self-service audit toolkit which is available on the [cypsinfo website](https://www.cypsinfo.co.uk).

You can also find guidance on the process to be followed if you are looking to reconstitute your board.



- GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

The Government's **Levelling Up White Paper** identifies North Yorkshire as one of the 55 Education Investment Areas, of which 12 are LAs containing current Opportunity Areas. Our local authority includes the North Yorkshire Coast Opportunity Area. Information about the government's plans can be found at [Package to transform education and opportunities for most disadvantaged](#)

Changes to formal examinations – Summer 2022

Pupils' GCSE and A level examinations will be graded more generously than in pre-pandemic years this summer, in a move to acknowledge the disruption and potential impact that COVID has had on learning in the past 24 months. Examination boards have confirmed that 'grade boundaries' are expected to be lowered. However, Ofqual have confirmed that they do not anticipate grade inflation this year. Some additional changes will be seen in some subjects. This includes:

- Students taking examinations in English Literature, Geography, History and Ancient History will not have to answer questions on one option from their GCSE course.
- In Mathematics and Science examinations, students will be given sheets of formulae and equations.
- Students taking vocational BTEC qualifications will have fewer internal assessments.

NYCC Governance Service Level Agreement – Launch: Summer term 2022

The Governance Handbook states that governance is critical to the education of our nation's young people...to drive relentless ambition for the young people served by our schools system. Within North Yorkshire local authority, we wholly agree with the Department for Education's vision for governance to be robust and effective within every school, and support the drive of our boards towards positive outcomes across all aspects of education for all children and young people.

In order to aid school leaders and governors in fulfilling this vision, the school improvement service is offering a high-quality, comprehensive package for each LA maintained school/federation governing body. This package is focused on ensuring that your board is fully supported in delivering the three core functions of effective governance:

- Ensuring clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
- Holding executive leaders to account for the educational performance of the organisation and its pupils, and the effective performance management of staff and;
- Overseeing the financial performance of the organisation and making sure its money is well spent.

What is included within the NYCC Governance SLA?

Training	Half-Termly Updates
The current training schedule is available on the last page of this update. Courses will be continually added and will respond to need.	The NYCC governance update/ newsletter will be available as part of the SLA.
Digital Toolkit	Access to Modern Governor
This will provide governing bodies with access to a range of documents which will support boards, committees and individual governors to fulfil their roles and responsibilities. The toolkit will include: governor induction materials, documentation to support with complaints, model guidance, monitoring support materials, etc.	In order to complement the NYCC training offer, governors will have access to Modern Governor's extensive suite of online e-learning professional development modules, which can be accessed on-demand and as required by your board and by individual governors.
Advice and support from NYCC governance support officers	
Each governing body will have access to the advice and support of our governance support officers in relation to aspects such as: complaints procedures and processes, board structures, governor induction processes and governor behaviours, roles and responsibilities.	
Annual cost of the Governance SLA per board is £680	

If your board chooses not to buy in to the SLA, we will still be willing and able to offer your board advice and support regarding governance matters, and this will be charged at an hourly rate of £70, with a minimum charge of one hour for each issue.

The local authority will continue to deliver on statutory duties in relation to governance, including: parent governor election guidance, staff governor election guidance, reconstitution and LA governor nominations. Statutory information can be accessed at [cypsinfo](https://www.cypsinfo.co.uk). All boards will be able to access the Governor School Improvement Meetings at no cost to the school.

Governor Training – the courses listed below are currently available for booking

Introduction to Governance: introducing new governors to the principles of good governance and enabling governors to understand their duties and responsibilities.	23 March and 27 April 2022	18:00 – 20:00
	11 May and 8 June 2022	17:30 – 19:30
School complaints: an overview for all governors and staff	22 June 2022	10:00 – 11:00
School complaints: a focus on investigations	6 July 2022	10:00 – 11:00
Governor Panel training: staff hearings and appeals	16 May 2022	19:00 – 21:00
Governors duties in relation to exclusions and attendance	26 April 2022	18:00 – 19:30
Being an effective chair: understanding the requirements of the role of chairing and strategies for ensuring that the board is effective	8 July 2022	09:30 – 12:00
Succession planning: defining an effective culture for succession, reflection on barriers to succession and developing a succession strategy.	22 March 2022	18:00 - 20:00
Ofsted for Governors: an overview webinar highlighting the key information that governors should consider with regard to inspection	25 March 2022	11:00 – 12:30
	5 May 2022	17:00 – 18:30
	6 June 2022	13:00 – 14:30
Safeguarding Overview for governors - an overview webinar relevant for all governors, signposting to key documents and legislation.	25 May 2022	13:30 – 14:30
	22 June 2022	17:00 – 18:00
HTPM training for governors – for governors with the responsibility for conducting the head teacher’s annual appraisal review.	6 July 2022	18:00 - 20:00
	15 July 2022	13:30 – 15:30

Further information on all of the courses can be found on the [NYES](#) website. Please liaise with colleagues in your school office if you wish to reserve a place at any of the courses.

Boards purchasing the Governance Support SLA also have access to Modern Governor – a digital platform giving access to over 70 online learning modules designed to develop and support your governance role.



NGA Leading Development Programmes

NGA continues to offer development programme for chairs and clerks. Like many things, these are now being delivered on-line which means that geographical restrictions no longer apply.

[Development for Chairs](#) – is aimed at current chairs, vice-chairs, committee chairs and future chairs. The programme aims to develop chair’s leadership skills, ensuring that governance is effective and sustainable. It will take approximately three terms to complete and is being delivered remotely. Delegates will attend three 2.5 hour workshops focusing on leading the board, delivering effective governance and leading school improvement and be involved in a number of other activities

[Development for Clerks](#) – is aimed at governance professionals and clerks with at least 3 months experiences of working in a school or trust setting. It develops the knowledge and skills needed for high-quality clerking. It will take approximately 9 months to complete and is being delivered remotely. Learning will be both group-led and independent. Delegates will be assigned a dedicated mentor for the duration of the programme.



Who we are

Antonia Praud – Governance Officer
 Elaine Trehitt – Governance Officer
 Chrissy Richardson – Head of Clerking Service
 Lindsay Miller – Interim Principal Adviser (Governance)

You can contact us via email
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or by telephone on 01609 798864