

## Happy New Year

### Question and Answers

**Governor Indemnity insurance** – it was recommended that clerks advise their boards the need to look at their indemnity insurance to ensure it covers their appropriate needs such as legal cover for advice and guidance - when required. Clerks were asked to share where possible their policies, so that GSS could review these and recommend a good model cover to use.

**Training** – GSS stated that they were in the process of putting together their training offer/package for Summer 2021 and clerks were asked to ask their boards what form of training they were looking for/seeking, to ensure that their needs were being met. Clerks were asked to bring this feedback back to the February Clerks Briefing.

**New Governor Training** – GSS confirmed that they will be offering this on Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> March and Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> March 2021 from 6:30 – 8:30pm as a two-part programme.

**Clerks Collective** – for those interested in joining this self-help group/forum. It was confirmed that the next meeting would be held on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> January 2021 at 2pm. For those wishing to join this please email Angie - [marchant.angie@googlemail.com](mailto:marchant.angie@googlemail.com) .

**Elections and voting** – Clerks shared the processes and mechanisms they have been using for this – methods used included SurveyMonkey, Google Forms and the traditional paper ballot with the required quarantining of ballot papers. GSS confirmed they would continue to look at the various methods and ways to conduct this and share what came out of their investigations at the February Clerks Briefing. Any electronic method used must be secure and prevent duplicate voting and be GDPR/data protection compliant. An option must also be given for paper or postal voting.

**Governor vacancies** – boards should consider whether it is practical to run with vacancies until a time they can hold a physical paper ballot (parent/staff governors in particular) or if and where appropriate look at perhaps changing the category of the governor appointment from a parent to a LA/Co-opted/Associate Member. *Note above on electronic voting.*

**Policies** – it is advised that all governing boards conduct a regular review of their school policies and it has come to our notice that some schools are not using the most current/up to date Complaints Policy template recommended by the Department for Education or from their HR provider.

### Help us to help you and your board.

- **Our course booking site is changing, and we will be contacting you with more information. Unless you already have a registration with Schools HR you and your governors will need to register on the new site please. Existing bookings made up to 31<sup>st</sup> December have been transferred to the new site.**
- What is covered is covered in the school insurance policy for the governing board and its members?
- Agree dates for New Governor Induction two-part course this term.
- A reminder to update your governing board membership information on the DfE Get information about schools' website. Applies to both maintained and academy schools. Please also send us and the Local Authority a copy of any changes.

- Virtual Governance, what has worked well, what has proved challenging?
- Looking to the future, what governance support does your board most value, and what other changes or services would they most want?
- Policies

## A round up of DfE & Ofsted updates for Governance, both maintained and Academy boards.

### [Guidance on Education and Childcare during the National Lockdown](#)

From this landing page, there are the links to other advice – i.e., free school meals, mass testing, mental health and wellbeing, mass testing (which still looks like it will be going ahead), home learning, safeguarding, attendance, exams, technology support, etc.

*Governing boards especially need to be asking in their meetings about the impact of remote home learning learning, safeguarding, and attendance.*

Following the [Prime Minister's announcement on 4 January 2021](#), only children of critical workers and vulnerable children and young people should attend school. All other pupils and students will receive remote education. List of critical workers & vulnerable children who can access schools or educational settings [here](#).

Strengthened minimum standards of remote learning: schools will be expected to offer pupils online lessons and a set number of hours of remote education for pupils.

Your headteacher and senior leaders would need to review the school's risk assessment considering the change in government regulations regarding covid19 when establishing how many pupils the school can physically accommodate. The National Association of Headteachers guidance can be found [here](#).

## Information

### What is the current situation with testing?

- The existing DfE provision of testing remains in place for those that are physically attending school. There will be:
  - Weekly testing for secondary, college, special and AP staff where they are working on site school.
  - Two tests, three to five days apart, to students in year 7 and above attending in person (critical worker children and vulnerable children)
  - Daily testing for staff and students in the groups above if they are a close contact of a positive case where they are working on site.
- The DfE continue to explore the rollout of testing for primary staff in the second half of January as planned.
- ✓ GCSEs and A and AS Level exams will not go ahead this summer.
- ✓ Ofqual, the exam boards and teaching representatives, are working on a form of teacher-assessed grades. Not using algorithms this time.
- ✓ Cancellation of Key stage 1 and SATs

- ✓ Schools will administer the [phonics screening check](#) in the week beginning Monday 7 June 2021 (updated 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2020). However, the Times Educational Supplement (TES) reported on 7<sup>th</sup> December that phonics test scrapped for this year.
- ✓ Remote education provided should be equivalent in length to the core teaching pupils would receive in school and will include both recorded or live direct teaching time, and time for pupils to complete tasks and assignments independently.  
The amount of [remote education](#) provided should be, as a minimum:
  - Key Stage 1: 3 hours a day on average across the cohort, with less for younger children
  - Key Stage 2: 4 hours a day
  - Key Stages 3 and 4: 5 hours a day
- ✓ Oak National Academy continues to provide video lessons for all ages across all subjects and the BBC announced it will be delivering the biggest push on education in its history, bringing 14 weeks of educational programmes and lessons to every household in the country.
- ✓ School attendance regulations
- ✓ Mobile networks EE, O2, Three and Vodafone have announced on 8<sup>th</sup> January they “will, subject to technical testing over the coming weeks, open up free access to the Oak National Academy online lessons so that families can continue to learn from home without using up any of their mobile data allowance until the end of the academic year”.
- ✓ Where schools cannot offer food parcels or use local solutions, the DfE will ensure a national voucher scheme is in place so that every eligible child can access free school meals while their school remains closed.
- ✓ New guidance published on 8<sup>th</sup> January on [face coverings](#) states that it will “not usually be necessary to wear face coverings in the classroom, where protective measures already mean the risks are lower, and they may inhibit teaching and learning”.
- ✓ As before, face coverings are only recommended to be worn for adults and pupils in secondary school communal areas “where social distancing is difficult to maintain”.  
The DfE advise against [educational visits](#) at this time.
- ✓ [Teaching staff vaccinations- ongoing discussion still taking place](#)
- ✓ [School attendance regulations](#)

### **[Data protection for education providers](#)**

Steps you should take to ensure you are sharing and receiving personal data lawfully:

- ✓ continue to carry out your own risk review.
- ✓ get legal advice if you are not sure.
- ✓ make sure you are complying effectively with GDPR.
- ✓ use the [ICO free web resources](#) to determine what changes, if any, you may need to make
- ✓ UK rules on transferring data outwards from the UK to the EU (including the EEA) and the rest of the world.
- ✓ the impact of EU transfer rules on those sending you personal data from outside the UK (including from the EEA) into the UK.
- ✓ In both cases, you can transfer personal data if it is covered by an adequacy decision, an appropriate safeguard, or an exception.

### **[Schools financial value standard \(SFVS\) – updated 10 November 2020](#)**

The SFVS document, checklist and dashboard guidance, and additional resource documents are appropriate for the 2020 to 2021 reporting year.

## Ofsted

[Disapplication notice: school inspections legislation changes](#) – updated 12<sup>th</sup> December 2020  
Secretary of State for Education issues a ninth notice about changes to state-funded school inspections requirements during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.  
Currently ends on 31st January 2021.

[Ofsted have reviewed plans for the inspections of schools and early years](#), which were due to begin next week. Considering a change in emphasis from the government and clear advice to ‘act as if you have the virus’ over the next few weeks, all planned inspection activity will be carried out remotely until after the February half term.

[Inspectors will look at how well schools are educating pupils in the current circumstances](#) – which for most pupils means being educated remotely. Unlike during the first lockdown last year, the government has set a clear expectation that schools must provide remote education, so pupils can continue to learn away from the classroom.

If parents feel their children’s school is not providing remote education of a suitable quantity and quality, they are encouraged to in the first instance raise their concerns with the teacher or headteacher and, if the concerns are not resolved, to report the matter to Ofsted. Ofsted will inspect schools – of any grade – where it has significant concerns about safeguarding or the quality of remote education being provided. Such concerns could be triggered by, for example, parents complaining about remote education directly to Ofsted.

## Other useful information

### National Governance Association

Partial school closure does not change the role and responsibilities of the governing board.

Priority areas for your governing board meetings during lockdown

- ✓ Risk management and safeguarding
- ✓ Wellbeing across the school community
- ✓ Providing remote education
- ✓ Disadvantaged pupils
- ✓ Maintaining the curriculum and continuity of learning for all pupils
- ✓ Support to reduce the impact of lockdown on disadvantaged pupils
- ✓ Resource allocation and management
- ✓ Asymptomatic COVID-19 testing for all pupils and staff

### Virtual meetings-what’s working well and what would be better if?

Has the virtual meeting environment changed our board’s culture of challenge and support? For the better?

- Has the virtual format made it more difficult to ask challenging questions of school leaders?
- Do we structure virtual meetings so that everyone can make their voice heard?
- Are our virtual meetings inclusive?
- Do any governors need support using the technology?
- Are we maximising the virtual meeting technology?
- Could we use functions like chat or hand raising to improve conversation flow?

- Does reduced in-person communication mean that we need to actively work on building and establishing relationships within the board? – consider setting time aside at the beginning or end of meetings (probably without school staff) to replicate the moments usually spent having a coffee and a catch up.
- Do we celebrate success? – this is particularly important in times of challenge, when recognising the achievements of the governing board can renew energies and galvanise the board.

### The Steering Group responsible for the Charity Governance Code

The main changes see clearer recommended practice in the renamed Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) Principle, and updates to the Integrity Principle to emphasise ethics and the right of everyone who has contact with the charity to be safe.

The Code recommends four stages of practice for charities in their EDI journey. Boards should:

1. Think about why equality, diversity and inclusion are important for the charity and assess the current level of understanding.
2. Set out plans and targets tailored to the charity and its starting point.
3. Monitor and measure how well the charity is doing.
4. Be transparent and publish the charity's progress.

<https://www.charitygovernancecode.org/en>