

Governor Support Service

Chair's Briefing

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9th February 2021

Agenda



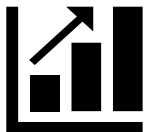
Governance Updates



Governor Support Service and SLA Offer



PAYG Training



Question and Answer



Governance Updates



Covid 19 - Guidance for schools updated on 2nd February 2021

During this period of national lockdown, schools, alternative provision, special schools, colleges and wraparound childcare should allow **only vulnerable pupils (which can include children who have difficulty in engaging with remote education) and the children of critical workers to attend.**

The DfE recognises that the characteristics of the cohorts in **special schools** and alternative provision will mean these settings **continue to offer face to face provision for all pupils, where appropriate.**

Early years provision should continue to remain open and should continue to allow all children to attend full time or their usual timetable hours. This includes early years registered nurseries, maintained nursery schools, as well as nursery classes in schools and other pre-reception provision on school sites.

All other pupils and students should not attend and should learn remotely, currently this is **until March 8th.**

Covid 19 - Continued

At present, the DfE has stated that all stakeholders will receive two weeks' notice prior to the wider reopening of schools.

School leaders, Governors and Trustees, will need to **review and amend**, where appropriate, both **the school's risk assessment and the safeguarding policy so that they remain fit for purpose and reflective of the current restrictions.**

The remote offer the DfE have stated should be provided:

- meaningful and ambitious work each day in an appropriate range of subjects; and
- provide teaching that is equivalent in length to the core teaching pupils would receive in school. This will include both recorded or live direct teaching time and time for pupils to complete tasks and assignments independently, and will 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; and Key Stages 3 and 4: 5 hours a day.

Covid 19 - Continued

Covid-19 Catch-Up Premium

As part of Government's overall £1Bn Covid-19 Catch-Up Premium for schools, concerns £350M National Tutoring Programme, may now fall behind schedule. The DfE intends to extend its National Tutoring Programme for a further two years. Launched in November 2020, the £350M scheme is due to run until 2022. However, subject to the outcome of future spending reviews, a further two years of the National Tutoring Programme are said to be planned. At this stage it is not known whether the further two-year commitment includes the 2021-22 academic year or means two more years after that. The DfE has so far refused to comment.

The NTP has enrolled 90,000 students, just over a third of the 250,000 promised. The Government is aiming to nearly double the number of children who receive tuition under its catch-up scheme next year, with the DfE aiming to provide 15 hours of subsidised tutoring to 450,000 disadvantaged pupils. The DfE also hopes that 2,000 academic mentors will provide tutoring in the most disadvantaged schools by the end of next year, 500 more than this year.

Covid 19 - Continued

Devices to support remote learning

Following its pledge in December 2020 to provide 1M devices for schools and colleges to distribute to those pupils in need, January 2021 saw the DfE pledge to provide an additional 300,000 laptops and tablets to assist poorer pupils with their remote learning. The DfE confirmed that primary schools have now been invited to apply for the scheme; previously, the scheme was only open to secondary schools. The additional 300,000 devices will allow secondary schools and colleges to apply for top-ups to their original allocations, as well as primary schools

Free School Meal Vouchers

The DfE has announced that schools can now order vouchers for their pupils who are eligible for free school meals. Vouchers are worth £15 a week per child and schools can order gift cards for supermarkets on behalf of parents and carers. The scheme is run by Edenred, who also ran the scheme between March and August 2020.

During February half term, vulnerable families will continue to receive meals and other essentials through the £170M Covid Winter Grant Scheme.

Covid 19 - Continued

Reports and findings

Poorer pupils struggling the most in the current lockdown: A Sutton Trust Report

Physical Attendance during the lockdown

Pupil Engagement and Motivation: An Ofsted Report

Summer Exams/Assessments

Secondary

Following the closure of schools to most pupils in January 2021, **the DfE has made the decision to cancel all GCSE and A/AS Level examinations planned for summer 2021.**

A two-week consultation jointly launched by Ofqual and the DfE which closed on Friday 29th January. The document setting out their joint proposals can be accessed in full [here](#)

Primary

As was also the case in 2020, **all Key Stage 1 and 2 assessments, as well as the Year 1 Phonics Check and the Year 4 multiplication check, will not take place in summer 2021.**

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile

The DfE has now confirmed that it will not be mandatory this year, subject to the completion of due parliamentary processes. Schools will instead be asked to use their “best endeavours” to carry out the assessment, which is how pupils’ development and learning is assessed in Reception.

Testing

School Staff

Following the launch of rapid asymptomatic coronavirus testing in secondary schools and colleges on the 4th January, staff in primary, school-based nurseries and maintained nursery schools are also being offered the opportunity to take part in regular asymptomatic testing. From the 18th January such settings should have started to receive deliveries of home testing kits to offer to all their staff.

Pupils

The rollout of daily Covid contact testing in schools has been paused amid fears over higher rates of transmission from the new variant of the disease as well as widespread concern over the accuracy of these tests.

Governor Visits

The DfE guidance continues to state that schools are able to use volunteers to support the school's work although numbers visiting the school should be limited, where possible. It is recommended that Board and Committee meetings are held remotely.

Formal School Visits

- Physical Governor visits into school are **not** undertaken in the spring term.
- The only two **exceptions** to this may be visits by the Safeguarding Governor and the Health and Safety Governor
- Where physical attendance is a necessity, this will need to be agreed with both the Head and the in-school link representative prior to the visit. The visiting Governor will need to ensure that all the health and safety protocol in place at the school is followed and, where possible meeting time limited.
- Governors are strongly encouraged to continue making contact with their in-school link representative virtually through the spring term.
- Formal visit reports should continue to be completed and shared at meetings to identify the strategic areas raised and discuss findings.

Safeguarding

Keeping Children Safe in Education

At the end of last term, the DfE launched a consultation on updating its KCSiE statutory guidance for September 2021. **This closes on the 4th March.** As well as KCSiE, the DfE is also seeking revisions to its advice on sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges.

A number of questions have been included in the consultation (Section 7) looking at the safeguarding training of both the Safeguarding Governor (KCSiE currently advises all schools and colleges to have a senior Board level safeguarding lead) and the rest of the Governing Board. The DfE has stated this will help them understand what training is currently undertaken by Governing Boards and if mandated safeguarding training would be helpful.

A review of your current arrangements is recommended: * Does your school have a safeguarding governor? * Have they had safeguarding training? *If yes, what format did the training take?* Face to face / Online / Blended * To what extent has the training assisted them to fulfil their role and helped them hold others to account? * What safeguarding training, if any, have other members of the board had?

Safeguarding - Continued

Abuse during Lockdown

As part of a new campaign, 'Something's Not Right', which aims to build children's awareness of the support services available to them and encourage disclosure of abuse to a trusted adult.

The charity, NSPCC, has reported that contacts to its helpline about the impact of domestic abuse on children have increased by 32% since the start of the lockdown, to an average of one an hour. In turn, 58% of the calls made have led to referrals or a referral update to the Local Authority. In some of these cases, fears about the virus were exploited to withhold access to children, cut off contact to family and friends, and monitor movement under the pretext of keeping them safe from the virus.

Complaints

Updated Complaints Guidance for Maintained Schools

Mid-January saw the DfE update its complaints guidance for maintained schools. The updated guidance makes no material amendments to the previous guidance other than in its introductory paragraph. This now states that whilst the DfE acknowledges the pressures caused by Covid-19 might affect schools' usual complaint processes and timescales, schools *should* (best practice rather than a legal/statutory requirement) still consider complaints, particularly those relating to the provision of remote education.

With parents being actively encouraged to make formal complaints about the quality of remote education provided during this lockdown period, including to Ofsted, Boards should be updated on the number of complaints received, how they are progressing and where formal Governor Panels may be required to be convened.

Resource Management

Resource Management Webinars

The DfE has provided funding for webinars to help schools, trusts to plan for the future and ensure long term financial sustainability. Delegates will receive “the knowledge and tools they need to quantify areas of inefficiency, diagnose the causes and ensure effective use of resources”.

These webinars will be delivered by Entrust Support Services until March 2021; full details of the training and how to book can be found on the [Entrust School Resource Management portal](#).

School Admission Appeals

School Admission Appeals

Temporary regulatory changes were made to the way admission authorities carried out admission appeals; these amendments will now remain in place until 30th September 2021. The new regulations:

- disapply the requirement that appeals panels must be held in person and instead give flexibility for panel hearings to take place either in person, by telephone, video conference or through a paper-based appeal where all parties can make representations in writing;
- relax the rules with regard to what happens if one of the three panel members withdraws (temporarily or permanently) to make it permissible for the panel to continue with and conclude the appeal as a panel of 2; and
- amend the deadlines relating to appeals for the time that the new regulations are in force.

Staffing and Employment Advice for Schools

Staffing and Employment Advice for Schools

In order to provide consistency in the information available to all schools in support of their handling of staffing and employment matters, the DfE's statutory "Guidance on Managing Staff Employment in Schools" has now been withdrawn. Instead, the DfE expects employers in all schools to make use of its new non-statutory guidance, "Staffing and Employment Advice for all Schools", and the sources of help it identifies, when carrying out staffing and employment duties.

Careers provision in schools

Careers Provision in Schools

In a recently published white paper, the Government is proposing that schools will face “tougher formal action” if they don’t comply with the Baker clause to let colleges, apprenticeship providers and University Technical Colleges talk to pupils about potential study routes. It also requires schools to have a plan to arrange visits at “important transition points” in the school year.

The Government has also committed to lowering the age range of the existing duty on schools to provide independent careers guidance, requiring schools to offer this support from year 7.

The Government will also ask Ofsted to undertake a thematic review to provide an up-to-date assessment of careers guidance in schools and college, providing recommendations to improve practice, where appropriate.

Schools Financial Value Standard

Due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, the Department for Education (DfE) has decided that the SFVS return should be delayed this year. Schools should **submit their SFVS to their local authority no later than 28 May 2021.**

Risk Protection Arrangement

The DfE has confirmed that the Risk Protection Arrangement (RPA) deduction from the General Annual Grant will be £19 per pupil from 1st September 2021 to 31st August 2022 (up from £18 per pupil in previous years).

Academy Updates

Financial Return Submission Dates

Academy Trusts **must submit their audited financial statements for the year ended 31st August 2020 to the ESFA by 31st January 2021**, along with the Trust's internal scrutiny annual report and management letter from the auditors. As a result of the ESFA submission delay for the financial statements

- These can now be uploaded onto Trusts' websites by 28th February 2021;
- The Accounts Return can now be submitted by 23rd February 2021
- **Trusts need to file their accounts with Companies House by 31st May 2021.**

The Land and Buildings Collection Tool is now open and will now need to be submitted online by Academy Trusts by 28th January 2021.

School Resource Management Self-Assessment Tool will now need to be submitted annually by Trusts in March rather than November, allowing better alignment with Trusts' budgetary cycle. This year the submission date has been extended by a further month to the 15th of April 2021.

Ofsted

Routine Inspections

Ofsted will commence its planned monitoring programme from 25th January onwards and all inspection activity will be carried out remotely until March 8th.

Key points to be aware of with respect to these inspections include:

- Before the February half term, remote monitoring inspections will usually last for 2 days and involve 2 HMI. Ofsted's position on this after the February half-term will be reviewed and confirmed before the half term break.
- Schools will be given up to 48 hours' notice of all monitoring inspections.
- Inspectors will focus on what leaders are doing to provide education to all pupils in the current circumstances.
- Inspectors will not expect schools to have updated their self-evaluation or improvement/action plans.
- Monitoring inspections will focus on the school's work towards improving and will not result in an inspection grade or a change to an existing inspection grade.
- Inspectors will look at whether leaders' actions are effective in providing education during the current circumstances.

Ofsted – Routine Inspections - Continued

- Inspectors will not evaluate leaders' actions during the spring and summer terms 2020. They will be interested, however, in how the pandemic has affected the school, especially in terms of leaders' curriculum thinking.
- In arriving at a final judgement, inspectors will consider the extent to which leaders' actions are helping or hindering the provision of education to all pupils at the current time.
- The lead inspector will make an overarching judgement. Either:
- Leaders and those responsible for governance are taking effective action to provide education in the current circumstances; or
- Leaders and those responsible for governance are not taking effective action to provide education in the current circumstances.
- A report will be written and published following Ofsted's visit.

The detailed monitoring inspection guidance for maintained schools and academies can be accessed [here](#)

[Remote Education: Findings from Ofsted's Interim Visits](#)

Actions for chairs and their boards

- Reminder of the strategic and operational roles, especially during the current situation
- Chairs of governors should keep in agreed regular(virtual) contact with their headteacher(s)
- Consider safeguarding and health and safety issues
- Consider wellbeing of headteacher(s) and staff
- Keep the governing board informed between meetings of any updates
- Provide a chairs summary update before governing board meetings
- Report any decisions taken under chair's action since the last meeting, which should be minuted and ratified by the board
- Ensuring board members are able to comment and ask questions
- The board should scrutinise remote education strategy ongoing, in line with government recommendations
- Carry out all 'visits' remotely

Governor Support Service – SLA Offer



Governor Support Service – PAYG Training



Questions?





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