

# Governors' Update

## March 2021

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### Welcome and School Governor Service (SGS) Information

Welcome to the March update which is being sent out on the basis of the current information that schools will reopen on 8 March 2021. All primary schools are to open for all pupils on that date and secondary schools have to be completely open by Monday 15 March, having completed the necessary Covid-19 testing for all students and staff.

Currently the Systems for Contacting the School Governor Team have not changed: The team are 'working from home' but monitor [school.governor@bradford.gov.uk](mailto:school.governor@bradford.gov.uk) daily. If you wish to speak to a particular member of the team, then please send an email unless you have the mobile number for the person to whom you wish to speak. Calls to the SGS contact number 01274 439400 are automatically forwarded to the first available team member. The SGS clerks also work from home and can be contacted by email directly. In the event of an urgent issue requiring a response from your clerk then please call SGS and contact will be made on your behalf.

### Training and Networking

The Governor Training programme and Governor Networking opportunities for the rest of the Spring and the Summer Terms 2021 has been published. See [www.skills4bradford.co.uk](http://www.skills4bradford.co.uk) for details, costs & booking; for a print version click [here](#). All courses will be virtually delivered. If circumstances enable it, there will be a face to face training offer developed for later in the summer term.

#### Training Programme for March and April 2021:

A reminder below of upcoming courses. Book on [www.skills4bradford.co.uk](http://www.skills4bradford.co.uk) or email [school.governor@bradford.gov.uk](mailto:school.governor@bradford.gov.uk)

#### **Chairs' Network**

**Tuesday 9 March 2021, 6.00pm – 7.30pm (v)**

Join this Chairs' Network for facilitated termly support from your peers; to hear about and discuss current challenges; to gain clarity and direction on effective board management.

#### **Safeguarding for Governors**

**Wednesday 10 March 2021, 4.30pm-6.30pm (v)**

This course, additional to the Training programme provision, will enable governors to be aware of their role in monitoring the effectiveness of schools in keeping children safe from harm and will take account of the latest Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance.

## Monitoring Vulnerable Groups and Pupil Premium

Tuesday 16 March 2021, 4.30pm-6.30pm (v)

This session will investigate what we mean by vulnerable groups and the role governors' play in supporting them to achieve their potential. It will address the governors' role in monitoring and providing for these pupils and also working with the grants and funds available in school for vulnerable children. Governors have a specific responsibility to ensure that the provision, progress and support for the vulnerable groups within their school enable those children to achieve the best possible progress and attainment.

## Ofsted: Preparing for Ofsted

Tuesday 13 April 2021, 6.00pm-8.00pm (v)

With Inspections resuming this is an important topic for governors to consider as the Ofsted criteria can be used by governors when considering the quality of the education being delivered in their school.

This session will provide guidance on the latest information from Ofsted on the focus for inspections, including those concerning governance and will explain how governors can prepare for the Ofsted visit. It will be particularly relevant to governors in schools that are due for inspection in the next few months, will include any changes to preparation needed for schools in the inspection window and also help governors to plan ahead.

## Introduction to Governance (2 session course)

Wednesday 14 April 2021, 5.00pm-7.30pm (second session 28 April 5.00pm-7.30pm)

This School Governor Service course is targeted at new and recently appointed or elected governors and trustees. It is a 'safe' environment to ask questions, learn about the role of governance in achieving successful outcomes for children. It also offers governors and trustees the opportunity for self-assessment and to learn from and share experiences.

This course aims to give you, as a newly appointed governor/trustee (including headteachers, staff governors and associate members), a level of knowledge of governance that you need to effectively support your school in raising standards.

## Monitoring School Improvement and Progress

Tuesday 20 April 2021, 6.00pm – 8.00pm

This training course looks at one of the most important roles of governance, monitoring school improvement and progress. Across all phases of education this role stays the same. The types of data differ but the systems used for monitoring are unchanged.

This course will look at:

- Establishing systems and planning
- Monitoring the implementation
- Triangulation of data and using the data to improve the cycle

**BOOKING:** Please visit [www.skills4bradford.co.uk](http://www.skills4bradford.co.uk) to reserve a place on any SGS courses or email [school.governor@bradford.gov.uk](mailto:school.governor@bradford.gov.uk) with requests or queries.

## Updates from the Department for Education

### Awarding Qualifications in Summer 2021

The full update is available [here](#) and this gives details of the arrangements for awarding GCSE, A Level, VTQ and other qualifications in summer 2021. This updated guidance was published on 25 February 2021 and outlines the types of assessments teachers can use and the quality assurance systems. It reminds schools that exam boards will also complete checks :-

'of the evidence for a sample of student grades in a sample of subjects, in a sample of schools and colleges over June and July.

The exam boards will determine which schools and colleges they visit, and which students' evidence they review. The exam boards will decide whether the grades determined by the centre following quality assurance are a reasonable exercise of academic judgement of the students' demonstrated performance. If they don't find this to be the case the exam boards will ask the school or college to investigate.

Exam boards will not re-mark the student's evidence or give an alternative grade. Grades would only be changed by the board if they are not satisfied with the outcome of an investigation or malpractice is found.

The sample of schools and colleges will take into account centre type and other characteristics of the centre and cohort. The exam boards will also check schools and colleges where concerns are highlighted as part of the initial external process checks. A check will also be triggered:

- if concerns have been raised or as a result of whistleblowing
- if a school or college's results are out of line with expectations based on past performance
- where there have been significant changes in early entries
- where schools have previously received sanctions for malpractice or an investigation is ongoing '

Students will be able to appeal their grades. Results for A/AS levels will be released on 10 August and GCSE results on 12 August. BTech and VTQ results will be issued on or before those dates.

### **Get Help Buying For Schools Service – urgent consultation closes on 11 March 2021**

The Get Help Buying for Schools service is designed to ensure that buyers and other buying decision makers in schools have access to specialist support, relationships, information and tools to buy goods and services efficiently delivering value for money.

A public consultation is taking place to help the DfE design the model they will use to deliver the service, which aims to support schools in receiving value for money on their non-staff spending.

Please use this [link](#) to access more information. The link to the consultation is at the bottom of that page.

### **Plan for return to schools on 8 March**

The Government has set out its plan for the return of all pupils to schools from 8 March.

Detailed plans have been circulated to allow schools to prepare for re-opening. The full plan is available [here](#)

Plans include the need for mass testing:-

- all primary school children will return on Monday 8 March. Primary school staff will continue to take 2 rapid COVID-19 tests each week at home
- all secondary school and college students will take three COVID-19 tests as they return to the classroom from the 8 March at existing school testing facilities. Schools and colleges will have discretion on how to test students over that week to enable their return to the classroom. After the initial programme of three tests in school or college, students will be provided with 2 rapid tests to use each week at home
- secondary school and college staff will also be provided with 2 tests to use each week at home

Wraparound childcare for primary and secondary pupils will resume from Monday 8 March where necessary to enable parents to access work, education or medical care.

**Staff and students in secondary schools and colleges are advised to wear face coverings in all areas, including classrooms,** where social distancing cannot be maintained and as a temporary extra measure.

As attendance will be compulsory governors will be aware of the need to monitor attendance, particularly the attendance of their vulnerable children and those for whom there are safeguarding concerns.

Governors will also need to note that remote education is still a requirement for children who are shielding or extremely vulnerable and so not able to attend. As staff will now be committed to working in school this may require some additional support.

### School Governance Update March 2021

This [update](#) provides links to the areas of the DfE website where governors will find helpful information.

It also invites governors to nominate their board or governance professional for an **Outstanding Governance Award from the National Governance Association** and includes a link to enable nominations to be made. It would be a lovely tribute to the hard work of Bradford volunteers and staff if referrals were made.

There is also a reminder for maintained schools that the submission of the **School Financial Value Standard (SFVS)** to the local authority has been delayed this year to Friday 28 May 2021.

Finally there is a link to a new Webinar on the wellbeing of staff and pupils and an NGA survey for clerks and governance professionals.

### Information that Schools Must Publish Online

This was updated in February to include information about remote education provision and the catch up premium

## Updates from the Local Authority

### Holiday Activities and Food Programme 2021

Bradford Schools online has full details of the criteria for accessing this funding, which will be used to give grants to organisations to provide free healthy food and enriching activities to disadvantaged children. Full details are available [here](#) including an update from the government about possible delivery of programmes during the Easter holidays if conditions are safe to allow outside events.

## Updates from Ofsted

In the light of recent Ofsted inspections and using recent updates from Ofsted, remote inspections are continuing and there is a focus on the curriculum and its relationship to the needs of the particular school demographic. This includes looking at the school's commitment to the disadvantaged in assisting them to access the curriculum.

For those schools where an Ofsted visit is expected further information will be made available in the Ofsted training session listed in the training section.

Ofsted are currently discussing the form and timing of inspections during the summer term but have not yet released information on when face to face inspections will resume.

Ofsted maintain a 'rolling update' page which can be accessed [here](#) where it is possible to access the latest guidance.

## Education Endowment Foundation

The EEF have produced a range of supportive information using research into effective online/remote provision, the use of assessment to plan catch up learning the use of catch up funding. Their website can be accessed using this [link](#).

## Afterword

The School Governor Service team are still available to support governing boards of all types with website checks, bespoke training and additional support to assist you in ensuring that the work you do to support schools is as effective as possible. Please get in touch to discuss any support you would wish to arrange, using the School Governor Service email address below.

Circulation of this document is to all governors who have given permission for their personal emails to be used or those for whom a school email address is on the [www.skills4bradford.co.uk](http://www.skills4bradford.co.uk) website. If you are a governor/trustee but have not received a link to this document please contact [school.governor@bradford.gov.uk](mailto:school.governor@bradford.gov.uk) to ensure that an up to date email address and permission for its use is recorded.

This is currently a free resource from the Bradford School Governor Service.