



# Governors' Update

## June 2020

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### Current Arrangements

The School Governor Service (SGS) is continuing to work from our respective homes but telephone calls to the number above have been diverted and will be answered during working hours. We will inform governors when the team returns to Margaret McMillan Tower.

Updates have also been sent to the Chairs of governing boards since the last general update and will continue to be sent if there is information that Chairs need to take note of when organising meetings and providing support for the headteacher.

Most governing boards are now meeting, either virtually or by social distancing and governors of **Maintained Schools are reminded that a meeting to approve the 2020/21 budget needs to be held prior to that budget's submission on or before 30 June. This approval cannot be delegated.**

### Training

Thank you to all those who responded to the training survey sent out by SGS. The overwhelming response received was that governors would like training to be delivered virtually and that training should continue to be made available over the summer.

In response to that survey a list of training sessions has been prepared. A separate message will be sent to you with the list of courses available for the rest of this term and through the summer.

These sessions will be advertised on Bradford Schools Online and on the Skills4Bradford website and can be booked on the website or by emailing [school.governor@bradford.gov.uk](mailto:school.governor@bradford.gov.uk). The topics for the courses have been selected in response to the requests received from those answering the survey.

If governors would like to request a bespoke session on any topic for their governing board then these are also available. Please contact SGS using the email above so that your request can be discussed.

### Updates from the Department for Education

#### **Billion Pound Covid catch up plan to tackle impact of Lost Teaching Time**

In an announcement on 19 June the government has informed schools that there will be a one off grant of £650 million to be shared across primary and secondary schools.

Whilst head teachers will decide how the money is spent, the government expects this to be spent on small group tuition for whoever needs it.

This one-off grant to support pupils in state education recognises that all young people have lost time in education as a result of the pandemic, regardless of their income or background.

Separately, a National Tutoring Programme, worth £350 million, will increase access to high-quality tuition for the most disadvantaged young people over the 2020/21 academic year.

This will help accelerate their academic progress and prevent the gap between them and their more affluent peers widening.

This £1 billion package is on top of the £14 billion three-year funding settlement announced last year - recognising the additional work schools will need to do to help students to catch up.

The National Tutoring Programme is designed to reach up to two million of England's most disadvantaged children.

The Government's ambition is that all providers running holiday clubs and activities for children over the summer holiday will be able to open, if the science allows.

Guidance will be provided to the sector on how to implement the protective measures necessary to open safely, and to parents on how to minimise the spread of the virus if they choose to attend.

Today the Education Endowment Foundation has also [published a guide](#) to help school leaders and staff decide how to use this funding to best support their pupils and their outcomes.

It provides advice on support strategies schools can use in deciding how to support pupils, including intervention programmes, extra teaching capacity, access to technology or summer schools.'

No additional information on this funding has yet been received but governors will wish to include its use in their monitoring of the progress being made in the acceleration of pupils' learning.

### **Guidance for Schools: Coronavirus**

The guidance continues to be updated as necessary and the DfE has now announced that updates will include a section on the changes since the last update. The complete set of guidance documents can be accessed [here](#). There are links to the guidance on specific topics so that governor can access those which are relevant to their particular remit.

The updated guidance for primary schools on inviting more children to attend school before summer was released on 15 June and this gives headteachers and leaders the discretion to invite back pupils from additional year groups if ready and able to do so within the existing guidelines. Governors will wish to look at the risk assessments being produced for the return of children and receive reports on their implementation.

### **Free School Meal Vouchers**

As governors will have seen on the news the Department has agreed to issue vouchers for Free School Meals (FSM) at the start of the summer holiday using the current voucher scheme. The latest information received is that one voucher will be issued for the six weeks of the holiday but no details have yet been published. Governors will need to consider the vulnerable children in their school and the numbers eligible for free school meals. It is a governor responsibility to ensure that those eligible are enrolled so that the school receives Pupil Premium funding for them. Governors may wish to ask questions about the health and well-being of the school's FSM provision currently and whether it appears that all those eligible are making claims.

### **Extra Mental Health Support for Pupils and Teachers**

Updated guidance has been issued about online resources and charity grants to help schools and colleges respond to the impact of Covid-19 on mental health and wellbeing.

The support includes a pilot project in partnership with the Education Support Partnership providing online peer support and telephone supervision to around 250 school leaders.

'An additional £9 million of funding has already been given to mental health charities and new online resources designed by health and education experts will be provided to schools and colleges to boost mental health support for staff and pupils, encouraging them to talk more confidently about the anxieties and concerns they feel as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. Videos, webinars and teaching materials, produced in partnership with charities, will be made available to schools and colleges, helping to foster conversations about mental health and reassure many young people who are worried about the impact of the virus on their lives.'

As more pupils return to the classroom as part of the Government's phased approach to the wider opening of schools, the Department for Education has announced grants worth more than £750,000 for the Diana Award, the Anti-Bullying Alliance and the Anne Frank Trust - to help hundreds of schools and colleges build relationships between pupils, boost their resilience, and continue to tackle bullying both in person and online'

The report also contains a link to a new training module for teachers to support them in giving lessons on the new Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) curriculum, which will become compulsory during the next academic year (more details on that below).

The link to the report is [here](#) and governors may want to question the school's plans for supporting staff and pupils with their mental health needs as well as any impact it may have on staffing provision.

### **Relationships, Sex and Health Education (RSHE) Curriculum**

This curriculum will make mental health and wellbeing a compulsory part of pupils' education in primary and secondary school. As governors will be aware this curriculum is compulsory from September 2020 and schools were charged with consulting parents and preparing for its delivery.

The implementation of the new curriculum is still compulsory but the Department for Education has stated that, given the current circumstances schools will not be penalised if the curriculum is not delivered immediately. Those schools where consultation has finished and all is prepared for delivery to start are encouraged to begin delivering teaching from 1 September 2020, or whenever is practicable to do so within the first few weeks of the new school year.

Schools that assess that they have been unable to adequately meet the statutory requirements because of the lost time and competing priorities should aim to start preparations to deliver the new curriculum and to commence teaching the new content **no later than** the start of the summer term 2021. To ensure teaching begins as soon as possible, schools are encouraged to take a phased approach (if needed) when introducing these subjects. Curriculum content on mental health and wellbeing, including knowledge on supporting your own and others' wellbeing, will be important as pupils return to schools and schools should prioritise the delivery of those parts of the curriculum.

The DfE has now published a training module that supports the physical health and mental wellbeing section of the statutory relationships, sex and health education curriculum. This is the first of a series of 14 modules to support schools to implement the new curriculum, developed to help subject leads and teachers understand what they should teach, as well as improving their confidence in delivering mental wellbeing as part of the new curriculum.

Governing boards and school leaders should review the current position at their schools, how they intend to deliver the new curriculum and their timetable for developing and updating policies that include stakeholder engagement.

### **Safeguarding**

The DfE has just released the updated Keeping Children Safe in Education document which will be in use from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2020. The consultation was suspended at the end of March and they have moved to publish the update to enable schools to prepare for the new school year. The link is here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2>.

## **Updates from the NGA**

NGA's latest COVID-19 [information briefing](#) published this week sets out the strategic approach that governing boards can take to reduce educational disadvantage caused and exacerbated by COVID-

19. It recommends that governing boards schedule a strategy review discussion with their senior executive leader at the earliest available opportunity to consider their school/trust's immediate response (the recovery phase from September) and assess their school/trust vision and strategic priorities.

The information briefing also highlights the importance of governing boards reviewing their school/trust pupil premium strategy in the light of COVID-19. It may well be the case that the pupil premium funding received by the school/trust needs to be distributed in a different way that reflects the increase in social, emotional and health issues that impact upon pupils' learning. All pupils will require some catch up education, and as well as supplementing this, the pupil premium can be targeted on tackling the identified barriers of the disadvantaged pupils.

Research released by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) shows that after nearly 10 years of working to narrow the attainment gap it is potentially being returned to the initial levels due to the pandemic. An [analysis](#) by EEF shows that the partial closure of schools may have completely reversed the progress of narrowing the gap that has been made since 2011. The analysis further estimates that the attainment gap "at the end of primary school could widen by between 11% and 75% between March and September".

The EEF, Impetus, Nesta and Sutton Trust have been working with the government to deliver a [national tutoring pilot](#) in order to target those falling behind as schools reopen to more pupils. Tutoring schemes will be piloted to provide effective remote learning to mitigate the further widening of the attainment gap and this offer includes high-quality tuition to up to 1,600 pupils.

## Updates from the Local Authority

Daily email updates are sent to headteachers from the Gold Team (a central team made up of leaders and managers from the Department of Children's Services which is based at City Hall) giving details of information from all areas which will assist schools with managing the current situation.

These updates give headteachers and Trust leaders the latest information on what is being put in place for schools both nationally and locally. Some of these items are of interest to governors. Some information from these updates has already been shared with Chairs and useful documents are available on Bradford Schools Online Link [here](#).

### Get Information about Schools (GIAS)

This is a government website with details of individual schools and their governance. Unfortunately, although it is compulsory for schools to maintain the information on the website, this is not being done regularly and so there will soon be a new functionality on the website which will remind schools if their part of the website has not been updated for 60 days. Details of all governors are supposed to be kept up to date and governors have a duty to ensure that this is done.

## Afterword

The next edition of this update will be sent out at the beginning of the next half term. If any urgent updates are needed for governors before that date then those will be sent out when they are released. Best wishes to all governors and schools from all at the School Governor Service for successful reopening of your schools as and when that happens.