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## COGNUS GOVERNOR SERVICES

Following on from the very difficult and challenging times we have all experienced since last Spring, we hope that you managed to relax over the festive season.

Following the Prime Minister’s announcement on 4 January of a national lockdown and the partial closure of schools until at least the 15 February, there is uncertainty around the timing of a full return to on-site education. Schools will, therefore, continue to provide on-site education only for vulnerable and key-worker children. Early Years Settings, Special Schools and Alternative Provision remain open for all children alongside a full remote online learning provision for those children at home.

Our newsletter brings you the updates from the tail end of last term when there were many guidance documents issued by the DfE. It also contains the most up to date guidance issued during the last two weeks, but the picture (and guidance) is still changing rapidly. No doubt there will be more information issued over the coming few weeks.

During the Autumn term, we undertook some extensive work on auditing Surrey County Council’s database of governors, and this is why we have been contacting clerks to clarify governing body membership details and to look more closely at vacancies across governing bodies. As always, we would ask that we are notified of any membership changes as soon as they happen.

We thank you again for your dedication to supporting and challenging the schools that you work with, particularly in these extraordinary circumstances.

June Crame,

Governor Services Manager

Welcome to the Cognus Governors’ Newsletter produced on a termly basis.

We would like to thank you for giving your valuable time to support and challenge your schools to be the very best they can be.

We wish you a successful new academic year as we continue our partnership with you in 2021.

COGNUS GOVERNORS’ NEWSLETTER

Spring 2021

**Message from the new Executive Director for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning**

Dear Surrey School Governors,

I’m writing partly to introduce myself, and partly to wish you all the best for the coming year, whatever it may bring.

I’m Rachael Wardell, Surrey County Council’s new Executive Director for Children, Families and Lifelong Learning. In previous local authorities where I have held similar roles, I’ve written from time to time to school governors, because I recognise what a vital role you play in the lives of our children and young people and their families, and because I hope that we have a shared vision and commitment to doing our best for the county’s children and young people. School governors are the largest volunteer workforce in the country. I try never to forget that. Over the years, your roles have become more demanding and complex, and your responsibilities ever greater. Never more so than in 2020, when the impact of Covid-19 on our school communities was so significant. Your support for Head Teachers and their Senior Leadership Teams has been very important during this period. Thank you.

I had hoped that I might be pulling together a few warm words about the start of the new year and how this one might be so much better for us all than the last. I am still optimistic that things will turn out well, but certainly the first few days of the year have started in turmoil. You won’t be surprised to know that over the new year bank holiday weekend, I and the Schools and Learning service were in busy communication with your schools and other settings via Surrey’s Phase Leaders, and with the Department for Education, about the plans for schools reopening during the week of 4 January. You were no doubt engaged in a similar flurry of activity, when in most years you would have been enjoying a final few day of seasonal relaxation.

I want to thank all of you, whose balance of challenge and support to your schools enabled them to be ready to welcome children back at the start of the spring term, and also to thank those of you who found local circumstances made the prospect of opening impossible. You all supported your Head Teachers to make difficult decisions with your school communities in mind. In the end, of course, the decision was made for the whole country on the evening of Monday 4 January and was probably met everywhere with a mixture of frustration, relief, and disappointment (and other emotions I won’t mention here!)

Now most schools face the even greater challenge of being open to the children of critical workers and vulnerable children (and an ever-expanding list of both) while at the same time delivering online learning to those children who stay at home. Early years settings, special schools and alternative provision remain open to all children. And all while the general public thinks of them as ‘closed’! I would like to assure you that Surrey County Council, and in particular the Area Schools Officers and the Schools Relationships Team, will be working with your schools through these latest developments and doing our best to support you, whatever news the latest announcement brings.

I will write to you again in the future, when we are all less focused on the pandemic response, about the vision for Surrey’s children, young people and families, and the pivotal role that your schools and you play in that. For now, though, in the hope that my optimism will be justified, I sign off by wishing you all the very best through the ups and downs of the first weeks of 2021.

**Rachael Wardell**

**Executive Director of Children, Families and Lifelong Learning**

**LA Governor Nominations**

The Local Authority is responsible for formally nominating LA governors based on their skills and experience to contribute to effective governance.

If you need to appoint, or re-appoint, a LA governor, please let us know and we will send you the appropriate forms to complete. These forms will indicate what skills you are looking for in a LA governor, and whether the governing body has a preferred candidate. Any appointments, or re-appointments, must be considered by governors at a full governing body meeting and it is preferable to schedule this discussion/approval on the agenda in the term before the end of the term of office.

We have produced a useful Guidance Document for Clerks to guide them through the process and this is available on request.

The Governor Nomination Panel will consider any applications for LA Governors on Monday 8 February 2021. Please make sure you send the completed applications to: [governorservices@cognus.org.uk](mailto:governorservices@cognus.org.uk)

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| **Date of Governor Nomination Panel – Monday 8 February 2021** |
| **Date for submission of completed applications – Monday 1 February 2021** |

Please note the date of the summer term panel has now been set as **Tuesday 18 May 2021** (with the date for submission of completed applications being **Tuesday 11 May 2021**).

**Please remember to notify Cognus Governor Services of any changes in your LA Governor membership.**

**Model Year Planner**

Our model year planner is available on the Surrey Governor Services section of the [Cognus website](https://cognus.org.uk/services-for-professionals/surrey-governor-service/governor-services-documents/). These will help you plan your standard governing body and committee business throughout the year.

**Governor Records – are your records accurate and up to date?**

Following a recent audit of governors’ records on the database that we maintain for Surrey, we found that there were a lot of inconsistencies in the information recorded on Surrey County Council’s database, the DfE’s site Get Information About Schools and school’s websites. It is vitally important that all of these areas contain accurate, up to date information. We would ask that you inform Cognus Governor Services of any changes in membership as soon as possible by submitting a [Change of Membership form](https://cognus.org.uk/services-for-professionals/surrey-governor-service/governor-services-documents/) securely by email to: [governorservices@cognus.org.uk](mailto:governorservices@cognus.org.uk).

This includes the annual appointments of Chair/Vice-Chair and link governor positions (with the date of appointment).

**Get Information About Schools**

**(GIAS)**

Please ensure that whoever is responsible at your school/s updates GIAS whenever there is a change in membership and/or change of Chair in order to ensure that the most up to date governance information is recorded.

**School Websites**

In addition to statutory requirements for schools setting out what they must publish online, you must also ensure that governance information is reflected correctly on the school’s website. This should be checked termly and all relevant information, including governor membership and committee structures, governor attendance for the past year and Register of Interests, must be included. See page 19 for further details.

**Diverse Governance**

Governing bodies must understand and carry out their responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010, promoting equality and diversity throughout the school including in relation to its own operation. The public sector **Equality Duty** (section 149 of the Act) came into force on 5 April 2011 and requires public sector organisations to publish information to show their compliance with the Equality Duty, at least annually and set and publish equality objectives, at least every four years. This means that the information they publish must show that they had due regard to the need to:

* **eliminate unlawful discrimination**, **harassment and victimisation** and any other conduct prohibited by the Act;
* **advance equality of opportunity** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it; and
* **foster good relations** between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it.

According to the Equality Act 2010, **protected characteristics** are aspects of a person’s identity that make them who they are.

**What are the protected characteristics?**

It is against the law (Equality Act 2010) to discriminate against someone because of:

* age
* disability
* gender reassignment
* marriage and civil partnership.
* pregnancy and maternity
* race
* religion or belief
* sex
* sexual orientation

The profile of diverse governance has been raised in recent years along with the concept of unconscious bias.

**What is unconscious bias?**

Everyone carries with them a set of cultural norms and practices which affects their attitudes and behaviour. We all have prejudice which comes from a variety of sources: upbringing, media, work colleagues, neighbourhood, religion, experiences etc. Many of these prejudices are so deep they are often sub-conscious, hence referred to as unconscious bias.

We can address these biases and prejudices, by asking three simple questions:

* How do I know what I know?
* What sources have I used?
* What value judgements am I bringing?

**Governing Body Appointments**

The Governance Handbook2020 *states:*

*‘The membership of the board should focus on the skills required; therefore, the primary consideration in appointment decisions should be acquiring the skills, experience and diversity the board needs to be effective. A board composed of governors and academy trustees who bring a diverse range of skills, experiences, qualifications, characteristics and perspectives and who are from different backgrounds and settings will have a positive impact on setting the strategic direction for the organisation’.*

Governing bodies should work to develop a strategy to reflect and address this within their schools, whilst recognising that there is much diversity among different ethnic groups.

Having governors from diverse backgrounds who are reflective of (but not representatives of) the community they serve provides a number of positive aspects when acting in the best interests of all pupils at the school such as:

* Bringing new perspectives and allowing for wider discussion, critique, and support, from different viewpoints.
* Promoting a culture of equality and diversity and setting examples around inclusion from the top down.
* Seeing governors and trustees from ethnic minorities provides role models for young people and can give them confidence in what they can achieve. This is also true for parents, staff, and the wider community. It can also help stakeholders feel more connected and valued as they see an example of how those making decisions understand the lives, context, and aspirations of the community they serve.

While bringing a range of perspectives makes for better decision-making, it should also be noted that governors/ trustees must understand that they are not on the board to represent anyone or a particular group but to use their own judgment to act in the best interests of all pupils at the school.

The National Governance Association launched its campaign “*Everybody on Board”* in 2018 working alongside Inspiring Governance, the school governance recruitment service, in order to promote and encourage diversity in school governance.

At that time, they identified that:

* 94% of school governors and trustees identify as white, 1% as Black, 2% as Asian, and 1% as mixed or being of multiple ethnic groups, which compares to a pupil population where 73% of school pupils are white, 6% Black, 12% Asian, 6% mixed or multiple groups and 2% another ethnic minority, according to the annual school governance survey 2020.

The survey also found that young people (aged under 40) were underrepresented with a higher proportion of volunteers aged 70 and over (14%) than there were aged under 40 (11%).

There were, however, positive signs that with new volunteers, the diversity of boards is improving. Of those volunteers that joined their board in the twelve months prior to completing the survey, 90% identify as white, 2% as Black, 3% as Asian, 3% from mixed/multiple groups and 1% from ethnic backgrounds. A third (32%) of new volunteers recruited within the past year were aged under 40.

Some useful links

* The NGA document  The [Right People Around The Table](https://www.nga.org.uk/Knowledge-Centre/Governance-structure-roles-and-responsibilities/Roles-and-responsibilities/Composition/The-right-people-around-the-table-a-guide-to-recru.aspx)

In January 2020 the NGA published an [update on their work on diversity.](https://www.nga.org.uk/News/Blog/January-2020/Championing-diversity-in-school-governance.aspx)

* Diverse Educators is partnering with the National Governance Association and governor recruitment services, [Inspiring Governance](https://www.inspiringgovernance.org/), [Academy Ambassadors](https://www.academyambassadors.org/) and [Governors for Schools](https://governorsforschools.org.uk).

There is a series of 6 webcasts on diverse governance. The first webcast was held on Thursday 19 November and the second on 3 December, but future sessions will be running up until March 2021.

Each webcast will target different audiences, feature diverse contributors, and cover topics such as how to recruit a diverse board, or the board’s strategic role in diversity. You can sign up through the link [here:](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/diversegovernance-webcast-series-6-parts-tickets-127507525441)

* [BAMEed](https://www.bameednetwork.com/) which has lots of information, resources and webinars

**What Steps Can Governing Bodies Take?**

There are many strands to ensuring diversity in schools. The first steps to achieving diversity within your governing body might be to have a termly agenda item to discuss diversity and unconscious bias and develop a strategy to address any areas e.g. the composition of the governing body, the understanding of governors around these issues and how this feeds into school policies and practice.

**Admissions**

The Admissions & Transport Spring Term newsletter will be coming out in the Schools Bulletin in January and will be sent on to Heads, Chairs and Clerks.

**Updated Complaints Guidance**

The Area Schools Officers at Surrey County Council have been working on some updated guidance for schools and academies on dealing with complaints, including model procedures, based on the DfE and EFSA models. We are grateful for the support of some experienced Surrey governors with this work.

The new model procedures and guidance will be issued to those schools who buy back the Area Schools Support service during week commencing 18 January 2021, via email to Headteachers and Chairs of Governors. The email will also include details of training being offered by the Area Schools Officers later in the Spring term.

**Area Schools Officers are:**

Ann Panton, South East Surrey

(Mole Valley, Reigate & Banstead, Tandridge) [ann.panton@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:ann.panton@surreycc.gov.uk)

Caroline Marden, North East Surrey (Elmbridge, Epsom & Ewell, Spelthorne) [caroline.marden@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:caroline.marden@surreycc.gov.uk)

Kate Prince, North West Surrey

(Runnymede, Surrey Heath, Woking) [kate.prince@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:kate.prince@surreycc.gov.uk)

Jane van den Broeke, South West Surrey (Guildford, Waverley) [jane.vandenbroeke@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:jane.vandenbroeke@surreycc.gov.uk)

**Orbis Internal Audit**

2020/21 has been an unusual year due to COVID 19 and we know schools have been incredibly busy ensuring staff and pupils are safe. During this time financial processes may have changed and controls normally in place may have weakened.

Unfortunately, we have seen an increase in fraudulent attempts on schools during this period, taking advantage of gaps in controls and changing working practices. If you are making significant changes to processes in response to COVID 19 restrictions and would like some advice from the Orbis Internal Audit Team, please do contact us:

**General School Audit Enquiries:**

Email: [carolyn.a.sheehan@brightonhove.gov.uk](mailto:carolyn.a.sheehan@brightonhove.gov.uk)

OR [carolyn.sheehan@eastsussex.gov.uk](mailto:carolyn.sheehan@eastsussex.gov.uk)

( 07795 335692

Email: [melanie.ball@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:melanie.ball@surreycc.gov.uk)

( 07968 832186

**To Report Fraudulent Activity:**

Email:[internal.audit@surreycc.gov.uk](mailto:internal.audit@surreycc.gov.uk)

( 03456 009009

OR [surreycc@navexglobal.co.uk](mailto:surreycc@navexglobal.co.uk)

( 08000 698180

**Surrey Healthy Schools**

Surrey Healthy Schools provides guidance and direction to bring together a whole system approach to wellbeing, health and achievement. This approach is to assist in developing an increasingly sustainable, long term culture to support the welfare of all.

They have reported that their first meeting was most positive and the ripples from the meeting continue to resonate – an increased number of services and staff are utilising the Surrey Healthy Schools’ PSHE & Wellbeing News section.

The team has asked us to prompt you to remind school staff to access the service. They have regular newsletters, which you can access through this link [News from Surrey Healthy Schools](https://www.healthysurrey.org.uk/professionals/healthy-schools/news)

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| **Publications and News from the Department for Education (DfE) in relation to COVID-19** |
| **There is a lot of information and guidance for Governing Bodies to help you continue to conduct business in these unprecedented times. As the Department for Education (DfE), is publishing new and updated guidance on a daily basis, please refer to the DfE website for all guidance at** [**DfE Full COVID-19 Guidance**](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/guidance-for-schools-coronavirus-covid-19)  Please see below some links to key documents, which you may find useful:   |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | | **COVID -19 Guidance** | **Source** | **Link** | | DfE full COVID-19 collection | DfE | [**here**](https://www.gov.uk/search/all?level_one_taxon=5b7b9532-a775-4bd2-a3aa-6ce380184b6c&level_two_taxon=272308f4-05c8-4d0d-abc7-b7c2e3ccd249&content_purpose_supergroup%5B%5D=guidance_and_regulation&order=most-viewed) | | Guidance for Schools re. full opening of schools  (updated 26 November, 30 December, 14 and 18 January) | DfE | [**here**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools) | | Actions for Early Years and Childcare Providers during the coronavirus outbreak  (updated in November, December and January)  **NEW** Guidance for Early Years Settings issued January | DfE | [**here**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures/coronavirus-covid-19-early-years-and-childcare-closures)  [**here**](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/950653/Education_and_childcare_settings_-_national_lockdown_from_5_January_2021_.pdf) | | Coronavirus – What Parents and Carers need to know – (updated 27 November) | DfE | [**here**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-parents-and-carers-need-to-know-about-early-years-providers-schools-and-colleges-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak) | | Coronavirus (Covid-19) Catch Up Premium and Early Years Language Programme (updated 19 November) | DfE | [**here**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/catch-up-premium-coronavirus-covid-19) | | Early Years Support Package to help close Covid Language Gap | DfE | [**here**](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/early-years-support-package-to-help-close-covid-language-gap) | | Remote Education Good Practice (updated 27 October) | DfE | [**here**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/remote-education-good-practice/remote-education-good-practice) | | Help with Accessing and Buying Resources for Remote Education (23 November) – information for schools | DfE | [**here**](file:///C:\Users\penny.garry\OneDrive%20-%20Cognus\newsletters\Help%20with%20Accessing%20and%20Buying%20Resources%20for%20Remote%20Education) | | School Governance update December 2020 | DfE | [**here**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-governance-update/maintained-schools-school-governance-update-july-2020) | | **SPRING UPDATES** |  |  | | Guidance for Schools and Childcare Settings re. Return to School in January 2021 (updated 31 December) | DfE | [**here**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/schools-and-childcare-settings-return-in-january-2021/schools-and-childcare-settings-return-in-january-2021) | | Staggered Rollout of Coronavirus Testing for Secondary Schools and Colleges (Press Release 17 December) and for Primary Schools (18 January) | DfE | [**here**](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/staggered-rollout-of-coronavirus-testing-for-secondary-schools-and-colleges?utm_source=295ddfed-a544-417c-9c7e-6799d01fdf0b&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=daily)  [**here**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-asymptomatic-testing-for-staff-in-primary-schools-and-nurseries/rapid-asymptomatic-coronavirus-covid-19-testing-for-staff-in-primary-schools-school-based-nurseries-and-maintained-nursery-schools) | | Contingency Framework: Childcare and Education Settings excluding Universities (updated 1 January) | DfE | [**here**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-contingency-framework-for-education-and-childcare-settings/contingency-framework-education-and-childcare-settings-excluding-universities) | | Children of Critical Workers and Vulnerable Children Who Can Access Schools or Educational Settings | DfE | [**here**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision) | |

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| **Publications and News from the Department for Education (DfE) in relation to COVID-19 and the return to school in January 2021**  ***Links to Guidance (where available) are contained in headings*** | |
| [**Guidance for Full Opening of Schools**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools)  [**Education and Childcare Settings: National Lockdown from 5 January**](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/950653/Education_and_childcare_settings_-_national_lockdown_from_5_January_2021_.pdf)  [**Schools and childcare settings: return in January 2021**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/schools-and-childcare-settings-return-in-january-2021/schools-and-childcare-settings-return-in-january-2021)  [**Restricting Attendance During the National Lockdown: Schools**](file:///C:\Users\Karen%20ORegan\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\INetCache\Content.Outlook\NKVY5CAO\Restricting%20attendance%20during%20the%20national%20lockdown:%20schools%20(publishing.service.gov.uk)) | At the beginning of January, a national lockdown was imposed and the planned return to school for all phases of education was delayed.  However, guidance was then issued on 5 January directing Nurseries and Early Years providers to open to all children.  New guidance is awaited in relation to many of the DfE’s previous publications. However, the government have made it clear that Remote Learning should be in place for all children other than those of key workers and vulnerable children who will continue to attend education settings. Schools are expected to publish details of their remote education arrangements on their websites by 25 January 2021.  **The information below was published throughout the Autumn term (with various updates in preparation for the planned opening of schools). We have included it in this newsletter as a reference point and a source of information.**  The DfE published their guidance for schools in July 20 NS this guidance was updated again in November 20 and December 20 to include information in respect of the November lockdown and subsequent local tiers and that schools would remain open in all Tiers. It covers aspects such as:   * Face coverings * Transport * Attendance - self isolating and shielding * Workforce - staff who are clinically extremely vulnerable * Educational visits * Music, dance, drama - performances in the various Local Restriction Tiers * Physical activity in schools * Process in the event of local outbreaks - guidance on contingency plans are to be updated in due course * Self-isolation timescales * Remote learning expectations.   The guidance also sets out more details on how the DfE expected schools to operate in the autumn term. and covered:   * school operations, including attendance, workforce, estates, catering * curriculum, behaviour and pastoral support * assessment and accountability, including plans for inspection * contingency planning in case of self-isolation of multiple pupils or staff or local outbreaks   Prior to the national lockdown, the DfE had published (on 17 December) guidance around the return to school and education settings. This guidance primarily referenced the fact that secondary schools would have a phased return to school and for those not returning in the first two weeks, online learning should be in place. The DfE refers schools to the remote education expectations contained within their guidance document ‘Actions for Schools during the Coronavirus Outbreak’.  The DfE issued a new guidance document in January 2021 which provides information on the following:   * Public health information * School operations * School workforce * Remote Education * Catch Up * Pupil Wellbeing and Support * Assessment and Accountability   This guidance includes new information on:   * Attendance – including confirmation of who should attend (including in alternative provision and special schools) and how attendance should be recorded * Testing – including confirmation that the testing programme can continue in secondary schools * Workforce – including advice for those who are extremely clinically vulnerable * Free School Meals * Educational visits – confirmation that no visits should take place during this period * Remote education – including further information on remote education expectations * Accountability expectations – including inspections, exams and assessments |
| [**Weekly Coronavirus Testing Programme**](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/secondary-schools-and-colleges-to-get-weekly-coronavirus-testing) **for Secondary Schools**  [**Coronavirus Mass Testing Programme**](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/staggered-rollout-of-coronavirus-testing-for-secondary-schools-and-colleges?utm_source=295ddfed-a544-417c-9c7e-6799d01fdf0b&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=daily)  [**Coronavirus testing for staff at Testing for primary, school-based nursery and maintained nursery school staff**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-asymptomatic-testing-for-staff-in-primary-schools-and-nurseries/rapid-asymptomatic-coronavirus-covid-19-testing-for-staff-in-primary-schools-school-based-nurseries-and-maintained-nursery-schools) | On 15 December, the DfE set out its plans for regular, weekly, testing of students and staff at secondary schools. The plan was that this would be done with lateral flow device tests in order to be able to rapidly identify positive cases, and also to contain any asymptomatic cases.  The government then advised on 17 December that all secondary schools and colleges in England would be able to test more of their staff and students in a round of free coronavirus testing from the first week of January.  On 18 January, the DfE extended the offer of asymptomatic testing to all primary school (and Nursery) staff with the rollout of home testing kits. Staff will be asked to self-test twice per week. |
| **Remote Learning**  [**The Coronavirus Act 2020 Provision of Remote Learning (England) Temporary Continuity Direction**](https://www.thegazette.co.uk/notice/3642261)  [**The Coronavirus Act 2020 Provision of Remote Learning (England) Temporary Continuity Direction Guidance Note**](file:///C:\Users\Karen%20ORegan\AppData\Local\Microsoft\Windows\INetCache\Content.Outlook\NKVY5CAO\The%20Coronavirus%20Act%202020%20Provision%20of%20Remote%20Learning%20(England)%20Temporary%20Continuity%20Direction)  [**Review Your Remote Education Framework: Schools**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-your-remote-education-provision) | The government issued a Temporary Continuity Direction on 1 October 2020 (under the Coronavirus 2020 Act) which sets out the requirements for the provision of remote education and the Explanatory Note stated:  *The Direction requires that where a class, group of pupils, or individual pupils need to self-isolate, or there are local or national restrictions requiring pupils to remain at home, schools are expected to provide immediate access to remote education. The expectations on the quality of remote education expected of schools remain those set out in the guidance for full opening published in July 2020*.  Following the national lockdown in January 2021, there is once again an expectation for remote learning for all children (other than key worker and vulnerable children and those attending Early Years settings, Special Schools and PRUs).  On 12 January, the DfE published a template document for schools to review their remote education provision. The DfE has also directed that schools publish information about their remote learning on the school website **by 25 January 2021** and have issued a [template document](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/providing-remote-education-information-to-parents-template) to help with this.  One other significant change has been an update within the DfE’s document “Action for Schools” stating that supply teachers may also teach remotely.  Ofsted also published a useful document “What’s Working Well in Remote Education” on 11 January 2021 on the DfE website, which gives some tips and hints based on findings from their interim visits, research, and literature review. Links to the document are in the Ofsted section of this newsletter on page 21.  The NGA has also published a useful guide to support governors in understanding the expectations of, and monitoring of, Remote Learning (the highlights of which are on page 16 of this newsletter). |
| [**Free School Meals Guidance for Schools**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance-for-schools) | The DfE issued guidance on the provision of free school meals in March 2020 and has since updated the guidance (on 8 and 13 January), following the latest national lockdown, to give further advice on the support available to schools during the national lockdown as well as how to order vouchers, sending eCodes to families, supermarkets and redeeming the vouchers. |
| **Contingency Framework: Childcare and Education Settings (excluding Universities)** | The government published its contingency framework, which is primarily a means of limiting the spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) in educational settings and the wider community. The contingency framework set out in this section describes how any restrictions to childcare and educational settings should be implemented. It is designed to be flexible and responsive to local circumstances. Restrictions may be advised for one, some, or all, of the types of setting. This guidance was updated on 1 January 2021. |
| [**Attendance in Early Years and Education Settings during the Coronavirus outbreak.**](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/attendance-in-education-and-early-years-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak#history) | The DfE has published weekly updates of attendance at educational settings nationally since April to the present time. The publication provides a high-level national summary of estimates from the Department for Education's education settings survey and local authority early years survey.  .  However, the way that attendance is reported has changed since the first reports and the data now reflects the numbers of children who have been sent home to self-isolate.  The latest report, prior to this newsletter, was issued on 15 [December.](https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/attendance-in-education-and-early-years-settings-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/2020-week-50) |
| Examinations[Consultation on How GCSE, AS and A Level grades should be awarded in Summer 21](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/953000/6743-1_GCSE__AS_and_A_level_grades_should_be_awarded_in_summer_2021.pdf)[Consultation on alternative arrangements for the awards of VTQs and other general qualifications in summer 21](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/consultation-on-alternative-arrangements-for-the-award-of-vtqs-and-other-general-qualifications-in-2021) | During the Autumn term there had been numerous publications and announcements from Ofqual and the Education Secretary around the proposals for exams in 2021.  However, following the Prime Minister’s announcement on 4January in respect of the national lockdown, a further announcement was made stating that exams would NOT take place in the Summer of 2021. The DfE had said that there would be no SATS for primary schools but that there would be some form of teacher assessments given for secondary school pupils.  On 15 January, Ofqual and the Department for Education have launched two consultations and want to hear the views of students who were due to take their exams, their parents and carers, their teachers, school and college leaders and others who have an interest, including further and higher education providers, and employers.  The consultations close on 29 January 2021. |
| [Exclusion Guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion/changes-to-the-school-exclusion-process-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak) | Some further clarification has been given by the DfE, in the updated guidance on 5 October 2020, to the timescales for the consideration of exclusions as follows:  Exclusions between 25 September 2020 and 24 March 2021 (inclusive) should follow the deadlines in the [Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion)  statutory guidance, other than the deadline for the application of an independent review.  If it is not reasonably practicable to meet by the usual deadline either in person (because of coronavirus (COVID-19)) or by remote access (because of the conditions for a remote access meeting), the meeting must not be delayed any longer than is reasonably necessary because of coronavirus (COVID-19).  For fixed term exclusions, which result in a pupil missing 15 days, there has been an extension to the time allowed for the governing body to meet from 15 days to 25 days.  For fixed term exclusions, which result in a pupil missing between 6 and 15 days, there has been an extension to the time allowed for the governing body to meet from 50 days to 60 days. |
| [**Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020**](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/954314/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2020_-_Update_-_January_2021.pdf) | Keeping Children Safe in Education was issued in September 2020 and all staff and governors should be fully conversant with these guidelines. A further update was issued in January 2021 around the exit from the EU.  A consultation is currently taking place on changes for 2021 in the form of an online survey, which can be accessed [here](https://consult.education.gov.uk/safeguarding-in-schools-team/keeping-children-safe-in-education-schools-and-col/). |
| [**Catch Up Premium**](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-catch-up-premium) | The DfE updated its guidance on 19 November 2020.  Schools will receive their catch-up funding in three tranches and the per pupil amount is based on the October census. Mainstream schools are receiving £80 per pupil.  While schools can use their funding in a way that suits their cohort and circumstances, they are expected to use this funding for specific activities, which will help pupils catch up on missed education. The Education Endowment Fund have published guidance for schools with evidence-based approaches.  Governors and trustees should scrutinise schools’ approaches to catch-up from September 2020, including their plans for and use of catch-up funding. This should include consideration of whether schools are spending this funding in line with their catch-up priorities and ensuring appropriate transparency for parents.  Schools can also access the government’s £350m National Tutoring Programme, which provides additional, targeted support for those pupils who need it most. |
| Governance during Covid-19 and other General Governance Guidance from the DfE | |
| [**Local Authority Maintained Schools Governance Collection**](https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/local-authority-maintained-schools-governance?utm_source=dc078d46-9ca2-4ebb-9610-e1c0e2a9edc5&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=daily) | This area of the DfE website contains a wealth of information for governance in maintained schools. Since our last Newsletter, two updates have been made:  **Early Years Statutory Framework dis-applications.**  An update was issued in November 2020 in relation to dis-applications to the Early Years Statutory framework in respect of the impact of Covid-19. The updated dis-applications cover the period between 26 September 2020 and 31 August 2021. If during this time the government confirms that an area will be subject to coronavirus (COVID-19) related requirements or restrictions (referred to in here as the period of intervention related to coronavirus), and those restrictions prevent an early years provider from meeting the requirements of the EYFS, the dis-applications can be used.  **Governance Structure and Roles – see item below.** |
| [**Governance Handbook**](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/925104/Governance_Handbook_FINAL.pdf)  [**Governance Structures and Roles**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-structures-and-roles?utm_source=b9a5a841-cc0e-4bbf-a111-56e371bba859&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=daily) | An updated Governance Handbook was issued in October 2020. The DfE took the decision not to include any reference to Covid-19, as there are vast resources on the DfE site covering this.  Alongside the Governance Handbook, guidance was issued for both maintained schools and academy trusts (October 2020), and this sets out the high-level school and trust governance structures and the roles and responsibilities of governance within them. |
| [**DfE Governance Update**](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-governance-update/maintained-schools-school-governance-update-july-2020) | The DfE published a governance update on 2 December 2020. Two of the important highlights are as follows:  **Meetings/Visits**  Guidance on governing body meetings and visits to school had not changed as at December 2020 (since the July 2020 guidance). However, with the Prime Minister’s subsequent announcement on 4 January 2021 of a national lockdown, no visits should take place. Virtual meetings should continue and, when the lockdown is lifted, schools must consider their own risk assessments and governors’ personal situations before resuming meetings (and visits) in school.  Governors should be assured that all governors are able to participate in virtual meetings and that challenge and support and the celebration of success is on-going. The meeting should be well structured and, perhaps, consideration be given for governors to have some time either before or after the meeting to simply “catch-up”, as they would when they meet in person.  An alternative way of monitoring should be considered whilst visits are not currently possible. This could take the form of a telephone conversation or video call with a relevant member of staff (following agreement with the Headteacher) whilst being mindful of the pressures staff are already under.  **Digital Education**  As governors and trustees have a responsibility and duty to ensure all pupils are accessing learning, whether in the classroom or online, you should be aware that schools can apply for government-funded support to access one of two free-to-use digital education platforms.  Schools across the country have been signing up to access Google Suite for education, or Office 365, since April 2020. These platforms will enable schools to provide remote education when required. So far, the programme has over 5,000 schools signed up to a digital education platform. Use this link to learn more about the [platforms programme.](https://get-help-with-tech.education.gov.uk/digital-platforms) |
| [**School and Trust Governance Investigative Report**](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/924898/NFER_Governance_Strand1_Report_FINAL.pdf) | The results of the NFER’s investigative research into school and academy governance, which had been commissioned by the DfE, was published on 7 October 2020.  The initial survey was emailed to a sample of 5,363 schools and trusts. Survey responses were received from 1,207 individual schools, academies, and trusts. In total, 2,571 individuals responded to the survey. Following this, telephone calls were made to 30 individuals (Chairs, Governors/Trustees, Executive Leaders and Clerks).  The aims of the study were to identify:   * governance structures and distribution of responsibility and authority between levels of trust governance * size and characteristics of school and trust governing bodies, including demographics and skills of governors, trustees, Local Governing Body (LGB) members and clerks * recruitment and retention of those involved in governance * the experiences of those involved in governance * what, if any, challenges governors, trustees, LGB members, and clerks face to be effective in their respective roles.   The overall conclusion sets out a variety of findings around governors’ time commitment to the role, governor and trustee recruitment and succession planning composition (and lack of diversity on boards, skills and training, professional clerking and the possible need for more external support for boards.  Specific issues identified for the different education settings were as follows:  **Trust Governance**   * There is a lack of separation between the different levels of governance in trusts, due to individuals taking on multiple roles across different levels. Trustees are often also Members, as are executive leaders. If Members are also acting as trustees or executive leaders, this may impact on their objectivity and ability to oversee trust governance impartially.   **Maintained Schools**   * Maintained school governing bodies appear to feel less confident in their strategic oversight role than trust boards. * Governors in maintained schools were less likely to have received most forms of training, support, and guidance. * Maintained school governing bodies were less likely to be monitoring or evaluating their effectiveness compared to trust boards.   **Single Academy Trusts**   * Clerks in Single Academy Trusts appear to be under utilised. * Clerks were less likely to feel that they had the support and training to undertake their roles in comparison to their counterparts in maintained schools and MAT trust boards.   **Multi Academy Trusts**   * The complexity of MAT governance presents a unique challenge in ensuring clarity in the roles and responsibilities of the different tiers of governance. * Roles and decision-making responsibilities are not always clearly defined in a way that is understood by all involved in governance. * MATs appear to experience unique challenges in their recruitment of trustees. * There are discrepancies in the training and confidence of those involved at the different levels of governance in trusts. |
| **Publications and News from Other Organisations**  **in relation to Covid-19** | |
| [**Monitoring Priorities for Governing Boards during Lockdown**](https://www.nga.org.uk/Knowledge-Centre/Covid-19/Monitoring-full-school-opening.aspx)  [**Information on Remote Learning (Safeguarding, Expectations, Support and Remote Monitoring)**](https://www.nga.org.uk/getmedia/4b6554dd-8deb-42d1-a061-d506f11d1793/NGA_COVID-19_Information-sheet_Remote_education_Oct_2020.pdf) | The NGA has issued guidance around the priorities for governors’ monitoring during lockdown:   * Risk management and safeguarding * Wellbeing across the school community * Providing remote education * 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   With particular reference to Remote Learning, the NGA has recommended a focus on:   * Keeping pupils and teachers safe * The expectations for remote education * The characteristics of effective remote learning * Support available for schools * Monitoring remote education   The NGA recommend a number of questions that governors should be asking:   * Has the school been able to switch quickly and efficiently to online (blended) learning? * How are pupils and staff supported, educated and encouraged to stay safe and behave online? * How are we supporting our pupils and their families to engage with the online learning provided? * How are pupils who are unable to access online learning supported? * What support, resources and CPD are available to teachers to deliver online learning and adapt the curriculum for online learning to best meet the needs of pupils? * Are our online education approaches tailored to meet the needs of pupils with SEND? * What support can the governing board provide to the school in this area? * Is the delivery of remote learning impacting on teachers’ wellbeing – do plans support a good work-life balance? |
| [**Disadvantaged Pupils – Reducing the Impact of Partial School Closures**](https://www.nga.org.uk/Knowledge-Centre/Covid-19/Reducing-the-impact-of-school-closures-on-disadvan.aspx) | The NGA has suggested that during strategic discussions, governing bodies ask the following questions in relation to disadvantaged pupils:   * How the school/trust intends to reduce the impact of partial school closure on: - the achievement and progress of all pupils - how this is monitored and assessed (e.g. reliability of data) - the number of pupils who now count as disadvantaged   - the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and the attainment gap  - their barriers to learning (and not just those that are addressed by teaching and learning)   * The research, proven practice and local networks the school/trust can draw on to inform their approach to overcoming barriers to learning and achievement created or exacerbated by COVID-19. * How to balance academic catch-up (pure teaching and learning) with the wider pastoral and family support needed to address circumstances that affect behaviour, attendance and attitudes to learning. * Which policies need to be reviewed, updated and aligned with the overall school/trust strategy in light of COVID-19. The Pupil Premium strategy (see below) will need to be rooted in the context of the times. * The support and CPD that all staff (including school leaders) require to reduce the impact of COVID19 on all pupils, particularly disadvantaged pupils. * The financial planning and resource implications of new/revised strategic priorities designed to reduce the impact of COVID-19 on the disadvantage gap and the achievement and progress of all pupils. |
| [**Being Strategic**](https://www.nga.org.uk/Knowledge-Centre/Vision-ethos-and-strategic-direction/Being-Strategic-A-guide-for-governing-boards.aspx) | The NGA updated their guidance document “Being Strategic” in October 2020. The updated content includes:   * Mission – the purpose of a mission statement and its influence on strategy * Culture – the factors that make a positive impact on culture and how culture impacts on strategy * An expanded list of strategy outcomes and sources of evidence   There is also a useful webinar to accompany the updated guidance. |
| [**Annual School Governance Survey**](https://www.nga.org.uk/Knowledge-Centre/research-(1)/Annual-school-governance-survey/School-governance-in-2020.aspx) | The NGA published the findings of its annual school governance survey in September 2020. 6,864 people took part in the survey, the largest number recorded.  The report is broken down into the following sections:  1. Leadership and staffing  2. Finance and funding  3. Governance volunteers  4. Governance practice  5. Governing in a multi academy trust  6. Pupils, communities, and accountability  Interestingly, the NGA observed that, despite governing during a pandemic, two of the top three concerns that governors and trustees say face their organisation have been at the top of the list for some years: balancing the budget and staff wellbeing. |
| [**Governors for Schools Wellbeing Campaign**](https://governorsforschools.org.uk/news/wellbeing-governors/) | As schools are facing more challenging weeks ahead, Governors for Schools are launching term 2 of their wellbeing campaign, focusing on school staff mental health and wellbeing.  The termly campaign includes;  • Insightful resources, including a new e-learning module on supporting wellbeing as a governor  • An animation to watch on the importance of staff wellbeing in a school  • A webinar to sign up to on 28th January to learn how and why school governors should support mental health and wellbeing. |
| **General Publications and News from the DfE** | |
| [Institute of Teaching](https://schoolsweek.co.uk/dfe-to-establish-new-institute-of-teaching-to-train-up-to-1000-teachers-a-year/) | Schools Week reported on the government’s new initiative, a new Institute of Teaching, which will, from September 2022, train up to 1,000 teachers each year. There will be at least four regional campuses with initial teacher training and life-long training and development for teachers. |
| [New Children’s Commissioner](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/dame-rachel-de-souza-confirmed-as-new-childrens-commissioner?utm_source=f1fa676a-7b3b-44a7-8147-eed903ec5d1b&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=daily) | On 17 December 2020, the DfE announced that, from March 2021, the new Children’s Commissioner will be Dame Rachel de Souza.  The role of the Children’s Commissioner was created by the Children Act 2004 and has been strengthened by the Children and Families Act 2014. The role of the Children’s Commissioner is to promote and protect the rights of all children in England with a particular focus on those with difficulties or challenges in their lives, such as those living away from home, in or leaving care, or receiving social care services. |
| [School funding confirmed for every local authority in England](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/school-funding-boost-confirmed-for-every-local-authority-in-england?utm_source=83552cea-b889-4bd4-a8e9-914fbd06544f&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=daily) | On 17 December, the DfE announced a school funding increase of £2.2bn in core funding for schools. A summary of the allocations is set out below:   * Every school is set to receive the new minima of £5,150 per-pupil funding for secondary schools next year, and £4,000 for primaries, up from the £5,000 and £3,750, which schools are receiving this year in the first year of the funding settlement. * Funding to cover increases to teacher pay and pensions worth £2 billion will also be included from 2021 rather than paid separately, reassuring schools that the funding will continue to be provided in their core budgets. * Funding for pupil premium will continue in 2021-22 with per pupil rates protected to remain the same as this year. This means schools will benefit from £1,345 per eligible primary pupil, and £955 for every eligible secondary pupil. * High needs funding to support children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) is also increasing by £730 million next year, a 10% increase that will bring the total high needs budget to more than £8 billion. The government’s £1 billion Covid catch up fund is also helping tackle the impact of lost teaching time as a result of the pandemic, including a £650 million catch up premium for this academic year and a £350 million National Tutoring Programme, which is on the way to reaching hundreds of thousands of pupils by the summer. * £44 million is being invested in early years in 2021-22, to increase the hourly rate paid to childcare providers for the government’s free childcare entitlement offers. |
| [What Maintained Schools Must Publish Online](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-maintained-schools-must-publish-online#history) | Every local-authority-maintained school must publish specific information on its website to comply with the School Information (England) Regulations (2008), as amended by The School Information (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 and 2016 and other relevant legislation including the Equality Act 2010: advice for schools and the Children and Families Act 2014.  An update was issued on 12 November 2020 and listed some new requirements as follows:  **Schools that do not have a website**  You must still publish all of the information even if you do not maintain your own website. You can use an alternative website to host the information as long as you make the address and details of the website known to parents, for example, by providing parents with the URL (website address) and any other relevant details.  **Coronavirus (COVID-19) catch-up premium**  If your school gets the coronavirus (COVID-19) catch-up premium grant in academic year 2020 to 2021, you should publish details of:   * how it is intended that the grant will be spent * how the effect of this expenditure on the educational attainment of those pupils at the school will be assessed   There are also new sections on Admission arrangements, Exams and assessment results, Curriculum, Pupil Premium, Year 7 Literacy and Numeracy Catch-up Premium, PE and Sport Premium for primary schools, Equality Objectives, Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Information and Governors' Information and Duties.  The new section on Governors’ Information and Duties sets out the requirements for governing body information that should be published including:   * details of the structure and responsibilities of the governing body and its committees * the full names of the Chair of the governing body and Chair of each committee, information about each governor, including their full name, date of appointment, term of office, date they stepped down (where applicable) and who appointed them (in accordance with the governing body’s Instrument of Government) * relevant business and financial interests including: * governance roles in other educational institutions * any material interests arising from relationships between governors or relationships between governors and school staff (including spouses, partners and close relatives) * attendance record at governing body and committee meetings over the last academic year   Schools must also publish the same information for Associate Members making it clear whether they have voting rights on any of the committees to which they have been appointed. |
| **Publications and News from Ofsted** | |
| [Remote Ofsted Inspections](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ofsted-inspections-to-be-done-remotely-until-half-term)[Guidance Note for HM Inspectors for inspections in January 2021](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/january-2021-maintained-schools-and-academies) | There have been a number of changes in Ofsted’s approach to inspections over the past few months and, on 12 January 2021, Ofsted published their plans for remote inspection from 25 January. Ofsted has said that inspections will be carried out remotely until at least after the February half term.  Prior to the latest information, Ofsted’s guidance note issued to inspectors on 7 December stated the following:  *“From January 2021, we will resume monitoring inspections of schools judged as requires improvement or inadequate. This is to ensure that leaders of these schools have the support they need and are focusing on what will help improve the school most in the current circumstances”.*  It is understood that these inspections will have a strong focus on the quality of remote education being provided. In addition, Ofsted can inspect a school of any grade if it has serious concerns about safeguarding or the quality of remote education being provided, including remote education.  In January, the Secretary of State for Education invited parents to write to Ofsted if they were dissatisfied with the provision of education. This has actually led to an influx of complimentary letters from parents about how well schools are doing. |
| [Ofsted Coronavirus Rolling Update](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ofsted-coronavirus-covid-19-rolling-update#history) | Ofsted first published their Coronavirus update in March 2020 and, since then, have regularly updated the publication. |
| [COVID-19 isolation having detrimental impact on children’s education and welfare, particularly the most vulnerable](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/covid-19-isolation-having-detrimental-impact-on-childrens-education-and-welfare-particularly-the-most-vulnerable) | On 3 December, Ofsted published the third and final set of reports looking at the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on children and young people. The main findings are listed as:   * Repeated isolation has chipped away at the progress pupils have made since returning to school in September * The effectiveness of remote education is varied and difficult to determine * Children arriving at secure children’s homes are, in effect, put into solitary confinement * Many children with special education needs and/or disabilities (SEND) are not attending school, are struggling with remote learning and are at risk of abuse or neglect. * Even more schools report at least one child now being home schooled. Many parents doing this say their children will not return to school ‘until pandemic is over’ |
| [Covid19: Briefing for Schools September 20](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/924670/Schools_briefing_COVID-19_series_Sept-20202.pdf)[Covid19: Briefing for Schools October 20](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-series-briefing-on-schools-october-2020) | Ofsted have published a number of briefings in September, October and December following their pilot visits between 14-18 September (121 visits) and between 29 September and 23 October 2020 (380 visits). Ofsted only carried out remote visits during the November lockdown period.    The reports set out their findings in the following areas:  1. What is the current state of children’s school education?  2. How have children been affected by schools’ closures to most children?  3. How are schools planning to maintain standards in education through the pandemic?  4. What are schools doing with their COVID-19 catch-up funding?  These areas are reflective of the questions that governors’ will have been asking over the past few months. Their second briefing introduced consideration of staff wellbeing.  Ofsted did not issue letters to schools following their September visits but did following the October visits. They have since said that the visits do “*fall within the broad concept of inspections*”. |
| [What’s Working Well in Remote Education](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/whats-working-well-in-remote-education/whats-working-well-in-remote-education) | Daniel Muijs, Ofsted’s Deputy Director, Research and Evaluation shared (on 11 January) some useful information based on Ofsted’s findings from interim visits, research and literature reviews. Ofsted acknowledges the difficulties and challenges that schools, colleges and teachers face in providing remote education.  Some key messages within the guidance are:   * The remote education curriculum needs to be aligned to the classroom curriculum as much as possible. * Remote education is not the same as digital education. Sometimes, it may be more effective to deliver remote education through worksheets or a textbook. * Huge changes to the way teachers teach are not needed, but the key elements of effective teaching must be retained. * Delivery of learning in smaller chunks will be helpful to aid concentration. * Focus on the key knowledge or concepts that students need to know. * An overview of the bigger picture should be given (and where learning sits within a sequence of learning). * Clear and high expectations must be communicated to pupils. * Feedback is still vitally important and can be done in different ways including chatroom discussions and1-to-1 interaction tools. * Interactive touch screen questioning in live recorded lessons and adaptive learning software live lessons are not always more effective than asynchronous approaches. |
| [Ofsted Annual Report 2019-2020](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ofsted-annual-report-201920-education-childrens-services-and-skills/the-annual-report-of-her-majestys-chief-inspector-of-education-childrens-services-and-skills-201920) | Ofsted published their Annual Report on 1 December. The report covers a pre-Covid period from September 2019 to March 2020 and a post-Covid period from March 2020 to August 2020.  Highlights from the report are:   * Overall, 86% of all 22,000 schools have been judged good or outstanding at their most recent inspection. This proportion remains unchanged since 2018 but is a substantial increase from 68% in 2010. * Judgements of overall effectiveness remained high and largely unchanged. The concerns of some that the new framework would lead to turbulence in inspection grade profiles have not been borne out. * In early years, the profile of overall effectiveness judgements is largely unchanged, at 96%. However, there has been a slight shift to a higher proportion of providers judged good and a lower proportion judged outstanding since August 2019, reflecting that outstanding is a challenging and exacting judgement. * Nearly two-thirds of state-funded schools inspected under the EIF kept the same overall effectiveness grade as at their previous inspection. However, only 32% of the schools receiving a routine section 5 inspection (as opposed to section 8 inspections, which are not graded) maintained their previous grade. Of schools whose grades changed, a similar proportion improved as declined. * For routine section 5 inspections the same proportion of schools were awarded good or outstanding for quality of education as for overall effectiveness. * Proportions awarded good and outstanding for leadership and management were slightly higher. In the majority of cases where the grade for leadership and management was different to overall effectiveness, the school was graded good for leadership and management but requires improvement overall. Just as we saw under the previous common inspection framework (CIF), the schools that are graded higher for leadership and management than for overall effectiveness are disproportionately in deprived areas. * Grades were substantially higher for behaviour and attitudes and personal development compared with overall effectiveness. This shows that even where the quality of education and overall effectiveness of the school may need improvement, inspectors are able to acknowledge strong work done to ensure good behaviour and personal development. * In the alternative provision (AP) sector, 85% of state-funded pupil referral units, AP free schools and AP academies were graded good or outstanding as at 31 August 2020, compared with 86% for all schools.   The report also highlights issues such as:   * Early reading (and the importance of phonics) * “Stuck schools” * Vulnerable children * The disruption to education from school closures and the impact of this on education (particularly for vulnerable pupils). |
| [Notification of Significant Events](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/childcare-providers-telling-ofsted-about-significant-events) | From 28 January, all childcare providers must notify Ofsted of any significant events (as set out in their compliance handbook) using a new online form (rather than by email or telephone). |



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