

Governance Monthly Bulletin April 2020

For all Governors, Trustees, Clerks and School Leaders



- ❖ We are sure that you are keeping up to date with how the coronavirus is impacting on us all.
- ❖ Kent County Council (KCC) is keeping [KELSI](#) (Kent Education Learning and Skills Information) updated on a daily basis; please check regularly for local and national guidance.
- ❖ Following feedback regarding the Covid19 situation and the amount of, often rapidly changing, information being sent to Governing Boards, it is our intention to provide a recorded 'Weekly Roundup'; look out for your alert to our first recording scheduled for next week!

Department for Education

[Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) - guidance for schools and other educational settings is being updated regularly for staff, parents and carers, pupils and students, including [DBS checks](#).

[School Governance](#) - this update, which covers a number of topics, confirms that:

- The DfE will not be making any changes to the statutory governance functions in any upcoming regulations related to COVID-19.
- Maintained Schools - The School Governance (Roles, Procedures and Allowances) (England) Regulations 2013 (regulation 14) allows for governing bodies in maintained schools to approve alternative arrangements for governors to participate or vote at meetings of the governing body, including by telephone or video conference.
- Academies - The model articles of association for academy trusts state that trustees can attend meetings remotely subject to certain stipulations set out in article 126.

The DfE also urges GBs to be pragmatic in what they cover in meetings, to be proportionate in the decisions that they are planning to take, to focus on urgent, time-bound decisions, understand that GBs are likely to want to defer non-urgent decisions/agenda items until future meetings.

[Keeping Children Safe in Education \(KCSIE\)](#) - this DfE consultation was withdrawn on 31 March due to COVID-19.

[Behaviour Hubs](#) - the behaviour hubs programme enables schools with exemplary behaviour to work with other schools to improve their behaviour culture.

Ofsted

[Ofsted rolling update](#) – contains guidance and information relating to coronavirus (COVID-19) for schools, early years, children's social care and further education and skills providers.

[ASCL annual conference](#) - Sean Harford, National Director, Education, spoke at the Association for School and College Leaders' conference covering items such as post-inspection feedback (positives and negatives), myths, exam results, curriculum (secondary), subject leadership (primary) and outcomes.

National Governance Association

[NGA updated resources](#) [Membership packages and sign up](#)

[Business continuity, virtual meetings](#) – NGA's GOLDline advice service is available to all Governing Boards that have questions about maintaining their business in the current circumstances – including non-members; NGA has also released free guidance on business continuity and holding meetings virtually; there is also a 32 minute webinar should you require a break from reading!

Now might be a good time for you to review NGA's '[Everyone on Board](#)' campaign which aims to increase the **participation of people from ethnic minorities and young people** in school governance. Please also consider the development needs of your **senior and middle leaders**, deputy, assistance and aspiring Headteachers in gaining valuable governance experience. [Visible Governance in school's campaign Resources](#)



Extra Support for Inspiring Governance volunteers

From 1 April, new Governors sourced through the Inspiring Governance recruitment service will benefit from additional support and guidance from NGA as part of a 12-month free support package, designed to complement the induction and ongoing face-to-face training provided locally by your Board.

The Education People, Governor Services

[KCC - KELSI updates](#) – as mentioned above, advice for Early Years, Schools and Further Education providers is being updated daily.

Safeguarding – Action Required

An [Exemplar School/College Child Protection Policy Addendum in Response to Covid-19](#) is available on KELSI. Please ensure you keep your school's situation and policy under review, checking regularly with [Kelsi for updates](#) as circumstances may change over time.

In addition to the KELSI policy update and information provided by DfE (above), your attention is drawn to the Kent Education Safeguarding Service, [Safeguarding Self-Review Tool](#) which Governors (especially Safeguarding Governors) should also be aware of; although the review tool is for completion by the school it provides a good focus for Governors' monitoring.

LA Governors - Action Required

- Please be sure to check GB membership and Governors' terms of office dates regularly, allowing additional time for the process of LA Governor nominations.
- To assist with the completion of nomination forms, we have made a word version of the LA Governor Nomination Pack available (GovernorHub, resources tab); this will enable completion by email (the nominee and then Chair), prior to forwarding to the Clerk for additional attendance information (where applicable), checking and forwarding Governor Services by email – governorservices@theeducationpeople.org
- Clerks are respectfully reminded that the Full Governing Body (FGB) minutes, detailing the formal appointment of the LA Governor (including the term of office start date) must be sent by email to Governor Services; should the (FGB) decide not to appoint, the minutes should also be forwarded.
 - Has your GB submitted a nomination in the last 6 months?
 - Has the appointment been formally made by the FGB?
 - Have the FGB minutes been sent to Governor Services?

District Governor Briefings

We intend to run a series of live monthly webinars in place of our face-to-face District Governor Briefings, with the first briefings being held in May. More information, dates and times, will be communicated via GovernorHub.

GovernorHub – Virtual meetings

You are likely to have seen our information posts on GovernorHub regarding holding meetings 'virtually' (from 16th March); 3 further articles are available to help [set up online meetings](#) from inside the GovernorHub system.

GovernorHub - Multi-email facility - information reminder

- An additional and convenient facility has recently been added to the GovernorHub system; agreements specific to your board (e.g. code of conduct) can be created under 'Governing Board Confirmations', members can then confirm via their own profile page (declarations tab).
- Do you **Govern at more than one school?** Need to **record a school email address?** A helpful guide is now available on the resources tab, GovernorHub folder providing details of how Additional Information (school email addresses, multiple DBS check numbers) can be applied to the system.

Maintained Schools – Instrument of Government changes

In addition to the information readily available on GovernorHub (resources tab, LA Maintained Governing Bodies Constitution and Reconstitution), the physical and logistical challenges of this process will no doubt become apparent (printing, postage, signatures etc.). To ensure that your Governing Body remains legally constituted, your Area Governance Officer (AGO, contact details below), will oversee the process; in the absence of the legally signed document your AGO will confirm by email, the formally agreed constitution; for clarity and transparency, this should be recorded in the minutes along with the associated action points (Chair and Clerk).

[Mentally Healthy Schools](#) - have produced a useful resource, including resources that can be used to ensure pupil mental health and wellbeing is being maintained during this uncertain time with activities addressing methods for coping and how parents can talk to young people; there are also a number of helplines that staff and parents can use if they themselves need support or advice.

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[The Education People – Governor Services and Clerking](#)