

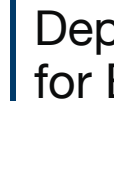
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Home > [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) > [Education, universities and childcare during coronavirus](#) > [School governance update](#)

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 Department for Education


Correspondence

School governance update: December 2020

Updated 2 December 2020

Contents

1. [Governing and trust boards meetings and visits into schools](#)
2. [\(Academy trusts only\): 'View my financial insights \(VMFI\)' tool update is now live and available to academy trustees](#)
3. [Diverse Governance Webcast Series](#)
4. [Efficiency savings with Teaching Vacancies services](#)
5. [‘Something’s Not Right’ Home Office campaign](#)
6. [Get funding and support to set up a digital education platform](#)
7. [Information about the transition from the European Union for schools and academy trusts](#)

 [Print this page](#)

Welcome to the December edition of the governance update. It has been a long and very unusual autumn term for all those involved in education.

We would like to thank you for your ongoing commitment to school and trust governance, and wish you and your school's staff and leadership team a restful and happy Christmas break.

The [actions for schools during the coronavirus outbreak](#) page is regularly updated with information for schools and academy trusts over this period.

## 1. Governing and trust boards meetings and visits into schools

Governing and trust boards should continue to take a pragmatic approach to their meetings. In line with regional or national restrictions, and guidance on social distancing, boards should continue with their alternative meeting arrangements where possible, but could consider whether a blended approach of face-to-face and virtual meetings would be appropriate if needed.

Chairs should be mindful of board members' personal situations, having open conversations about how they wish to join meetings. No governor or trustee should feel pressurised into attending a meeting on school premises.

Our guidance about governors or trustees going into schools has not changed. This can still happen, if considered essential. Schools will need to consider their own risk assessments and how they will protect the health and safety of any visitors, alongside staff and pupils, in line with our guidance, including on face coverings. If your visits can happen outside of school hours, they should.

## 2. (Academy trusts only): ‘View my financial insights (VMFI)’ tool update is now live and available to academy trustees

We have updated the ‘View my financial insights’ (VMFI) tool, and made it available to academy trustees. The tool provides users with insights into the financial position and performance of their trust. Board members are able to gain access to the tool with the help of their trust's finance team.

There are 2 types of access available to trustees: VMFI read only, or VMFI summary of finances; this should be discussed with your trust's finance team. Find further [guidance on VMFI](#).

## 3. Diverse Governance Webcast Series

Diverse Educators is partnering with:

- the National Governance Association
- the 2 DfE governor and trustee recruitment services, [Inspiring Governance](#) and [Academy Ambassadors](#)
- the charity Governors for Schools

They will deliver a series of 6 webcasts on diverse governance. The first webcast was held on Thursday 19 November, and sessions will be running up until March 2021, with the next webcast on Thursday 3 December.

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 or contribute to the series.](#)

## 4. Efficiency savings with Teaching Vacancies services

[Teaching Vacancies](#) is the free job listing service from DfE, developed to help make teacher recruitment advertising cheaper and more convenient for schools.

New service developments include a document upload feature to help hiring schools save time in listing their roles, enabling them to upload supporting documents, such as applications forms, job descriptions, or a link to promotional videos.

With teacher recruitment, the priority of governors and trustees is to support their school leaders in finding excellent candidates, and save time and money on the recruitment process, and this service can do just that.

To discuss Teaching Vacancies in more detail, or if you are an existing user and would consider being a case study for the service, please contact:

[teaching.vacancies@education.gov.uk](mailto:teaching.vacancies@education.gov.uk).

## 5. ‘Something’s Not Right’ Home Office campaign

The Home Office, in partnership with charities including Childline and Barnardo's, launched a new 4-week campaign, ‘[Something's Not Right](#)’, on 17 November, for children and young people 13+ who suffered harms, including sexual and physical abuse, during lockdown. The campaign aims to build awareness of the support services available to children, and encourage disclosure of abuse to a trusted adult.

The campaign team would greatly appreciate governors and trustees' encouragement to their schools to support the campaign, including delivering PSHE lesson plans on the subject. Further information is available via the [campaign portal](#).

If you have any questions, or would like any more information, please contact the campaign team at [somethingsnotright@homeoffice.gov.uk](mailto:somethingsnotright@homeoffice.gov.uk).

## 6. Get funding and support to set up a digital education platform

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 2 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. 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](#).

## 7. Information about the transition from the European Union for schools and academy trusts

Governors and trustees will want to ensure their schools are aware of the potential impact of the transition from the European Union. The good news is that DfE has recently published a [sector collection for schools](#) which lists links to all relevant information across government in one place.

You can also go to the [transition checker](#) which, though not specifically for schools, takes you through new rules for businesses and citizens.

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<a href="#">Benefits</a>	<a href="#">How government works</a>
<a href="#">Births, deaths, marriages and care</a>	<a href="#">Departments</a>
<a href="#">Business and self-employed</a>	<a href="#">Worldwide</a>
<a href="#">Childcare and parenting</a>	<a href="#">Services</a>
<a href="#">Citizenship and living in the UK</a>	<a href="#">Guidance and regulation</a>
<a href="#">Crime, justice and the law</a>	<a href="#">News and communications</a>
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<a href="#">Driving and transport</a>	<a href="#">Policy papers and consultations</a>
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