

Part of **Education and childcare during coronavirus**



Department for Education

Correspondence

Local authority maintained schools: school governance update July 2020

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Introduction

Welcome to the July edition of the governance update. In this update we have linked to the main guidance that we have published to support schools to prepare for the autumn term, alongside other publications and news that may be of interest to you in your governance role. We would like to thank you for your ongoing commitment to school and trust governance, and for the support you have shown your school leaders this summer term and throughout the national response to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. We wish you and your schools a restful summer break.

Guidance for getting all pupils back in the autumn term

We have published [Actions for schools during the coronavirus outbreak](#) outlining our plans for the autumn term. The guidance includes details to help schools prepare for all children and young people to return to full-time education in the new academic year. It includes plans to:

- lift current restrictions on group sizes to allow schools, colleges and nurseries to fully reopen to all children and young people as coronavirus (COVID-19) infection rates continue to fall
- keep children in class or year group sized bubbles and encourage older children and staff to keep their distance from each other where possible
- encourage testing if staff, pupils or their families develop coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms and provide access to easy to use home testing kits for children and staff who would otherwise be unable to get a test
- increase the frequency of cleaning and minimise contact in corridors
- take action in circumstances in which there is a positive case in a school or college
- cover assessment and accountability regarding Ofsted and exams in 2021

We have also published [guidance for parents](#) about what to expect.

We have published separate guidance for [early years](#), [further education](#) and [specialist settings](#).

In June, we announced a £650 million catch-up premium for schools. Schools will receive additional funding for the 2020 to 2021 academic year to ensure they have the support they need to help all pupils make up for lost teaching time. We will publish more information and guidance on when schools can expect to receive the funding, how they should use it, and how governors and trustees should scrutinise use of the funding imminently.

We will publish more detail on some of the other areas outlined in the guidance in the coming weeks. Check [Guidance for schools: coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) regularly for updates.

Governors and trustees visiting schools

Our guidance does not prevent governors or trustees going into schools. When considering how to organise visits from governors or trustees, 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. Our guidance explains that schools should consider how to manage visitors to the site and ensure site guidance on physical distancing and hygiene is explained to visitors on or before arrival.

If your visits can happen outside of school hours, they should. A record should be kept of all visitors. Depending on their risk assessment, schools may choose to continue to host governor meetings virtually.

Benefit from the reduced cost of risk cover

The [risk protection arrangement \(RPA\)](#) is an alternative to commercial insurance and has been operational for academies since 2014.

Local authority maintained schools can now join and benefit from the reduced cost of risk cover and achieve similar financial savings as attained by academies through membership of the RPA.

For just £18 per pupil, the insurance includes cover for:

- employer liability
- governor liability
- material damage
- professional indemnity
- personal accident

To join the RPA, use [DfE Sign-in](#). If you have any questions, including about how to opt in or opt out, email LAMS.RPA@education.gov.uk.

New guidance on managing cyber security risks in your school

When considering a school's security policies and plans, schools should also include an assessment of cyber security risk. A cyber security incident can result in a data breach where sensitive personal information about pupils, parents and staff is accessed without permission. This can have implications for safeguarding, and can also result in serious disruption to the running of the school.

The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) has published [Cyber security in schools: questions for governors and trustees](#) to help inform conversations with school leaders about managing cyber security risks.

Provide or update contact information

We keep details of schools and governors on the [Get information about schools \(GIAS\) website](#). It is important that you keep these details up to date, including email addresses, so we can send direct communications when necessary.

If you would like to receive a direct email alert when we publish updates, ask your school's DfE Sign-in approver to add your contact details to the GIAS website.

You must update GIAS with:

- email addresses for all chairs of governors
- start and end of term of office dates for all governor posts

For further information, read the [GIAS website](#).

If you are a clerk, or are otherwise unable to upload your details to GIAS, email schoolgovernance.update@education.gov.uk and we will add you to the circulation list manually.

Funded training and development programmes

Our funded development programmes are now available virtually and are suitable for home working.

The governance leadership programmes are ideal for those in roles such as chair, vice chair or committee chair. They will support you to work with your board to increase its effectiveness.

The governance clerking programmes are suitable for all school, academy and trust board clerks or governance professionals. They aim to increase expertise in these important governance roles.

For further details on these programmes, read [Academy and school governance: professional development](#).

Further information

The National Governance Association (NGA) continues to update its [resources](#), which are currently free to use, to support governing boards to manage the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) in schools.

Is this page useful? Yes No [Is there anything wrong with this page?](#)

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