

Governance Update 8 - Friday 1 May 2020

This update from the Governance Team shares information from Devon County Council (DCC), the Department for Education (DfE), the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) the Early Years Team and other trusted sources which governing boards will find useful. The updates are currently replacing our regular Friday Governance Alert in order to bring you additional information and background.

Current focus for governing board meetings

Many boards are embracing the opportunity to meet virtually. It is important for governors and trustees to remember that the school and the staff are currently operating in a completely different way. Safeguarding for all pupils, whether in school or at home, is the focus of their work. There is no expectation that schools will be providing an education or setting work for pupils, although many are choosing to do so. It is important that governance is proportionate to the current situation our schools and leaders are dealing with. The priorities for the areas the board is discussing will need to change and adapt accordingly, with safeguarding at the forefront of the agenda. If the school has chosen to set work for pupils the board needs to recognise that individual's engagement with this work will differ. For some families and pupils the expectation that they will complete the work being set may increase stress and tensions, so parents need to be reassured that there is no requirement for the work to be completed. The board needs to ensure that the wellbeing of headteachers and all staff is being considered and that they know how much their efforts are appreciated by the board, parents and pupils.

Boards may wish to consider some of the questions within the Governance Teams Q-card 'Coronavirus – governance in unprecedented times'.

Ofsted

On Monday of this week Amanda Spielman, Ofsted Chief Inspector, appeared before the [Parliamentary Education Committee](#) (attending virtually). When asked if Ofsted would consider a schools response to Coronavirus she responded "*We're not going to be judging schools per se on their response to COVID-19*" she explained that there are no specific expectations from government about what schools should be doing in terms of providing education for pupils. There are very clear expectations around what schools should be doing related to safeguarding and protecting vulnerable pupils, but there is no standard for home learning or online learning by which schools could be judged. "*We need to recognise that education has been substantially disrupted and will continue to be disrupted for some period after schools reopen, given what we know about likely expectations around social distancing and shielding.*" "*We have to accept that what can be done while schools are substantially closed is a very poor substitute for full normal education. Children are losing education and it's not just the children who are disadvantaged or academically behind, it's children without motivations. It would be unrealistic for anyone, including me, to expect the majority of children to have made the same progress they would have made if they'd been in school.*"

Virtual meetings

Hopefully your board has found a platform for virtual meetings that they are happy with and finding easy to use. GovernorHub has now launched a secure platform, where virtual meetings can only be attended by members of the board and specifically invited individuals. Further information is available on the GovernorHub site.

<https://help.governorhub.com/en/collections/2234495-governorhub-video-meetings>

Education Endowment Foundation free resource

Five issues schools face with home learning

- **Environment:** Home school isn't the same as ordinary school, and we will struggle if we try to replicate it, not least because the pupils that we teach will have a range of home contexts.
- **Structure:** Many schools are understandably trying to maintain a degree of consistency and routine by encouraging students to follow the timings of a normal school day. This won't be possible for all pupils, particularly the most vulnerable.
- **Access to technology:** Even if we use technology to try and overcome this reliance on adults at home, some households will have limited internet access or will have fewer devices than number of children.
- **Planning and teaching:** If we are to keep both pupils and parents motivated to engage with work we set, it is important that it feels meaningful and manageable. When time and resources are limited, we need to ensure that this work is as impactful as possible.
- **Self-regulation:** Metacognition and self-regulation will be particularly important when we're not physically with pupils, especially for the most vulnerable. Some children will have very good support at home, and well-developed self-regulation strategies, but others will find it more difficult to adjust to the 'new normal,' and they will need support.

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/news/blog-what-learning-should-we-be-promoting-for-home-during-school-closures/>

EdTech demonstrator schools

Broadclyst Community Primary School (BCPS) has an international reputation for its use of technology in education and has been awarded EdTech Demonstrator School status by a consortium including the Department for Education (DfE) and the National Grid for Learning. Providing expert technical support to other schools in the region and helping them to access Google and Microsoft's free education platforms, the school are running a range of EdTech webinars. BCPS is the lead school in the Cornerstone Academy Trust. Its CEO, Jonathan Bishop, commented: "*The EdTech Demonstrator School programme targets schools and colleges who are most in need of support; for example, those getting to grips with using a new online learning platform and those with the most disadvantaged learners. We are delighted that BCPS will be using its extensive knowledge and experience to help schools to build their own online strategies and select their learning platforms. We will be supporting governors and trustees, advising on the procurement and set-up of equipment, as well as providing guidance on safeguarding online, supporting SEN and offering advice on wider curriculum opportunities.*" <https://ed-tech.education/demonstrator/overview>

MP Briefing – Re-opening schools

Please see the attached briefing which school leaders have recently shared with MPs at a meeting to discuss issues that will influence the re-opening of schools following Covid-19 lockdown arrangements.

Local Learning Communities

The Local Learning Community (LLC) network has been re-established to support schools to work together to share resources and information. Dawn Stabb, Devon Head of Education and Learning, has asked us to pass on her personal thanks to all of the school based LLC links for their work in helping Devon County Council to coordinate a structured and well planned response to the pandemic.

Grant and funding support for Devon

This new webpage from Devon County Council, which is being regularly updated, provides links to a range of support available for businesses, charities and individuals in Devon for assistance with issues related to Coronavirus.

<https://www.devon.gov.uk/coronavirus-advice-in-devon/document/grant-and-funding-support/>

Education Health and Care Plans (EHCPs)

The DfE has published guidance on temporary changes to education, health and care legislation during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. The changes are in effect from today (1 May) to 31 May 2020 and mean that reasonable endeavours must be made to deliver a pupil's EHCP, but it may not be possible to currently deliver the plan in full due to limitations created through COVID-19, so Local Authorities must explore with parents and the child or young person what provision can reasonably be secured or arranged. Local Authorities still have a duty to consider new requests for an EHCP, but the timeframes have been temporarily modified for the period from 1 May to 25 September 2020.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/changes-to-the-law-on-education-health-and-care-needs-assessments-and-plans-due-to-coronavirus>

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The Safeguarding Team has advised schools that during these unprecedented times schools are having to run on reduced staffing numbers and this may include without the school DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) or Deputy DSL. In most situations the DSL / DDSL will be available by phone to support the school even if they are having to self-isolate. However there may be exceptional circumstances when due to illness another member of the staff team is acting as the DSL with limited knowledge of the role. Wherever possible for good practice this member of staff should be part of the schools senior leadership team. In these exceptional circumstances the member of staff acting as DSL will undertake a stripped down version of the role as outlined in KCSiE 2019. It is strongly recommended that in these circumstances the acting DSL must read the KCSiE 2019 (whole document) as well as refreshing their knowledge on internal policies and procedures. Guidance has been sent to schools.

The safeguarding governor or trustee may wish to ask the school what provision is in place currently and have a look at the One Minute Guides available on the Safeguarding Team webpages: <https://www.babcockldp.co.uk/safeguarding-and-compliance/safeguarding/one-minute-guides>

New free online learning platform to boost workplace skills

A new online learning platform to help boost the nation's skills while people are staying at home has been launched by Education Secretary Gavin Williamson.

Free courses are available through a new online platform hosted on the GOV.UK website, called 'The Skills Toolkit'. The new platform gives people access to free, high-quality digital and numeracy courses to help build up their skills, progress in work and boost their job prospects. <https://theskillstoolkit.campaign.gov.uk/>

Launching bite size training from the Governance Consultancy Team

The team has developed some bite size online modules for governors, trustees and clerks so that new and more experienced individuals can keep up to date with their role. The first of these are now available on our website, with more to follow. Between five and ten minutes long the modules cover different aspects of your role in an accessible format to fit around your other commitments. We hope you enjoy them! Please let us know of any topics you would like us to cover within the modules.

<https://www.babcockldp.co.uk/improving-schools-settings/governance-consultancy/training/bite-size-training-modules>

The Professional Clerk – webinars

The DfE funded development programme for clerks will be offered as an online programme for clerks who have not yet had an opportunity to attend the course. Over a 12 week period there will be six interactive webinars, each one hour in length, with additional online activities via the programme Moodle. The programme is aligned with the Clerking Competency Framework and aims to help clerks to develop the specialist skills and knowledge to carry out their role confidently and effectively. The full cost of the programme is £400, the DfE will fund £350 per clerk, meaning the school will need to contribute £50.00. Clerks who were registered to attend the face-to-face course at Buckfast will be given the option to transfer to the online course, after which bookings will be open for all clerks. Watch this space for further information. To register your interest in the programme please email:

Fiona.collier2@babcockinternational.com

Teachers' pay grant April 2020 to March 2021

The DfE has published the conditions of the grant for this financial year.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/teachers-pay-grant-allocations-for-2020-to-2021-financial-year>

Careers South West (CSW) Additional Support Available

CSW Group has a revised support offer available, free of charge, from their Transitions Team, especially for young people currently in year 11, further information attached. CSW would like to encourage schools to get in touch with their link advisor if they have any concerns about young people due to move in to post 16 provision in September, specifically where a young person does not have an education or training offer for the post 16 phase, or where it is felt there is some risk that they will become NEET (Not in Education, Employment of Training). CSW advisors are stepping up their offer and will give telephone support to young people. They are fully equipped with the digital tools needed to work with young people remotely, in place of face to face contact.

Governance Team Q-Card – 'Governance in Unprecedented times' (reminder)

This Q-card offers questions the board may wish to consider over the course of meetings this term. It is important that governance is proportionate to the current situation our schools and leaders are dealing with. The priorities for the areas the board is discussing will need to change and adapt accordingly. The board needs to ensure that the wellbeing of headteachers and all staff is paramount and that they know how much their efforts are appreciated by the board, parents and pupils.

<https://www.babcockldp.co.uk/improving-schools-settings/governance-consultancy/q-cards>

Letter from the Secretary of State

The Secretary of State for Education, Gavin Williamson, has sent a letter to all education providers sharing his gratitude for your support in caring for our most vulnerable children and young people. This letter places special emphasis on your continued efforts to ensure as many of these children and young people are supported to attend an education setting where it is in their best interests to do so.

<https://twitter.com/GavinWilliamson/status/1253421199775817729>

Contacting the Governance Consultancy Team

Members of the Governance Team have all been enabled to work remotely, our email and telephone helplines are available as normal:

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