**LDBS Governance Update Spring 2020**

# *New* Department for Education Guidance and Policy Updates

# Monthly messaging – DfE has launched a new “School Governance Update” – a monthly message with key updates from the Department. The aim is to help reduce workload by putting news in one place. The launch includes some new and improved sources of governance guidance in response to concerns that it is often hard to find what governors are looking for. The DfE has recently published a list of statutory polices and two longer, more comprehensive lists of all GOV.UK documents that relate to local-authority maintained and academy trust governance respectively. These longer lists ensure that all DfE documents relevant to school governance can now be found in one place. The updates can be accessed on <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-governance-update> or through a direct email from DfE. If you have not already received an email, it’s because DfE do not hold an up-to-date email address for you. If you wish to receive future updates directly, please ensure your school admin team updates your contact details on the Get Information About Schools (GIAS) national database.

**Pupil Premium Strategy Statements** - all schools in receipt of the Pupil Premium Grant must publish a pupil premium strategy statement on their website. The DfE has published its updated strategy statement templates for both primary and secondary schools as well as providing guidance for those schools who wish to write their own strategy statements. This guidance can be accessed here. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pupil-premium-strategy-statements>

**Pupil Absence -** DfE has released statistics on pupil absences during the autumn and spring terms of the 2018/19 academic year <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statistics-pupil-absence>. Key points to note include:

* The overall absence rate in state-funded schools decreased from 4.7% in 2017/18 to 4.5% in 2018/19. This decrease is consistent across school types.
* Authorised absence has decreased, from 3.6 to 3.3%, and unauthorised absence has remained stable at 1.2%.
* Persistent absence rates vary by school type: persistent absence in primary schools was 8.4%, in secondary schools it was 12.7% and in special schools it was 28.5%. Illness continued to be the most common reason for both absence and persistent absence.

**Schools Causing Concern Guidance** DfE has updated its schools causing concern guidance which sets out how Regional Schools Commissioners and Local Authorities may use their powers of intervention. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/schools-causing-concern--2>. The update does not introduce any new policy. It aims to make the information easier to use and reflective of current government policy. The guidance:

* No longer makes reference to coasting and floor standards.
* Has added information about how the school support offer will work in 2019/20.
* Has been restructured to avoid confusion between the academy and maintained school intervention frameworks and added a chapter called “academies causing concern”.

# *New* Ofsted updates

# A school inspection [update](https://drive.google.com/open?id=1xZKy4ZjHoy5FjR8WMPiYAKo6gQQYt0r6) was issued in November. This is the first update since the new inspection framework was rolled out in September 2019. Below are the paragraphs from the Section 5 handbook which will be of particular interest to governors. The changes are in italics:

# ****Paragraph 110****: The role that governors and trustees play in the school’s performance is evaluated as part of the judgement on the effectiveness of leadership and management, and each report will contain *if appropriate* a separate paragraph that addresses the governance of the school.’

# ****Paragraph 118:**** the chair of the school’s governing body and as many governors as possible; ***the clerk of governors, or their delegate, may also attend to take******notes***

# ****Ofsted governance videos** – Ofsted has produced a suite of seven two minute videos** to assist Governors prior to inspection. Featuring Matthew Purves, Ofsted's Deputy Director, Schools, they are also a useful resource to clarify governor role and good practice across the topics covered. These are:

# The role of governors and the myths around data

# The role of governors and leadership and management

# Meeting as many governors as possible on inspection

# The role of governors and myths around checking the curriculum

# Myths around safeguarding and the role of governors

# Who is responsible for governance?

# Governors – the final feedback

# <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLLq-zBnUkspPBRlt1VCsnoT4UYnZsd007>

**Deep Dives – inspecting the quality of education**   is a 5-6 minute clip which explains how and why during inspection, Ofsted undertake ‘Deep Dives’ to gather information and evidence to support the quality of education judgement <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=byqlQ9nxshg>

# *New* National Governance Association (NGA) updates

**What Governing Boards and School Leaders should expect from each other**This is the fifth edition of the guidance written by the NGA, the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL), the National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT), the Local Government Association (LGA) and the Institute of School Business Leaders (ISBL). It aims to improve the effectiveness of governance by developing mutually supportive and respectful working practices between those leading and those governing schools. The paper is broken down into four key areas:

* the respective roles of governance and management
* developing and supporting the governing board
* effective ways of working
* understanding the organisation and engaging with stakeholders.

The document makes clear that whilst those governing must understand their role, remit and responsibilities, executive leaders must also understand governance. It also states that governors and trustees must have a commitment to asking challenging questions to hold school leaders to account, and executive leaders must be willing to provide information in the most appropriate way for the governing board to carry out its role.

Governing boards should regularly review the content, format and frequency of the information requested from executive leaders, while remaining mindful of workload implications for staff. There is also an increased emphasis on wider working relationships such as those between the board and the school business professional where the guidance states “it is important that governing boards both understand the specific remit of the school business professional’s role and how to best utilise the information and support that they can provide”.

This edition also refers to the Framework for Ethical Leadership in Education, alongside the Nolan Principles of Public Life, as a resource to help school leaders take difficult decisions and support a culture in which ethical decision making can flourish. The authors state that “it is the view of our organisations that all governing boards and school leaders should meet the expectations set out in this document; evidenced through the adoption of a code of conduct.”

The leaflet is available free from the NGA website <https://www.naht.org.uk/news-and-opinion/news/pay-and-conditions-news/what-governing-boards-and-school-leaders-should-expect-from-each-other/>

**Exclusions - a guide for governing boards - updated publication**

The management of behaviour in schools is an operational role for the senior leadership team, however governing boards have a statutory duty to consider certain aspects of pupil exclusion. Accessible to NGA members, this updated guidance from NGA explains the legal obligations and limitations that surround exclusion decisions. It also provides practical advice on how to prepare and the things to bear in mind if you are called on to consider an exclusion decision.

**Governance Training for Chairs and Clerks funded by DfE**

National development programmes for chairs and for clerks are being offered again this autumn across the London area. The programmes are a combination of 360° appraisal, online learning, face to face sessions, mentor support and networking opportunities. The clerks’ programme includes accreditation. The DfE provides bursaries, so the training is generally free to participants. For more details and dates of London based training check the NGA website

<https://www.nga.org.uk/LeadingGovernance/Chairs.aspx>

<https://www.nga.org.uk/LeadingGovernance/Clerks.aspx>

## **Governor Recruitment Services**

## Two national agencies are currently involved in finding and matching volunteers to vacancies. Both will help recruit specifically to church schools and their services are free!

## **Inspiring Governance** is allied to the National Governance Association and provides 12 months post-appointment support to recruits through access to NGA services. They also run a [**Future Chairs Recruitment Service**](https://www.inspiringgovernance.org/volunteers/future-chairs-recruitment-service/)**,** which helps boards to find potential chairs, vice-chairs or committee chairs within a year of joining a board. <https://www.inspiringgovernance.org/to>

* **Governors for Schools** was formerly known as SGOSS (School Governors One-Stop Shop) and provides a similar service**,** with a number of online learning modules to support appointees. These can be accessed by any governor  
  <https://www.governorsforschools.org.uk/e-learning/>

**LDBS support for governors**A reminder that as part of LDBS Core Service\* support, schools are **entitled to one free school based governor training session**. The areas you might consider include:

* How to be effective as a governing board
* Preparing for Ofsted
* Reviewing your committee structures and delegation arrangements
* Holding the school to account: asking strategic questions
* Understanding and using school performance data
* More useful governor visits
* What makes an outstanding governing board?
* Governance health check – a facilitated governing board self-evaluation session
* GB roles and responsibilities for safeguarding

As part of a Grow package we can arrange an external governance review which would examine governance practice and make recommendations for strengthening governance. Although developed primarily to respond to Ofsted judgements, the review process is also suitable for governing bodies who want an independent view of their practice, especially if they are looking to move from ‘good’ to ‘outstanding’, or if there are other issues which need addressing

For more information or to arrange for whole governing board training, please speak to your link adviser or contact Ann Foster [ann.foster@london.anglican.org](mailto:ann.foster@london.anglican.org)

\*<http://schools.london.anglican.org/25/ldbs-core-school-support-service>