

SCHOOL GOVERNANCE BRIEFING PAPER - SPRING TERM 2020

This briefing paper is a summary of recent key developments and announcements which have implications for the governance of schools. Governors and Governing Boards are asked to consider any implication for the governance of their school.

This paper does not constitute definitive guidance or advice on whether any of these developments have an impact on the governance of your school or how to respond.

CONTENTS

Section One:	GBase Updates
Section Two:	Safeguarding
Section Three:	Finance and Business
Section Four:	Curriculum and Standards
Section Five	Special Educational Support (SENCO) report
Section Six:	Parental Engagement and Community
Section Seven:	Academies
Section Eight:	Governance Planner/Suggested Agenda Items

1 GBASE UPDATES

1.1 Governor Access and User Guide

We are continuing to roll out access to GBase to Governors for our client schools. Feedback received includes that access to GBase during meetings, whether through iPads, laptops or Whiteboard, helps in ensuring that they are effectively managed. In particular time is used efficiently and Governors understand by viewing documents and presentations the business they are being asked to consider and actions to agree to.

We are continuing to develop GBase as a cloud-based resource to help our Trusts and Schools to further develop effective governance. In our next Briefing Paper for the Summer term 2020, we will advise of enhancements to GBase which will be incorporated in the next version to be released in September 2020.

2 SAFEGUARDING

2.1 Advice on Coronavirus

The government has issued advice on Coronavirus, with the DfE stating that “the overall risk of Coronavirus in the UK remains moderate” and has asked those in settings with young children and young people to display posters in relevant public spaces.

The link to posters is available at:

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5e35b25740f0b609169cb52a/coronavirus-public-info-poster-2.pdf>

Department of Health and Social Care advice:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/wuhan-novel-coronavirus-information-for-the-public>

3. FINANCE AND BUSINESS

3.1 Pupil Premium Increases

At the end of January, the Government confirmed the amount of Pupil Premium funding for 2020-2021:

As of April 2020, your school should receive:

- £1,345 for primary schools or £955 for secondary schools for every pupil on roll that has been registered for free school meals (FSMs) at any time in the last six years
- £2,345 per pupil looked after by the local authority at any time in their lives
- £310 for every pupil registered as a ‘service child’ at any point in the last six years or those ‘in receipt of child pension from the Ministry of Defence’.

3.2 Buying for Schools

The DfE have published updated advice on buying goods and services for your school to help ensure quality and value.

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/buying-for-schools?utm_source=7675f1a4-62d5-4fdd-ac36-356c731fad97&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=daily

3.3 Risk Protection Arrangement (RPA) for schools

The Government have provided some update information on how local authority maintained schools can join the RPA instead of commercial insurance with advice on what it covers and where they can receive professional advice.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/academies-risk-protection-arrangement-rpa#history>

3.4 School Resource Management – Top 10 planning checks for Governors

A useful set of questions set out to help Governors efficiently manage resources and money.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-resource-management-top-10-planning-checks-for-governors>

4. CURRICULUM AND STANDARDS

4.1 Study of Early Education and Development (SEED)

The study of early education and development (SEED) released by the DfE evaluates:

- the effect of early education on children's outcomes
- quality of provision
- value for money of providing funded early years education

The document may provide useful information for Governors in discussion regarding EYFS provision within your schools.

https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/study-of-early-education-and-development-seed?utm_source=75eeff8a-7f61-4a2f-bf57-6c83afca2708&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=daily

4.2 Supporting Pupils with Literacy Challenges

The TES have published an article highlighting six key areas for supporting pupils with Literacy difficulties. The article may be of particular interest to Literacy Link Governors and Curriculum Committee members.

<https://www.tes.com/news/6-steps-support-pupils-literacy-challenges>

5. PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY

A Special Educational Needs and Disabilities SENCO report has been released by National Association for Special Educational Needs (NASEN) and Bath Spa University. **The Time is Now: Addressing missed opportunities for Special Education Needs Support and coordination in our schools**, was conducted by Bath Spa University and NASEN. The link to this report can be found below.

This report was published in January 2020 and is an interesting read for Link Governors who are responsible for the oversight of SEND or those with an oversight for Staff Wellbeing. The report builds on a previous research project in September 2018 regarding the workload for SENCO in schools. The research team have reviewed the original 2018 survey to explore if the report had impacted on SENCOs.

<https://nasen.org.uk/news/flagship-senco-report-exposes-rising-administrative-tide-impacting-support-for-pupils-with-special-educational-needs-and-disabilities.html>

6. PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT AND COMMUNITY

The DfE have endorsed a number of Apps to help families support literacy and language skills from home. Six Apps have been published on the **Hungry Little Minds** website to encourage the use of technology to enhance learning.

<https://hungrylittleminds.campaign.gov.uk/>

Governors may want to promote this initiative with parents and families at your school.

7 ACADEMIES

7.1 Updates to Guidance on Multi-Academy Trusts: Establishing and Developing

The following document provides guidance and resources for Academy Trusts, to include new trusts and those existing trusts who plan to expand.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/multi-academy-trusts-establishing-and-developing-your-trust?utm_source=e448963c-3517-442d-9cec-d9acfdc1fcee&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=daily#history

7.2 Academy Trusts – Financial Insights Tool

Published by the DfE in February, this guide provides information on how to access the ESFA financial insights tool for Academy Trusts to view, analyse and compare financial information with other Academy Trusts.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academy-trusts-view-my-financial-insights>

7.3 Multi-Academy Trust Performance Measures – Key Stage 4

The document below includes Multi-Academy Trusts performance measures for Key Stage 4 that may be of interest.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/862793/Key_stage_4_multi-academy_trust_text.pdf

7.4 Multi-Academy Trust 2020 Benchmarking

The Multi-Academy Trust 2020 Benchmarking report, published by the Kreston Academies Group, is now available.

8 GOVERNANCE ANNUAL PLANNER / SUGGESTED AGENDA ITEMS FOR SPRING TERM

If you do not already have an Annual Governance Planner in place, we recommend you consider developing one. The aim is to plan the business the Board wants to cover through the year. Please contact our Director, Charmaine Strelitz Charmaine@clerkingandappeals.co.uk if you would like her to support you in developing this useful tool.

Agenda items to be covered through the Spring term include:

- Year End Budget Projections 2019-2020
- Review Best Value Statement and Statement of Internal Control (SIC is no longer a statutory return, but best practice)
- Review Finance Procedures – to be reviewed (usually by the Resources Committee) and approved by the Full Governing Board
- Resources Committee should complete a Financial Skills Audit, to inform the School Financial Value Standards return
- School Financial Value Standards (please ensure the new format is used) – to be reviewed (usually by the Resources Committee) and approved by the Full Governing Board
- Budget Priorities 2020-2021
- Consider arrangements to review and approve the Budget 2020-2021, subject to Local Authority deadlines and meeting dates (ensure approval is delegated to the Resources Committee in your Terms of Reference if they are approving the budget).

If Governing Boards have not already done so then they should ensure the following are completed:

- Review of Behaviour Management and Exclusion Policy, taking into account the Statutory Exclusion Guidance September 2017 – ensure as a Governing Board you have adequate training
- Pay Committee Report to the Full Governing Board (including Headteacher Performance Management)
- Pupil Premium and Sports Premium Statements 2018-2019 reviewed and approved for publication, along with the summary plan for 2019-2020.