



COVID-19 Public Health Crisis

Monitoring Remotely

Guidance for monitoring during the Covid-19 Pandemic September 2020

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Monitoring remotely?

Schools have welcomed back all pupils from September and started to get back to a level of normality. The governing board's support and strategic oversight of this process will be key, but it is likely that much of the business of the board will still be conducted remotely and that 'virtual' meetings will continue for some time.

DfE guidance published July 2020 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

The guidance also 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 governor 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.

This guide is to help governors prepare for, and carry out, the challenge of their monitoring role in the remote world.

Leading into the Autumn term much emphasis is on maintaining oversight of the school/trust **plans and risk assessment** for getting all pupils back into education safely. The key areas governors should consider for re-opening are covered in detail in our [‘Preparing for September; The Governors Role’](#) document.

Although the world will still be slightly different in the Autumn, governors will need to re-focus on the other areas of monitoring that may have been side-lined over the past few months so it will be important to draft and implement a monitoring programme which allocates specific areas to governors/committees if you haven’t already.

Safeguarding

Key contact: Headteacher or Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL); via phone call, online meeting or face to face meeting, if safe to do so. Agree the frequency of these calls/ meetings and an outline of the discussion topics.

Key areas to consider:

- How the school is working to safeguard vulnerable pupils (including any who are at home for any reason, rather than in school), and whether these plans are working well.
- Whether staff have concerns about any individual pupils, including those who were not technically categorised as 'vulnerable' by the DfE, and what the school is doing for these pupils? (Governors must not know any child specific information)
- If the school is delivering any remote lessons, what safeguarding arrangements are in place to keep pupils safe?
- Have all staff and governors (and regular volunteers, if being used at the present time in line with the risk assessment) read at least Part One of the statutory guidance [‘Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2020’](#) (governors should read the whole document) and the appropriate induction policies (Safeguarding / Child Protection, Online Safety, Behaviour, Children Missing from Education, Code of Conduct)? How do governors know this? Where is it recorded?
- Have the Safeguarding and Behaviour Policies been updated and approved by governors, taking into account the new arrangements for the Autumn term? How do governors know that all staff are familiar with the updated policies? Where is this recorded?
- Has safeguarding training been completed by all staff? Where is this recorded and what arrangements are in place for staff unable to attend the training or new staff to be fully briefed?
- Is the Single Central Record up to date, when was it last monitored and by whom? Governors to decide on the frequency of their SCR monitoring and arrangements for

reporting. Is the school aware of the updated DBS requirement that all pre employment documentation needs to be physically (not virtually) verified from the Autumn term?

- Are governors confident that all adults in school are aware of how to report a concern about a child and, also, the whistle blowing procedure?
- Has the full governing board considered how it will get safeguarding updates and how these will feature in the governing board agendas?
- Various safeguarding training options and/or webinars for governors will be available from the Autumn term. The governing board will need to consider how all governors are kept up to date.
- Does the school have sufficient numbers of staff/governors trained in safer recruitment? What are the arrangements for updating training and skills?
- Does the safeguarding governor /chair regularly check on the latest guidance from the NCC safeguarding team on the Norfolk Schools' website and safeguarding information provided by the Governance Service?

<https://www.schools.norfolk.gov.uk/Behaviour-and-safety/Safeguarding/index.htm>

A '[Safeguarding Compliance Audit Tool](#)' is available from the Resources/Toolbox section on GovernorHub

A **Safeguarding** online [Bitesize training course](#) is available via GovernorHub and includes a Covid addendum in the resources.

Health & Safety

This is a statutory element of compliance for schools, governors need to ensure they maintain a strategic overview of how this is managed.

Key contact: Headteacher; via phone call, online meeting or face to face meeting if safe to do so

Key areas to consider:

- Do governors have a strategic oversight of the Covid [Educational settings risk assessment – September](#)?
- Are governors aware of the Health & Safety Executive spot check regime (see [HSE bulletin Sept. 2020](#)) and that the dutyholders in school have been briefed on their responsibilities?
- Is the H&S policy up to date and being implemented by staff?
- Are governors assured that appropriate risk assessments are completed for off-site activities?
- Is staff training up to date (Fire, First Aid, etc.)
- Has the fire risk assessment been completed?

Headteacher and staff workload & wellbeing

It is important that governors fulfil their responsibility for the wellbeing of staff, and headteachers, especially during this challenging time.

Key contact: Headteacher; via phone call, online meeting or face to face meeting if safe to do so

Key areas to consider:

- Have governors considered the principles of the '[Making data work: Report of the Teacher Workload Advisory Group](#)' November 2018 e.g.
 - The purpose and use of data is clear, is relevant to the intended audience and is in line with school values and aims.
 - The precision and limitations of data, and what can be inferred from it, are well understood.

- The amount of data collected and the frequency with which it is collected is proportionate.
- School and trust leaders review processes for both collecting data and for making use of the data once gathered.
- Do governor data collection practices reflect these principles?
- Do governors understand the limitations of the data they use?
- Do governors make additional or duplicative data requests on school leaders which could be reduced?
- What could governors stop doing, or do differently?
- Be wary of asking too much of the headteacher early in the autumn term until a routine is established
- Is the level of reporting (provided or requested) reasonable and proportionate for the work of the governing board?
- How often does the chair meet with the headteacher to discuss their and staff wellbeing?
- Any additional support the Headteacher, or staff, needs?
- What are the workload pressure points and what can be done to alleviate these?
- Do governors need to do a staff wellbeing survey if not already completed?
- Are governors making use of the [Mental Health, Stress and Wellbeing audit tool](#)

A **Workload & Wellbeing** online [Bitesize training course](#) is available via GovernorHub and includes a Covid addendum in the resources.

Data

The Department for Education (DfE) [guidance 'Coronavirus \(COVID-19\): school and college performance measures'](#) outlines the approach to school and college accountability, performance tables and data during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. They will not publish any school or college level educational performance data based on tests, assessments or exams for 2020 and the Reception Baseline Assessment due to rollout this year has been suspended.

Although it may be difficult to get into school and do classroom visits it's important that governors continue to monitor pupil progress and the impact of the various interventions and strategies implemented by the school. Governors need to be able to understand the range of school data available, so that they can challenge and support the school's professionals.

Key Contacts: Headteacher, heads of year, subject leads; via phone call, online meeting or face to face meeting if safe to do so

Request reports from the in-school tracking system.

Key areas to consider:

- How will the school identify where pupils are in their learning since returning to school after lockdown?
- What measures will there be for catch up and are there additional cost implications to consider?
- The attainment gap between disadvantaged pupils and their peers
 - Has this gap widened due to pupils not being in school during the pandemic?
 - What are the plans to close these gaps? - What interventions/strategies are required?
 - What is the evidence to assure governors that these are the most appropriate strategies to use? (Have governors made use of the [Education Endowment Foundation \(EEF\) Toolkit](#)?)

- What are the targets for the coming year?

An **Understanding Data** online Bitesize training course is available via GovernorHub and includes a Covid addendum in the resources.

Finance

Key contact: Headteacher, Business Manager, CFO; via phone call, online meeting or face to face meeting if safe to do so

Key areas to consider:

- Is a budget review meeting scheduled?
- Does the Budget Control Report (BCR) show that we are on track?
- Is the forecast expenditure on the SIDP on track to deliver the required outcomes?
- Have any development areas identified by the SFVS been added to action plans?
- Is the impact of expenditure being monitored effectively?
- Is the school tracking relevant additional COVID related expenditure (e.g. excess cleaning costs)?
- Has the governing board considered benchmarking against similar schools via the [‘Schools Financial Benchmarking Service’](#)?
- What are the plans and rationale for spending the additional Coronavirus catch-up premium? Do these align with the catch-up priorities of pupils?
- Are the school and governors making use of the Education Endowment Foundation [Support Guide for Schools](#) and [School Planning Guide 2020/2021](#)?
- Is the impact of pupil premium expenditure being rigorously monitored?
- Is the impact of primary PE & sports premium being rigorously monitored?

Attendance

Understanding a school's attendance patterns and trends enables focus on helping those pupils, or groups of pupils, to ensure they are given every opportunity to engage fully with their education.

Key contact: Headteacher, Heads of year; via phone call, online meeting or face to face meeting if safe to do so

Key areas to consider:

- Has the expectation for children to attend from September been communicated by the school?
- Are governors aware of the new [contingency planning guidance](#), which sets out the process to follow if local restrictions are imposed?
- Are there any pupils or groups of pupils for whom attendance is a problem?
- Are there any trends in the attendance figures?
- How does attendance compare with previous years/terms?
- What strategies are being used to improve attendance if necessary?
- Has the attendance policy been communicated to all parents?
- What action is the school taking for persistent non-attendance?

Curriculum

Many pupils will be trying to catch up on missed months of education, so it will be important for governors to understand how this will be achieved.

Key Contacts: Headteacher, heads of year, subject leads; via phone call, online meeting or face to face meeting if safe to do so.

Key areas to consider:

- How do governors ensure that the planned curriculum (Intent) is what is being delivered (Implementation)?
- Could subject lead governors make a virtual appointment to discuss with school subject leads and question what is happening in class, and compare this against their sequenced curriculum plans as an assurance that the intent is being implemented?
- Have governors/trustees been involved in discussions around curriculum intent?
- How will the curriculum prepare pupils for the next stage of education/life?
- How do we know that the curriculum is broad and balanced? What evidence is there?
- Can curriculum leaders explain how the curriculum is planned and sequenced?
- Does the curriculum meet the needs of every pupil- do we have high expectations for all?
- How will the school identify where pupils are in their learning since returning to school after lockdown?
- How do we know it is suitable for each key stage?
- Are the legal requirements of the curriculum covered by what we offer? (Are we ready for RSHE?)
- What do our pupils say about the curriculum that we offer? How have we sought out their views?
- How do we know what we have planned for pupils is being delivered?
- If there are any pupils that have not returned to school and are working online, how is their work being allocated and monitored and does this differ from the curriculum being taught to their peers in school?
- What are the catch-up priorities for pupils? Is the school ensuring transparency with parents as to how these priorities will be met using the Coronavirus catch-up premium?
- Are all governors involved in monitoring various aspects/subjects?

SEND

The Covid-19 pandemic will likely have been more disruptive to the lives and routines of children with special educational needs and disabilities, so this is another key area to monitor to ensure these pupils are settled back into education.

Key contact: Headteacher, SENCo; via phone call, online meeting or face to face meeting if safe to do so.

Key areas to consider:

- Have strategies been put in place to support SEND pupils back to school? Have they been effective?
- Is there a named member of the governing board (or a committee) with oversight of the school's arrangements for SEND?
- Have they been involved in reviewing the school's SEND Policy?
- Are regular meetings held between the SEND Governor/committee and the SENCo? How frequently are these?
- Is a SEND Annual report produced and presented to Governors? Who writes this? How is this shared?

- How are disabled learners accounted for in school's policies with regards to behaviour and exclusions?
- What is the quality of teaching like for pupils with SEND? How do you know?
- Have staff involved in supporting SEND pupils received appropriate training?
- What funding does the school receive for SEND?
- How is this money spent?
- What impact is the funding having?
- How many pupils in the school have an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP)?
- What progress are pupil with SEND making in school?

Stakeholder Engagement

Communication with parents on the expectations and safety protocols of getting all pupils back into school is vital to re-establishing their confidence that their children will be as safe as possible in school.

Key contact: Headteacher; via phone call, online meeting or face to face meeting if safe to do so.

Key areas to consider:

- Is the school website upto date and informative?
- Do parents know what to expect from September?
- Has the school communicated the NCC '[Back to school campaign](#)' to parents?
- Is there regular communication with parents to update them when necessary?
- Have parents been advised of any changes to Health & Safety aspects when dropping off and picking up their children?
- Are parents aware of transport plans and safety measures?

Below is an example monitoring programme, should you wish to use this as a basis for your own if you do not already have one.

Example Monitoring Programme

Term	Focus	Date / Method	Name of Governor(s)	Staff Member	Impact and action	Share Findings
Autumn half term 1	Risk Assessment	03/09/2020 Online meeting	Chair H&S governor/ committee	HT	All safety requirements in place. Weekly reviews in place	FGB 04/10/2020
Autumn half term 1	Safeguarding	20/09/2020 Meet with DSL	Safeguarding Governor	Designated Safeguarding Lead (HT)	Report to FGB. Assurance of safeguarding	FGB – 04/10/2020
Autumn half term 1	Workload & Wellbeing	30/09/20 Survey?	Chair/Resources committee	HT/Wellbeing lead	Report to FGB	FGB 01/11/2020
Autumn half term 1	Pupil Premium – planned spend and impact	04/10/2020 Review of plans	Pupil Premium / Vulnerable Groups linked Governor	Pupil Premium staff lead	Closing the gap. Cohort analysis each year & subject and by Groups of Learners	Improvement committee – 18/10/2020
Autumn half term 1	SEND and LAC	11/10/2020 Meet with SENCo	SEND Governor	SENCo	Familiarise with SEND cohort and EHCPs & any LAC - Identify any issues	FGB – 01/11/2020
Autumn half term 2	SIDP Priority Area 1 Curriculum (intent & implementation)	18/10/2020 Meet with HT/ subject leads	Named Governor on SIDP / Curriculum committee	HT	Overview and monitor progress against milestones: Update SEF and SIDP	FGB – 01/11/2020
Autumn half term 2	SIDP Priority Area 2 Data	25/10/2020 Monitor reports. Meet with subject leads or HT	Named Governor on SIDP	HT	Monitor progress against milestones Gaps, interventions, targets	FGB – 06/12/2020
Autumn half term 2	Attendance	08/11/2020 Meet with HT	Named Governor	HT	Absence rate, trends, reasons for absence, appropriate actions	FGB – 06/12/2020
Autumn half term 2	Finance	18/11/20 Meet with HT / BM / LA Officer Check spend against plans	Finance committee	HT / Business Manager	Finance on track Budget review Impact of performance management reviews	FGB 06/12/2020

