



Eight priorities for governors in the 2022 Spring term

Created in collaboration with our governance expert, Denise Maloney.

Denise has gained more than 25 years of governance experience, working in roles including chair and clerk, and currently, vice chair on a board of MAT trustees. Denise also writes and runs bespoke training for governors, schools and LAs, sharing her expertise to help mentor and upskill individuals and ensure schools can run successfully.

In this article, our governance expert, Denise Maloney, goes through eight priorities for governing boards in the 2022 Spring term. Read on for more detail!

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Next steps

1: Update coronavirus-related risk assessments

Governing boards should ensure that their school's risk assessments reflect the most up-to-date versions of DfE and wider government guidance on coronavirus (COVID-19). Any changes to coronavirus-related guidance that have come into force since the risk assessment was last reviewed should be considered.

Schools may also choose to put additional coronavirus mitigation measures in place, beyond those outlined in government guidance, to keep their school communities safe. Schools' governing boards should be informed about any decisions to do so.

Our Coronavirus (COVID-19): Risk Assessment for Schools can be used as a base to develop your school's own risk assessment, and you can browse our coronavirus risk assessments topic [here](#) for more resources to help you mitigate specific coronavirus-related risks.

2: Review the school's policies and single central record

Governing boards should ensure their school's policies are up-to-date with any updates from the Autumn term, such as:

- Policies affected by the DfE's statutory '[School teachers' pay and conditions document 2021](#)' (STPCD 2021), e.g. the [Teachers' Pay Policy](#).
- Policies affected by the DfE's new statutory '[Cost of school uniforms](#)' guidance, e.g. the [School Uniform Policy](#).
- Policies affected by any coronavirus-related updates, e.g. the [Infection Control Policy](#).

Governing boards should also ensure their school's single central record (SCR) is checked. This must be done each term, either face-to-face or online.

3: Monitor attendance and absence

Governing boards should ensure that pupils' attendance is closely monitored during this period, including looking for any patterns that may be present in pupil absence.

Governing boards should examine instances of unauthorised and/or persistent absence, how these absences are followed up by the school, and what the impact is of following up the absences. If there is no obvious impact from following up absences, governing boards should consider what needs to be changed to ensure attendance rates improve. Governing boards should be aware of their school's attendance target and create solutions in line with this.

Governing boards should also ensure they monitor staff absence and look for any patterns.

The cost of staff absence and its impact on the school budget should be considered – for example, the cost of hiring supply staff to cover lessons.

The impact of staff absence on pupils' education should also be considered, as well as how the school is managing absences – for example, if a teacher is absent, address who is covering their lessons and how the risk of disruption to education is being mitigated.

4: Evaluate staff and pupil wellbeing support

Governing boards should ensure they work with school leaders to assess how the coronavirus pandemic has impacted the physical and mental health and wellbeing of pupils and staff. This must include the wellbeing of the headteacher and/or chief executive officer (CEO), who may be grateful for the additional support from their governing board.

Governing boards should focus on the support currently in place and its effectiveness, considering what staff morale and pupil wellbeing is like, and how any concerns are addressed and followed up.

5: Support pupils' education

Governing boards should ensure they remain aware of how pupils' education is being supported during the coronavirus pandemic, including whether all pupils still have access to a broad, balanced curriculum. Whilst it is important to close any gaps in learning caused by coronavirus-related disruption, governing boards should make sure any education recovery interventions are not to the detriment of wider enrichment and learning in non-core subjects. Governing boards should also examine how diversity in the curriculum is being developed.

Governing boards' monitoring of curriculum gaps should focus on assessments based on what pupils have learned since the initial period of school closures, looking whether gaps in learning are being closed effectively. Any monitoring of education recovery should be specific to the circumstances of the school – for example, whether pupils are being supported within lessons or are being taken out of lessons, which may mean they acquire additional learning gaps.

Governing boards must ensure their school is prepared to deliver remote learning, if needed. Any contingency plans already in place to deliver remote learning, e.g. from previous periods of school closure, should be revisited to ensure they are up-to-date.



A few good practice tips:

- **Maintain a broad and balanced curriculum.**
- **Work to close any learning gaps.**
- **Prepare to deliver remote learning where needed.**

Good practice

6: Tailor support to specific groups of pupils

Governing boards should ensure their school tailors any support provided to the needs of the specific groups of pupils involved.

This includes ensuring that disadvantaged pupils are being supported effectively; for example, by finding out from school leaders how the most disadvantaged pupils are being supported and how the impact of any support is being monitored.

Support provided should help to make up for any learning lost during partial school closure periods and address disadvantaged pupils' needs in regard to remote education, e.g. ensuring they have access to a laptop and the internet to enable learning from home. Discussions about support should remain strategic and focus on raising the attainment of disadvantaged pupils.

Similarly, schools should continue to ensure high-attaining pupils are appropriately challenged in order to reach their potential. Governing boards should be included in any discussions of how learning is being scaffolded to push pupils working at greater depth.

7: Utilise education recovery funding



Information on how your school uses the education recovery premium must be published on your school's website.

Schools should utilise any education recovery and catch-up funding available to them – information on the different schemes is available [here](#). Governing boards should ensure recovery premium expenditure is focussed and monitor its impact, including what changes are made where outcomes are not as expected following interventions.

From the end of December 2021, it is a statutory requirement for schools to publish details of their use of the recovery premium, so governing boards should check this has been completed. A full checklist of what schools must publish on their websites can be found [here](#) for maintained schools and [here](#) for academies, free schools, and special schools.

8: Hold the necessary board meetings

Governing boards should ensure that governors know whether meetings are being held in person or virtually, and if virtually, on which platform the meetings will be held. Governing

boards should make these decisions in advance so that governors can prepare accordingly; however, it is also important for governors to be flexible, should any last-minute changes to government guidance be released.

Regardless of whether they are conducted in person or virtually, governing board meetings should take place as scheduled and follow the usual procedures.

There are a number of actions governors should meet to discuss during the Spring term. The mid-term performance management review for the headteacher should take place in the first half of the Spring term. After the first half of the Spring term, governing boards should monitor and discuss the impact of progress against key items in the SDP.

Next steps

- Visit the [Governance](#) topic in our [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) category.
- Browse our [Spring Governing Board Resource Pack](#).
- Use our [Spring Governing Board Agenda Template](#).