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DGAT Governance Briefing

Volume 2: July 2020

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Dates for your diary

Due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic all planned face-to-face events are on-hold.

We will be in touch with revised dates as soon as possible.

Welcome from Rachel Howie



As we approach what has been a rather unprecedented year I would like to express my sincere and heartfelt thanks for your work as local governors within the Trust. It has been a tough end of the year for everyone both in school and in our personal lives. I continued to be amazed at the time that you give, as volunteers, to supporting our school. It is valued and appreciated.

Over recent months as we have navigated the pandemic I have been struck by how well we have lived out our vision and core principles.

- We aspire to be the best we can be in an ever-changing environment - providing opportunities for all to flourish.
- Within our DGAT family we cherish everyone as individuals; appreciating and celebrating diversity.
- We act with integrity; we are open to challenge and we are reflective about our practice.
- We treat everyone with dignity and respect.
- Through collaboration, in a nurturing community, we grow, learn and achieve

I have been reflecting on these principles and can think of numerous practical examples of each across the Trust. They bring our principles off the page and make them real and meaningful. In a spare moment with a cuppa you may want to think about how your setting has lived these out – I'm sure there are many. This may be an idea for a short slot at one of your future governing board meetings.

The coming school year will continue to bring challenges for us as a Trust and for each individual school but due to the commitment and hard work of our headteachers and staff, supported by you, I know that we can safely steer through whatever is thrown at us.

However uncertain the next year will be I believe are very definitely stronger together.

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Rachel

Important sector updates



Please note due to the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) some of the dates and timescales given below may be subject to change.

Due to the continued release of information for schools we will provide a further update at the start of the Autumn term.

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

There has been an abundance of Coronavirus (Covid-19) guidance published and updated since the last Governance Briefing. All of the up-to-date guidance is collated on this [page](#) on the DfE website.

[Guidance for full opening: schools](#) sets out the government's plan for opening schools to all pupils in September. This guidance will be used to plan for the opening of schools to all pupils and to develop school's recovery curriculum, which Headteachers will share with local governing boards in due course.

The guidance recommends that the following policies are reviewed in preparation for the opening of schools to all pupils:

- Health and Safety Policy
- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Uniform Policy

DGAT will review and update relevant Trust policies but local governing boards should ensure that non-Trust policies have been reviewed and updated where necessary.

All statutory KS1 and 2 assessments are expected to return in 2020/2021, in accordance with their usual timetables.

Schools must prepare a contingency plan for the event of a local outbreak – this may involve a return to remaining open only to vulnerable children and those of critical workers, and providing remote education for all other pupils.

[Managing school premises during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#) sets out the requirements to ensure that all statutory health and safety arrangements are in place and is a useful source for your health and safety governor.

[Actions for early years and childcare providers during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#) provides the most up-to-date guidance for early years settings opening to more children.

In response to the coronavirus pandemic, the government has extended its free school meals national voucher scheme through the Summer holidays. The [COVID Summer Food Fund](#) will provide the eligible pupils with free school meal vouchers to cover the six weeks Summer holiday.

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OFSTED

Ofsted has confirmed that routine inspections will remain suspended for the remainder of the Autumn term. The inspectorate intends for the normal inspection schedule to

resume from January 2021 but the exact timings are subject to review.

During the Autumn term, Ofsted will inspect a small sample of schools in a phased return to inspections to 'discuss how they are managing the return to education of all their pupils.' These visits will start with schools currently judged as 'inadequate' as well as a small sample of schools currently judged as 'Outstanding', 'Good', and 'Requires Improvement'.

The visits will include collaborative discussions, taking into account the curriculum and remote education expectations, and will not result in a judgement – a brief letter will be published containing information agreed with school leaders about their next steps in managing the return of all pupils to school.

Ofsted will still conduct registration visits and regulatory activity in early years settings. Pre-registration visits and emergency section 8 inspections in maintained schools and academies will also continue to be undertaken. You can read further information [here](#).

SIAMS

The Church of England Education Office has confirmed that SIAMS inspections remain suspended for the remainder of 2020. Further information will be shared in the Autumn term when it is clear how inspections will be rescheduled.

PAY AND BUDGETS

The [DfE has announced](#) a £1 billion catch-up funding commitment for all schools to help pupils catch-up on education missed due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

£650 million will be split between primary and secondary schools and £350 million will be

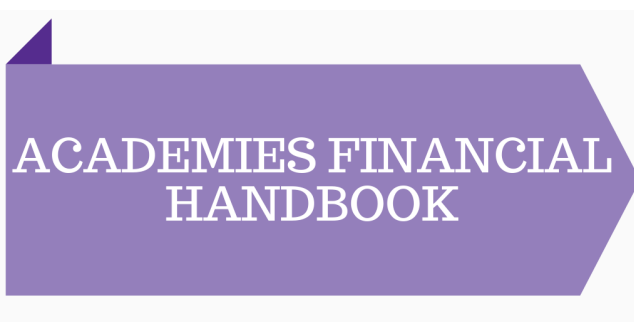
tutoring sessions and free tutoring coaches for the most disadvantaged pupils.

The details of how the payments will be made to schools remain unclear but the DfE has confirmed that schools will have the autonomy to decide how the funding is spent. The Education Endowment Fund has published [guidance](#) for schools to help decide how to use the funding.

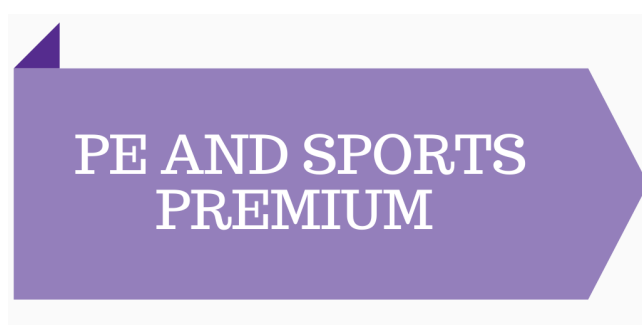
Local governing boards should include on their finance committee agenda's in the new academic year an item to confirm any further guidance on spending the catch-up fund and to establish the school's allocation and intentions for spending the funding.

School budgets have been reviewed by the Trust Board and all schools will receive written notification from Rachel Howie when budgets have been approved. Thank you to those local governors who supported Headteachers to prepare their draft budgets.

The government has launched a [10-year school buildings re-building programme](#) in areas where school buildings are in the worst condition. The programme will start in 2020/21.



The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) have published the [Academies Financial Handbook 2020](#), (AFH) ready for changes to be implemented by academy trusts in September 2020. It is a statutory requirement for all academy trusts to comply with the AFH as a condition of their funding agreement. Get up-to-speed on all the changes ready for September [here](#).



The DfE has confirmed that the PE and Sports Premium for Primary schools will continue in 2020/21. Individual school allocations have not yet been confirmed. Schools are permitted to carry forward any unspent PE and Sports Premium to the next academic year.

The existing rules regarding the use of the funding are unchanged and the DfE has confirmed that the deadline – end of the Summer term or by 31 July at the latest. – for publishing how schools have used the funding also remains unchanged. You can read more [here](#).

EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

The DfE has published its response to a consultation launched last Autumn on the Early Years Foundation Stage profile (EYFSP), which is how pupils are assessed at the end of Reception. It has been confirmed that some of the early learning goals will be revised and the current requirement for local authorities to moderate the EYFSP will be removed. Changes will become statutory in September 2021; however, Reception classes are able to implement the reforms from September 2020.

The DfE has confirmed that the introduction of the baseline assessment for Reception pupils has been delayed until September 2021.

DFE GOVERNANCE UPDATE

The DfE has published a further 'School governance update' which provides further information for governing boards around key messages related to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. You can read the update [here](#).

The guidance explains temporary changes to the [School Admission \(Appeals Arrangements\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#) came into force on 24 April which give admission authorities, local authorities and appeal panels some flexibility when dealing with appeals during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. The temporary regulations, called the [School Admissions \(England\) \(Coronavirus\) \(Appeals Arrangements\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2020](#), will remain in force until 31 January 2021.

The DfE has also recognised that it may not be possible for governing boards to meet the timeframes set out in the [School Discipline \(Pupil Exclusions and Reviews\) \(England\) Regulations 2012](#).

If you need any support or guidance in relation to admissions appeals or exclusions please do not hesitate to get in touch with Nicki at nwadley@glosdioc.org.uk

SAFEGUARDING

You will recall that in the last Governance Briefing we told you that the Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) consultation had been paused by the DfE. It, therefore, took us by surprise to see [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(from 1 September 2020\)](#) published. A summary of the changes can be found [here](#).

It says in KCSIE 202 :

"This statutory guidance should be read and followed by:

Proprietors of independent schools (including academies, free schools and alternative provision academies) and non-maintained special schools. In the case of academies, free schools and alternative provision academies, the proprietor will be the academy trust"
Governing bodies of maintained schools (including maintained nursery schools) and colleges."

The [Governance Handbook](#) (2019) states that it is best practice for governors to make sure they have the knowledge and information needed to carry out the safeguarding arrangements set out in KCSIE.

The DGAT scheme of delegation provides authority for local governing boards to monitor compliance with all safeguarding practices, including the appointment of a safeguarding governor and to monitor the implementation of the Trust's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. To effectively monitor compliance we recommend that all local governors read KSCIE and make themselves aware of the changes.

The DGAT Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and any other related safeguarding policies will be updated ready for implementation in September.

DGAT Wellbeing Strategy



**The DGAT Wellbeing Strategy, in line with our
Trust vision, underpinned by**

John 10:10 to be:

Authentically Christian

Boldly passionate about excellence in learning

***Relentlessly driven in our aspiration for
everyone***

The Diocese of Gloucester Academies Trust has always been fully committed to the wellbeing of every member of our family of schools. However, throughout this exceptional period, we are especially aware of the pressure and stresses that coronavirus has had on all within our family of schools. As a response to this, we have as a central team sought to formalise the support and guidance that we offer to all within the Trust, and that schools in turn offer to their staff and pupils, to ensure that this is the best that we can possibly deliver.

This offer is set out in our updated DGAT Staff Wellbeing Policy. We hope that acknowledging and promoting our commitment to this important area will enable schools to specifically adapt to their circumstances, staff, and pupils. The policy is clear that wellbeing must be championed and modelled by school leaders but with an expectation that

for their well-being too and that within the core offer is support and guidance for them as well as their teams.

As well as the policy the Trust has set out a basic core commitment for all of our schools to deliver in their settings through a Pyramid of Support. There are 3 layers of support - a 'Universal Layer' that identifies what is available to ALL staff, a 'Group Support Layer' which is slightly more targeted, including a broader offer of support from the Central Team, especially in terms of CPD and a 'Personalised Support Layer' targeted to individual need and circumstance, including one to one coaching and supervision. Schools will personalise their pyramid offer by the Autumn term and ideas will be shared so that we are continuing to develop our wellbeing programme as a Trust.

We have an aspiration that for the autumn term, every school will have a Health and Wellbeing Lead – a member of the SLT, preferably not the Headteacher. In addition to this, every school will have at least one member of staff trained in Mental Health First Aid in the next academic year. These staff will work closely with Jackie Buckland, one of our School Improvement Team, who will lead on this work, promoting and developing good practice through our schools.

In order to support and prepare for wider reopening in June, we organised as a Trust online trauma training for all staff. This was delivered online by specialist trainers who are experienced in supporting adults and children with challenging and traumatic events. We also wanted to have support in schools for pupils as well and so we commissioned a suite of materials called Navigate, which our schools have been able to purchase at very reduced cost so that they can fully support pupils and staff in understanding why they are feeling the range of emotions that they are and how they can deal with them. We have also provided Headteachers with a list of suggested resources, online CPD and tools that will further support both staff and pupils in these difficult times.

Finally, on a positive note the Quality Assurance Lead Catherine Leahy, in her recent conversations with Headteachers and Leaders has heard examples of really good practice in promoting and supporting staff and pupil wellbeing during these challenging times - we thank all of our staff for their continued positivity, resilience and commitment to delivering the best possible education for all of our children. We are so very grateful for each and everyone one of them.

Recommended Resources



The NGA has shared a useful webinar exploring the issues governing boards need to consider ahead of the Autumn term [Virtual Governance: Planning for the Autumn term, what do boards need to know](#). provides advice based on the latest information available and will focus on the discussion between governing boards, senior executive leaders, clerks and governance professional, which covers:

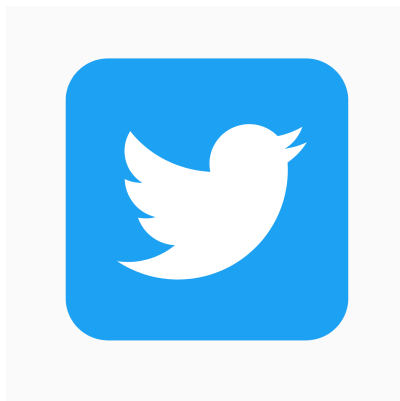
- The school/trust priorities for responding to issues created or exacerbated by COVID-19.
- The governance arrangements needed to support and monitor the priorities, maintain the ongoing effectiveness, productivity and compliance of the board.

There are a number of other useful webinars shared by the NGA on their [website](#).



Governors for schools are hosting a webinar on **Thursday 23rd July 8.00 am - 9.00 am** focussing on ethical governance.

academies. Governors can sign up for the webinar [here](#).



@UKGOVCHAT is a weekly Twitter chat about all things governance. It takes place on a Sunday evening at 8.45pm - 9.15pm and has a guest host each week. There is a new topic up for discussion each week.



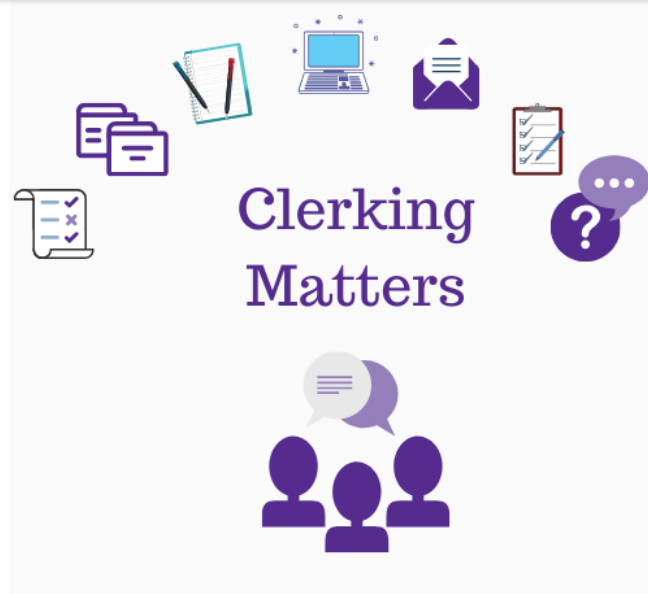
The [BAMEed Network](#) is a grassroots organisation aimed at ensuring our diverse communities are represented as a substantive part of the education workforce for teachers and leaders in education. The website includes many useful free resources for people to explore diversity issues and to support recruitment and event planning.

Takisha Sargent, a young person in the Diocese of Gloucester, shares why all lives can't matter until black lives matter.

She says, "I'd like to take this time to tell you about the honest realities of what it's like to grow up in England black."

Takisha is a member of the congregation at St Peter's, Newnham and is reading music at Cardiff University. Listen to Takisha and her lived experience by clicking this [link](#).

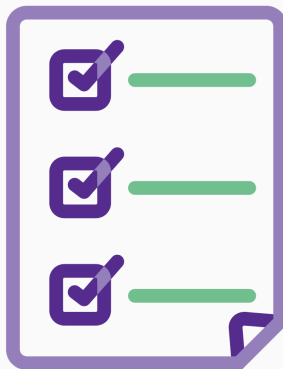
If you know of any useful resources which other local governors would find helpful please send to Nicki at nwadley@glosdioc.org.uk and we will share them in the next edition of the DGAT Governance Briefing [#sharingiscaring](#)



Thank you to you all for engaging so enthusiastically over the last term and for the support offered to your governing boards, particularly over recent. Many of you have learned new skills in managing remote meetings and supporting governors to work in a new way.

For those of you who joined our Clerks' Forum this month, you will have seen that we asked your Chairs of Governors to share with us words that they associated with you and your support for the governing board. This is what they said - and we couldn't agree more!





Ellie has put together an end of year checklist for you to help you plan for the Autumn term. You can access the checklist [here](#) or in the Clerks' area on the DGAT website.

Thank you for your feedback on the DGAT Annual Schedule of Work, this has now been finalised and can be accessed [here](#) or on the DGAT website.

IMPORTANT

If you haven't yet returned the local governing board information spreadsheet sent out by Nicki earlier in the year please do so ASAP. It is really important that we have an up-to-date record of our local governing board members and their contact details. If you did send the spreadsheet back - thank you, could you please check that there are no changes and let Nicki know if there are or confirm that the information is accurate. Any questions, please just get in touch with Nicki.

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DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

The dates for the Clerks' Forum next year are:

20th October 2020 10.00 am - 1.00 pm

9th February 2021 10.00 am - 1.00 pm

22nd June 2021 10.00 am - 1.00 pm

Venue to be confirmed

Please let us know if there is a specific topic
you would like us to cover.

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Resources

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Updated

Resources



We will publish a DGAT Governance Briefing ready for the start of the new academic year and share the new and updated resources we have worked on over the Summer.

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Authentically
Christian



Boldly passionate about
excellence in learning



Relentlessly driven in
our aspiration for
everyone

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