



**Suggested Areas to Cover During the Spring Term 2021 Meetings That You Plan**

Buckinghamshire Council and Buckinghamshire Association of School Governors (BASG) have worked in partnership to create a suggested list of focus areas to support your work as governing boards and to support your Spring Term agenda’s

With schools now partially closed we recommend that you follow the Governance advice provided by the [NGA](https://www.nga.org.uk/Knowledge-Centre/Covid-19.aspx) , NGA are in daily contact with DfE and liaise with other relevant partners, (e.g. unions and public health) so as to bring you accurate, up to date and reliable information and guidance. Please note that all maintained schools have been provided free NGA membership and access to Learning link, and academies can access at a greatly reduced cost. Other sources of information to support you are the [DfE](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools) and [The Key](https://schoolgovernors.thekeysupport.com/) (membership is needed for access)

Based on the information provided from each of these organisations we have added references and links to a number of key documents to support your work and agenda setting for the Spring Term. It is intended that you use this document at your discretion to inform discussions as is appropriate for your individual Boards.

We are aware that the attached document is extensive, however It is intended to be an option to support your work as Boards throughout the term. It is not suggested you try and cover all aspects in one meeting*.*

We would emphasise that when setting your Boards agendas that this is done in liaison with your Headteacher and Clerk selecting the relevant items to allow for structure and sequence over the term.

The legal and strategic responsibilities of governance have not changed during the pandemic, but the way governance functions are fulfilled is now different. You might also wish to consider the length of your meetings and board structures as your meetings remain virtual.

More frequent and shorter meetings work better online. This term’s agenda items can also be spread across meetings according to your Governance Committee Structure.

We will update this document if the situation changes substantially over the course of the term.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| 1 | **Notification of Any Other Business*** This is to forewarn everyone, so that if needed, interests can be declared.
 |
| 2 | **Declarations of Interests / loyalties in relation to items on this agenda**This should always be a standing item on all agendas. Declarations of interest’ should be a standing item at the beginning of the agenda for every governing board meeting to help identify potential conflicts of interest and if any updating or further action is needed. |
| 3 | **Minutes and matters arising, including:*** Confirmation of previous minutes and a brief audit of actions taken. Review of outstanding actions.
 |
| 4 | **Strategic Management – Headteacher’s report to include –** this list will vary from school to school.[NGA-COVID-Monitoring-priorities-08012021](https://www.nga.org.uk/getmedia/4b6554dd-8deb-42d1-a061-d506f11d1793/NGA-COVID-Monitoring-priorities-08012021.pdf) – this gives guidance on content and questions to ask.* Risk assessments for partial opening
* Safeguarding
* Wellbeing across the school community
* Providing Remote Education
* Maintaining the curriculum and continuity of learning for all pupils
* Support to reduce the impact of lockdown on disadvantaged pupils. (You may need to revise your Pupil Premium and catch-up plans in the light of this – both need to be published on school website)
* Resource allocation and management – including budget revisions to meet the above and ICT access for home learning.
* Asymptomatic COVID-19 testing for all pupils and staff
* Free School Meal Provision [Providing school meals during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance-for-schools)
* The DfE have added to its COVID [guidance](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak) to include guidance for the current lockdown for schools in England.
* Early years settings, including nurseries and childminders, will remain open while schools, alternative provision, special schools, and colleges remain open to [vulnerable children](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision?utm_source=5%20January%202021%20C19&utm_medium=Daily%20Email%20C19&utm_campaign=DfE%20C19) and young people and the children of [critical workers](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision?utm_source=5%20January%202021%20C19&utm_medium=Daily%20Email%20C19&utm_campaign=DfE%20C19). All other children will learn remotely until February half term and will not return full time to school before then at the earliest.
* **Self-Evaluation Form (SEF)** - update and approval
* **School Development Plan (SDP)**– update and approval
* **Budget Monitoring**–
1. To receive and review budget monitoring report – Prompt, accurate and up-to-date financial information should be readily available at the appropriate levels within schools. To achieve this, schools will require clearly defined and properly used channels of reporting to the governing body on a regular basis, which should include the finance committee if the school has one. The governing board should review the income and expenditure against the budget at a meeting at least 3 times a year [Checklist guidance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/schools-financial-value-standard-sfvs/2019-to-2020-checklist-guidance)
 |
| 6 | **Delegated Reports – Committees – to include.*** Finance / Resources Committee
	1. To confirm submission of the approved SFVS (2020/21) for submission 31 December 2020 (maintained schools)
	2. To confirm arrangements for setting Budget and 3-year plan and submission to the LA for maintained schools by 3rd March 2021.
	3. Requirements and dates for academies will be set out by individual Trust Boards based on specific governance arrangements and DFE requirement set out in DfE Academies planning document <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/942943/Academies_Planning_Calendar_2020_to_2021_V_2.11.pdf>

Trusts must submit audited accounts by 23rd February.* 1. All schools to consider ICFP requirements when planning budgets

NGA Bitesize module - <https://www.nga.org.uk/Training-and-Development/NGA-Learning-Link-e-learning/Learning-Link-modules/The-best-use-of-resources/Using-Integrated-Curriculum-and-Financial-Planning.aspx>* Personnel and Pay Review Committee
* Premises, Health and Safety Committee
* Curriculum and Standards / Teaching and Learning Committee
* Admissions
* HR Related Panels, Complaints Panel and Pupil Discipline Committees
 |
| 7 | **Delegated reports – Governors – to ensure all reports are uploaded to Governor Hub in advance and to include.*** **Chair –** to report on any actions taken under delegated powers (it is suggested that chairs keep Governors updated regularly between meetings)
* **Safeguarding Governor** – to update Board on Safeguarding and Safer Recruitment Processes and to confirm that the SCR is up to date. Buckinghamshire Council are running free Managing Allegations Training for Governors on Wednesday 27th January via Teams – [Governor Training Available Spring 2021 – Bucks Association of School Governors (bucksgovernors.org)](http://www.bucksgovernors.org/basg-news/governor-training-available-spring-2021/)
* **Pupil Premium Governor –** to update Board on the provision that is in place for students entitled to the Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) and Catch-up Funding, such as.
1. Confirming the named governor for PPG
	1. Confirming programme of monitoring and reporting for Pupil Premium Grant activity and impact
	2. Ensure statutory reporting requirements are met including up to date information on the school website.
	3. Identification of the use of the catch up premium and its impact.
2. Review Buckinghamshire Council guidance and resources related to PPG.
3. Review external links to PPG guidance. - especially the EEF - <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence-summaries/pupil-premium-guide/>
4. Governing boards should consider the impact of Covid-19 on pupils eligible for the PPG.
5. Ensuring that Boards are aware of the next Closing the Gap in Bucks Assessment of Need Workshop on the 15/01/2021 [Closing the Gap in Bucks, Assessment of Need Workshop Tickets, Fri 15 Jan 2021 at 13:00 | Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/closing-the-gap-in-bucks-assessment-of-need-workshop-tickets-132254710399?aff=ebdssbonlinesearch)
* **Equalities Governor** - to confirm that equalities objectives are published on the school website [Equality Act 2010: advice for schools - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-act-2010-advice-for-schools)
* **SEND Governor** – to update the Board on SEND and ensure knowledge of key documents to support the role.
1. [SEN Governors – Best Practice Guidance](http://www.bucksgovernors.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/SEN-Governors-Best-Practice-Guidance.pdf)
2. [Annual Cycle of SEND Governor Responsibilities – Example](http://www.bucksgovernors.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Annual-Cycle-of-SEND-Governor-Responsibilities-Example.pdf)
3. [SEN Governor Checklist of Duties](http://www.bucksgovernors.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/SEN-Governor-Checklist-of-Duties.pdf)
4. [Asking the Right Questions as the SEN Governor](http://www.bucksgovernors.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Asking-the-Right-Questions-as-the-SEN-Governor.pdf)
5. To Note Free membership of NASEN from January 1st, 2021 [www.nasen.org.uk](http://www.nasen.org.uk)
6. Publication of NASEN guide for SEND governors <https://nasen.org.uk/news/must-read-governance-handbook-for-send-and-inclusion-is-available-for-pre-order-now.html> and Amazon.
* **Development Governor** – Review of training needs for Board. Skills audit available on NGA website [https://www.nga.org.uk/Knowledge-Centre/Good-governance/Effective-governance/Governing-Board-Self-Review-(1)/Skills-Audit-and-Skills-Matrix.aspx](https://www.nga.org.uk/Knowledge-Centre/Good-governance/Effective-governance/Governing-Board-Self-Review-%281%29/Skills-Audit-and-Skills-Matrix.aspx)
* Maintained Schools have been provided free membership by Buckinghamshire Council to [NGA’s Learning Link](https://www.nga.org.uk/Training-and-Development/NGA-Learning-Link-e-learning.aspx)
* There are two free Buckinghamshire Council Led training courses for Governors this term Managing Allegations and the Prevent Agenda [Governor Training Available Spring 2021 – Bucks Association of School Governors (bucksgovernors.org)](http://www.bucksgovernors.org/basg-news/governor-training-available-spring-2021/)

**Governor Reports –** to include other linked Governor reports and arrangements for Governor visits (Virtual) this term – noting the guidance from the **DfE** - [School governance update: December 2020 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-governance-update/school-governance-update-december-2020) and the **NGA -** The national lockdown means that people in England will have to stay at home and only go out for essential reasons, therefore governing boards should continue to meet and govern remotely. |
| 8 |  **Other Items to include**1. **Wellbeing**

Both BASG & Buckinghamshire Council believe that all Governing Boards should consider appointing a Wellbeing Governor or sub - committee to engage with stakeholders and school leaders to understand the impact that COVID-19 has had, and continues to have, on pupil and staff mental health and wellbeing. Discussions should focus on the support in place and its effectiveness.The NGA [Guidance](https://www.nga.org.uk/getmedia/4b6554dd-8deb-42d1-a061-d506f11d1793/NGA-COVID-Monitoring-priorities-08012021.pdf) suggest that the following could form part of your discussions.* How can we best implement the pastoral policies of the school or trust to provide support where it is needed (for pupils, families, staff, and those governing)?
* Is wraparound provision being offered to pupils attending school? These are enriching activities that improve wellbeing and support education.
* How is the school or trust communicating with stakeholders to maintain engagement and provide assurance (e.g., the safety of the environment and the commitment to providing continuity of education)?
* Are there any concerns about the wellbeing of pupils from particular groups (such as pupils with SEND or those who are disadvantaged)? How are these concerns being addressed?
* What is the overall assessment of staff wellbeing?
* Have organisational changes impacted on staff work-life balance?
* What steps have been taken to pare back workload activities to the absolute essentials?
* Is staff absence impacting workload for staff who remain in school?
* How are staff who need to work from home being supported?
* Are school leaders maintaining a sustainable and healthy work-life balance? Is dedicated leadership time available?
* Is external support being utilised effectively to support wellbeing across the school community?

Boards may consider adopting a wellbeing policy so as to update and ensure all other policies, especially HR/Staff related, have wellbeing as a priority focus in the light of ongoing COVID pressures.A sample template is available from several sources and an example from the Key is available here <https://schoolleaders.thekeysupport.com/policy-bank/staff/wellbeing-sample-policies-and-guidance/?marker=visited-articles#section-0> The NGA in collaboration with the Schools Advisory Service have produced an audit tool which will help Boards to review wellbeing practice and culture in their school and gives access to various resources.[https://www.nga.org.uk/News/NGA-News/October-2020-(1)/New-staff-wellbeing-evaluation-tool-for-governing.aspx](https://www.nga.org.uk/News/NGA-News/October-2020-%281%29/New-staff-wellbeing-evaluation-tool-for-governing.aspx)Buckinghamshire Council have a COVID -19 well-being support for pupils and families (including Bereavement Support) [COVID-19 Well-being support for pupils and families (including Bereavement Support) | SchoolsWeb (buckscc.gov.uk)](https://schoolsweb.buckscc.gov.uk/covid-19-corona-virus-latest-advice/covid-19-well-being-support-for-pupils/) boards should ensure their schools are aware of the support in place.Buckinghamshire Council have a COVID -19 well-being support for pupils and families (including Bereavement Support) [COVID-19 Well-being Support for School Staff (including bereavement support) | SchoolsWeb (buckscc.gov.uk)](https://schoolsweb.buckscc.gov.uk/covid-19-corona-virus-latest-advice/covid-19-well-being-support-for-school-staff/) boards should ensure schools are aware of the support in place.**2. Catch up Funding.** Schools are required to publish their plan for spending catch up funding on their school website.The DFE announcement is here <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/catch-up-premium-coronavirus-covid-19>The Key has published a ‘Cheat Sheet’ on the funding aspects and details of how the funding can be used and reported [here https://schoolleaders.thekeysupport.com/covid-19/stay-top-announcements/coronavirus-catch-up-premium/](https://schoolleaders.thekeysupport.com/covid-19/stay-top-announcements/coronavirus-catch-up-premium/?marker=live-search-q-catch-result-3)Extract taken from Buckinghamshire Council [update 8th January 2021](http://www.bucksgovernors.org/basg-news/summary-of-dfe-announcements-and-guidance-for-schools/) *We recognise that it may be challenging for schools to deliver effective catch-up support during periods when COVID-19 restrictions impact their normal operating procedures. Schools can continue to offer NTP tuition as arranged with Tuition Partners - the majority of tuition partners are already in a position to offer online tuition at home – and the Academic Mentor programme will also continue with mentors working online in line with individual school policies.* Schools should also use this period to strategically plan the catch-up support required for their pupils in the next half-term.**3. Exams and assessment** * Statutory key stage 1 and 2 tests and teacher assessments planned for summer 2021 will not take place. This includes key stage 2 tests in reading and mathematics.
* Students are not being asked to sit GCSEs and A-Level exams this summer. The Secretary of State expects Ofqual to consider a teacher assessed system as a replacement for these exams. A consultation will launch next week and conclude swiftly to give certainty to schools, colleges and students.
* The DfE are confident that vocational exams can go ahead next week.

**4. School inspection** * Ofsted’s “supportive” monitoring inspections will go ahead as planned with a strong focus on the quality of remote education. Ofsted can inspect schools – of any grade – where it has significant concerns about safeguarding or the quality of education being provided, including remote education.

**5. NGA's webinar series continues in 2021: Good Governance.**Join Emma Knights (NGA’s Chief Executive) Thursday 28 January 2021 at 4.30-5pm for an introduction to what constitutes good governance. The webinar will explore the three pillars of good governance•            Ethical governance•            Effective governance•            Accountable governanceAnd how they need to be built on agreed values and a healthy culture.To book a free place: see [https://www.nga.org.uk/News/Webinars.aspx](https://nga.us4.list-manage.com/track/click?u=61b50c958d6d8bdc66ca58bbd&id=f4bb0abb84&e=977e99b71e) |
| 9 | **Items to note – to include,*** BASG AGM Thursday 14th January 2021 at 5pm with Guest Speaker Emma Knights [BASG – AGM with Emma Knight OBE Chief Executive of the NGA – Bucks Association of School Governors (bucksgovernors.org)](http://www.bucksgovernors.org/events/1438/)
* NGA and Learning Link Membership purchased by the LA (maintained schools). Reduced rates available for upgrade to GOLD membership and for Academies. - Governing Boards to note and update membership details via - <https://www.nga.org.uk/sm/Login.aspx?returnurl=%2fMy-Account.aspx>
* [NGA Covid-19 Guidance and FAQ’s](https://www.nga.org.uk/Knowledge-Centre/Covid-19.aspx) **NGA COVID-19 resources to support governing boards which is updated regularly.**
* [Governors Handbook](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/925104/Governance_Handbook_FINAL.pdf) **–** has been updated October 2020.
 |
| 10 | **Recurring items,*** Term Dates and In-Service Training Dates – Governing Boards to agree/approve school specific dates.
* School Website – Governing Boards to confirm that the school website is up to date and compliant / that arrangements are in place to update it.

 <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-maintained-schools-must-publish-online>**Policies *– policies to be reviewed and approved in line with your own Governing Boards Policy Schedule*** * Pay Policy
* Child Protection Policy
* Home Learning Policy
* Virtual Attendance at Meetings Policy
 |
| 11 | **Date and times for next meetings –** to agree meeting dates for the next academic year (if not already done) |
| 12 | **Any Other Business*** Items tabled at the beginning of the meeting
 |
| 13 | **Evaluation of meeting*** Governors to confirm that the meeting has been conducted appropriately.
 |