

Governance during lockdown

The legal and moral responsibilities of Governing Boards still continue during lockdown. Whilst schools can't be governance free it is important that Chairs and Clerks consider how they can best ensure that the work of their board recognises the challenging circumstances that we are in at the moment and limits its governance work to the essential and engages with its school 'in a proportionate way'.

The following list of sixteen question has been compiled as a framework to support Chair and Clerks to think through how they are going to manage the governance of their schools during this challenging period

No	Key Question	Check
1.	How can we produce the preparation time we are expecting head teachers and other senior leaders to do for our meetings? Can we relax the need to have papers seven days before the meeting?	
2.	Have we ensured that we have provision for virtual meetings and that this does not limit access, and therefore participation, for any member of the board?	
3.	How can we ensure that we focus on 'what matters most' – 'urgent, time limited decisions' (DfE School Governance Update, 25 th March 2020) that need to be taken before the end of the school year?	
4.	Have we made arrangements for discussion of the draft budget and for 'sign off' before the end of the school year?	
5.	What are the critical decisions that the Headteacher needs to make before the end of the school year that would ordinarily have governing board input? Can we let the headteacher make these decisions without our input?	
6.	How can we ensure that when we do meet (these are likely to be virtual meetings) the agendas are tightly focussed and objective-led so that time is used well?	
7.	Chair's Action. For maintained schools – are we clear about what decisions can be taken by the Chair without the governing board? Has this been discussed by the board and recorded on the minutes? For academies - are we clear that the Chair's action is not permitted unless it is clearly outlined in the Scheme of Delegation? Has the board agreed the parameters for Chair's action and has this been recorded as a resolution in the minutes?	
8.	What arrangements have been put in place for the Chair to keep in contact with the headteacher – weekly or fortnightly?	
9.	How are we going to ensure that the board retains a strategic overview of the school within the current situation - with particular reference to the welfare of pupils and staff? (see questions 10 – 16 below)	
10.	How is the school continuing to provide care for children who are: vulnerable children with ECHP plans; the children of key workers?	
11.	What are the associated risks and how are these being managed?	
12.	What specific guidance has been given to staff over and above the current policy?	
13.	Are there any issues arising from how the school building is currently being used?	
14.	Are there any issues arising from the remote working of staff?	
15.	What support is being given to parents and carers to help them educate their children at home?	
16.	How is the school monitoring the well-being and welfare of pupils and staff?	