How well prepared are you for the full return of pupils in September 2020?

The Governors' Role - Checklist *

List of actions for governors prior to schools reopening fully in September 2020. Please note, these must be read in conjunction with the DfE guidance:

The schools Covid-19 risk assessment plans will have evolved over the summer to reflect the latest DfE guidance on the full return of pupils. It will be essential to continue to review the plans to support the safe and compliant return of all pupils.

- All governors to receive the updated/revised risk assessment from the headteacher
- Meeting arranged to approve final risk assessment (which will include appropriate changes as updates become available) – governors to be confident that all measures are in place for the protection of children and staff and agree how this will be monitored

Have you done this?

- Approve updated risk assessment, being reassured adjustments have been made when available
- Agree arrangements for the monitoring of the risk assessment. (How will the monitoring arrangements ensure the risk assessment is robust?)
- Approve updated Safeguarding and Behaviour policies
- Agree a plan to monitor the single central record
- Agree how and when the risk assessment and other relevant information will be shared with parents. Decide on whether school uniform will be required and arrange for parents to be informed in a timely manner (This is a governing body decision - DfE recommends a return to full school uniform).
- Ensure that Health and Safety/buildings checks are completed before the return to school in September
- Agree a monitoring plan to ensure that a broad and balanced curriculum is available from the start of the Autumn term
- Review the financial situation of the school considering the impact of future plans linked to the School Development Plan, highlight areas of concern as soon as possible.

*Adapted from Educator Solutions at Norfolk County Council, with thanks

Questions for governors or trustees to consider for the new term

Public health advice to minimise coronavirus (COVID-19) risks

Re-visit and update risk assessments - build on learning and practices developed since the start of the pandemic

- What are the additional risks?
- What additional control measures will be required?

Ensure prevention measures are sign-posted and followed by pupils and staff

- What enhanced cleaning procedures will be required?
- Is any appropriate PPE required, and is it available?
- What will the group/'bubble' sizes be in school?
- Will any changes be required to classrooms and premises?
- How can timetabling assist in keeping groups apart (e.g. mitigating the risk of more than one group being in the same space/area)?
- Is the school operating staggered start/finish times?
- Do we have any staff that move between schools/sites?
- Is the staff room set up for social distancing?
- Have governors considered reviewing the school uniform policy in the short term?
- Have we reduced the number of contacts that pupils and staff have as much as possible?
- Has the school made plans for pupils who would be particularly vulnerable to infection?
- Will the school be providing any extra-curricular activities (breakfast clubs/after school clubs) from day one of the new term? – If so, have these been suitably risk assessed?

Ensure there is a clear protocol for dealing with any infection

- Is there provision for isolation?
- Do we have contact lists for each group/bubble so that contact and trace can be implemented if necessary?

Ensure parents are aware of protocols for dropping off and picking up pupils

- How are we communicating with parents?
- What are the parent's views of full re-opening?
- What are their concerns?
- What view do staff and stakeholders have for the plans?

School operations

Ensure transport policy is suitably amended

- Are pupils aware of procedures for using public transport if necessary?
- What is our policy of groupings for transport? How is this implemented?
- Is any additional transport required?
- Are measures in place to notify transport providers of any confirmed positive cases in school?

Ensure the attendance policy is up to date and communicated to parents

- Does the school have any pupils who are still unable to attend?
- Are we able to provide access to remote learning where necessary?
- Have we communicated our expectations of attendance?

Ensure staff are aware of the procedures for a full re-opening

- Do we have any staff who are unable to return to work?

- Could some support staff continue to work from home?

- Do we need to consider flexible working for some staff?

- Are staff aware of the support available to ensure their wellbeing?

- What is the school doing to try to ensure there is no increase in unnecessary or unmanageable workloads?

- Do we have any capacity issues?

- Do we need to recruit? – If so, how can we ensure this is done?

- Are any summer leave arrangements likely to cause any problems on return (e.g. visits to countries that may require quarantine)?

Safeguarding

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020 – this document has been updated for September 2020

- Has the safeguarding policy been suitably amended and approved by governors? (note – we may need to create new procedures, for example, what to do if there are allegations about supply teachers)

- Has this been published on the school website?

- Are all staff aware of any revisions?

- Are arrangements in place for governors to monitor the Single Central Record?

- Do we need to consider increasing the numbers of L3 trained staff to deal with anticipated increases in reporting safeguarding concerns?

- Do all classrooms have good ventilation – access to windows?

- Have all Health & Safety risk assessments been completed?

Curriculum, behaviour and pastoral support

Ensure curriculum is broad, balanced and ambitious

- Do governors have a monitoring plan in place to oversee the wider curriculum?

- How will the 2020/21 curriculum planning be adapted to enable missed work to be covered?

- How will the school prepare for possible changes to assessment/exam sitting dates in 2021?

- Do we need to review our current Equalities objectives so that actions to close the gaps between various groups of children are data driven, measured, monitored and achievable?

Have a clear plan of how the school intends to catch up on missed education

- Are we able to offer a full curriculum in the autumn term?
- What subjects cannot be provided, if any? Why?
- How will the school use the proposed government 'catch up' funding to provide additional tutoring?
- What support will be in place for the 'reskilling' of students where classroom learning skills may have been lost?

Do we have the capacity to provide remote education if necessary if a group has to isolate?

- What are the knowledge gaps? – How will these be closed?
- Do we have any pupil wellbeing issues? (particularly those suffering bereavement or sleep issues caused by lockdown, etc)

Update and publish the school behaviour policy

- What changes have been made to the behaviour policy?
- Should we consider relaxing any aspects of the Behaviour Policy to enable flexibility around responding to the behavioural needs of children who may have suffered from bereavement, harm, trauma, or had to deal with significant change and upheaval as a result of Covid-19?

Assessment and accountability

Ensure plans for assessing and testing pupils are up to date and clear

- What are our plans to level our children to assessment criteria and how does this look in each year group?

- Are pupils/parents clear on assessment arrangements and plans for taking exams where appropriate?

Contingency planning for outbreaks

- What are the contingency plans to provide continuity of education in the case of a local outbreak? (Online provision that can be quickly implemented?)

- What will our class delivery need to look like to reduce the impact further across the school?

Governance

Does the governance structure and protocols support the school's return and recovery?

- How will governing body meetings be conducted this term? (Virtual / Face-to-Face?)
- Do we have a protocol for remote meetings? Does this need to be reviewed in light of experiences so far?
- What is the protocol for governors coming into school? (visits should be minimal)
- Will we need to consider new priorities/ committees/ responsibilities?
- Do we need to consider any structural solutions?
- How will we measure the schools progress? What will be the success criteria?
- Has workload and wellbeing of staff been considered and discussed?
- Is there any additional support the governing body can offer to the senior leadership team?

Budget

What are the financial implications for the Covid-19 outbreak on the school's future sustainability?

- Maintained schools - ensure there is a review of the current budget to gauge the impact of lockdown, and the additional costs incurred, during the prolonged opening of schools - Covid-19 will have reshaped many assumptions made when the budget was being set
- Academies, whose financial year starts in September - ensure again that the assumptions that underpinned the budget setting are revisited in the light of the impact of Covid-19
- Academy trustees and governors - note that the Academies Financial Handbook 2020 has been published – there is a summary of changes at the beginning of the handbook

RE and Catholic Life

- What did we do for RE and Collective Worship/Spiritual Development/Catholic Life during lockdown?
- What are our plans for addressing 'gaps' in RE and Spiritual Development?
- What will our Collective Worship provision be now? How are we mitigating issues/restrictions?
- Are plans in place to address new RSE requirements?

ICT Strategy

- Ensure a review of the school ICT strategy to inform the technology infrastructure of the school and ensure that staff have the tools required to deliver blended learning
- Is investment in training required to ensure that teachers have the skills and the confidence to deliver virtual learning?

School Development Plan

- How does our School Development Plan/ SEF look in the light of the past few months? Are any of the priorities from 19/20 to be carried forward to 20/21?
- Could a working party of governors reflect on the key priorities for the year ahead and work with the headteacher to support their development?