

Ealing COVID-19 Governance Update (Spring 5)

Friday 26 March 2021

Information about COVID-19 cases in the borough

- 105,000 have now received their first vaccine in Ealing and more than 5,200 members of front-line staff, care home and domiciliary workers have also received their first vaccine.
- The 'R' rate in Ealing was 57/100,000 over the last 7 days. Still third highest in London though does vary across wards
- In the priority groups 4-9, 59% take up of vaccine so on track for mid-April.

[Ealing News Extra](#) has a video and infographic: A year of COVID. Further information about COVID-19 cases in the borough <https://www.ealing.gov.uk/coronavirus> and [Ealing Covid-19 cases dashboard](#). For all school related COVID information please visit [EGfL](#).

Return to school for all pupils

- Our schools report that the return to school has gone well with 92% attendance across the borough
- Children with social worker attendance is generally below average. This is being picked up at local authority (LA) and school level. However, as a reminder please ensure safeguarding measures adequately identify pupils who have not returned or where they have returned and there may be concerns
- Schools also telling us that children are generally in a better place than they were after the first lockdown/ September return. Improved remote learning and contact with schools whilst at home have really helped
- There is still the need to provide remote learning for pupils needing to self-isolate due to COVID. Information can be found on EGfL for [mainstream](#) and [SEND](#) pupils.

Asymptomatic testing in schools and the Easter break

- High school testing has been overall very successful
- The NHS have produced a [guidance and FAQ document for schools on asymptomatic testing](#).
- DfE guidance over Easter to manage the spread of Covid-19 and to help identify infectious individuals at the earliest opportunity - staff and students to continue twice-weekly home testing through the Easter holidays wherever possible
- Schools to continue to emphasise the importance of home testing to parents and carers.

COVID grants

Catch-up Premium funding

- The DfE [Catch up Premium](#) 2020/21 academic year is to help pupils and disadvantaged young people catch up on missed education because of COVID-19. There are no specific requirements other than it should be spent on pupils that will benefit most from the funding. Schools receive the funding in three tranches – which began autumn 2020 term
- Schools can use their catch up funding to access tuition partners and academic mentors using the [National Tutoring Programme website](#)
- Governor/trustee oversight re this should be monitoring use of the funding, is it line with the school's catch-up priorities and is the school being transparent with parents on its use
- Details should be on the school website of how it plans to spend the grant and how they will assess its impact on the educational attainment of pupils. For more information see the DfE guidance for [maintained schools](#) and [academies](#)

- From autumn 2021, it is likely as part of the quality of education judgement, Ofsted will look at how schools have used catch-up funding to make a positive impact on all pupils.

Recovery Premium – a new one-off payment – will be allocated based on Pupil Premium numbers. The average primary school will receive around £6,000 extra, and the average secondary school around £22,000 extra. Schools will be able to use as they see best to support disadvantaged students.

PE and Sports Premium [updated information](#) about any PE and Sports Premium carried forward from the 2019.20 academic year. The deadline to spend this has been carried forward until the end of the 2020/21 academic year.

The [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) workforce fund](#) for staff absences during the period 1 November to 31 December 2020. Eligibility criteria applies with a deadline **31 March 2021**.

Holiday Activity and Food (HAF) programme is DfE funded, to provide free holiday provision, including healthy food and enriching activities for reception to year 11 pupils in receipt of benefits related FSM. The programme will cover the Easter, Summer and Christmas holidays in 2021, for a minimum of one week at Easter, one week a Christmas and four weeks in summer 2021, four hours a day for four days a week. HAF funded activities will be promoted via [Ealing families directory](#).

Winter Grant scheme means schools do not need to provide lunch parcels or vouchers during the Easter holidays. The Government provides support through the Winter Grant Scheme. [EGfL information](#) re how Ealing Council will be offering financial support to low income families over Easter. Includes letter that can be sent to parents.

DfE's - The Big Ask!

The new [Children's Commission](#), Dame Rachel de Souza launched a 'once in a generation' review of the future of childhood last week. This will look at the barriers to children reaching their potential and propose policy solutions with 10-year targets. The project will be shaped by the findings of [The Big Ask](#), a survey of school pupils to be carried out in April, to gain the views of children across the country. The Commission aims to address issues highlighted and exacerbated by the pandemic including the impact of missed schooling on children's career prospects and mental health.

Ofsted

The Chief Inspector, Amanda Spielman has stated that 'inspections will resume next academic year.' This means only monitoring visits will currently be the only form of inspection in schools. She also stated that the [Education Inspection Framework](#) (2019) principles still stand as there is a key focus on curriculum as opposed to measured results but that there will need to be review of the framework to ensure it is shaped in a way that acknowledges the current context and challenges of schools.

Board meetings

Considering the Governments 'road map' we recommend that all meetings 'should' continue to be virtual until such time as individual school risk assessments judge it to be safe and sensible for meetings to begin again in school.

Parent governor vacancies

Legislation does not allow for any electronic elections - the same as general elections. Until you judge in line with your risk assessment that it is safe to hold parent governor election, the following may prove helpful.

- **Nominations** use pupil post. If the exact required number of nominations or less are received, then there is no requirement for an election

- **Elections** - subject to a thorough risk assessment, elections can be carried out using pupil post, using pupils to return completed ballot papers.

Further details on governor elections can be found on [EGFL](#).

Is your website accessible?

It is now a legal requirement to ensure websites and online documents are accessible. Making accessible content is not hard and can help all users, not just those with disabilities. There is a section on Ealing OneSpace that [explains about accessibility](#) – what sort of problems some of our audience may have, and what you need to do. Please take a look at the guide on [how to make web pages accessible](#) and / or watch this [video](#) about accessibility and ensure that the school website is reviewed to identify documents that are no longer required and can be removed and created after 23 September 2018 that should be made accessible.

Register of interests

[DfE statutory guidance](#) explains:

“Governors hold an important public office and their identity should be known to their school and wider communities. In the interests of transparency, a governing body should publish on its website up-to-date details of its governance arrangements in a readily accessible form. This should include:

- *The structure and remit of the governing body and any committees, and the full names of the chair of each*

For each governor who has served at any point over the past 12 months:

- *Their full names, date of appointment, term of office, date they stepped down (where applicable), who appointed them (in accordance with the governing body’s instrument of government),*
- *Relevant business and pecuniary interests (as recorded in the register of interests), including: Governance roles in other educational institutions.*
 - *Any material interests arising from relationships between governors or relationships between governors and school staff (including spouses, partners, and close relatives); and*
 - *Their attendance record at governing body and committee meetings over the last academic year. “*

The statutory requirement is to publish the register of 'relevant' interests on the school/trust website and then manage potential and real conflicts. There is nothing in regulations, requiring signed forms in order to create the required register on the school website, although this may prove the easiest way of collecting information. It is acceptable to use an electronic system to collect this information but, in all cases, please remember this needs to be regularly reviewed (at least annually); published as appropriate on the school website and interests declared as appropriate to agenda at meetings. We are currently developing a model template to support boards with this process.

Complaints

The DfE’s [updated complaints guidance](#) (January 2021) includes model policy for complaints (two-step process) and a separate, *Managing serial and persistent complaints* policy. Now that schools are fully open again, we recommend that you review your policy/policies to make your process a two-step (not three process and to add in something or adopt complaints that could be deemed serial or persistent. We also recommend having a form that a person making a complaint needs to complete. This can help guide them when making and you when responding. Your complaints policy must be published and easily accessible on the school website.

Ealing governor / trustee recruitment event, 11 March

Our annual recruitment event in collaboration held with Governors for Schools, held for the first time, attracted 70 potential new governors and 22 schools. Thank you to those schools that took part. Whilst there were a few ICT issues for some, we hope you found the event worthwhile. Since the event, 21 individuals have completed their application forms with 14 already having been matched / introduced to schools. We expect more people to complete applications over the Easter break. To capitalise on interest from candidates please register your vacancy at

www.governorsforschools.org.uk

Ealing governance training 2020/21

Training programme for summer term includes:

- New governor induction 20 & 22 April
- Unconscious bias (parts 2-4) 21 April, 5 May and 7 May
- Wellbeing governor briefing 26 April
- Effective governance 29 April
- Clerks briefing 5 May
- SEND governors and SENDCOs network meeting 5 May
- Governor briefing 27 May
- Learning conversation 27 May

For full details and to book: <https://governors.ealingcpd.org.uk>

ELP discounted rates for governance services

In addition to Ealing bespoke governance support, ELP schools can benefit from discounted membership (1 April 2021 – 31 March 2022) rates for, The Key for School Governors, NGA and GovernorHub. The deadline for schools to sign up via the [Services for schools 2021/22 brochure](#) is 31st March 2021.

And finally..

Now that schools have fully returned, unless circumstances change significantly, this will be our last COVID governance update for now. We will of course continue to support you in your role as boards during the road to recovery. News items will be sent again half termly via the Gatekeeping Directors' Report and by e mail for any urgent or important information that needs to be shared more immediately.

Finally, a huge thank you to you all, for your support of Ealing schools over the last year. Whilst undoubtedly there have been many issues to deal, you and your schools have done an amazing job. Please make sure you all have a good Easter break and we look forward to continuing to work with you next term.

Best wishes and stay safe

Therese and Michelle

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