

Academy Trust Board decision-making

As we enter the second week of school closure, we have developed a new guidance for Boards to help you implement robust structures for urgent decision-making.

31 March 2020

Please note: the information contained in this legal update is correct as of the original date of publication

As we enter the second week of school closures and the subsequent lockdown in the country, the round of applause given by the nation to the NHS last Thursday night was both a poignant moment and a reminder of the strength of the human spirit in challenging times.

I have been bowled over by the way schools have risen to the challenge, both through the discussions I have had with clients and my own interactions with my children's schools. The dedication to, care of and innovation in connection with our children's wellbeing and learning by schools has shone through brightly.

As an organisation we have also been adapting to the various demands home working brings, whilst also sharing ideas, legal updates and resources with our clients to help them when they need it the most.

That said, this continues to be a very difficult time for all – including senior leaders and School Trust Boards who are likely to be faced with the need to make important and urgent decisions.

Whilst many decisions will be led by the senior leadership team, there will be some decisions where they will want (and need) Board support. In some cases it may be possible to make some discussions relatively informally by email exchanges or phone. There will however also be times when it is important to have a Board resolution taken at a meeting (or as if it had been passed at a meeting of Trustees) because the subject matter is so important.

To help in scenarios like this, we have developed a new guidance for Boards to help you implement robust structures for urgent decision-making. You can access this [resource here](#).

It outlines that where there is not a planned Board meeting (or a committee meeting with delegated authority to make the required decision) you have the following options:

1. Hold a Board meeting on short notice with Trustees participating via telephone or video conference;
2. Pass written Board resolutions; or
3. Provide for urgent decision-making by the Chair or Vice Chair.

With the duration of the Coronavirus crisis unknown, we hope that the information provided will be of use, ensuring that you have a plan in place should you need to make robust decisions over the coming weeks.

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