

Coronavirus

Impact on your school

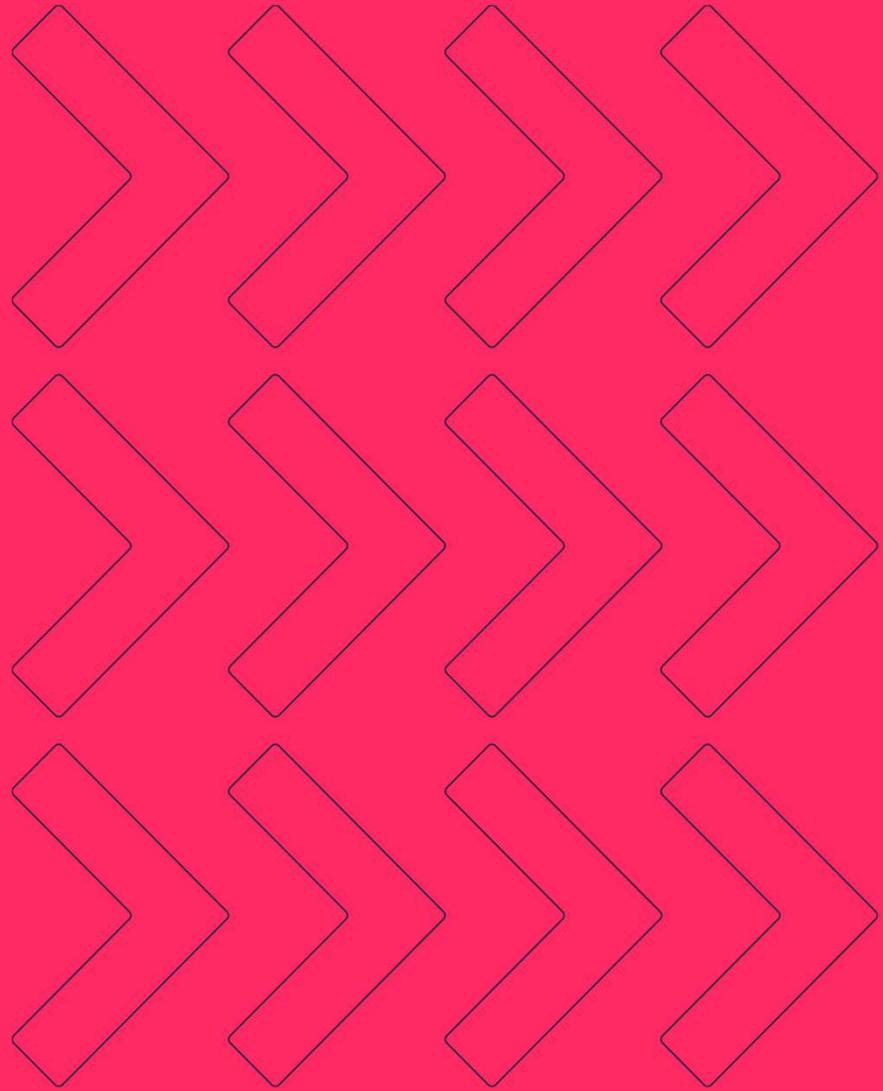


Overview



In this session, we'll discuss:

- Key challenges coronavirus and lockdown will pose to your schools
- What these challenges may mean for school improvement planning and monitoring
- What school reopening may look like, and how boards can help their schools plan
- How to prioritise your board's work while schools are closed



Section 1

Coronavirus and lockdown: challenges

Pastoral challenges



These include:

- Missing key transition points
- Vulnerable pupils in unstable home situations
- Resettling into school routines and reestablishing expectations
- Bereavement
- Pupil mental health
- Reestablishing relationships

In the initial period after your school reopens, the focus should be on pastoral issues. That's because:

- Pupils need to be in a place where they're ready to learn
- Phased reopening, and the practicalities of keeping pupils safe, will make it difficult for schools to jump back in to delivering the curriculum anyway

Academic challenges



Even when school is running normally, gaps emerge in terms of where pupils are in their learning. Closure will have made these gaps more pronounced.

Schools will need to contend with:

- Gaps in pupils' learning due to time out of school
- Disparity in the amount of work pupils were able to accomplish at home
- Adapting their curriculum plans to account for where pupils are after closure and remote learning

Financial challenges



Lots of schools are facing financial challenges as a result of school closure:

- Lump sum payments made out of the school budget to cover providing free school meals to eligible pupils prior to the voucher scheme
- Loss of income from clubs or lettings

Schools can reclaim some of these costs eventually, but this may still cause budget pressures.

Even if your school's budget remains balanced, you may find that you need to realign it with new school improvement priorities

Reopening



The recent announcements about school reopening have created a lot of uncertainty.

School leaders are going to be struggling to understand how reopening might look, and how to balance competing demands (for example, adhering to government guidance without falling foul of health and safety or employment law).

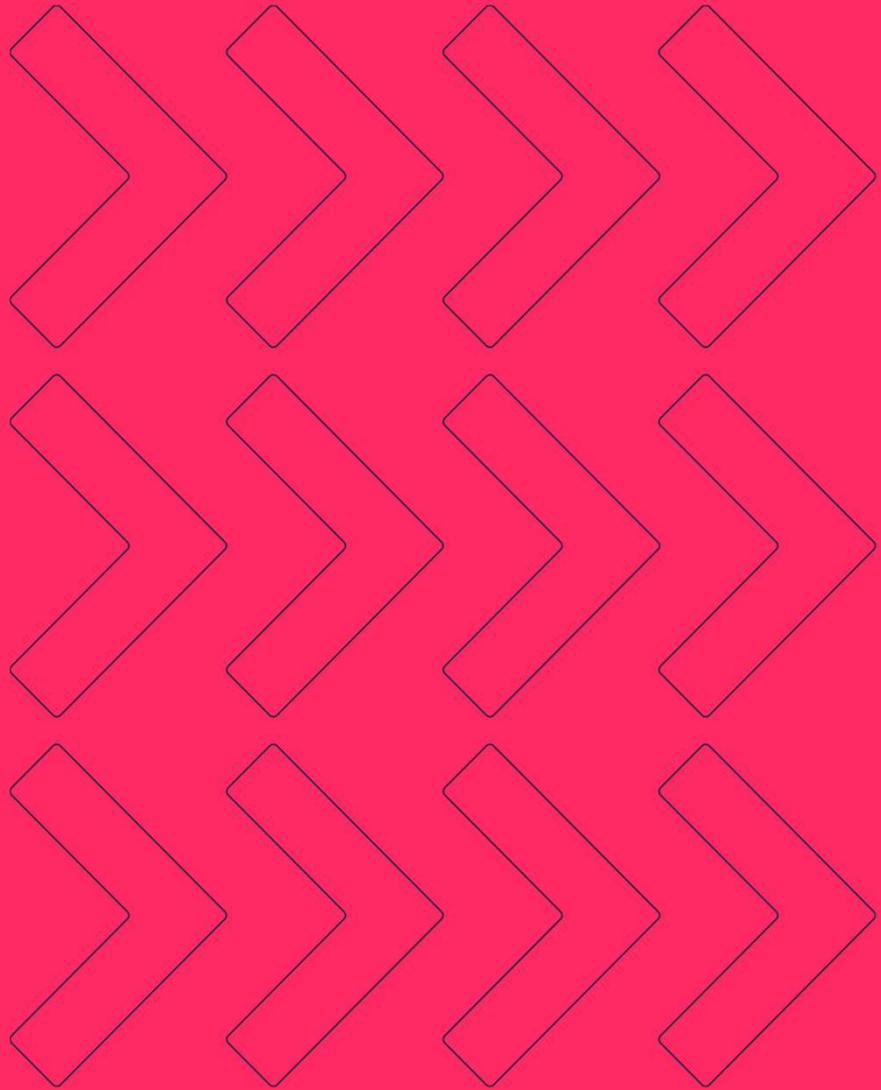
Much of the planning for school reopening will be too operational for governors to get involved in directly, but the more support you can provide for your school leaders the better.

Reopening



Key challenges will be:

- Identifying how many staff your school will have available, and which members of staff should come in
- Organising pupil groups and the school day in a way that minimises risk as much as possible
- Scaling up operations like catering
- Dealing with parent concerns about school reopening
- Navigating staffing challenges, including workload, mental health and safety concerns



Section 2

What does this
mean for school
improvement
planning?

Impact on school improvement planning



Most of how your school approaches school improvement planning won't change much.

Broad areas of focus, or assessments of strengths and weaknesses, will likely remain mostly the same.

However, specific actions or strategies may change.

For example:

- If your school has been refining or redeveloping its curriculum, this will likely continue, but curriculum plans will change
- Your school may already be focusing on how to better support pupil mental health, but the emphasis, timescales, or strategies may need adapting in light of coronavirus

School recovery vs school improvement



Important difference between long term and short- and medium-term challenges:

- . Short term: schools will be focused on recovery - getting back to where they were before closure
- . Medium-term: a focus on helping pupils get back on track academically

Your school's long-term improvement priorities won't likely have shifted too much

Practically speaking, the evidence you have on key monitoring metrics (like teaching and learning or behaviour) will be less robust than usual.

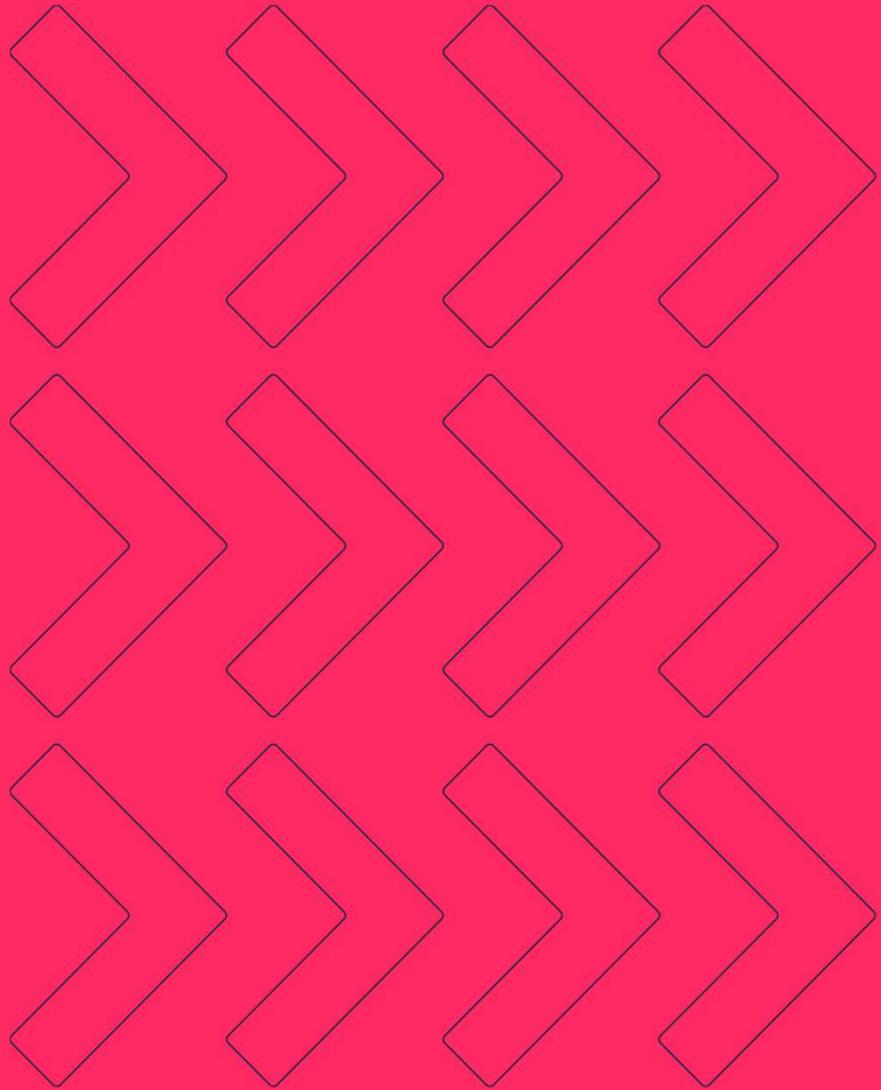
Learning from closure and remote learning



One big exception is that many schools will now have an opportunity to apply what they've learned from the experience of remote learning and school closure to wider school improvement.

For example:

- . Use of technology to support learning
- . Approaches to effective home learning or independent learning



Section 3

What governors need to do

Key considerations for governors



- Think about how your board's structure and link governance arrangements align with your school's short and medium-term challenges
- Consider the emphasis your school places on mental health and well-being for pupils and staff
- Assess your data in context
- Be prepared to revisit your budgets

Board structure and link arrangements



There's no right or wrong way to do this!

Committee structures, link governor roles, and reporting arrangements should:

- . Reflect your school's priorities
- . Facilitate the right level of challenge and support for school staff
- . Help each governor to get the right level of detail, while ensuring the board runs efficiently

The arrangements that support this may vary from board to board.

Mental health and well-being



The government is already encouraging schools to place more emphasis on this, and coronavirus will force schools to make faster progress.

As board this will probably mean:

- Closer monitoring of mental health, well-being and safeguarding in the short and medium term
- Providing support for key members of staff (like your headteacher, DSL, or SENCO)
- Encouraging and supporting mental health training
- Looking at policies, procedures and action plans through a well-being lens

Data in context



Important data is always more useful with context, and part of a governor's job is to assess (and challenge) whether the data matches with the context you're presented.

Understanding the context your school is operating in, and the challenges coronavirus and school closure have presented, will allow you to better understand the information you're presented with.

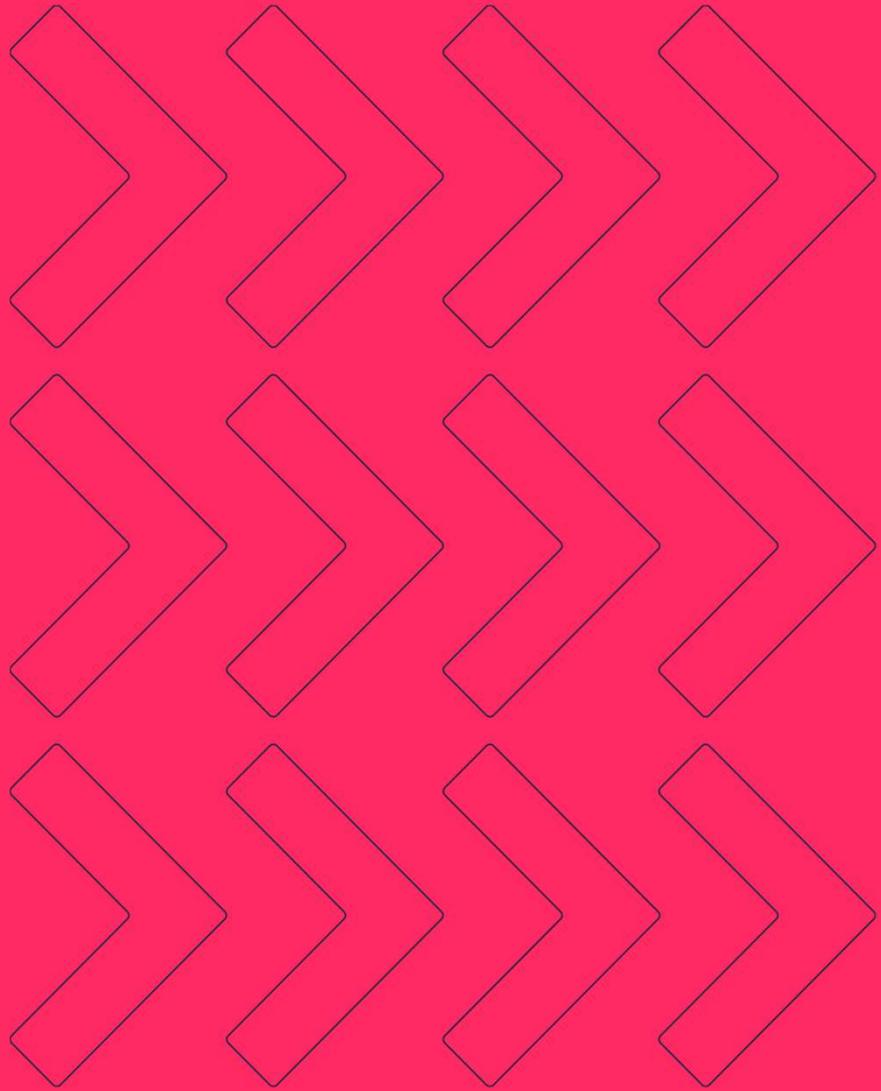
Revisiting budgets



If you're in a maintained school, your school leaders planned a budget with no inkling of the challenges to come!

Spending priorities for your school may have changed a fair bit

If you're in an academy, you'll need to approve a budget developed in light of unique challenges.



Section 4

Q+A

Common questions



Can we choose to open the school to year groups other than the one's specified in the DfE's guidance?

Could governing boards be held liable for illness or deaths from COVID-19?

Why isn't PPE being recommended in schools?

Can governors refuse to allow the school to reopen?

Thank you!

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