



Academi Genedlaethol ar gyfer  
Arweinyddiaeth Addysgol Cymru  
National Academy for  
Educational Leadership Wales

## Interviewing During Covid-19



### Meet our board members

Dr Martin Price is Vice Chair of Governors at St Richard Gwyn Catholic High School, Barry, Vale of Glamorgan.

Martin is Chair of the Governor Steering Group of the Central South Consortium and is Chair of the Vale of Glamorgan School Governors Association. He has had a number of senior management and leadership roles in the third sector in Wales, including being Chair of The Institute of Fundraising Cymru for some years and Chair of Social Firms Wales.

One of the most important tasks which School Governors perform is the appointment of Senior Leaders. This year we have an even greater challenge: how to appoint Senior Leaders when normal face to face interviews are not possible in the Covid-19 lockdown.

We interviewed in early May 2020 for the Deputy Headship of a secondary school entirely virtually: a first for the Governors, Head, Challenge Adviser and Diocesan Director.

I have been using Zoom professionally for more than a year – before it became fashionable and have a paid-for account. Much misgivings, but the secret as with many things is to plan well.

What did we learn?

- We used Zoom's waiting room facility so that the panel could get its act together and then bring in each candidate at an appropriate time.
- We offered all candidates a trial run to make sure the technology worked and reduce their stress levels. In the event no-one took this up.
- We built in gaps to recharge, between interviews for the panel, but also within each interview to break things up. Staring at a screen and concentrating hard is somehow even more draining than a face to face interview.
- We scheduled each interview with half an hour of questions; a five-minute break for the candidate to gather themselves; a ten-minute verbal presentation, followed by a further half hour of questions.
- The candidates were informed that interviews were to be recorded, and all were asked to confirm the fairness of the process. The recordings were deleted after a week.
- We reduced the panel to five and I chaired and hosted the meeting, muting and unmuting participants. In retrospect, it might have been better to split those roles. It requires an extra level of concentration.

The process worked well technically. No hitches. We were able to appoint with a unanimous decision. Then I went on to rest both eyes and brain for the rest of the day!

Further information and resources can be found at  
[www.nael.cymru](http://www.nael.cymru)