

Clerks' Monthly Briefing

March 2023

**Strong teamwork
between the
headteacher, the
chair of the
governing body and
the clerk is crucial to
efficient working.**

Ofsted, Learning from the Best 2011.



**The role of the clerk is
pivotal to ensuring that
statutory duties are met,
meetings are well organised
and governors receive the
information they need in
good time. Consequently,
governors come to meetings
well prepared and with
pertinent questions ready so
that they are able to provide
constructive challenge.**

Ofsted, Learning from the Best 2011.



Governor Support Service

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<http://www.governor.support>

[Twitter.com/govsandclerks](https://twitter.com/govsandclerks)

Agenda

➤ Welcome new clerks	➤ Information exchange
➤ Help us to help you	➤ Updates
➤ Clerking vacancies	➤ Your questions

Governor Support Service

We hold a database of maintained school and academy governing boards which helps us to help you. Such information is needed for governor recruitment purposes, in cases of urgency, safeguarding, Ofsted inspections, and schools where there is a cause for concern. All data is stored and accessed in accordance with the Data Protection Act and GDPR. The only piece of information we can give out publicly is the name of the Chair of the Governing Board, which is already in the public domain. We do not give out personal contact details or any other information.

With contact details changing each term, please let us have a complete list of all your GB membership including:

- Category of governor
- Contact phone numbers (mobile & home)
- Who is chair and vice chair
- Term of office
- Email address
- Details of any associate members of the board (inc. contact details and term of office)

Please send your Governing Board membership information to: office@governor.support

Instruments of Government (IOG)

Please send us a copy of any changes made to your IOG.

Get Information About Schools (GIAS)

Please make sure that you keep the DfE site updated with your governing board membership as well.

Your governing board minutes

Please send us a copy of your draft board and committee minutes once approved by your chair of governors and the final agreed minutes. Email: office@governor.support

School email addresses

Please can you check with your school that our email addresses are on the “White” allowed list? This issue happens more often with “LGFL” school emails.

Summer 2023 Term Governor & Clerk Training Courses

Please can you remind your governors of the range of courses that are available, also that they feedback on the course(s) attended to the governing board and to update your training records. Your minutes need to show what learning was achieved and shared with all governors. Check the courses [here](#).

Agenda reminders

Items to consider

- ✓ Budget outturn and considerations for the new financial year
- ✓ SFVS and SRMSAC last reminder
- ✓ School Food
- ✓ Review Service Level Agreements
- ✓ Pupil Attendance
- ✓ Exclusions
- ✓ Equal access to Sport
- ✓ Review policies and update as necessary
- ✓ Data protection

Department for Education (DfE)

The government and education unions have released the following joint statement:

“The Government and the education trade unions, Association of School, and College Leaders (ASCL), National Association of Head Teachers, NASUWT and National Education Union, have agreed to move into a period of intensive talks. The talks will focus on teacher pay, conditions and workload reduction.”

“In order for talks to begin and, we hope, reach a successful conclusion, the NEU has confirmed it will create a period of calm for two weeks during which time they have said no further strike dates will be announced. The Education Secretary and all unions will meet ([Friday 17 March](#)), beginning intensive talks, which will continue over the weekend.”

Information

Continued Government support for energy bills

Further support will be provided for schools once the current energy bill relief scheme ends in March. The new scheme will run from 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024. However, the thresholds for when schools become eligible to benefit from the scheme have increased. Based on the [DfE Energy Survey](#) carried out in Spring 2022, a Schools Week report alleges that fewer than one in five schools would now be eligible for the new scheme if they remain on the same tariffs.

Governing boards and trusts to note.

Free school meals for all London primary pupils

Initial analysis has suggested that London primary schools could face having to fill a £39M shortfall in funding after the London Mayor recently pledged to extend free school meals to all London primary pupils in 2023/24. As a result, universal eligibility will be extended to all pupils in years 3 to 6 from September 2023.

The £130M funding for the scheme, which is only guaranteed for one year and does not extend to secondary schools, has been criticised. City Hall said 270K more children would benefit, working out at c.£2.53 per meal, with the money coming from “additional business rates income”, a one-off windfall. Last year, the National Education Union estimated the true cost to a school of providing a hot meal for a primary pupil, once rising costs were factored-in, was £3.30. If the 77p shortfall was extrapolated across all the children the policy is expected to help, this would leave London schools facing a shortfall of over £39M.

City Hall has stated that it will work “closely” with schools to “ensure” they are not left out of pocket, but has not said how it would do so, or if further money would be made available. Watch this space!

Governing boards and Academy trusts to discuss and note.

The Chancellor’s Spring Budget Announcement did not include further funding to relieve the budget pressures and the recruitment and retention crisis affecting schools. Jeremy Hunt did however announce £289 million of “start-up” funding to support primary schools with the provision of childcare to pupils between the hours of 8am and 6pm from 2026.

It is not yet clear whether this would be compulsory for schools, but the Treasury has confirmed that from 2026, most schools would be expected to provide childcare “self-sufficiently” through means such as charging parents.

Governing boards and Academy trusts of primary schools to discuss and include in their strategic planning.

New standards for equal access to sports

New standards which ensure that girls and boys are offered the same sports during PE and extracurricular time in schools has been announced.

As part of these standards, schools are being asked to deliver a minimum of two hours curriculum PE time with Government support, including £600 million across the next two years for the PE and Sport Premium and up to £57 million funding for the opening school facilities programme. Schools that successfully deliver equal opportunities for boys and girls will be rewarded through the School Games Mark.

Updated guidance will be published this summer setting out how to use the funding to the best advantage of their pupils. Read NGA's [guidance](#) to learn more about the boards role on PE and school sports

Governing boards need to understand provision in their own setting to enable informed conversations and decision-making.

Questions that governing boards can ask:

1. How does our school/trust ensure that the PE and extra-curricular offer is engaging and stretching for all pupils?
2. How is PE inclusive and accessible to all pupils? (Consider culture, ethnicity, disability, faith, age, gender, sexual orientation, and gender identity.)
3. Do school/trust leaders have a good understanding of barriers to engagement and a plan in place to address these?
4. How does PE, school sport and physical activity contribute to pupils' development of character, confidence, and resilience? How is the progress captured?
5. What strategies do we have for ensuring effective professional development for PE? How is this led and monitored?
6. What quality assurance processes are in place for the provision of external providers and the impact of their delivery?
7. How can PE, physical activity, and school sport support COVID-19 recovery?
8. In primary schools: How do we monitor the impact of PE and sport premium spending?

[Youth Sport Trust Governor/Trustee Toolkit](#)

Governing boards and Academy trusts to note their responsibilities.

Protecting your data

Governing boards are responsible for ensuring that schools comply with a range of legal and regulatory requirements, including the management of information requests.

Information requests, such as Freedom of Information (FOI) and Subject Access Requests (SAR), are important tools for individuals seeking access to information held by public bodies, including schools. Therefore, having access to information and guidance on managing SAR and FOI requests is essential to ensure compliance with relevant legislation.

Governing boards and Academy trusts to note.

[Special Educational Needs and Disabilities \(SEND\) and Alternative Provision \(AP\) Improvement Plan Right Support, Right Place, Right Time - March 2023](#)

Key proposals include:

- A set of new National Standards, clarifying what types of support should be made available, whose job it is to make different types of provision available, and which budgets should be used.
- A renewed focus on supporting children and young people through all stages of their education and beyond.
- New SEND and AP practice guides to help frontline professionals make best use of provision and identify needs early, accurately, and consistently.
- Strengthened accountabilities, clear routes of redress and a local and national inclusion dashboard.

Further consultation to follow from the DfE.

Governing boards and Academy trusts to note their responsibilities.

Cracks in our foundations: addressing the longstanding attainment gap primary schools

Two in five pupils finished year 6 without meeting the expected standards in reading, writing and maths (combined) in 2022. This is according to a new report published by the Centre for Social Justice.

The governing board is responsible for ensuring that the spending is targeted at the right pupils and has an impact on their attainment and progress. Pupils who are targeted will include those who receive the funding, and pupils who don't but will benefit from the support and intervention that the funding is spent on. Governing boards fulfil this responsibility by:

- exploring the barriers to learning faced by pupils eligible for pupil premium
- using data, information, and research to both support and challenge the school's approach
- contributing towards and approving the school's strategy for spending the pupil premium
- monitoring the implementation of the pupil premium strategy
- evaluating the impact of the pupil premium strategy

Governing boards and Academy trusts to note their responsibilities.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

2022 State of the Nation report: Children and Young People's Wellbeing

The fourth [State of the Nation report](#), focusing on trends in mental health and wellbeing over the 2021-22 academic year, has been published by the DfE.

The report looks at personal wellbeing, mental and physical health, education and skills and relationships. Bringing together a range of published information from various organisations, the DfE findings present a mixed picture, suggesting an inconsistent recovery of children and young people's mental and physical health towards pre-pandemic levels. While annual trends indicate that children and young people's subjective happiness and life satisfaction have recovered to pre-pandemic levels by 2022, anxiousness among both primary and secondary aged pupils appears to have increased and is higher than in 2020-21.

[Guidance](#) on how to support school attendance for pupils experiencing social, emotional or mental health issues has also been published. The guidance includes a summary table of responsibilities, with a column dedicated to Trustees and Governors. These responsibilities cover:

- To regularly monitor and consider the approach to promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing within the school to understand how it is working;
 - Satisfy themselves that the building of emotional resilience is sufficiently delivered through the school curriculum and pastoral support, promoting a strong ethos and culture; and
 - Support the school to take a holistic approach to promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing.
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[ESFA updates for Academies:8th March 2023](#)

View current and previous Education and Skills Funding Agency allocations by organisation or funding type. This information is available to all - you do not need to be signed in.

Trust boards, for information

Ofsted

Ofsted Webinars

Securing good attendance and tackling persistent absence (30th March, 4:30-5:30 pm)

Webinars can be signed up for via <https://bit.ly/OfstedWebinars>

[Parent View outcomes](#)

Worth a read to see the local and national response rates to the parent questionnaires.

[There will be a new Statutory Inspection of Anglican & Methodist Schools \(SIAMS\) framework from September 2023](#)

SIAMS inspectors will reach one of two judgements.

- J1 Through its vision and practice, the school is living up to its foundation as a Church school and is enabling pupils and adults to flourish.
- J2 The school's vision and practice are not enabling it to fully live up to its foundation as a Church school. This is for the following reason/s. (The inspector will select all those that apply)

[From September 2022, all section 48 inspections of Catholic schools in England and Wales will be carried out by the Catholic Schools Inspectorate \(CSI\).](#)

The framework for inspection and for a school's ongoing self-review, together with other supportive materials for schools, can be viewed by visiting the Catholic Schools Inspectorate website.

Obstructing inspections is a criminal offence

Under section 10 of the Education Act 2005, when inspecting a school, the chief inspector has at “all reasonable times” a right of entry to the premises.

This relates to section 5 (graded) or 8 (ungraded) inspections – the most common for schools. Chief inspectors can delegate their powers and rights to inspectors for the purposes of inspection.

To “intentionally obstruct” this right is an offence that carries a maximum fine of £2,500.

Governing boards and Academy trusts to note.

Nominate your clerk and board for an Outstanding Governance Award

Has your board demonstrated effective governance and outstanding strategic leadership? Are you on a journey of improvement? Have your efforts made a positive impact on your school(s) or trust?

Entries can be submitted until 9am on Monday 27 March. You can find the nomination forms and information sheets for each category on the [Outstanding Governance Awards page](#).

Summer term 2023

Clerks briefing meeting date your diary

Tuesday 9th May 2023 at 10.00am Please book a place [here](#)

Wednesday 28th June at 10.00am

Edited from material from: BBC, Department for Education, Fischer Family Trust, Information Commissioners Office, London Borough of Hillingdon, National Governance Association, NHS, Ofsted, Schoolsweek, The Times, Times Educational Supplement



