



Clerks Briefing, December 2024

An overview of key issues for Governing Boards to consider and review

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Department for Education

[Pupil attendance in schools, week 47 2024](#)

This release covers the 2024/25 academic year from 09 September to 22 November 2024.

[School food: guidance for governors - GOV.UK](#)

LA audit of schools with their own kitchens.

It is the statutory responsibility of the governing board and trustees to ensure the [School Food Standards](#) are being met.

The governing board should ensure that it receives regular reports on compliance with the school food standards as well as take-up of school lunches and financial aspects of school food provision. Find out more [here](#).

An independent evaluation of universal primary free school meals for children in London. Read the report [here](#).

[Flexible working in schools, November 2024](#)

Schools and multi-academy trusts are encouraged to adopt a flexible working policy which responds to the needs of the staff, and the employer, to address the challenges to flexible

working in their school. Employers could consider embedding strategic, whole-school approaches to flexible working, with contribution from all parties.

[Schools financial value standard \(SFVS\): checklist guidance - GOV.UK](#)

The guidance will help schools to complete the schools financial value standard (SFVS) checklist. Local-authority-maintained schools must submit the SFVS checklist to their local authority by 31st March each year.

As part of the checklist, the DfE ask governing boards to answer questions on 6 areas of resource management.

SFVS form [here](#)

Full check list guidance [here](#)

1. Does the governing body have adequate and up-to-date financial skills among its members to fulfil its role of challenge and support in the field of budget management and value for money? Is there a plan in place to address any gaps?
2. Does the governing body have a finance committee, or equivalent, with clear terms of reference and a knowledgeable and experienced chair?
3. Does the governing body receive clear and concise monitoring reports of the school's budget position at least 6 times a year?
4. Are business interests of governing body members and staff properly registered and taken into account so as to avoid conflicts of interest?
5. Does the school have access to an adequate level of financial expertise, including when specialist finance staff are absent, for example, on sick leave?
6. Does the school have a realistic, sustainable and flexible financial strategy in place for at least 3 years, based on realistic assumptions about future funding, pupil numbers and pressures?

[Digital leadership and governance standards](#)

The governing board, or board of trustees will need to be aware of and support and challenge any plans and decisions made by the school leadership on the digital technology strategy.

- Governors or trustees should also consider assigning a digital link role within the governing board or board of trustees.
- Have a digital technology strategy that is reviewed every year.

School meal funding

The rate of funding paid to schools for universal infant free school meals has increased by 5p, but remains far below the estimated actual cost, leaving schools having to subsidise provision. Schools were initially funded from September based on last year's rate of £2.53 per meal. The Department for Education has increased the rate to £2.58, a rise of 5p, or 2 per cent, and backdated the increase to September.

Children 'missing' from education

Data published by the government earlier this year suggested 117,100 children were considered to be missing from education at some point in 2022-23, up from 94,900 the year before.

New data from the [Education Policy Institute](#) suggests the figure could be around 2.5 times higher.

Teacher wellbeing

The annual teacher wellbeing index report from charity Education Support found "disturbingly high rates of stress, anxiety, and burnout continue to affect education staff, exacerbated by pupil and parent behaviour, and a lack of support outside school for children and young people".

Education staff wellbeing charter

Governing boards to review staff wellbeing.

PE and sport premium funding

All schools who receive PE and sport premium funding must publish a report on their website detailing how the funding has been spent. The report must be published by 31 July each year. This must include:

- the amount of premium funding received
- a full breakdown of how it has been spent
- the impact seen by the school on pupils' participation and attainment in PE and sport
- how this improvement will be sustained
- swimming and water safety attainment

While school leaders are responsible for drafting the report, the governing boards should review it ahead of publication and ensure it is published on time.

From July 2025, all schools who receive the funding must also complete a digital reporting form (the DfE will make the form and accompanying guidance available by June 2025).

A copy of the digital form can also be downloaded and published to fulfil the above reporting requirement. An example is included [here](#), although the final version may differ.

Ofsted Updates

Introduction of 'Regional Improvement Standards and Excellence' RISE Teams in 2025

- 2 RI schools will not receive an academy order but 'support from a high performing school'
- Removal of single word judgement. 4 individual grades for this year. Any inadequate sub judgements or ineffective safeguarding = being 'placed in formal category of concern'

Removing the 'overall effectiveness' judgement: implications

Categories of concern

- These are unaffected. Where one or more of the key judgements is inadequate, and/or safeguarding is ineffective, Ofsted will place the school in a 'formal category of concern'. The 'twin test' will still be applied to determine whether:
 - the school provides an acceptable standard of education
 - there is demonstrable capacity to improve.

Special measures – This means the school is both:

- failing to provide its pupils with an acceptable standard of education
- not showing the capacity to make the improvements needed

Serious weaknesses – This means that the school's performance 'requires significant improvement' but

meets only one, or neither, of the conditions for special measures. A school with serious weaknesses will have one or more of the key judgements graded inadequate and/or have important weaknesses in the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Regions group (RG) will only mandate academy conversion, governance change or academy trust transfer of a school in relation to educational standards if Ofsted has judged it to be 'requires significant improvement' or 'special measures'

The RG will not use warning notices on the grounds of low standards of pupil performance apart from in exceptional circumstances.

[The annual report of His Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2023/24, Published 5 December 2024](#)

Academy Updates

[School resource management self-assessment checklist](#)

Academy trusts must complete by 14 March 2025

National School Governance Awareness Day

A key date in the education governance calendar

School governors give their time, energy, and expertise to help schools thrive. National School Governors' Awareness Day (NSGAD) is an opportunity to recognise their impact, celebrate their commitment, and highlight the vital role they play in shaping education.

Next year, NSGAD will be held on **13th February 2025**. Save the date for a day of thought-provoking webinars and networking opportunities.

Read on to find out how you can make an impact and get involved on the day.

Effective Governance in 2025:

- Hot Topics
- the structure of education and governance in 2025
- accessing information and knowledge in 2025
- effective clerking in 2025
- chairing in 2025
- Recruiting governors and trustees in 2025
- Taking AI in governance forward

Book here

Please note, at the time of the meeting the link wasn't available.

We will forward the link to you asap.

News in Brief

Help us to help you and your board

Please let us know about any:

- board appointments, reappointments and resignations
- contact emails and mobile numbers of members of the board
- dates of appointment and term of office
- type of governor
- positions held, i.e., chair, vice chair, committee chair, member of a committee, link governor
- copies of the approved board minutes

Governor and Clerk Training and Development Programme

Spring term /summer term 2025

To book a place on any course:

- **Essential please remember to use the same email account when booking a place**

and joining the Microsoft Teams meeting

- Please follow the course link(s) where you will find full details about each course. You will then be able to register and book your place(s),
- You will receive an automatic email reply which will confirm each booking, together with a Microsoft Teams meeting link for the course.
- An automatic reminder email will be sent one hour before the course.

Any questions you have about a course, or any other queries please contact us:

Phone: 01895 717321 Email: office@governor.support

Clerks briefing meetings <i>Clerks only, book your meetings by clicking on the dates opposite please.</i>	Tuesday 14th January 2025 Wednesday 12th February 2025 Thursday 6th March 2025 Tuesday 22nd April 2025 Wednesday 14th May 2025 Thursday 5th June 2025 Tuesday 8th July 2025	All at 10.00am-11.00am	
Finance for governors of maintained schools & academies	Tuesday 14 th January 2025	6.30pm-8.00pm	Register and book a place here
Hot Topics/Question time Just a selection of some of the topics we can discuss: Budget, Exclusions, Behaviour, Staffing	Wednesday 5 th February 2025	6.30pm-8.00pm	Register and book a place here
The Inspector Calls Is your board prepared? <i>Update of current inspection framework & possible future structure</i>	Wednesday 12 th February 2025	6.30pm-8.00pm	Register and book a place here
Governance Essentials: A course for New School Governors Three-part course <i>We strongly recommend attending all parts of the course</i>	Dates to follow for this term Please check with your clerk for more details	6.30pm-8.00pm	
Complaints and grievances How to prepare and manage the process For clerks and all governors who may be involved in an investigation or serve on a hearing panel	Thursday 6 th March 2025	6.30pm-8.00pm	Register and book a place here
Taking the chair (Part 1) Course for chairs, vice chairs, committee chairs and aspiring chairs <i>Essential to attend both parts of this course</i>	Thursday 27 th March 2025	6.30pm-8.00pm	Register and book a place here
Taking the chair (Part 2) Course for chairs, vice chairs, committee chairs and aspiring chairs <i>Essential to attend both parts of this course</i>	Thursday 3 rd April 2025	6.30pm-8.00pm	Register and book a place here

Understanding the role of the Safeguarding link governor	Thursday 1 st May 2025	6.30pm-8.00pm	Register and book a place here
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