



Clerks Briefing, March 2025

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

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Department for Education

Consultation reminders

DfE and Ofsted

[Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions guidance: proposed amendments](#) (Closes 25th April 2025)

[School accountability reform](#) (Closes 28th April 2025)

[Improving the way Ofsted inspects education](#) (Closes 28th April 2025)

Get Information about schools (GIAS)

The DfE say that they will be adding the role of governance professional (including clerks) to GIAS. This function has currently been ‘soft launched’ on the system and new guidance on GIAS will be available shortly to assist with adding the data.

While it is not currently a mandatory requirement, the DfE strongly encourage governing boards to add their governance professionals’ details. The change aims to ensure that governance professionals receive important information directly and promptly from the Department for Education. Currently, the department rely on schools or chairs to pass on communications, which can sometimes cause delays. By having the clerk/governance professionals’ details available via GIAS, the DfE can keep them updated with the department’s priorities and provide key information efficiently. Due to the limitations of the current GIAS system, you can only add individual names rather than any clerking service provider.

Primary Assessment Dates

For the academic year 2024 to 2025, schools must adhere to the following assessment schedule:

Academic Year 2024 to 2025 Assessment Timetable:

Reception Baseline Assessment: Schools must complete the reception baseline assessment for each child within the first 6 weeks after they enter reception.

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile Assessment: Schools must complete the early years foundation stage profile assessment between April and June of the academic year in which children turn 5, typically during the reception year.

Optional Key Stage 1 Tests: It is recommended that the optional key stage 1 tests are administered in May 2025.

Key Stage 2 Tests: The statutory key stage 2 tests will take place from Monday, 12 May to Thursday, 15 May 2025:

- o **Monday 12 May 2025:** English grammar, punctuation, and spelling papers 1 and 2
- o **Tuesday 13 May 2025:** English reading
- o **Wednesday 14 May 2025:** Mathematics papers 1 and 2
- o **Thursday 15 May 2025:** Mathematics paper 3

Multiplication Tables Check: Schools must administer the multiplication tables check within the 2-week period from Monday 2 June 2025.

Phonics Screening Check: Schools must administer the phonics screening check within the 1-week period from Monday 9 June 2025.

For a complete list of all important dates, you can download the following:

[Key Stage 1 Assessments Calendar 2024 to 2025 \(1.24 MB\)](#)

[Key Stage 2 Assessments Calendar 2024 to 2025 \(2.39 MB\)](#)

Holiday Activities and Food Programme Secures Funding for 2025-26

The government has confirmed that the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) [programme](#) will continue through the 2025-26 financial year, backed by funding of over £200 million. However, the future of the programme beyond this period is uncertain, as it will depend on the upcoming government spending review.

The HAF programme, which started with a limited pilot in 2018, provides funding to councils for the delivery of holiday clubs and meals for children eligible for free school meals and other vulnerable children during the summer, Christmas, and Easter holidays.

AI Teacher Tools Set to Enhance Teaching Standards

The government has announced a £1 million investment to fund 16 ed-tech companies in developing AI tools aimed at improving teaching and feedback efficiency. These tools will help teachers save time on marking and providing detailed, tailored feedback to students, allowing more time for direct teaching.

The initiative is part of the government's broader effort to integrate AI into education and drive high standards across schools. It aligns with the Prime Minister's plan to leverage AI to boost growth and enhance public services. The funding will support developers creating tools that help teachers in different subjects, from marking handwritten essays in English to providing feedback on maps in geography.

Teachers will retain oversight of feedback, with AI offering efficiency while ensuring that teacher expertise is still central. The tools could save up to 50% of the time spent on formative assessment, allowing teachers to focus more on teaching and inspiring students.

The tools will be developed by April 2025 and will use a world-first AI content store, backed by £3 million of funding, to ensure that the tools are accurate and reliable.

[Pupil attendance in schools, 6th March 2025](#)

Updated DfE information on 10th February 2025 to share with your governing board

Reminder :Schools financial value standard (SFVS)

For the financial year 2024 to 2025, schools should submit their SFVS checklist to their local authority no later than 31 March 2025.

Recycling for schools

New regulations require schools to separate recyclable materials and food waste from your general waste. From 31st March 2025, schools, along with businesses, hospitals and other non-household premises will be required to separate dry recyclable waste such as paper, card, glass, metals and plastic, from food waste and black bin waste.

New DfE guidance: Breakfast club early adopters

The DfE has set out expectations for the early adopters of school breakfast clubs in new [guidance](#).

With the scheme set to begin in the summer term of 2025, the [guidance](#) details how the strategic oversight of a free breakfast club can be incorporated into trustees and governing board's responsibilities. This will include ensuring compliance with the school food standards.

[Read the full guidance](#) for more details about designing and delivering a breakfast club as an early adopter school.

Council for Disabled Children: Guidance for Governors

The Council for Disabled Children has recently published a guide for school governors and trustees to support their responsibilities towards disabled pupils under the Equality Act 2010. This new guidance outlines the specific duties owed to disabled pupils, as well as the broader strategic responsibilities of governing bodies and trustees.

The document encourages governors to engage in meaningful conversations with executive leaders, ensuring they have the necessary evidence to assess how well schools are meeting their duties and promoting inclusion for disabled students. The guidance aims to support governance practices, helping boards hold school leaders accountable for creating equitable and supportive educational environments.

Summary:

- Governors and trustees are encouraged to understand their legal duties towards disabled pupils and work collaboratively with school leaders to meet these responsibilities.
- Schools are urged to gather and assess evidence related to the impact of their

disability provisions and services.

- The guide highlights the importance of strategic leadership in ensuring the needs of disabled pupils are met effectively.
- Governors should ensure that disabled pupils receive the necessary support and access to opportunities in line with their peers.

A [report](#) published by the Education Policy Institute (EPI) highlights some of the challenges in relation to identifying special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

The report found that the likelihood of SEND identification was lower for:

- Pupils attending academy schools or residing in highly academised areas.
- Pupils with higher levels of school absence or those who frequently change schools.
- Pupils who speak English as an additional language.

Additionally, it highlighted challenges in consistently assessing the needs of children in disadvantaged areas.

The recommendations include making child development and various types of SEND a mandatory component of initial teacher training and early career development. The report also calls for further research into the methods used by schools for SEND identification, as well as an investigation into the causes and consequences of the lower rates of SEND identification in academies.

[Managing Food Allergies](#)

Research by NASUWT reveals that 67% of teachers have not had sufficient allergy awareness training, even though 95% report having children with food allergies in their classrooms. The study also found that only 40% of teachers believe their school has a policy on allergies, with 46% unsure about the policy in place.

The study is part of the Natasha Allergy Research Foundation's Allergy School programme, which provides schools with resources to promote allergy awareness.

Dr. Patrick Roach, General Secretary of NASUWT, stresses the importance of schools receiving proper support and resources to implement effective allergy management policies and urges the government to do more to help schools address this important issue.

[Disadvantaged Pupils: Suspension and Exclusion Rates](#)

Disadvantaged students are more likely to face suspension or exclusion compared to their peers, with 10% of disadvantaged pupils in years 9 and 10 experiencing this at least once in the autumn term, according to recent [analysis from FFT Datalab](#).

The data also shows that suspension rates may be reaching their peak. In the 2022/23 academic year, suspension numbers hit record levels, continuing to rise into the 2023/24 year. However, early data for the 2024/25 academic year indicates that this growth may be slowing down.

Other findings:

- Only 40% of teachers said their school had an allergy policy
- 46% of teachers did not know if their school had an allergy policy

The research is part of [The Allergy School programme](#) by [The Natasha Allergy Research Foundation](#), which aims to improve allergy awareness in schools.

[National Foundation for Educational Research \(NFER\)](#)

Special school leaders fear the government's plans to ensure all teachers have qualified teacher status (QTS) could limit the curriculum and worsen the recruitment crisis.

State-run special schools employ significantly more teachers without QTS than mainstream settings, according to a new report by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER).

Academies

Updates

The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) has published the academy general annual grant (GAG) allocation guide for the 2025 to 2026 academic year. This guide applies to mainstream academies, free schools, university technical colleges, studio schools, special and alternative provision academies, and special free schools.

Key Points from the Academy General Annual Grant (GAG) Allocation Guide for 2025-2026

- The GAG allocation guide for the 2025-2026 academic year provides essential details for both existing academies and those opening between April 2025 and March 2026. This guide ensures all types of academies, including mainstream, special, and alternative provision academies, understand their funding distribution and eligibility for the upcoming year.
- For academies that have been established before February 2025, the pre-16 GAG allocation statements will be issued by the end of February 2025, with the process expected to be completed by the end of March 2025.
- The government is moving towards a more efficient digital system, with digital statements being distributed via the Manage Your Education and Skills Funding

(MYESF) portal. Academies will need a valid DfE Sign-in account and must also add the 'view allocation statements' sub-service to their account in order to access the funding information. This move aims to improve accessibility and transparency in the allocation process.

[Buying for schools: find an approved framework agreement, updated 24th February 2025](#)

Framework agreements help schools to buy goods and services from a list of pre-approved suppliers, with agreed terms and conditions and legal protections.

Framework agreements are provided by third parties. They run a tender to select the right suppliers to provide specific goods and services.

[Get training on the Procurement Act 2023](#)

The free Department for Education (DfE)-approved transforming public sector procurement course:

- aims to give you the knowledge, skills and confidence to manage your procurement under the legislation
- is suitable for anyone within a school or multi-academy trust (MAT) responsible for running procurements, not just those in a specific commercial role

Ofsted Updates

Ofsted trial inspections of the proposed new framework

The test visits will take three different forms.

Around half will be “thematic” or “paired thematic” visits – both limited to assessing specific areas of Ofsted’s proposals.

Thematic visits will test the “feasibility and validity” of specific aspects of the proposed methodology, and inspection toolkits.

Meanwhile **paired thematic visits** will be carried out by more than one inspector and will test the consistency of assessments.

Ofsted said its trial visits will look at “feasibility” and “validity” of the toolkits, or how well they help inspectors gather evidence, and whether they enable inspectors to collect evidence on “the most important aspects of education”.

All of the visits are voluntary, meaning schools approached to take part can decline.

The visits are not official inspections and will not result in official, graded assessments.

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
- It is important that you [keep your GIAS establishment record up to date](#) so that the DfE can always contact you if needed.

National Governance Association



Every two years, the National Governance Association's (NGA) awards recognise the contributions of boards, governors, trustees, and governance professionals.

These awards showcase outstanding practice in school and trust governance, shining a spotlight on the transformative impact that effective governance has on schools, trusts, and the education of children and young people.

How to make a nomination

1. Find out more about each of the categories below
2. Download a category information sheet to find out who can be nominated, the criteria and how to make a successful nomination
3. Read the [terms and conditions](#) and email any queries to awards@nga.org.uk
4. Complete the relevant category nomination form by 12 pm on Monday 14 April 2025 and return it via email to awards@nga.org.uk

[Outstanding clerk award application](#)

[Outstanding lead governance professional application](#)

[Outstanding governance in a single school application](#)

[Outstanding governance in a multi academy trust application](#)

Governor and Clerk Training and Development P

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	
Complaints 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	Thursday 3 rd April 2025	6.30pm- 8.00pm	Register and book a place

chairs <i>Essential to attend both parts of this course</i>			here
Understanding the role of the Safeguarding link governor	Thursday 1 st May 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 All governors, chairs and clerk's welcome	Tuesday 6 th May 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>	Part 1 Thursday 8 th May 2025 Part 2 Wednesday 14 th May 2025 Part 3 Wednesday 21 st May 2025	All parts are at 6.30pm-8.00pm	Book Part 1 here Book Part 2 here Book Part 3 here

Governor Support Service Ltd

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Edited material including Department of Education, Ofsted, National Governance Association, Schoolweek