



## Clerks Briefing, April 2025

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

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## Department for Education & Ofsted - Consultations

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

[School accountability reform](#) (Closes 28<sup>th</sup> April 2025)

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

### [Narrowing the digital divide](#) (Closes 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2025)

This consultation sets out the Department for Education's long-term vision for narrowing the digital divide in schools and colleges, focusing on proposals for the future of the [digital and technology standards](#).

The document is split into three sections, outlining proposals and gathering evidence aligned to three key aims:

- Prioritising essential technology infrastructure
- Managing the risks of technology
- Harnessing the opportunities of technology

To help inform future policy development, this document also seeks to gather wider evidence, including:

- the readiness of the sector to meet these six-core digital and technology standards
- any barriers schools and colleges face in meeting the standards
- the support the sector requires to meet the standards
- examples of best practice in harnessing the benefits of technology
- evidence gaps that the sector would like the Department to help with filling

### [Equality \(Race and Disability\) Bill: mandatory ethnicity and disability pay gap reporting](#) (Closes 10<sup>th</sup> June 2025)

The consultation is seeking views on how to introduce mandatory ethnicity and disability pay reporting for large employers (those with 250 or more employees).

Responses to the consultation will help to shape proposals which will be included in the upcoming Equality (Race and Disability) Bill.

*The requirement to publish gender pay gap information is a statutory obligation for schools, academy trusts, academies, and FE colleges with 250 or more employees. However, we strongly recommend that all schools and trusts publish this information voluntarily as part of the school website requirements — even if they fall below the 250-employee threshold. Transparency in pay reporting demonstrates accountability and commitment to fair pay practices and equality in the workplace.*

## Department for Education - Updates

### [Curriculum and Assessment Review Interim Report](#), March 2025

DfE report explores the link between attendance and attainment

Increased school attendance leads to higher attainment, according to a research report by the DfE. Pupils with higher attendance bands at Key Stage 2 (KS2) and

Key Stage 4 (KS4) were more likely to achieve successful outcomes in 2022-23.

The findings revealed that missing 10 days of school in year 6 (KS2), decreased chances of reaching the expected standard in reading, writing and maths by 25%. And for those in year 11, this reduced their chance of achieving a grade 5 in English and Maths by nearly 50%. *[For information for curriculum committees](#)*

### **[Buying for schools: find an approved framework agreement, updated 24<sup>th</sup> 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

### **Creative and technology education**

Pupils nationwide will have enhanced access to creative and technological education the DfE has announced. This follows the curriculum and assessment review's interim report that set out its next steps to develop a system that prepares pupils for modern life.

Plans include:

- The creation of a National Centre for Arts and Music Education, which aims to support pupils to explore their artistic and creative passions in school.
- An Enrichment Framework, developed in partnership with a panel of experts, covering a broad range of extracurricular activities.
- A Digital, AI, and Technology Task and Finish Group consisting of sector and digital experts who will advise the government on how to improve the digital skills of young people.

## **The Prevent duty in schools**

The Prevent duty in schools and academy trusts forms part of wider safeguarding and welfare responsibilities, as set out in 'Working together to safeguard children' and 'Keeping children safe in education'. Compliance with the Prevent duty will reflect existing safeguarding good practice. Statutory Prevent duty guidance provides an overview of requirements.

NGA check list of example questions:

- How are the school/trust's duties in relation to Prevent included in the safeguarding and child protection policy?
- How is Prevent included in the safeguarding updates the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) provides to the governing board?
- How does the school develop relationships with key partners including the local authority Prevent Lead, children's services and the local policing team?
- Does the school complete a risk assessment (which considers the national and local picture) to evaluate how pupils may be susceptible to radicalisation into terrorism and how risks will be addressed?
- What (anonymised) data does the board receive and can this data be used to identify trends and emerging risks? Examples of relevant data include:
  - ✓ Behaviour incidents – e.g. racist or homophobic bullying
  - ✓ Safeguarding concerns that highlight specific vulnerabilities or high-risk online behaviour
  - ✓ Pupils' online activity – e.g. a summary of IT filtering report findings
  - ✓ What training have staff received to ensure they understand their duties in regard to Prevent and how to support pupils?
- When was the last time our school/trust made a Prevent referral?
- How do we keep staff knowledge and understanding of the Prevent policy and referral process up to date? (Important to consider if a referral has not been made in some time.)
- Are all staff aware of how to report any concerns they may have?
- How does our curriculum build pupils' resilience to extremist ideologies and radicalisation?

[DfE video: The Prevent duty, the role of education in safeguarding learners from radicalisation](#)

[DfE Prevent duty guidance](#)

[DfE Prevent self-assessment template](#)

[Ealing Prevent toolkit for schools](#)

### Attendance data to 4<sup>th</sup> April 2025

<b>Overall absence rate</b> <b>9.8%</b> during week commencing 31 March 2025	<b>Authorised absence rate</b> <b>6.5%</b> during week commencing 31 March 2025	<b>Unauthorised absence rate</b> <b>3.3%</b> during week commencing 31 March 2025
<b>Overall absence rate</b> <b>6.7%</b> academic year 2024/25 to date	<b>Authorised absence rate</b> <b>4.6%</b> academic year 2024/25 to date	<b>Unauthorised absence rate</b> <b>2.1%</b> academic year 2024/25 to date
<b>Persistent absence rate</b> <b>18.4%</b> academic year 2024/25 to date		

### Service Pupils in Schools: Non-statutory guidance, April 2025

This guidance outlines the support schools and local authorities should provide to Service pupils to assist with their education and wellbeing. Service pupils are those pupils with a parent(s) or carer(s) serving in the armed forces. They generally experience higher mobility than non-Service pupils, often moving schools several times.

The [Service pupil premium](#) (SPP) was introduced in April 2011 in recognition of the specific challenges that pupils from Service families face and as part of the commitment to delivering the Armed Forces Covenant.

### Pupil premium: overview, March 2025

Schools must show how they are using their pupil premium effectively:

- by publishing a statement on their website each academic year using the DfE template
- through [inspections by Ofsted](#) - inspectors may discuss plans schools have to spend their pupil premium
- through scrutiny of pupil premium plans by governors and trustees

### Data protection in school, March 2025

The responsibility and accountability for compliance sits with governors and trustees. Schools and multi-academy trusts risk getting a fine if they don't comply.

Governors and trustees check that the school:

- monitors their data protection performance
- supports the data protection officer

- has good network security infrastructure to keep personal data protected
- has a business continuity plan in place that includes cyber security

### **Broadband internet standards for schools**, March 2025

With increasing reliance on internet-based services, broadband internet is an essential service. You should ensure that appropriate measures are in place to mitigate against a single point of failure.

It's essential that children are safeguarded from potentially harmful and inappropriate online material. An effective whole school and college approach to online safety empowers a school or college to protect and educate students, and staff in their use of technology. It establishes ways to identify, intervene in, and escalate any concerns where appropriate.

You should already be meeting this standard as a part of the ongoing safeguarding requirements as set out in the statutory safeguarding guidance on [keeping children safe in education](#).

## **Academy - Updates**

### **Related party transactions: information for academy trusts**

Checklist: things to consider when transacting with a related party.

This checklist will help academy trusts consider if transactions with a related party:

- are justifiable
- are conducted fairly and transparently
- can withstand scrutiny

### **Academy trust chair: Apply for a suitability check**

Academy trust chairs of trustees must complete a suitability check with DfE as soon as they are appointed.

The suitability check includes:

- verification of identity
- confirmation of the right to work in the United Kingdom
- an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check

Additional information is required if you have lived outside the United Kingdom for a period of 12 months or longer.

DfE will also consider any further information, including where individuals are barred from teaching or the management of a school.

### What Do Schools and Academies Need to Publish?

Schools and academies must publish one of the following on their website:

A copy of their most recent Ofsted report, OR

A direct link to the school's Ofsted report on the Ofsted website.

While meeting just one of these requirements is enough for compliance, best practice is to include both for ease of access. It's very simple to go the extra mile with this requirement.

**Ofsted is considering renaming the 'secure' grade** in proposed new report cards, amid concerns it won't be clear to families where it sits on the new scale, *Schools Week* understands.

The inspectorate proposes replacing its current four-point grading system with five grades across up to 11 judgment areas. The system is now being piloted and is open to consultation.

Schools would be given one of five colour-coded judgments for each area, ranging from dark green to red. Under current plans, those would be 'exemplary', 'strong', 'secure', 'attention needed' and 'causing concern'.

Ofsted is now understood to be considering replacing 'secure' with another word or phrase.

### Parent View, Responses, 1<sup>st</sup> January 2024 - 6<sup>th</sup> January 2025

School level data

London average response rate = 4.9%

Hillingdon “ “ = 16.4%

## 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.



Inspiring the Future is a free service, and is open to all state schools and colleges, with focused support for those who need it most.

### How to sign-up

Inspiring the Future is an easy and flexible way to volunteer. You can:

- Give from an hour a year
- Take part in local sessions in-person or virtual activities from wherever you are
- Choose the types of activities that interest you

As a volunteer, you'll be connected with primary schools, secondary schools, and colleges through a dedicated online system. This enables you to indicate your activity preferences, search for volunteering opportunities and accept or decline invitations from schools.



**Chance UK has published a new report on the impact of primary school suspensions and permanent exclusions on children in England.**



The research included data from the National Pupil Database and followed five-year groups of children. Key findings show: 97% of those excluded at primary school had a special educational need or disability (SEND); and 59% of children who were excluded/ suspended were identified as a 'Child in Need' by social services during their school life. [Read the executive summary](#)



### [Online safeguarding course for school governors and boards](#)

This course contains four modules on your role and responsibilities, working with your school's senior leadership team, creating a safer culture and preparing for safeguarding and child protection inspections.

You'll learn through a combination of teaching pages, videos with school governors and teaching staff, reflection and assessment questions

## The Schools & Academies Show

**Excel London 2025**

**15<sup>th</sup> May, 9.00am – 4.30pm**

The Schools & Academies Show, returns to London on the 15<sup>th</sup> May and will be co-located with EdTech Innovate, The School Estates Summit & The SEND Conference. Every year the show provides a space to connect, gain new ideas, and explore key challenges and emerging trends, shaping the future of education technology.

The event is free for schools and academies. Simply select 'public sector' from the dropdown below to secure a free pass. [Book your place here.](#)

## Governor and Clerk Training and Development P

**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](mailto:office@governor.support)

<b>Clerks briefing meetings.</b> <i>Clerks only, book your meetings by clicking on the dates opposite please.</i>	<a href="#">Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2025</a> <a href="#">Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> June 2025</a> <a href="#">Tuesday 8<sup>th</sup> July 2025</a>	All at 10.00am- 11.00am	
<b>Understanding the role of the Safeguarding link governor</b>	Thursday 1 <sup>st</sup> May 2025	6.30pm- 8.00pm	<a href="#">Register and book a place here</a>
<b>Hot Topics/Question time</b> Just a selection of some of the topics we can discuss: Budget, Exclusions, Behaviour, Staffing All governors, chairs, and clerk's welcome	Tuesday 6 <sup>th</sup> May 2025	6.30pm- 8.00pm	<a href="#">Register and book a place here</a>
<b>Governance Essentials: A course for New School Governors</b> Three-part course  <i>We strongly recommend attending all parts of the course.</i>	Part 1 Thursday 8 <sup>th</sup> May 2025  Part 2 Wednesday 14 <sup>th</sup> May 2025  Part 3 Wednesday 21 <sup>st</sup> May 2025	All parts are at 6.30pm- 8.00pm	<a href="#">Book Part 1 here</a>  <a href="#">Book Part 2 here</a>  <a href="#">Book Part 3 here</a>
<b>Just for clerks-planning and managing board hearings</b>	Thursday 19 <sup>th</sup> June 2025	6.30pm- 8.00pm	<a href="#">Register and book a place here</a>

## Suggested summer term agenda

### Full Governing Board

**Policy review - The following can only be approved by the full governing board:**

- Staff Disciplinary Policy
- Staff Grievance Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct

### *Safeguarding/child protection – section 175 return*

The chair or nominated safeguarding governor must check the supporting evidence available to verify the return is an accurate representation of safeguarding arrangements in school. The finalised report should be shared with all governors and attention should be drawn to actions highlighted.

- Budget approval (unless delegated to the Resources Committee).
- Governing board self-evaluation/external review

## **Teaching and Learning committee**

### *Sex, Relationships and Health Education*

Ensure statutory guidance is followed and review and approve the Sex, Relationships and Health Education policies.

### *Equality*

Ensure the school meets its statutory obligations in respect of equality and community cohesion including:

- Approve an accessibility plan.

Governing boards are required to draw up and publish equality objectives every four years and annually publish information demonstrating how they are meeting the aims of the equality duty. The school needs to include details of:

- eliminating discrimination
- advancing equality of opportunity – between people who share a protected characteristic and people who do not share it
- consulting and involving those affected by inequality in the decisions your school takes to promote equality and eliminate discrimination (affected people could include parents, pupils, staff and members of the local community).

### *Annual report to parents*

Ensure the school reports at least annually to parents on their child's achievement and general progress

## **Resources committee**

### *School meals*

Approve the price of paid-for school meals.

### *Budget*

Scrutinise and approve the new school budget.

*Policies to approve:*

- Data protection/GDPR policy
- Freedom of information policy
- Whistleblowing policy.

*Health and safety arrangements, including approving a suitable policy.*

To review, approve and implement a Health and Safety policy and ensure that the school meets all relevant health and safety legislation including first aid and assurance that fire safety precautions are suitable, and risk assessed annually.

Governor Support Service Ltd

Contact us:

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

