

GOVERNOR SERVICES: EDUCATION IMPROVEMENT
SUPPORTING INFORMATION FOR SUMMER TERM 2025

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Governors are encouraged to read all the provided information in advance of the meeting and come prepared with questions to help streamline governing body meetings as much as possible.

We have also provided some suggested timings on the agenda.

Thank you for taking the time to read and consider this information.

We thank you for your service.

Staff Wellbeing

Get support with thinking strategically about wellbeing with other articles available through GovernorHub Knowledge:

- [How to approach wellbeing strategically](#)
- [Wellbeing initiatives: what they look like in practice and how the board is involved](#)
- [Questions to ask about wellbeing](#)
- [Wellbeing link governor: role description](#)

Please remind all school staff that the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is available to them and their families, who may also be impacted.

The service is provided by an independent company, Wellbeing Solutions, which provides professional and confidential advice, wellbeing and therapeutic support and is available to all school staff free of charge.

Staff and their family members (who live in the same household and are over 16) can access the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) by ringing 0800 0542 301 at any time of day or night, 365 days a year. Appointments can also be made online on their website: www.employeeassistance.org.uk using the access code lancsedu.

Safeguarding

An update from Lancashire's Safeguarding in Education

Safeguarding In Education

As per Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024, governing bodies and proprietors have a strategic leadership responsibility for their school or college's safeguarding arrangements and must ensure that they comply with their duties under legislation. They must have regard to this guidance, ensuring policies, procedures and training in their schools or colleges are effective and comply with the law at all times. Headteachers and principals should ensure that the policies and procedures, adopted by their governing bodies and proprietors (particularly those concerning referrals of cases of suspected abuse and neglect), are understood, and followed by all staff.

Consultation on Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025

Significant changes are expected to come into force from September 2025. As always, the Safeguarding in Education Team will keep schools up to date with information as it is released, and this will be embedded into all training as appropriate.

Changes to the Safeguarding Team

The team has recently rebranded to *Safeguarding in Education* and consists of four school safeguarding officers which will hopefully increase capacity of services and support being provided to schools.



Services to Schools

We offer a range of support to schools including whole school training, consultation, safeguarding audits and DSL training. The Safeguarding Advice Line continues to operate daily for schools to obtain advice and guidance for cases where immediate harm is not suspected. A termly safeguarding newsletter is sent to schools with information about new services, changes to guidance and important updates. The annual safeguarding conference continues to be popular with over 130 DSL's attending the October 2024 conference at Ewood Park. The planning of the next conference is underway!

Training Opportunities

Schools are provided with a menu of training and CPD opportunities for free. Some of the training available to schools is delivered by external providers and is charged at cost to delegates. Training opportunities can be found on the Schools' Portal.

Governor Support

There is a wealth of support available from the Safeguarding in Education Team to support the roles of governors. We offer governor training that will build confidence to challenge and assure that safeguarding processes and policies are fit for purpose. We have also developed a question bank and governor reporting document to support school leaders in sharing safeguarding information.

Key Questions to Consider

The role of the governing body comes with significant responsibility and accountability. Below is a quick snapshot of considerations however we do have a more comprehensive document available to schools to share with the governing body.

- Has the governing body appointed a safeguarding link governor?
- Has the governing body had strategic safeguarding training to allow the management of safeguarding. Is this provided on a 'regular' basis as per Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024?
- Are governors fully aware of the Early Help offer provided by school? What does this look like?
- Is staff training up to date and effective – how is this recorded?
- Has the safeguarding governor had oversight of the Single Central Record and signed to say this has been done?
- When was the last time a child voice questionnaire was completed? How do we know that children are safe in school?
- Has a premises check been done recently? Any considerations for site security?

Feel free to contact safeguardingeducationteam@lancashire.gov.uk for more support and advice.

School Improvement

When considering the Headteacher's Report, governors might want to consider the following:

- Attendance
Make sure you're [evaluating the data you're given](#) thoroughly and effectively (more guidance below)
- Safeguarding
Online safety is a big topic in schools at the moment, so use this as an opportunity to ask questions about how your school/trust are [making sure pupils are safe online](#)
- Vulnerable children
- Pupils with special educational needs (SEN)
- Pupils eligible for the pupil premium
- Finance and premises
- Health and safety
- Recruitment
- Parental engagement
- Staff wellbeing and continuing professional development (CPD)
- Additional support the headteacher/CEO needs from the governing board

Attendance

All governors should be aware of the 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' guidance released in May 2022, with the most recent updates in August 2024: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>.

It is important that the chair of governors and/or the governor assigned to attendance are familiar with the whole document, and that all governors are aware of the challenges around attendance being faced nationally and in their own school.

What does the guidance say about governors' responsibilities around attendance and how they can support schools?

Governors should:

1. Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and policies.
2. Make sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
3. Regularly review attendance data and help leaders focus efforts on pupils who need it.

How?

Review the Attendance Policy.

Look at the Headteacher's Report and pay close attention to the attendance data.

Key questions to consider:

- Do we have an Attendance Policy?
Have we reviewed this policy in line with the DfE's latest guidance? When do we plan to review the policy next?
- How do we make sure that our attendance data is recorded accurately in the register?
- How do we look to build strong links with local services to remove barriers to attendance?
- How are we monitoring pupils' attendance to identify patterns and any concerns?
- Are there any trends in the latest attendance data? How does this differ by year group/pupil cohort? For example, pupils:
 - with a social worker
 - from a background/ethnicity where attendance has been low
 - with a long-term medical condition
 - with SEND
 - who are eligible for free school meals.
- How are we supporting:
 - Pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent
 - Persistently-absent pupils
 - Severely-absent pupils
 - Cohorts of pupils with lower attendance than their peers.

What support is available from the Local Authority?

Every school in Lancashire has been allocated a School Attendance Support Worker (SASW), this includes Pupil Referral Units, Special Schools and those in the independent sector. In the autumn term 2023, the SASWs undertook the first targeted support meetings with nearly every school in Lancashire. The meetings have allowed for an analysis of school data and a discussion around vulnerable pupil cohorts. Termly meetings will continue to assist with tracking, monitoring and reviewing practice and to help with the advice around individual pupils.

Arrangements for Exams

Exams may have already taken place when you hold your meeting.

Key Stage 1 Assessments (optional)

Assessments at the end of Key Stage 1 (KS1) are no longer statutory. The Reception Baseline Assessment (RBA) will serve as the baseline for cohort-level primary progress measures, replacing the traditional end-of-KS1 assessments from the academic year 2027/28.

Optional tests are available in English reading, English grammar, punctuation, and spelling, as well as Mathematics. For schools administering the tests, paper copies are no



longer produced and sent to schools. Instead, they are available to download on the Primary Assessment Gateway from 1 May 2025. The recommendation from the Department for Education (DfE) is to conduct the tests throughout May. Additional information can be found in the DfE guidance on KS1 tests.

Key questions to consider:

-
- Will our children be participating in the tests this year, and what are the reasons for this decision?

If the tests are being administered:

- How will the results be utilised to benefit the children?
- What is the number of children taking the tests this year?
- How were the children identified who will not be taking the tests this year?

If the tests are not being taken:

- How is the school ensuring that children meet the expected standards by the end of KS1?
- What assessment measures are in place for KS1 children?
- How will the decision not to take the tests impact the transition into Key Stage 2?

Key Stage 2 SATs

The KS2 SATs are scheduled to take place from 12 - 15 May 2025. These are for children who are in Year 6. They take tests in Reading, Grammar, Spelling and Punctuation and Maths. The children are also assessed in writing by their teachers rather than a test. Additional information can be found in the DfE guidance on KS2 assessments.

Data specific to each school from the 2023/24 SATs was available on the KS2 performance measures website in December 2024. This allows you to compare your school's results with those of other schools this year.

Key questions to consider:

- How is the school ensuring compliance with the assessment and reporting arrangements for this academic year?
- In what ways are teachers utilising the practice materials provided by the Department for Education (DfE) to prepare children for the tests?
- What is the total number of children expected to participate in the tests this year?
- How many children will not be participating in the tests, and what criteria was used to identify them?
- How many children require modified tests, and what process was followed to identify them?

GCSEs, AS and A-Levels

In 2025, the normal examination procedures will continue.

When incorporating past papers for mock exams, it is important for school leaders to be aware of the potential leniency in grading observed in papers from the pandemic years. Such papers may not offer accurate predictions.

Key questions to consider:

- How is the school providing support to students in preparing for exams?
- Are pre-pandemic standards being utilised to predict grades?
- What measures are in place to mitigate risks associated with students using AI in their graded work?

Educational Off-Site Visits

Schools are required to annually review their own internal arrangements and procedures for the approval of educational off-site visits. Following the review the school/academy is required to inform Lancashire County Council of these arrangements in the autumn term.

A list of the options for internal arrangements is shown below:

- The governing body/management committee to approve all Type A visits and to approve Type B visits prior to submission to Lancashire County Council.
- The governing body/management committee to approve all Type B visits prior to submission to Lancashire County Council. The headteacher/EVC to approve all Type A visits. The decisions to be reported to the governing body/management committee meeting each term.
- The governing body/management committee to approve residential Type B visits only prior to submission to Lancashire County Council. The headteacher/EVC to approve all Type A visits and to approve all other Type B visits for submission to Lancashire County Council. The decisions to be reported to the governing body/management committee meeting each term.
- A designated governor/manager to work alongside the headteacher/EVC to approve all Type A visits and to approve Type B visits prior to submission to Lancashire County Council. The decisions to be reported to the governing body/management committee meeting each term.
- A committee of governors/focus group of managers to work alongside the headteacher/EVC to approve all Type A visits and to approve Type B visits prior to submission to Lancashire County Council. The decisions to be reported to the governing body/management committee meeting each term.
- Other arrangements (confirm the arrangements for your establishment).

A letter will be sent out at the end of October via the Schools' Portal, this will include the e-proforma. This needs to be completed by the end of the autumn term.

In addition, the authority should be informed of any changes to the school's/academy's trained Educational Visits Co-ordinators (EVC's) and those staff with head or administrator

rights on EVOLVE. These users on EVOLVE can only be removed/amended by the authority.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact the Educational Off-Site Visits Team via 01772 532702 or email educationalvisits@lancashire.gov.uk

Finance (LA Maintained Schools only)

Budget Outturn 2024/25

Outturn statements will be issued to all schools via the Schools' Portal early in the summer term 2024 following the closure of accounts for the financial year 2023/24.

School Budgets 2025/26

It is a requirement of the Scheme for Financing Schools in Lancashire that the first formal budget plan for the financial year be approved by the governing body.

All schools need to carefully consider their three-year school budget outlook, taking early action where changes are needed to set a balanced budget both in year and in following years, particularly taking early action where changes will need to reduce expenditure on staffing.

Schools are asked to ensure that following approval of the budget plan for 2025/26 this is submitted to the authority. The budget plan is to be submitted using a web-based form titled 'Income and Expenditure Form' (I&E Form). It is located in the Forms > Finance section of the menu on the left of the Schools' Portal homepage. The I&E form is required no later than **Friday 16 May 2025**.

Governors are reminded that the Scheme for Financing Schools indicates that the governing body shall not approve a budget for a school which exceeds its total available resources, including any balances brought forward.

Where a school is unable to submit a balanced budget, the school can submit a budget recovery plan that includes a request to apply for a budget anticipation of up to three years. A recovery plan should be submitted as soon as possible, but no later than **Friday 27 June 2025**. In accordance with the agreed Schools in Financial Difficulty (SIFD) procedures, schools that fail to comply with this deadline, even after a reminder has been sent, may be issued with a Notice of Concern in Respect of Financial Delegation and representatives of the School Improvement Challenge Board (SICB) may attend the autumn term meeting of the governing body.

Schools that purchase the budget preparation and financial forecast services from the Schools Finance Team will get support to work on a recovery plan request.

Governor Training and Development

Lancashire County Council continues to update its training programme, with online and face to face training available.

There are new and existing courses which offer a strategic overview on a broad range of critical areas of governance, such as child protection and safeguarding, SEND, wellbeing, behaviour, exclusions, governor self-assessment and review, equality and diversity, safer recruitment, as well as a new school marketing course.

All courses are easily accessible by going onto the Training page on GovernorHub. We encourage all governing bodies to familiarise themselves with the updated training programme and consider how it might benefit their members and, by extension, their schools.

School Admissions (for own admission authority schools)

If the governing body is looking to make changes to the school's oversubscription criteria or admission number for the September 2027 admissions round, realistically, it should be discussed during the summer term of 2025. This will allow time to consider the practicalities and to contact the necessary teams for advice.

The consultation window formally opens on 1 October 2025. The proposed arrangements are required in County Hall by Friday 5 December 2025. Wherever appropriate, please discuss any proposed changes with your Diocesan Officer and School Place Planning Officer.

It is essential to include Lancashire Local Authority in the consultation process. Please email proposed policies to adm.consult@lancashire.gov.uk [after 1 October 2025, please] Full details will be available on the Schools' Portal in the autumn term. Calls are welcome at any time, on 01772 531540.

Determination [Finalising] Admission Arrangements

Wherever appropriate, please include your Diocesan Officer.

In order to comply with the DfE School Admissions Code, own admission authorities will be required to determine arrangements for 2027 admissions by 28 February 2026. Policies are required on the LCC website and the school website by 15 March 2026.

Determined arrangements are collected and processed using this team email box determined@lancashire.gov.uk

For more information, please contact Nan Hogg – please don't hesitate to call, we are here to help you. Tel: 01772 531540 or email: nanette.hogg@lancashire.gov.uk

You can also call Shamim, Sarah or Andrew on 01772 531676.

SEND Inclusion updates

Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) Consultations

The law says before naming an educational setting in Section I of an EHCP the Local Authority must consult with the setting they are considering that may be named in Section I of a final EHCP. It is useful to know that receiving a consultation may be due to several factors:

- The local authority will consult with a mainstream school as all children have the legal right to a mainstream education.
- The local authority must consider the wishes of the parent and may be consulting with a school at the request of the parent.
- The local authority may be consulting with a school as it is the nearest school to the home address.
- The local authority may be consulting with both a specialist setting and a mainstream setting.
- It is not unusual for the local authority to consult with several schools to satisfy and discharge their responsibility to secure a suitable education for the child.

The Consultation

Schools/academies have up to 15 days to respond to the local authority's consultation letter. Earlier responses are appreciated to support the local authority to make timely decisions within statutory timescales.

The consultation documentation will include the draft EHCP and the appendices used to inform the draft EHCP (as listed in Section K of the EHCP) and if applicable the most recent annual review. These should be read carefully and the school may make contact with the parents and child/young person to gain a better understanding. They can be invited in to visit and arrangements can be made to observe them in their current setting to engage with them before giving a fully informed response.

Consultation Responses

The response to the consultation should state what specific provisions will require reasonable adjustments and set out the school's proposal to make these to meet the child's needs.

Headteachers must then set out their response by:

- linking it to the documents in section K
- linking it to the needs in section B and,
- linking it to the provision in section F.

If you assert you cannot meet the needs, you must assist the local authority and tell them why and identify each provision in the draft plan which your school cannot make even with reasonable adjustments.

All responses to consultations are shared with the parent and may be seen by a range of professionals who are working with the family.

Once a school has responded to a consultation, the local authority will give due consideration to the response before deciding whether to name a placement. If no response is received to a consultation by the 15th day the local authority assumes the school has no objection to being named.

SEND Units in mainstream schools

SEND Units within mainstream schools are part of the continuum of offer between full time mainstream provision and special schools. They are for children and young people with EHCPs who:

- will be able to access a mainstream curriculum but may need it presented in a specialised and flexible way with opportunities for consolidation and adaptation as required based on the individual child or young person's presenting need;
- may have gaps in learning and be behind age related expectations requiring individual assessment of skills and knowledge across subjects;
- will be able to progress towards accessing some mainstream sessions (with support as appropriate to individual needs);
- will have difficulties with some of the everyday demands of a mainstream environment.

As a SEND Unit is a distinct type of provision the material change process for schools must be followed in order to ensure that the correct designation is recorded for the school. The Local Authority commissions an agreed number of places within the SEND Unit for pupils with EHCPs and funds these places in a similar way to special schools; the funding in SEND units is approximately £10,000 per place. Each pupil also brings an amount of top up funding as determined by the provision identified in their EHCP. It is the Local Authority who allocates pupils places in SEND Units as part of the EHCP process, following consultation with the school.

Having a SEND Unit has benefits not only for the pupils who attend there but for the school as a whole.

- Expertise can be shared and developed amongst the whole staff team, supporting a larger number of children who may have needs at SEN support or EHCPs within the mainstream classrooms.
- Staff feel more confident in identifying and supporting pupils in their class.
- Pupils experience belonging to a diverse community and are able to develop friendships with a wider group of peers.
- Schools who establish SEND Units often find that their popularity within the local community increases as families recognise the community values and focus on best outcomes for all pupils, regardless of need.

Lancashire is committed to increasing the number of SEND Units so that this is an offer available in all parts of the county at both Primary and Secondary. Since the development of Units usually involves capital funding to accommodate this we will be communicating the priority areas in the coming months, along with details about how schools can register their interest and the application criteria.

For any queries in the meantime please contact sarah-jane.hill@lancashire.gov.uk

Off-site Directions and Managed Moves

The DfE issued exclusion guidance in 2022 that for the first time explained how managed moves should work. Despite updates, the guidance still does not cover the mechanics of how a managed move should operate in any significant detail. It is known that a failed managed move may form part of the deliberations of an Independent Review Panel (IRP), when considering the appropriateness of a permanent exclusion. Additionally, managed moves have featured in a number of parental complaints that have been raised with the Authority by OFSTED.

It is acknowledged that managed moves are used widely across Lancashire schools and that there is varying practice in respect of how they have been organised, documented and rates of success. In light of this scrutiny, we have reviewed our managed move guidance to ensure that the DfE advice is observed and to protect schools from any challenge of off rolling. We recommend that managed moves be preceded by an off-site direction for the purpose of improving behaviour.

As always, a managed move should only take place in the best interests of the child and where initial interventions have been exhausted. Information sharing is required (including on attainment and risk management) so that the new school is able to support pupils from day one.

It is appreciated that this will bring about a change in working practice in some areas and therefore we intend to ask for the new guidance to be placed on the agenda for the Pupil Placement Panels and secondary headteacher meetings.

If you have any queries regarding off-site directions or managed moves please contact either

Lucia Brown on 01524 586417 lucia.brown@lancashire.gov.uk or

Debbie Ormerod on 01772 531878 debbie.ormerod@lancashire.gov.uk

Guidance has also been prepared by the Virtual School that is specific to the consideration of an off-site direction or Managed Move for a child looked after (CLA). If either measure is being considered for a CLA you should contact the Education Consultant attached to your school.

Lancashire Governance Association (formerly LASGB)

We are members of the National Governors Association, and we meet every term with the Executive Director of Education and Children's Services and with the Head of Governor Services. We also organise a workshop every term for ALL governors of member schools. Once a year we hold an Annual Conference with top-class speakers in education and with the Cabinet Member for Education in attendance. All this for the modest sum of £30 per year per school.

The Lancashire Governance Association now has a dedicated GovernorHub page, if you are a member and would like to be added to the page, please email contact@lancashirega.org.uk

Special Recognition Award

If you have a governor who has given special service to your governing body, then you can recommend them for our Special Recognition Award. They will receive a framed certificate and be invited to our Annual Conference to receive it. Submission can be from the headteacher or chair of governors. Go to our website 'www.lancashirega.org.uk'. Click on 'About us' then 'Roll of Honour'. Here you will also find some guidelines. Nominations can be submitted to contac@lancashirega.org.uk. Note your school must be a member of LGA.

New Primary Career-Related Learning Resources

Research has shown that children begin to narrow their aspirations and their thoughts about jobs and future careers whilst they are in primary school. Building career-related learning into the primary curriculum or delivering activities and enrichment projects can help to introduce primary-aged children to the world of work, help them understand what they are interested in and show them the range of possibilities in front of them. Whilst delivering careers provision is not mandatory in primary schools, it is seen to be good practice and there is already a lot of fabulous work taking place across the county.

To help bring this together, we've created a primary career-related learning webpage which provides some further information, ideas and case studies from around the county. You can access this page here: [Resources to Support Career-Related Learning in Primary Schools - Lancashire Professional Development Service](#). It would be wonderful if you could take some time to have a look at this webpage and consider how you can support your school to bring some career-related learning or activities into your settings. Governors are well-placed to provide support to schools wishing to develop this area of their engagement with their pupils. You may be able to get involved in career-related activities yourself, for example you may run a business which the pupils could visit, or you may have an interesting/unusual job which could form a 'guess the job' activity. There are lots of ways you can help the school to start showing children what the world of work looks like.

If you already do this within your school, we'd be really keen to hear about your good practice and to include a case study on this webpage. Please contact sarah.hirst@lancashire.gov.uk if you would like to share a case study with us.

Apprenticeship/Careers Team Update

Apprenticeship Menu: We are pleased to inform you that a new apprenticeship menu is now available on the Schools' Portal. This can be accessed via the A-Z menu on the apprenticeships page. We are currently accepting expressions of interest for September. For further information, please contact us at apprenticeenquiries@lancashire.gov.uk.

Apprenticeship Levy Update: We have funds available and are offering apprenticeships from Level 2 to Level 7. These apprenticeships range in cost from £4,000 to £20,000 per apprentice, which will be funded through the apprenticeship levy. For more information, please refer to our apprenticeship menu or contact us directly.

Teacher Encounter: We recently hosted our first teacher encounter in partnership with MPLOY, where we highlighted various LCC departments including Highways, Registrars, Digital, Trading Standards, and Social Care. We are planning another event in June and would like to extend an invitation to careers leads from across the county. To register, please contact Nicola.hardy@lancashire.gov.uk for additional details.

Upcoming Opportunities: We have participated in a range of headteacher meetings to discuss apprenticeship opportunities and early careers. If you have any upcoming events or cluster meetings where we could present, please contact us to arrange for a team member to attend.

Contact details for Area North Governor Services Team

Schools in Lancaster, Fylde, Wyre and Preston

Area Team Manager – Val Morris 01524 581185 val.morris@lancashire.gov.uk	Team Contact governors.north@lancashire.gov.uk
Janet Burbidge 01524 581215 janet.burbidge@lancashire.gov.uk	David Callaghan 01524 581229 david.callaghan@lancashire.gov.uk
Amanda Daws 01772 534384 amanda.daws@lancashire.gov.uk	Donna Holland 01524 581135 donna.holland@lancashire.gov.uk
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