

GOVERNOR SERVICES

SUPPORTING INFORMATION FOR AUTUMN TERM 2025

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Code of Conduct for School Governing Bodies (2025)

The governing body has the following core functions, as defined in Regulations:

- a) ensuring that the vision, ethos and direction of the school are clearly defined;
- b) ensuring that the headteacher performs his or her responsibilities for the educational performance of the school; and
- c) ensuring the sound, proper and effective use of the school's financial resources.

In exercising their functions, the governing body shall:

- a) act with integrity, objectivity and honesty and in the best interests of the school; and
- b) be open about the decisions they make and the actions they take, and in particular shall be prepared to explain decisions and actions to interested parties.

Specifically, as individuals on the governing body we agree to the following:

Role and Responsibilities

- We accept that our role is strategic and so will focus on our core functions rather than involve ourselves in day-to-day management.
- We understand the purpose of the governing body and the role of the headteacher and senior leadership team.
- We accept that we have no legal authority to act individually, except when the governing body has given us delegated authority to do so, and therefore we will only speak on behalf of the governing body when we have been specifically authorised to do so.
- We accept collective responsibility for all decisions made by the governing body or its delegated agents. This means that we will not speak against majority decisions outside the governing body meeting.
- We have a duty to act fairly and without prejudice, and in so far as we have responsibility for staff, we will fulfil all that is expected of a good employer.
- We will encourage open governance and will act appropriately.
- We will consider carefully how our decisions may affect the community and other schools.
- We shall fully cooperate with individual requests that are necessary to ensure organisational compliance, such as disclosure and barring checks.
- We will always be mindful of our responsibility to maintain and develop the ethos (and school's religious ethos – where applicable) and reputation of our school. Our actions within the school and the local community will reflect this.
- In making or responding to criticism or complaints we will follow the procedures established by the governing body.
- We will actively support and challenge the headteacher and senior leadership team.
- We will accept and respect the difference in roles between the governing body and staff, ensuring that we work collectively for the benefit of the organisation.
- We will respect the role of the headteacher and their responsibility for the day-to-day management of the school and avoid any actions that might undermine such arrangements.

- We agree to adhere to the school's rules and policies and the procedures of the governing body as set out by the relevant governance documents and law.
- When formally speaking or writing in our governing role, we will ensure our comments reflect current organisational policy even if they might be different to our personal views.
- When communicating in our private capacity (including on social media) we will be mindful of and strive to uphold the reputation of the school.
- We will avoid, as far as possible, becoming involved in any communication which may lead to a conflict of interest with the role of the governing body.

Commitment

- We acknowledge that accepting office as a governor involves the commitment of significant amounts of time and energy.
- We will each involve ourselves actively in the work of the governing body, and accept our fair share of responsibilities, including service on committees or working groups.
- We will make full efforts to attend all meetings and where we cannot attend explain in advance why we are unable to do so.
- We will arrive at meetings prepared, having read all papers in advance, ready to make a positive contribution and observe protocol.
- We will get to know the school well and respond to opportunities to involve ourselves in school activities.
- We will visit the school, with all visits arranged in advance with the headteacher and undertaken within the framework established by the governing body.
- When visiting the school in a personal capacity (i.e. as a parent or carer), we will maintain our underlying responsibility as a governor and continue to honour commitments made in this code.
- We will participate in induction training, prioritise training in required areas (such as safeguarding) and commit to developing our individual and collective skills and knowledge on an ongoing basis.
- We accept that in the interests of open governance, our full names, date of appointment, terms of office, roles on the governing body, attendance records, relevant business and pecuniary interests, category of governor and the body responsible for appointing us will be published on the school's website.
- In the interests of transparency, we accept that information relating to governors will be collected and logged on the Department for Education's national database of governors ('Get Information about Schools').

Relationships

- We will strive to work as a team in which constructive working relationships are actively promoted.
- We will work to create an inclusive environment, where everyone's contributions are valued equally.
- We will express views openly, courteously, and respectfully in all our communications with other governors, the clerk to the governing body and school staff both in and outside of meetings.

- We will support the chair in their role of ensuring appropriate conduct, both at meetings and at all times.
- We will confront malpractice by speaking up against and bringing to the attention of the relevant authorities, any decisions and actions that conflict with the Seven Principles of Public Life (detailed below) or which may place pupils at risk.
- We are prepared to answer queries from other governors in relation to delegated functions and take into account any concerns expressed, and we will acknowledge the time, effort and skills that have been committed to the delegated function by those involved.
- We will seek to develop effective working relationships with the headteacher, staff, parents, the local authority and other relevant agencies and the community.
- We will respect the remit of, and engage constructively with, relevant authorities and other schools.
- We will be candid, but constructive and respectful when holding senior leaders to account.
- We will have regard to our responsibilities under [The Equality Act](#) and will work to advance equality of opportunity for all.

Confidentiality

- We will observe complete confidentiality when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern specific members of staff or pupils, both inside or outside school.
- We will exercise the greatest prudence at all times when discussions regarding school business arise outside of a governing body meeting.
- We will not reveal the details of any governing body vote.
- We will ensure all confidential papers are held and disposed of appropriately.
- We will practice good ICT security, keep personal data safe and support GDPR compliance.

Conflicts of Interest

- We will record any pecuniary or other business interest (including those related to people we are connected with) that we have in connection with the governing body's business in the Register of Business Interests, and if any such conflicted matter arises in a meeting we will offer to leave the meeting for the appropriate length of time.
- We accept that the Register of Business Interests will be published on the school's website.
- We will also declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the situation arise.
- We will act in the best interests of the school as a whole and not as a representative of any group, even if elected to the governing body.

Ceasing to be a Governor

We understand that the requirements relating to confidentiality will continue to apply after a governor leaves office.

Breach of this Code of Conduct

If we believe this code has been breached, we will raise this issue with the chair and the chair will investigate; the governing body will only use suspension / removal as a last resort after seeking to resolve any difficulties or disputes in more constructive ways.

Should it be the chair that we believe has breached this code, another governing body member, such as the vice-chair will investigate.

The Seven Principles of Public Life

Originally published by the Nolan Committee: The Committee on Standards in Public Life was established by the then Prime Minister in October 1994, under the Chairmanship of Lord Nolan, to consider standards of conduct in various areas of public life, and to make recommendations.

- **Selflessness** - holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.
- **Integrity** - holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships.
- **Objectivity** - holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.
- **Accountability** - holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.
- **Openness** - holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.
- **Honesty** – holders of public office should be truthful.
- **Leadership** – holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

(Adapted from the model Code of Conduct published by the NGA - 2025)

Qualifications and Disqualifications (Regulation 17 and Schedule 4 to the Regulations)

Grounds for disqualification fall into three broad categories:

- general grounds;
- grounds that apply to particular categories of governor; and
- grounds that arise because of particular failings or actions on the part of the governor.

All the grounds for disqualification apply also to associate members except that associate members can be registered pupils at the school and can be under 18.

General Grounds

Registered pupils cannot be governors.

A governor must be aged 18 or over at the time of election or appointment.

A person cannot hold more than one governor post at the same school at the same time.

Grounds that Apply to Particular Categories of Governor

A person is disqualified from being a parent governor if they are an elected member of the Local Authority or paid to work at the school for more than 500 hours (i.e. for more than one-third of the hours of a full-time equivalent) in any consecutive twelve month period at the time of election or appointment.

A person is disqualified from being a local authority governor if they are eligible to be a staff governor at the school.

A person is disqualified from being a partnership governor if they are:

- a parent of a registered pupil at the school;
- eligible to be a staff governor at the school;
- an elected member of the local authority; or
- employed by the local authority in connection with its education functions.

Grounds that Arise because of Particular Failings or Actions on the part of the Governor

A person is disqualified from being a governor of a particular school if they have failed to attend the meetings of the governing body of that school for a continuous period of six months, beginning with the date of the first meeting they failed to attend, without the consent of the governing body. This does not apply to the headteacher or to foundation governors appointed by virtue of their office.

A foundation, local authority, co-opted or partnership governor at the school who is disqualified for failing to attend meetings is only disqualified from being a governor of any category at the school during the twelve-month period starting on the date on which they were disqualified.

A person is disqualified from holding or continuing to hold office as a governor of a school if, in summary, that person:

- is the subject of a bankruptcy restrictions order; an interim bankruptcy restrictions order; debt relief restrictions order; an interim debt relief restrictions order; or their estate has been sequestered and the sequestration has not been discharged, annulled or reduced;
- is subject to a disqualification order or disqualification undertaking under the Company Directors Disqualification Act 1986; a disqualification order under the Companies (Northern Ireland) Order 2002; a disqualification undertaking accepted under the Company Directors Disqualification (Northern Ireland) Order 2002; or an order made under section 429(2)(b) of the Insolvency Act 1986 (failure to pay under county court administration order);
- has been removed from the office of trustee for a charity by an order made by the Charity Commission or Commissioners or High Court on grounds of any misconduct or mismanagement in the administration of the charity, or under section 34 of the Charities and Trustee Investment (Scotland) Act 2005 from being concerned in the management or control of any body;
- has been removed from office as an elected governor within the last five years;
- is included in the list of people considered by the Secretary of State as unsuitable to work with children or young people;
- is barred from any regulated activity relating to children;
- is subject to a direction of the Secretary of State under section 142 of the Education Act 2002 or section 128 of the Education and Skills Act 2008;
- is disqualified from working with children or from registering for child-minding or providing day care;
- is disqualified from being an independent school proprietor, teacher or employee by the Secretary of State;
- subject to certain exceptions for overseas offences that do not correlate with a UK offence, has been sentenced to three months or more in prison (without the option of a fine) in the five years ending with the date preceding the date of appointment/election as a governor or since becoming a governor;
- subject to certain exceptions for overseas offences that do not correlate with a UK offence, has received a prison sentence of two and a half years or more in the 20 years ending with the date preceding the date of appointment/election as a governor;
- subject to certain exceptions for overseas offences that do not correlate with a UK offence, has at any time received a prison sentence of five years or more;
- has been convicted and fined for causing a nuisance or disturbance on school or educational premises during the five years ending with the date immediately preceding appointment/election or since appointment or election as a governor;
- refuses a request by the clerk to make an application to the Disclosure and Barring Service for a criminal records certificate.

Anyone proposed or serving as a governor who is disqualified for one of these reasons must notify the clerk to the governing body.

(Extract from "Department for Education – The Constitution of Governing Bodies of Maintained Schools – August 2017")

Safeguarding

Safeguarding In Education

As per Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) 2025, 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.

Changes to Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 ~(KCSiE)

There was a call for evidence in March 2024 and more changes to KCSIE 2025 were anticipated, however, the passing of The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill, DfE Guidance for Relationships, Sex and Health Education and Gender Questioning Children are awaited, therefore the changes in this year's guidance are minimal. The changes emphasise the role of the Virtual School for children in kinship care, safeguarding risks in conspiracy theories and disinformation to children when online and clarification that schools continue to hold safeguarding responsibilities when placing children in Alternative Provision.

S175/157 Self-Assessment

The S175/157 self-assessment will be sent to schools to complete and return electronically. This tool supports education settings to assess themselves against the safeguarding requirements expected of them according to legislation and develop an action plan to improve safeguarding activity within their setting. Part 1 has a focus of Leadership and Governance, and it is best practice for the Safeguarding Link Governor to have input into the self-assessment.

Services to Schools

The Safeguarding in Education Team 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. Schools requiring additional support can opt into the enhanced service level agreement that offers a flexible package of support for a cost of £1,030 per academic year. Please note this is a popular service and schools will need to register interest by emailing safeguardingeducationteam@lancashire.gov.uk. A termly safeguarding newsletter is sent to schools with information about new services, changes to guidance and important updates.

The annual safeguarding conference is scheduled to take place on 8 October 2025. This popular event provides DSL's with CPD opportunities, guest speakers and networking opportunities to support safeguarding practice across schools.

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. They have also developed a question bank and governor reporting document to support school leaders in sharing safeguarding information.

Governor checklist

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

- Has the governing body appointed a safeguarding link governor?
- Has the governing body had safeguarding training other than that completed at induction, is this regular as per Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025?
- Are governors fully aware of the Early Help offer provided by school. What does this look like?
- Is staff training up to date and purposeful – 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 governors know that children are safe in school?
- Has a premises check been done recently, are there any considerations for site security?

As always, feel free to contact school.safeguarding@lancashire.gov.uk

Here is the link to training: [Strategic Safeguarding for Governors \(GOV159\)](#)

School Improvement Plan

The School Improvement Plan (SIP) is typically established at the start of the academic year, and governors play a key role in shaping and approving it. During the autumn term governing body meeting, the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) will present the draft SIP. It's important that both the board and SLT reach a shared understanding of the intended outcomes and how progress will be measured.

Consider asking these types of questions:

- How do the targets and objectives support the school's vision?
- What outcomes are expected? Why do we expect this result?
- How have we ensured the objectives are realistic and achievable?
- What problems do we anticipate?
- Have we got staff in place to deliver on this?
- What financial implications does the SIP have for our school budget?
- How will progress be monitored and reviewed?
- What support do staff need from the governing body?

Once governors have discussed the plan with senior leaders and made any necessary amendments, the governing board should formally agree and approve the SIP.

Data and Outcomes

The Headteacher's Report will contain key performance data. Take time to review this information in advance. The headteacher should present the data in a clear and accessible format. Even with limited experience in data analysis, governors should be able to identify:

- How your school's performance compares locally and nationally.
- Whether pupils are meeting, exceeding, or falling below expectations.
- Which areas of learning are performing well.
- Which subjects may require additional attention.

If these insights aren't immediately clear, speak to your chair of governors about ensuring future reports are easier to interpret.

Governors should familiarise themselves with performance data across key pupil groups:

- Boys and girls
- Pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM)
- Pupils receiving pupil premium
- Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL)
- Pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)
- Looked-after children (LAC) and previously LAC.

All performance data should inform the SIP. Compare the data against the success criteria agreed by the board and the Senior Leadership Team (SLT). Pay attention to objectives that are being met or are significantly above or below target. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, exams and assessments were disrupted in 2019/20 and 2020/21. The government did not publish performance tables in autumn 2020 or 2021, and this data was not used for accountability purposes. Additionally, assessments in 2021/22 were graded differently to reflect pandemic-related disruptions. Therefore, comparisons with these years may not be reliable.

There will be no Progress 8 data for the academic years 2024/25 and 2025/26, due to the impact of the pandemic on Key Stage 2 assessments. The DfE has confirmed that no replacement measure will be introduced during this period. Progress 8 is expected to return in 2026/27.

Here are some questions to ensure governors are scrutinising the information they are being presented with:

- What does the latest performance data tell us about pupil achievement across key stages?
- Are there any significant trends or changes compared to previous years?
- How does the school's performance compare to national averages and similar schools?
- Are pupils making expected progress from their starting points?
- How is progress measured for different groups (e.g. disadvantaged pupils, SEND, EAL)?
- What are the attainment gaps between different pupil groups, and how are these being addressed?
- How does performance data reflect the impact of curriculum changes?
- Are there subjects or departments where performance is notably strong or weak?
- What interventions have been implemented in response to underperformance?
- How reliable is the data we're presented with? What internal moderation or external validation has taken place?
- How frequently is performance data reviewed and updated?
- What systems are in place to ensure data accuracy and consistency?
- How are senior leaders using performance data to drive improvement?
- What actions have been taken in response to previous data reviews?
- How is the governing body kept informed about progress against school improvement targets?
- What does the data show about the impact of pupil premium funding?
- Are there measurable outcomes linked to specific interventions?
- How is performance data used to inform future spending decisions?
- How are staff supported to understand and use performance data?
- Are pupils and parents aware of performance expectations and outcomes?
- What feedback mechanisms are in place to gather stakeholder views on achievement?

School Term and Holiday Dates (including Inset Days) 2026/27

The background: Governing bodies are aware that under the Education Act 2002, the Local Authority is required to determine a school term and holiday framework for the 2026/27 academic year that the individual school may adopt or amend. The framework is now provided. The County Union Secretaries and the Diocesan/Church Authorities have been consulted, and it is commended to you for adoption.

Whilst the framework set by the authority is provided as guidance to schools, it is strongly recommended that if they wish to amend the framework that they should consult with relevant partners before finalising their individual patterns. This should include, cluster groups, feeder/partner schools and settings, and service providers such as catering, transport and crossing patrol agents.

Governing bodies should be mindful of ensuring a consistent approach between local schools to reduce the possibility of difficulties and conflict resulting from differing holiday patterns. This is specifically relevant for parents/carers in making childcare arrangements and for service providers/agents where linked arrangements are in place (e.g. peripatetic services, catering, crossing patrols and transport provision).

The requirements: The headteacher, following consultation with staff, recommends to the governing body/management committee their nominated five INSET days. The governing body/management committee must ensure that the 190 pupil days and five INSET days remain within the academic year of Tuesday 1 September 2026 to Tuesday 31 August 2027. In addition, there must be no conflict with any public or statutory holidays under the teaching/support staff conditions of service. Where the pattern set by a governing body does deviate significantly from the Lancashire pattern resulting in concerns or complaints to the authority these would be directed to the respective governing body to address.

Next Steps: The authority has written to headteachers early in the autumn term 2025 providing information on how schools should submit details of their chosen INSET dates via the Schools' Portal. The calendar is now available to populate 2026/27 dates. Schools are reminded that the school term and holiday arrangements should be posted on the school's website.

Scheme for Financing Schools (NB this applies to All Schools)

Where schools set term and holiday dates that depart from the 195 day envelope determined by the authority, the authority may charge any additional costs arising (e.g. for home-to-school transport) to the school's budget share under Section 6.2.11 of the Scheme for Financing Schools in Lancashire. This provides that the authority has the power to charge all categories of schools (including aided and foundation) with additional costs incurred by the Authority arising from a governing body/management committee decision in setting school term and INSET days.

Subject to the support of the appropriate Diocesan/Church Authority, the authority would not look to make a charge at a denominational VA school where the governing body departed from the Lancashire framework to take account of a religious festival (e.g. Holy Week).

2026/2027

Autumn Term 2026

Starts: Tuesday 1 September 2026

Half term: Monday 26 October - Friday 30 October 2026

Ends: Friday 18 December 2026

Spring Term 2027

Starts: Monday 4 January 2027

Half term: Monday 15 February - Friday 19 February 2027

Ends: Thursday 25 March 2027

Summer Term 2027

Starts: Monday 12 April 2027

May Day: Monday 3 May 2027

Half term: Monday 31 May - Friday 4 June 2027

Ends: Wednesday 21 July 2027

Total number of openings - 195

Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits

Schools are strongly advised to annually review their own internal arrangements and procedures for the approval of Educational/Off Site Visits. Following the review the school is required to inform Lancashire County Council of these arrangements.

In addition, the Authority should be informed of any changes to the school'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.

Should the governing body choose Option 6, please confirm the arrangements for the establishment. A list of the options for internal arrangements is shown in the following table for reference:

1.	The governing body/management committee to approve all Type A visits and to approve Type B visits prior to submission to Lancashire County Council.
2.	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.
3.	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.
4.	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.
5.	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.
6.	Other arrangements.

The completed e-proforma should be returned to the Educational Off-Site Visits Team no later than 19 December 2025. 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

Lancashire Policy/Procedure reviews

1. HR Policy Updates

The following amendments to HR policies were made last term:

Absence (Management of Sickness) Guidelines	Aug-25	Included reference to wellness action plan and Employee Assistance Programme
Disciplinary & Dismissal procedure (Support Staff)	Jun-25	New Annex 3 - Role of Contact officer
Leave of Absence	Jun-25	Clarity regarding Maternity Support Leave and inclusion of link to Neonatal Care Leave Policy
Parental Leave	May-25	Reference to the fact that the maximum leave in one year is 4 weeks

2. Teacher Pay Progression

Colleagues will recall that the 2024 version of the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document removed the requirement for performance-related pay progression on all teacher pay ranges. However the changes brought in only take effect this year.

There remains a statutory requirement to make a written pay recommendation following the completion of the appraisal process. Pay recommendations should still be presented to the Pay Committee, which should ensure that pay decisions are made in line with the School's Pay Policy. Where the LCC model Pay Policy has been adopted, this will include ensuring that colleagues recommended for pay progression are not or should not be subject to capability proceedings. If a school has retained elements of performance-related pay progression within their Pay Policy, this will include ensuring that any additional performance criteria are met

The other changes for schools that have adopted the Lancashire model Pay Policy are as follows:

1. Accelerated pay progression is no longer available. Only one point of pay progression is possible per year on all pay ranges.
2. Pay progression should be awarded unless an individual is subject to capability proceedings.
3. Teachers will still need to 'apply' for progression to the Upper Pay Range, providing evidence that they are 'highly competent' in all elements of the relevant standards and that their achievements and contribution to the school are substantial and sustained.
4. Schools should consider annually whether there should be any progression for eligible teachers on the Upper Pay Range.

Schools using Lancashire County Council Payroll Service will still need to action any pay progression on Oracle Fusion.

The LCC model Appraisal and Capability policies have been amended to reflect these new arrangements.

Here are links to helpful training:

[Appraisal and Pay Committees for Governors \(GOV101\)](#)

Finance

As usual, most of the finance guidance has been reviewed over the summer. School leaders need to ensure they review the latest versions available on the Schools' Portal to ensure they pick up on any developments (e.g. change of the LCC procurement rules captured in the latest Internal Financial Regulations).

For finance training see the below links:

[Strategic Finance Introduction \(GOV175\)](#)
[Finance for Maintained Schools](#)

Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) 2025/26

The Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) is a statutory requirement for all maintained schools. It is a legal requirement for the governing body to agree the standard annually and to submit a completed return to the local authority, by 31 March each year.

Governing bodies must formally discuss the SFVS annually with the headteacher and senior staff and ensure that the standard is completed in full, including the supplementary spreadsheet to record related party transactions (RPTs), if required.

The 2025/26 standard must be completed, agreed by the governing body and submitted to the LA, **by 31 March 2026**.

The approved SFVS spreadsheet should be uploaded on the 'Forms' section of the Schools' Portal. This can be accessed via the Schools' Portal home page under Forms > Finance > Schools Financial Value Standard.

Budget Sustainability

Schools are asked to give careful consideration to the financial forecasts over the next three years and to factor in any committed expenditure, any costs that were deferred or put on hold due to the pandemic and any additional catch-up spending that may be needed in the future.

If forecasts predict that budget reductions are required in future, schools are asked to be aware that the timescales involved to achieve savings can be significant, particularly if staffing changes are needed. To achieve realistic budget reductions, schools should have started to consider the matter preferably by the summer break but otherwise as early in the autumn term as possible. As the governing body has the overall responsibility for school finance it will need to play a key role in any review and to consider the new information (e.g. recent staffing changes and pupil numbers and forecasts) and take account of the latest financial monitoring report.

The Lancashire Schools Forum voted to apply clawback to excess balances at 31 March 2025. The policy can be found [here](#).

The Unofficial School Fund 2024/25

The Scheme for Financing Schools in Lancashire (Section 2.8) requires the governing body to submit, annually to the Authority, confirmation that financial regulations and procedures are in place for any unofficial or private funds operated by the school and that the funds have been audited and signed by a suitably qualified person, who is independent of that fund.

The accounts of all unofficial school funds are required to be prepared and audited on an annual basis prior to presentation to the governing body for approval.

Financial Transparency of Local Authority Maintained Schools

In July 2020, the DfE published their response to a consultation on 'Financial transparency of local authority maintained schools and academy trusts', which set out a number of proposals that are taking effect from 2020/21 onwards.

The governing body are reminded that one extra requirement that was introduced from 1 January 2021 related to additional financial information that maintained schools must publish on their website:

- how many school employees (if any) have a gross annual salary of £100,000 or more in increments of £10,000
DfE recommend using a table to display this information.
 - a link to the webpage which is dedicated to your school on the DfE's [schools financial benchmarking](#) service
DfE advise to follow the prompts to find your school's specific page.
-

Governor Training and Development

We know that with so many training options available, it can be hard to know where to start - especially if you're new to governance or stepping into a new link role. That's why we've made the process as clear and flexible as possible.

This year's training offer includes a mix of **in-person sessions**, **live Zoom & Teams webinars** and **online learning modules** - so you can choose what works best around your schedule and preferences.

To help you plan with purpose, our **2025/26 brochure** includes:

- Direct hyperlinks to book on to every course on GovernorHub
- **Tailored training pathways** for:
 - New Governors
 - Experienced Governors
 - Link Governors (e.g. SEND, Safeguarding, Finance)
 - Chairs and Development Leads.

These pathways are designed to support individual learning and help boards embed training into their annual cycle.

You'll also find a **Complete Safeguarding Training & Compliance Checklist** on **page 20** of the brochure. It's ideal for discussing at your next governing body meeting - and, as a bare minimum, it clearly sets out what each board must do in regard to training and compliance, including KCSIE, Code of Conduct, link governor training, and more.

Training Resources:

[View and Book All Courses](#)
[2025/26 Training Brochure](#)

Lancashire Governor Training

You can book on the upcoming courses below by clicking on the links. All courses below are included in our Governor Services Training SLA with schools.

[GovernorHub: A Governor's Guide \(GOV173\)](#)
[New Governor Induction \(GOV116\)](#)
[Strategic Finance Introduction \(GOV175\)](#)
[Strategic Governance: Governors and the Curriculum \(GOV166\)](#)
[Culture, Ethos and Values \(GOV161\)](#)
[Strategic Safeguarding for Governors \(GOV159\)](#)
[SEND: What is Adaptive Teaching \(GOV181\)](#)
[Pupil Behaviour: A Governor's Role \(GOV156\)](#)
[School Marketing: A Strategic Overview \(GOV174\)](#)
[Strategic Governance: Governors and the Curriculum \(GOV166\)](#)
[Equality and Diversity in Schools \(GOV152\)](#)
[New & Aspiring Chairs Course \(GOV167\)](#)
[What Great Governance Looks Like \(GOV155\)](#)
[Your Role on Governing Body Panels \(GOV132\)](#)
[Your Role as a Nominated Governor \(GOV165\)](#)
[Appraisal and Pay Committees for Governors \(GOV101\)](#)
[SEND: Exclusion Guidance \(GOV179\)](#)
[SEND: Role of the SEND Governor \(GOV180\)](#)
[Pupil Attendance – A Governor's Role \(GOV170\)](#)
[Strategic Governance: Governors and the Curriculum \(GOV166\)](#)

Online Governor Training Modules

As part of our Training SLA, governors have access to two excellent online training platforms: **NGA Learning Link** and the **GovernorHub Knowledge Training Modules**. Both options allow you to complete high-quality training **at your own pace and convenience**, making them ideal for topping up knowledge or revisiting key topics throughout the year. They complement our live sessions perfectly.

NGA Learning Link

This platform offers over 50 CPD-accredited courses covering all aspects of school governance. You'll need to register at: [Register for NGA Learning Link](#)

For support, call **0121 237 3780 (option 3)** or visit: [Contact the NGA](#)

GovernorHub Training Modules

These are short, practical e-learning sessions focused on key governance areas - from interpreting data, to preparing for Ofsted, or understanding your role as a link governor.

- Your progress is saved automatically, so you can complete modules in stages
- Easy to fit around your schedule

[Browse the GovernorHub Training Library](#)



Try the New AI Assistant on GovernorHub

This is a new feature and it's super useful. The AI Assistant on GovernorHub can help with almost anything governance-related:

- Answer questions about your **role**
- Help you prepare for **monitoring visits**
- Explain terms like **IDSR**, **SFVS**, or **Ofsted grades**
- Suggest **questions to ask** in meetings
- Draft **communications** or **monitoring summaries**
- Guide you on how to **use GovernorHub tools**.

It only uses content from **GovernorHub** and the **GovernorHub Knowledge Platform**, so everything is accurate, safe, and relevant to school governance.

Just look for the **speech bubble icon** in the bottom-right corner of your screen when you're logged into GovernorHub — have a play and ask away, you can't break anything.

Contact us:

If there's anything you need or you require any support, please contact us at:
ecsgovernors.centralteam@lancashire.gov.uk
01772 534447

School Admissions (for own admission authority schools)

School Admission Arrangements for 2027/28 – Consultation and Determination

Consultation Requirement

To comply with the School Admissions Code, governing bodies must consult on their admission arrangements at least once every seven years.

- Has your governing body consulted within the last seven years?
- Do you need to consult now?

If so, please email your proposed policies to: adm.consult@lancashire.gov.uk, including a copy to your Diocesan Officer and school website.

Consultation Window – 2027/28

If governors are considering changes to the school's oversubscription criteria or a reduction in the admission number for 2027, the formal consultation window opens on 1 October 2025.

- Proposed arrangements must be submitted to County Hall by 5 December 2025.
- Where applicable, please discuss any proposed changes with your Diocesan Officer.

- It is essential to include Lancashire Local Authority in the consultation process.
adm.consult@lancashire.gov.uk

Further details will be available on the Schools' Portal during the autumn term. For queries, please call 01772 531540 – we're happy to help.

Determination of Admission Arrangements – 2027/28

In line with the DfE School Admissions Code:

- Admission arrangements must be determined on or before 28 February 2026.
determined@lancashire.gov.uk
- Final policies must be published on both the LCC website and the school's website by 15 March 2026.
- Early submission is greatly appreciated and helps us manage the process smoothly.

Contact Information

For more information or support, please contact:

Nanette Hogg

Tel: 01772 531540

For administrative advice, please contact Nan, Shamim, Sarah or Andrew on 01772 531676.

In-Year School Admissions

Please check the Schools' Portal regularly for updated information regarding In-Year Admissions. For area-specific queries, contact your Area Education Office:

- North – 01524 581148
- South – 01772 532109
- East – 01254 220747

Compliance

GDPR

Ensuring compliance with the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) is a regular item on the agenda for full governing body meetings.

Invite your Data Protection Officer (DPO) to provide a six-monthly update on how UK GDPR compliance is being implemented in practice.

Use the DPO's report to guide a meaningful discussion. Key areas to explore include:

- What training has been delivered to ensure staff remain compliant?
- Have there been any breaches since the last report? How were they handled?

- What are the main challenges the DPO has identified?
- What actions or strategies have been put in place to address these challenges?

Induction Training

Do all governors receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety) during induction, and is this training regularly updated?

Legal and Local Safeguarding Awareness

Are all governors fully aware of their responsibilities under the Human Rights Act 1998, Equality Act 2010, Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), and local safeguarding arrangements?

Online Safety and Technology Standards

Does our school meet the [Department for Education's digital and technology standards](#)? Are there areas where online safety could be improved?

Employee Assistance Programme – don't struggle in silence

Returning to work in the autumn term can be a challenging time for many, so please remind all school staff that this valuable service is available to them and their families, who may also be impacted.

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

Staff and their family members (who live 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.

The website also has information and videos to support all areas that impact wellbeing.

The EAP can provide up to six sessions of counselling or Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) or provide expert help on a wide range of topics including mental health, legal issues, money, family, addiction, relationships, bereavement and work. There are no waiting lists and therapy can be provided over the phone, via an online platform or in person. No manager referral is needed.

This service is currently significantly under-utilised, so please remind staff to look out for signs that they or others may be struggling and get the help that could make the difference in their lives and that of their families to support staff to be happy, healthy and productive in work.

Attendance

All governors should be aware of the document updated on 7 March 2024 which became statutory on 19 August 2024: [Working Together to Improve School Attendance from August 19th 2024](#)

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 how they can support school?

The [Summary table of responsibilities from August 2024](#) outlines the key responsibilities for governing bodies.

- The link below provides up to date statistics on school attendance nationally. <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/pupil-attendance-in-schools>
- From 19 August 2024, it became mandatory for all schools (other than independent schools) to submit their attendance to the DfE via YVED (Wonde). See link <https://viewyourdata.education.gov.uk/>. It is also very useful for headline facts and figures which can be used to compare individual schools to national data.
- The DfE also released a presentation on how effective governance can support school attendance. [School attendance training webinar how effective governance can support attendance](#)

All of the DfE guidance is clear that governors should:

- Take an active role in attendance improvement; support their school(s) to prioritise attendance and work together with leaders to set a whole school culture.
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Understand what persistent and severe absence mean.
- Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.
- Governors should consider how the school provides support for:
 - Pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent.
 - Persistently absent pupils.
 - Severely absent pupils.
 - Cohorts of pupils with lower attendance than their peers.
 - Pupils with medical conditions or SEND with poor attendance.
 - Pupils with a social worker.

Schools should now consider legal interventions if thresholds are met. This is to avoid schools having blanket policies of never considering legal interventions. However, there is nothing in the guidance to say that governors have direct involvement in this decision:

All state funded schools must consider whether a penalty notice for absence is appropriate in each individual case where one of their pupils reaches the national threshold for considering a penalty notice. Schools should not have a blanket position of issuing or not issuing penalty notices and should make judgements on each individual case to ensure fairness and consistency across the country.

What support is available for 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. The Attendance team visit all schools to discuss attendance matters and prioritise visits using attendance data and professional knowledge of their allocated schools. In these visits (Targeting Support Meetings) they meet with the School Attendance Champion (who must be a member of the school's SLT) and the Attendance Officer and any other appropriate staff. These meetings have a strategic focus combined with support and advice for specific pupils causing concern. The team also support schools via a Teams channel, a helpline and the school attendance mailbox. The Lancashire Attendance Handbook (which outlines in detail the support for schools and our ethos of Support First. Early Intervention) also contains pledges from other services within the authority which support with school attendance.

New Ofsted Framework

From **10 November 2025**, Ofsted will begin implementing a new inspection framework, with full rollout from **1 December**. These reforms aim to provide a more nuanced and transparent view of school performance and governance.

Key Changes to the Inspection Process

- **Report Cards Replace Single Judgements:** Schools will now be assessed across **6–8 evaluation areas**, including:
 - Leadership and governance
 - Curriculum and teaching
 - Attendance and behaviour
 - Achievement
 - Personal development and wellbeing
 - Inclusion
 - (Where applicable) Early years and post-16 provision
- **New Grading Scale:**
 - **Exceptional**
 - **Strong Standard**
 - **Expected Standard**
 - **Needs Attention**

- **Urgent Improvement**
- *Safeguarding* will be graded separately as **Met** or **Not Met**
- **Inclusion as a Standalone Category:** A key focus is on how schools support disadvantaged pupils and ensure inclusive practice across all areas.

Implications for Governors

- Governors will need to understand the **new evaluation areas** and how their school is performing in each.
- The **leadership and governance** category will assess how effectively governors contribute to strategic direction, oversight, and accountability.
- NGA encourages governors to attend briefings and webinars, including one with HMCI Martyn Oliver, to understand the rationale behind these changes.

Recommended Actions

- **Review** [NGA's full summary](#) and [information from Ofsted](#).
- Ensure your governing body is familiar with the **report card format** and the expectations for each evaluation area.
- Consider how your school's current practices align with the new framework, especially around inclusion and safeguarding.

Updated Relationships and Sex Education Guidance

The Department for Education (DfE) has released updated statutory guidance for Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education. Read it [here](#). While the new guidance becomes mandatory from **September 2026**, schools may choose to begin implementation from **September 2025**.

Key changes include:

- Updated curriculum content
- Revised guidance on LGBTQ+ topics
- New requirements to consult with parents/carers and share teaching resources.

Please note: The guidance does **not** introduce expected age thresholds for discussing specific topics with pupils.

Lancashire Governors Association

Lancashire Governors Association represents the majority of schools in Lancashire. They are members of the National Governors Association and meet every term with the Director of Education and Children's Services and with the Head of Governor Services. They also organise a workshop every term for all governors of member schools. Once a year they hold an Annual Conference with top-class speakers in education and with the Cabinet member for Education in attendance. The conference takes place on Saturday 11 October 2025 from 9:30am at the Farrington Lodge Hotel.

Guest Speakers:

- **Emma Balchin** – Chief Executive, National Governance Association
Speaking on national issues including SEND, Ofsted plans, school funding, and more.
- **“LadlikeUs”** –
Delivering a powerful presentation on the importance of trauma-informed approaches in schools.
- **Paul Turner** – Lancashire Director of Education, Culture and Skills
Providing a county-level update on education matters.
- **Daniel Ballard** – Chair, Lancashire Schools Forum
Offering insight into the work of this vital committee.
- **Councillor Matthew Salter** – Cabinet Member for Education and Skills, Lancashire County Council
Joining us to support and engage with governors.

Membership is £30 per year per school.

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	Amanda Daws 01772 534384 amanda.daws@lancashire.gov.uk
Stanislava Fadrna 01772 537415 stanislava.fadrna@lancashire.gov.uk	Donna Holland 01524 581135 donna.holland@lancashire.gov.uk
Alicia Hough 01524 585891 alicia.hough@lancashire.gov.uk	Helen Linsley 01772 534306 helen.linsley@lancashire.gov.uk
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