

GOVERNOR SERVICES

SUPPORTING INFORMATION FOR AUTUMN TERM 2024

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Code of Conduct for School Governing Bodies (2024)

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 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.

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 - 2024)

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 sequestrated 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")

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE)

A reminder that there have been updates to Keeping Children Safe in Education: [Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/keeping-children-safe-in-education-2024)

This includes:

- New requirements on keeping and sharing registers
- New rules around fines for unauthorised absences
- Clearer expectations for the school's senior attendance champion
- More detail about supporting pupils with physical or mental ill health
- Clearer links between improving attendance and wider school culture

Governors should:

- Ensure that your safeguarding and child protection policy is updated to reflect key changes to Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024.
- Ensure that the policy is an accurate reflection of the systems and procedures in your setting.
- Ensure this has been shared with all staff and is available on the website.

It remains imperative that the chair and/or safeguarding governor are familiar with the whole document but all governors must understand their role in safeguarding and ensure they are familiar with Part 2 of the Guidance: The Management of Safeguarding. They should also be familiar with Annex C – the Role of the DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead). As we see workloads increasing for DSL's, it is vital that governors understand the role and ensure the DSL has the capacity and resources to fulfil the role effectively.

The Safeguarding Team in Lancashire has a new name. Formerly the School Safeguarding Team, renamed the Safeguarding in Education Team.

The team continues to provide a service to schools to support their safeguarding duties. The team has produced the Section 175 / 157 audit tool kit for use in your settings to self-assess your safeguarding practice for the academic year 24/25.

A reminder: What does KCSiE 2024 say about Governor Safeguarding Training requirements?

“Governing bodies and proprietors should ensure that all governors and trustees receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (including online) training at induction. This training should equip them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge to test and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place in schools and colleges are effective and support the delivery of a robust whole school approach to safeguarding. Their training should be updated regularly”.

If you have any questions, feel free to get in touch – safeguardingeducationteam@lancashire.gov.uk

School Term and Holiday Dates (including Inset Days) 2025/26

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 2025/26 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 Monday 1 September 2025 to Monday 31 August 2026. 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 will be writing to headteachers early in the autumn term 2024 providing information on how schools should submit details of their chosen INSET dates via the Schools' Portal. **Please note that the calendar will not be available to populate until the afore-mentioned correspondence advises and so schools should not attempt to add dates onto their 2025/26 calendar prior to that point.** 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 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).

Note to the governing boards of Academies:

While the Lancashire holiday framework is commended to academies, the setting of the holiday pattern in each academic year is the responsibility of their respective governing board.

In situations where they are looking to deviate from the Authority's framework however, academies are encouraged to liaise with their partner schools to minimise the potential of childcare difficulties for parents/carers with children attending schools across the various phases.

LANCASHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

SCHOOL TERM AND HOLIDAY PATTERNS: COMMUNITY AND CONTROLLED SCHOOLS

ALL DISTRICTS 2025/2026

AUTUMN TERM 2025

Re-open on	Monday 1 September 2025
Mid Term Closure	Monday 27 October- Friday 31 October 2025 (inclusive)
Closure after school on	Friday 19 December 2025
Number of openings	75

SPRING TERM 2026

Re-open on	Monday 5 January 2026
Mid Term Closure	Monday 16 February- Friday 20 February 2026 (inclusive)
Closure after school on	Friday 27 March 2026
Number of openings	55

SUMMER TERM 2026

Re-open on	Monday 13 April 2026
May Day Closure	Monday 4 May 2026
Mid Term Closure	Monday 25 May- Friday 29 May 2026 (inclusive)
Closure after school	Monday 20 July 2026
Number of openings	65

TOTAL NUMBER OF OPENINGS - 195



Health and Safety of Pupils on Educational Visits

Schools/academies 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/academy is required to inform Lancashire County Council of these arrangements.

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.

Should the governing body choose Option 6, please confirm the arrangements for your 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 <u>only</u> 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 Friday 20 December 2024. If the return is not completed, then the previously submitted details will be presumed to be current.

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

Schools HR Team – Policy/Procedure reviews

Colleagues in the Schools HR Team conduct an annual review of all of its policies and procedures, to ensure that they remain relevant and up to date. In most cases, the review results in a change of any dates or terminology e.g. job titles of those involved in the procedure (List (i) below). In some cases, more significant amendments are made (List (ii) below). The lists below provide details of the reviews that took place over the summer term 2024.

List (i)

Capability Procedure (Support Staff)
Probation Arrangements Support Staff in Schools
Collective Disputes - Model Procedure (Teachers)
Parental Leave
Disciplinary & Dismissal procedure (Teachers)
Disciplinary & Dismissal procedure (Support Staff)
Long service award - teachers
Long service award - support staff
Amalgamation/Re-organisation of Schools - Teachers
Amalgamation/Re-organisation of Schools - Support
Breastfeeding at Work
Job-share
Absence (Management of Sickness) Guidelines
Short-term absence procedure
Long-term absence procedure
IR35 guidance
Statement of Ethical Standards

Reviews which took place over the spring term

Alcohol / Drug Abuse, Statement for Employees
 Directed Time
 Extreme / Unpredictable Weather Guidance
 Flexible Working
 Grievance Procedure (Support Staff)
 Grievance Procedure (Teachers)
 Job Share
 Leave of Absence
 Paternity Leave Policy & Form
 Shared Parental Leave
 Smoke-Free Policy
 Trans Equality Guidance

List (ii)

Flexible Working	Confirmed the process for applications made by the Headteacher (i.e. application goes to the Chair of Governors)
Leave of Absence	Reference to Unpaid Carers Leave added
Adoption Leave	Rate of Statutory Adoption Pay updated
School Staff Code of Conduct	Update to paragraph 7(iii) as a result of the Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023, which comes into force in October 2024

Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) 2024/25

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 head teacher 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 2024/25 standard must be completed, agreed by the governing body and submitted to the LA, **by 31 March 2025**.

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

The aggregate balances held by Lancashire schools at 31 March 2024 decreased by circa £3m compared to a year earlier.

Returns from schools to the annual Analysis of Balances submission to the authority shows that of the school balances held at 31 March 2024, £11.5m is already committed, which has reduced in comparison to £15m at 31 March 2023, so balances at 31 March 2024 may be artificially high.

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 the 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 taking 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 2023/24

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 and academy trusts

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

All Lancashire Governor Training is now live on GovernorHub, replacing the LPDS page for booking training.

All governor training can be found on our [Lancashire Governor Services Page](#) under the [Training](#) tab on GovernorHub. We have also included on GovernorHub all links to the NGA eLearning Links within the training page for you to access easily.

Supporting local and national agendas, this term you may wish to consider the following training courses:

- [Appraisal and Pay Committees for Governors](#)
- [New Governor Induction](#)
- [Strategic Safeguarding for Governors](#)
- [Head Teacher Performance Management](#)
- [New & Aspiring Chairs Course](#)

Please be aware that all Governor Training is part of the LCC Governor Services Training SLA. For those outside of our Training SLA, governors who attend the sessions will be billed at the course rate.

If you would like to discuss the LCC Governor Services Training SLA please contact – joshua.mangas@lancashire.gov.uk

School Admissions (for own admission authority schools)

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

In order to comply with the School Admissions Code, governors must consult every seven years. Please email proposed policies to adm.consult@lancashire.gov.uk

School admission arrangements for 2026/27

Should governors be looking to change the school's oversubscription criteria for 2026 – or lower the admission number – the consultation window formally opens on Tuesday 1 October 2024. The proposed arrangements are required in County Hall by Friday 6 December 2024. [Where appropriate] please discuss any proposed changes with your Diocesan Officer.

It is essential to include the Lancashire Local Authority in the consultation process. Please email proposed policies to adm.consult@lancashire.gov.uk. Full details will be available on the Schools' Portal in the autumn term. Calls are always welcome on 01772 531540.

Finalising the 2026/27 Admission Arrangements

In order to comply with the DfE School Admissions Code, own admission authorities are required to determine arrangements for 2026 admissions on or by Friday 28 February 2025. Policies are required on the LCC website and the school website by Friday 14 March 2025. It would help us tremendously to send these as early as you can, please.

For more information, please contact **Nan Hogg** – **please** don't hesitate to call, we are here to help you.

Tel: 01772 531540 Email: nanette.hogg@lancashire.gov.uk

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 and 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 Thursday 7 March 2024 which becomes statutory on Monday 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>
- Around 89% of Lancashire schools currently submit their attendance data to the DfE. It is also very useful for headline facts and figures which can be used to compare individual schools to national data. From Monday 19 August 2024, it becomes 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/>
- 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.

School 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. Termly meetings will continue to assist with tracking, monitoring and reviewing practice and to help with the advice around individual pupils. Training for new attendance staff and training around the new guidance is now being advertised through the Schools' Portal.

Writing of an Attendance Strategy is well underway and consultation with schools and services within the authority will begin in the Autumn term with a view to launching the strategy in early 2025.

Apprenticeship Funding Available

This academic year, we aim to expand our apprenticeship usage throughout LCC. Currently, a significant amount of our funds is returned to the government each month. We would like to redirect these funds towards upskilling staff members across Lancashire.

We offer a variety of courses ranging from Level 2 to Level 7, including Teaching Assistant, Early Years, Chartered Manager, and Teacher degree programs. The total cost of these apprenticeships is covered by the Levy, meaning the only expense for the school is the staff members' salaries.

Additionally, we have opportunities to recruit apprentices for your school. This allows you to gain a new staff member and train them simultaneously, with the only cost being their salary.

Whether you are a Levy paying school or not, we have an offer available. For further details, including a copy of our school's menu, please contact the apprenticeship team at apprenticeenquiries@lancashire.gov.uk.

Chairs' Forum: 2024/25

The summer term forums were again very successful and provided excellent CPD for chairs. It is essential that chairs book early to guarantee a place on GovernorHub. Paul Turner, the Director for Education, Skills and Culture will be regularly attending the forums to provide strategic updates and the authority's vision.

You can book your place on the upcoming Chair's Forum here: [Chair's Forum Booking](#)

Lancashire Association of School Governing Bodies (LASGB) – an independent organisation run by governors for governors

Lancashire Association of School Governing Bodies represents the majority of schools in Lancashire. We are members of the National Governors Association and we meet every term with the Executive Director of Education and Childrens 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.

Membership

If your school is not a member and you would like to join just go to our website www.lasgb.org.uk and click on join us.

Special Recognition Award

If your school is a member, then the chair or headteacher can nominate one of your governors every year for our Special Recognition Award. If approved, they will be invited to our Annual Conference to be presented with a framed certificate or this can be presented in school. We just need the chair or headteacher to send us a brief email with the name of the governor, the school name and number and the reasons why they think the governor is worthy of the award.

Contact details for Area North Governor Services Team

Schools in Lancaster, Fylde, Wyre and Preston

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