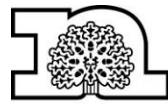




Making Nottinghamshire
Schools Better



Nottinghamshire County Council



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Schools Better

Governors' Newsletter – Autumn term (1) 2025

Governor Services contact details:

T: 0115 8044666 E: governors@nottscc.gov.uk

Your termly national and local updates from Governor Services

Dear Governors

Welcome to the Autumn 2025 newsletter! I hope you have enjoyed a restful and fulfilling summer.

As we begin the new academic year, I want to take a moment to sincerely thank each of you for your continued dedication, insight, and support. Your commitment to your schools has made a real difference - not only in guiding the strategic direction, but in the lives of the children and families of Nottinghamshire.

Governance is not always easy, and it often happens behind the scenes. Yet your thoughtful questions, careful scrutiny, and unwavering focus on what's best for pupils, are what help drive our schools forward. Whether it's through attending meetings, reviewing policies, visiting the school, or simply being a sounding board, your contributions are deeply valued.

I would particularly like to draw your attention to the **2025 revised model complaints policy**. We have supported many schools with complaints over the years and used this considerable learning to update our template policy and revise the complaints toolkit to try to alleviate the pressures on schools and governors, whilst remaining in line with the current DfE guidance.

Looking ahead, we have exciting opportunities for great governance coming up; please note that the annual Governor Conference which will take place on 6 March 2026. An inspiring keynote speaker has been identified and a comprehensive programme of representatives from the Local Authority and Ofsted has been created to share the most current trends within education and governance. We hope the Conference will provide information and inspiration to support you in carrying out your responsibilities.

Your role in shaping your school's vision and holding school leaders to account remains vital, and I'm confident that with your continued support schools will keep striving for excellence in everything.

Thank you once again for your time, energy, and passion in supporting governance in Nottinghamshire schools

Sinead Allan, Team Manager Governor Services

ACTIONS FOR GOVERNORS:

- [HR Updates](#)
- [Safeguarding in Education](#)
- [Budget Reforecast 25/26](#)
- [EYFS Statutory Framework](#)
- [Writing Framework 2025](#)
- [Improving School Attendance](#)

INFORMATION AND UPDATES:

- [DfE changes to Governance Guides](#)
- [Effective Governance](#)
- [Strengthening Headteacher Appraisal](#)
- [Using AI in Education](#)
- [National Updates](#)
- [Message from the Chair of NAGs](#)

Plus, lots more!

Safer Working (recruitment and selection), Teachers and Support Staff Pay and other HR Updates

For schools/academies who purchase their HR Services from Nottinghamshire County Council and for information for schools/academies who purchase their HR support from other providers.

Updates to Recruitment and Selection Safer Working Documents 2025

The publication of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025 (KCSIE 2025) introduces minimal statutory changes to HR Policies and procedures for the upcoming year 2025-26. However, all safer recruitment documents have been reviewed below to ensure they remain in line with the current version KCSiE 2025 and the key points are highlighted below:

- A reminder that new DBS identity-checking guidance came into effect on 22 April 2025, with a transition period until 1 November 2025. While the three-route structure remains, a key change is that Route 1 no longer requires a document showing the applicant's current address, instead, three documents confirming name and date of birth are sufficient (for example, a biometric passport, a photocard driving licence, and a birth certificate).
- The guidance also strengthens rules on who can verify identity (relatives, friends, or household members cannot act as ID checkers), and encourages the use of digital identity checks, and requires schools to retain ID check records for a minimum of two years.

Next Steps for Schools include:

- Update Route 1 procedures to remove address document requirements and ensure ID checkers are aware of the changes.
- Review record-keeping systems to ensure you can retain ID check records for two years

Full guidance is available here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dbs-identity-checking-guidelines>.

All Safer Recruitment HR Policies and procedures 2025 current document versions on the School's Portal are available below with changes shown in the red type versions of each document:

1. [Recruitment and Selection Policy 2025](#)
2. [Recruitment & Selection guidance 2025](#)
3. [Recruitment and Selection Toolkit 2025](#)
4. [Disqualification under the Childcare Act 2006 Guidance](#)
5. [Written confirmation from the local authority for staff visiting schools and academies](#)
6. [Single Central Record Guidance](#)
7. [Pre Ofsted Safer Working Checklist](#)
8. [Guidance on Visitors, including VIP's to Nottinghamshire Schools](#)

Headteachers and Governors are reminded to regularly review all safer working recruitment practices to ensure they are fully compliant with statutory guidance, as set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education. See all Safer Working updates here: [Recruitment and Selection](#)

Teacher and Support Staff Pay Award 2025

The 2025 pay award for teachers and support staff are now agreed and the details available on the Schools Portal under the heading [Pay Policy 2025](#).

Teachers – a flat rate 4% increase to all pay points and allowances effective from 1 September 2025. The new rates will be paid in the September Payroll. As required by the Appraisal Regulations 2012, schools will still need to confirm teacher incremental pay progression decisions to the payroll team as soon as possible in September and arrears paid as appropriate.

Support Staff – a flat rate 3.2% increase to spinal column points and allowances effective from and backdated to 1 April 2025. The new salaries will be applied in the August 2025 payroll, including the payment of all arrears backdated to 1 April 2025.

Full details are available in the [Pay Award Letter 2025 Teachers and Support Staff \(25 July 2025\)](#) and if your school has any questions about the pay awards please contact your usual [HR Business Partner](#)

School Teacher's Review Body 2026 (STRB) and School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD)

The [STRB Remit 2026-2028](#) was published by the DfE on 22 July 2025 and consultation is currently taking place through the national employers on the next teachers' pay round. The remit is seeking **evidence** on the following matters for **recommendation**:

Recommendations

- By February 2026, an assessment of the multi-year adjustments that should be made to the salary and allowance ranges for teachers and leaders in the academic years 2026/27 and 2027/28;
- By February 2026, an indicative assessment of the adjustments that should be made to the salary and allowance ranges for teachers and leaders in the academic year 2028/29, to be confirmed or reconsidered in a subsequent remit;
- By April 2026, an assessment of whether the current 3-year salary safeguarding period for teachers should be reduced to enable employers to deploy their workforce and resources most effectively, whilst ensuring protection from sudden drops in pay
- By April 2026, whether to introduce the option for maintained schools to offer non-consolidated payments to teachers (including bonuses), for those who want to use them, separate to and above incremental pay progression and the annual pay uplift

The government has stated that no additional funding will be made available for the pay awards in any year of the multi-year Spending Review periods.

Views sought

In addition, by April 2026, the STRB has been asked for **views** on the benefits and drawbacks of the current STPCD working hours arrangements, considering both directed and non-directed time for teachers and working hours of school leaders. The government will then decide whether to formally include in a future STRB remit and the HR Service will keep you updated on developments.

Employment Tribunal statistics

Employment tribunal (ET) claims in Nottinghamshire schools are infrequent, but the trend is rising. Between January and March 2025, nationally, there has been an overall increase of ET claims by 32% (22% unfair dismissal, 14% breach of contract and 13% discrimination claims) and whilst this trend has not been seen in our schools, it means our work with you is more important than ever.

As an HR service, we always seek to work closely with schools to advise and guide school leaders and governors on a range of HR matters to ensure that the correct policies and procedures are being followed to avoid the many pitfalls involved in managing both straightforward and more complex cases. School leaders and governors should not hesitate to contact their named [HR Business Partner](#) at the early stages of any staffing concern, so that cases stay on track and risks are minimised.

Update: School Support Staff Negotiating Body (SSSNB)

The DfE has recently consulted on plans to reintroduce a School Support Staff Negotiating Body (SSSNB). This national body would be responsible for developing a standardised pay and conditions framework for

support staff across schools in England, from 2027-28, similar to the existing Teacher's Review Body. Nottinghamshire HR Service participated in the recent consultation which ended on 18th July 2025, and a formal government response is expected in Autumn 2025. The proposal is for the new SSSNB to develop a national framework for all support staff roles in schools to cover terms and conditions and possibly job role profiles.

The SSSNB will be established through powers in the draft Employment Rights Bill currently progressing through Parliament. We will continue to keep you updated and support you as this progresses. If you have any questions, please contact Tracey Christian HR Senior Practitioner on 0115 9773940 or email tracey.christian@nottsc.gov.uk

HR Training 2025

The HR Service provides a range of training sessions and are available to book through www.em-edsupport.org.uk or via the school portal [HR Training | NCC Schools Portal](#)

The school training programme covers a wide range of HR Topics designed to provide new insights and refresh existing knowledge for school leaders and governors. You are encouraged to explore the training available and if you have any questions, please contact your usual HR Business Partner or the hrdutydesk@nottsc.gov.uk

Places are available to book by following the links above.

Keeping Children Safe in Education - What Governors need to know in the Autumn Term



Hello, my name is Zain Iqbal and I've recently joined Nottinghamshire County Council as the Safeguarding Children in Education Officer (SCiEO). My background includes experience as a classroom teacher, phase leader, and roles within Manchester and Nottingham City local authorities. I've worked extensively in areas such as mental health, RSHE, and PSHE, and I'm looking forward to supporting governors in their strategic safeguarding responsibilities.

As the new academic year begins, governors play a vital role in ensuring their school's safeguarding arrangements are robust, compliant, and child centred. The updated *Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) 2025* guidance came into force on **1st September 2025**, and while changes are minimal this year, they are important for strategic oversight.

Key Updates for Governors

- **Online Safety:** Schools must assess their filtering and monitoring systems against new standards, including risks linked to AI and misinformation.
- **Alternative Provision:** Clarified responsibilities for safeguarding pupils placed in alternative settings.
- **Attendance:** *Working Together to Improve School Attendance* is now statutory. Persistent absence must trigger safeguarding consideration.
- **SEND Language:** Terminology updated to align with the SEND Code of Practice—governors should ensure inclusive safeguarding practices.
- **Kinship Care:** The Virtual School Head now supports children in kinship care—governors should ask how this is reflected in pupil support.

Governor Responsibilities

- Ensure the Child Protection Policy has been updated and approved by the governing board early in the autumn term.
- Confirm that staff training and induction includes the latest safeguarding guidance.
- Monitor how the school promotes a whole-school approach to safeguarding, including pupil voice and online safety.
- Review linked policies such as behaviour, RSHE, SEND, and attendance to ensure they reflect KCSiE 2025.

Governors and trustees must also read Part 2 of the Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) 2025 guidance, which outlines their strategic safeguarding responsibilities, including oversight of policy, training, and compliance. It is also **strongly recommended** that **all governors read the full guidance** to support effective governance and assurance to ensure consistency across the board.

Child Protection Policy and Safeguarding Audit

As mentioned in previous correspondence, my priority is providing schools with a new Child Protection Policy that not only reflects the changes made in KCSiE 2025 but aims to be a policy that is readable, understandable and clear to navigate. This will be available to schools before the beginning of the Autumn Term. Further to this, we are currently in the process of discussing updates to schools annual safeguarding audit as part of their section 175/157 duties. Further information regarding this will be available in September.

Suggested Questions for Governors

- Has our Child Protection Policy been updated to reflect KCSiE 2025?
- How is the school ensuring pupils know how to report concerns?
- What systems are in place to monitor online safety and respond to risks?
- How are safeguarding responsibilities met for pupils in alternative provision or kinship care?

Further Support

- [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(KCSiE\) 2025](#)
- nscp.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/resources/for-schools/
- [Pathway to Provision – Early Help](#)

For any queries or support, please contact:

Zain Iqbal, Safeguarding Children in Education Officer, T: 07824 482429 E: zain.iqbal@nottsc.gov.uk

Free Prevent Duty Training for Governors/Trustees

Prevent in education: training for governors and trustees in schools

This training package has been designed by the DfE for school governors to understand their responsibilities and the importance of the Prevent duty.

For more information, please see the link below.

[Regional Prevent education co-ordinators - GOV.UK](#)

Budget Reforecast 2025/26

It is that time of year when governors in maintained schools should be thinking about the annual mid-year reforecast and future year planning. Balancing a school budget can be difficult, particularly in these turbulent financial times. The biggest cost in any school is that of staffing, so it is key that the school ensures that these costs/details, presented to governors, are as accurate as possible.

It is therefore important to update:

- staffing, as detailed in the Budget Planner, with any changes since the original budget was submitted. This includes making changes to grades, points, hours, and start/end dates.
- estimated back-pay for staff pay awards, if payroll has been imported.
- non-staffing charges and income may also have changed significantly since Governors approved the original budget. Expenditure & income should be reviewed and updated with the most current information, which could be very different from the original assumptions used.

A review of budget estimates should be undertaken. Many of these are subject to alteration based on pupil number changes. These include (but are not limited to) Early Years (15 and 30 hours), Special Educational Needs (SEN) funding, and Pupil Premium.

Please ensure that the new DfE grants (NI & School Budget Support Grants) have been included when undertaking the review of the Autumn Reforecast. Both grants can be quite substantial and will make a significant difference to the final projected position.

Once these key parts of the budget have been reviewed and updated, this should complete the budget “reforecast” process. The formal Reforecast should be submitted to School Finance by **30th November**, either already ratified by Governors or to be ratified at the next available Governor meeting. If the school are projecting a budget deficit, the school should contact their NCC Finance Officer as soon as possible.

School Financial Value Standard (SFVS)

The SFVS (maintained schools) deadline is 31st March 2026. Any received after this date will be reported to the DfE as a non-return.

It is important to note that the **SFVS should be completed by Governors** (with assistance from school staff where appropriate) and signed by the Chair of Governors. The completion of the SFVS may be done by a finance committee or working party, but the final decision will depend on the board’s scheme of delegation. There is a column on the SFVS for comments, evidence and actions which should be completed, and this final document should be shared with the governing board.

Guidance on how to complete the SFVS is detailed on the following web page: Checklist guidance - GOV.UK (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/schools-financial-value-standard/schools-financial-value-standard-sfvs-checklist-guidance>) although the 2025/26 updated guidance may not yet be available.

The Related Party Transactions spreadsheet MUST be completed and returned with the SFVS even if it is a NIL RETURN.

School Finance will be monitoring the SFVS returns for quality assurance and they may be returned for further information if incomplete.

If you have an academy order you do not need to complete the return.

School Finance Monthly Checklist

Following recent fraud in Nottinghamshire schools, the School Finance Team have created a monthly checklist. It is designed to prompt the Office / Business Manager with their monthly finance tasks. It also indicates which areas should be checked/reviewed by the headteacher. Whilst completion is not compulsory, it is useful for Finance Governors to be aware of the checklist.

EYFS Statutory Framework - 2025 Update

The Department for Education has released the revised *Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Statutory Framework*, effective from 1st September 2025. These changes aim to strengthen safeguarding, improve recruitment practices, and enhance child welfare across early years settings.

[EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers](#)

- **Whistleblowing:** this includes establishing clear procedures for all staff to raise safeguarding concerns.
- **Absence Tracking:** Settings are required to monitor children's attendance more closely and act promptly in cases of prolonged absence. Policies must be communicated with families.
- **Verified References:** Providers must obtain direct references for all staff and volunteers before recruitment is finalised.

- **Supervision while children are eating:** Staff with a valid PFA certificate must be present when children are eating during meal and snack times.
- **Paediatric first aid (PFA):** All staff including students must have PFA if they are to be counted in ratios.
- **Toileting Policies:** Revised guidance balancing both privacy and safeguarding are central to toileting and nappy changing procedures.
- **Safeguarding Training:** New criteria for effective safeguarding training, including details on what effective training looks like and that training must be renewed every 2 years.
- **DSL:** The role of the designated safeguarding lead (DSL), including that every early years setting must assign a DSL.

Governors should ensure their early years provision is fully prepared for the 2025 EYFS framework changes by:

- reviewing policies.
- providing staff training; and
- engaging with relevant guidance and resources. This includes familiarizing themselves with updates on safer recruitment, child absence monitoring, safeguarding training, and other key areas.

Liz Kitts

Education Improvement Adviser Early Years, Em-EdSupport

The Writing Framework - 2025

The DfE has released a new Writing Framework (2025) aimed at improving how writing is taught and assessed. Although non-statutory, the framework is expected to influence writing provision in schools. Governors should be aware of its key messages - particularly when monitoring the curriculum, its implementation and pupil outcomes. Key messages include:

- Handwriting and spelling should be taught from Reception (to free up pupils' working memory for composition).
- Pupils should be encouraged to compose orally, especially in early years.
- Pupils should not be expected to write at length before they are ready (short, well-constructed writing is more valuable than long, unfocused pieces).
- Pupils should write for real purposes.
- Grammar instruction is most effective when taught in the context of a writing task.
- School leaders are expected to create a strong writing culture, ensure staff are trained, and implement a well-sequenced curriculum.

As part of their monitoring role, governors should ask:

- How is the school implementing the new framework?
- How are teachers supported to teach writing effectively?
- How is writing progress monitored?
- What opportunities do pupils have to write for real purposes?

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/686e7890fe1a249e937cbeeb/The_writing_framework.pdf

Nicola Lawson and Vanora Cooper (English Consultants - Education Improvement Service)

Improving School Attendance – View Your Education DATA (VYED)

In Nottinghamshire during the last academic year almost:

- 1 in 5 pupils are Persistently Absent (>10%), and
- 1 in 50 pupils are Severely Persistently Absent (>50%)

Since September 2024, all schools are required to share their daily attendance data with the DfE. The easiest way to do this is through Wonde. More details are available through [Share your daily school attendance data](#)

Action for Governors:

1. Please check that your school or Trust has signed up to sharing daily attendance data with the DfE.
2. Please check that your School or Trust is using the Live School Attendance data and the reports that are available through View your Education Data. (viewyourdata.education.gov.uk)

Targeting Support Meetings with the Local Authority:

All local authorities are expected to organise Targeting Support Meetings with schools and Trusts in their area so the school's attendance leads and their point of contact in the local authority's School Attendance Support Team can meet to discuss pupils, policy and practice.

Action for Governors:

Please check that your school or Trust have accessed their Targeting Support Meetings. Schools and Trusts can request a Targeting Support Meeting using the following link: [Request a Targeting Support Meeting](#)

2025 DfE Changes to the Maintained Schools and Academies Governance Guides

All governors (including headteachers) and clerking professionals must be aware of the updates to the key DfE governance resource issued 25th June 2025. (Boards may wish to revise their 25/26 training plans to update governor knowledge to cover these updates)

Maintained schools - the new guidance includes:

- A greater emphasis on the requirement for governing bodies to demonstrate the active promotion of fundamental British Values.
- A need for all board members to have a basic understanding of the school's legal requirements on procurement as well as on accountability and spending.
- A new section on nutrition under pupil mental health and wellbeing regarding the board's role regarding school food.
- A greater emphasis on the requirement for the school premises and facilities to be kept up to a standard where, as much as is reasonably possible, the health, safety and welfare of pupils are guaranteed.
- Suggested guidance to support the promotion of good behaviour of pupils, including the use of mobile phones and searching, screening and confiscation in schools.

Academy schools - Governance: the new guidance includes:

- The need to remain compliant with statutory and contractual requirements relating to procurement.
- The recommendation for trusts to undertake external reviews of governance (ERGs) every three years.

Academy schools - Trust Boards: the new guidance includes updates to:

Environmental sustainability • Digital and technology standards. • Managing Public Money (MPM) • Executive pay • Cyber Ransomware. • Intervention powers • Recovery of funds • Managing conflicts of interest and related party transactions.

Plus, ALL governors (maintained and academy schools) also need to be aware of:

- The requirement for the chair to sign off the school's digital reporting form of how the school has used its PE and sport premium allocation.
- School funding information – addition of the teachers' pension employer contribution grant, core schools budget grant, and the national insurance contributions grant; removal of the mainstream schools' additional grant and the recovery premium after they finished at the end of the 2023/2024 academic year.
- Update to the legal basis for keeping admission and attendance registers under The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 for providing information requested by the Secretary of State on attendance under with the Education (Information About Individual Pupils) (England) Regulations 2024.

[Maintained schools governance guide - Guidance - GOV.UK](#)

[Academy trust handbook - GOV.UK](#) and [ATH Schedule of Musts 2025.xlsx](#)

[Financial support and oversight for academy trusts - GOV.UK](#) – (The financial support and oversight guidance should be read in full by finance and/or audit and risk committee members).

Effective Governance

The DfE governance guidance says that “an effective governing body should review its own performance regularly”.

Governors and school leaders must develop effective working relations for the school to thrive; and clear and transparent systems and structures need to be in place to ensure that governors understand their roles and responsibilities. How a governing body operates can have a significant impact on the wellbeing of the headteacher and senior leadership and, where governors are ineffective, the pressure on staff can increase significantly.

Most governors do not come into the role with several years of experience and knowledge of strategic leadership in the education sector. It is therefore vital that the headteacher supports governors to develop their understanding of the school and their role as a positive advocate and critical friend and welcome questions and challenge. In turn, governors should come to meetings prepared so that the headteacher’s time is used effectively, reducing additional workload and stress and helping the headteacher to feel valued.

Governor Services provides lots of resources and support for governing boards on the Nottinghamshire Governors Services GovernorHub pages. Below are some key statements based on the DfE criteria in the link below. Board may then wish to access the new and free governing board self-evaluation. [GovernorHub](#)

Do these statements reflect your board of governors?

The board uses the annual planning documents provided in the summer term support decision making; and the board plans the content of all meetings to ensure they cover all the requirements of governance, whatever governance structure is used.	
Regular termly training is undertaken by all governors to ensure updated skills and knowledge are obtained to undertake the governance role.	
All governors arrive prepared for meetings with comments or questions ready.	
Link governors’ visits (which are recommended to be linked to the school’s SIP priorities rather than subjects) are completed termly and reported back to the Full Governing Board.	
All governor actions are completed and committee chairs <u>feedback</u> any concerns or key points to the FGB, as the whole board retains overall responsibility for delegated decisions.	
<u>All</u> governor meetings are competently clerked, and all minutes reflect the board’s effective decision-making questions and challenge; the meetings should have separate public and confidential minutes.	
The board undertakes a regular and <u>accurate</u> review of their effective performance, as per the DfE guidance.	

Strengthening Headteacher Appraisal with EM-Ed Support

As we approach the new academic cycle, it’s timely to revisit one of the most important responsibilities of the governing board: the annual appraisal of the headteacher. This process not only ensures accountability and professional growth but also sets the tone for school-wide improvement.

It is a statutory requirement for governing bodies to appoint an external adviser to support the Headteacher appraisal process. The adviser brings impartiality, expertise, and a broader perspective that strengthens the integrity of the review. Their role includes:

- Advising on objective-setting and performance evaluation
- Supporting governors in interpreting school data
- Ensuring the process remains developmental and evidence-based

To maintain objectivity and fresh insight, it is recommended that governing bodies change their external adviser every three years. This rotation helps avoid over-familiarity, introduces new perspectives, and ensures the appraisal process remains rigorous and reflective of evolving standards.

Why Use the EM-Ed Headteacher Appraisal Service?

The [East Midlands Education Support Service \(EM-Ed\)](#) offers a comprehensive Headteacher Appraisal package tailored to support governing bodies in fulfilling their statutory duties. For maintained schools (£600) and academies (£700), the service includes:

- A full day of support from a highly experienced external adviser
- Access to exemplar objectives, performance criteria, and evidence sources
- Clear guidance on roles and responsibilities for governors and advisers
- Wellbeing resources to support constructive and professional dialogue
- Structured documentation aligned with Headteacher Standards

This package is designed to empower governors with the tools and confidence to conduct meaningful, fair, and forward-looking appraisals. Effective Headteacher appraisal is a cornerstone of strong governance. By engaging with EM-Ed's trusted service and ensuring regular adviser rotation, governing bodies can uphold high standards, foster leadership development, and contribute meaningfully to school improvement.

If you haven't yet booked your appraisal support for this year, now is the time to act. Visit the [EM-Ed service page](#) to learn more and secure your adviser. For more information contact liz.kitts@nottscg.gov.uk

Using AI in Education

Artificial intelligence (AI) tools generate content that looks as if it was created by a person, not a computer. You may be already using some in the form of predictive texting, talking to Siri on your phone or Alexa in your home.

AI tools can help cut down workload and can generate presentations, reports, templates etc templates and analyse complex data and information almost immediately. This can be used in school to help improve communications, generate ideas and presentations for lesson plans, support with personalised and differentiated learning, plus lots more. When used correctly, it can save us all a lot of time. However, there are limitations, and errors can be presented as fact or data, which can be mis-interpreted. This is an everchanging area and governors need to keep informed of how AI is used in school and impacts teaching and learning. If you are thinking of using AI in any governor meeting, don't forget that it remains a requirement for all FGB and committees to have a clerk to governors.

The governing board is responsible for holding leaders to account for the safe and effective running of the school. Governors need to be assured that the school

- identifies potential risks, mitigation and advantages of using AI in school
- has robust procedures in place that protects personal data
- monitors pupils' use of AI carefully to make sure that it's being used safely and responsibly
- knows what AI tools are used in school, how much they cost, how they are approved to use and how these tools use the data
- has robust policies regarding how the use of AI in school integrates with online safety requirements

- has revised its homework policy in line with DfE Guidance [Generative artificial intelligence \(AI\) in education - GOV.UK](#)

The DfE have provided free support materials for school and college leaders about using AI effectively and safely. These materials are designed to help school and college leaders implement AI safely and securely. They should be used in conjunction with the other modules and training materials about settings. These materials provide information about:

- the opportunities of AI
- the safety requirements of using AI
- how to conduct an audit of your current use of AI
- what to consider when planning to use AI
- help with embedding AI into your wider digital strategy

There are also free support materials to help all staff in schools and colleges understand how to use AI safely and effectively in their settings: [using AI in education settings](#).

Please contact your training provider to see what courses are available for governors and GovernorHub also has an interesting article for governors about AI in school. [Artificial intelligence \(AI\) use in schools | GovernorHub](#)

Best Practices for Managing Images and Videos on School Websites

Earlier this year, the UK Safer Internet Centre published [new guidance](#) regarding the 'best practices for managing images and videos on school websites' – this includes images of children and of staff.

The new guidance focuses on ensuring schools have consent to publish images.

Further information about each of these points is available here: [New Guidance: Best Practices for Managing Images and Videos on School Websites - UK Safer Internet Centre](#) and here: [Managing student image and video content - UK Safer Internet Centre](#)

If you / a member of staff at your school has experienced someone using a staff or pupil image inappropriately – there is guidance and offers of support available here: [Impersonation Advice and Support | SWGfL](#)



New Guidance: Best Practices for Managing Images and Videos on School Websites

Katherine Marshall – Anti-Bullying and Online Safety Coordinator, NCC ESHAWH

National Updates

• Free school meals eligibility extended

From September, all children in families receiving Universal Credit will be eligible for free school meals. The announcement of this decision made by the government follows years of persistent advocacy from the School Food Review Working Group – more details in the links below.

[Over half a million more children to get free school meals - GOV.UK](#)
[Free school meals: guidance for schools and local authorities - GOV.UK](#)

• New procurement advice for governing boards

The DfE has released new [guidance](#) on getting the best value from non-staff spend for those governing at schools and trusts to check if their setting is carrying out procurement compliantly and achieving

value for money.

The NGA has more information on the board's role in procurement: [procurement guidance](#).

- **New DfE fraud reduction guidance published**

The DfE has published new [guidance](#) on reducing fraud in the education sector. The guidance aims to help schools reduce the risk of fraud or financial irregularity, deal with fraud within their organisation, report fraud, theft or irregularity, and to be aware of and manage cybercrime risks.

The NGA has a [blog](#) on fraud prevention as well as [guidance](#) on cyber security to ensure that schools/trusts have the right controls in place.

- **DfE extends support for neurodivergent children in mainstream schools**

The DfE has announced the expansion of its Partnership for Inclusion of Neurodiversity in Schools (PINS) programme that trains teachers to identify and better meet neurodiverse pupils' needs and improve parental engagement.

Backed by £9.5 million in funding, the programme aims to reach a further 300,000 pupils across 1,200 schools. Please see the DfE's updated [guidance](#) which sets out the expectations for the PINS programme.

Ofsted Restructure for Inspection Teams

Following feedback from Ofsted's Big Listen and the recent consultation on inspection reform, Ofsted has announced a new structure for inspection teams in schools and further education, focused on improving consistency. The changes mean that following the introduction of the renewed education inspection framework in [November 2025](#):

- all schools and further education inspections will be led by current His Majesty's Inspectors, or Ofsted Inspectors (OIs) with recent HMI experience, drawing on their more in-depth inspection expertise and training
- Ofsted will make the best use of OI's current sector knowledge and experience by deploying them as team inspectors, placing greater emphasis on matching their expertise to specific types of provision to complement the inspection expertise brought by His Majesty's Inspectors.

Read more in the [Ofsted press release](#). Any further information will be provided when available.

Training for Governors and Trustees

Reminder

- **All new governors** and trustees should receive induction training that includes safeguarding training.
- **All governors** must update safeguarding and child protection training, including online safety.
- **The person responsible for safeguarding** on the board should undertake Prevent training to make sure that your board is carrying out all of its responsibilities.
- **At least one person** on the board should have Cyber Security training.
- **The chair of governors** must attend managing allegations training.

Please refer to [Signposting to Safeguarding Training for Governors - Sept 2024.pdf - GovernorHub](#)

Training required for specific duties – Governors should undertake specific training for panels meetings.

- At least 1 panel member of a recruitment panel must have completed safer recruitment training.
- We strongly recommend that all boards (who may need to arrange panels ad hoc and as required) have reciprocal arrangements with local schools to support governor panel meetings and all governors access specific training prior to the panel meeting.

GovernorHub Knowledge - is included as part of your Governor Services package. [Governor Training | GovernorHub](#) This includes several governor training webinars such as:

- Governor safeguarding training
- Governor Induction courses
- Specific governor roles – including training for link governors
- Plus, several Learning Pathways to understand more about topics such as complaints panels, budgets, monitoring attendance, etc. Each pathway takes around 30 minutes.

The East Midlands Education Support Service (EMED) offer training for Nottinghamshire governors on a wide range of topics and support packages that the board can purchase on an annual subscription or ad hoc. HT appraisal support and the HT recruitment package is purchased from the LA via EMED. Please see the regular articles in the governors newsletter from Liz Kitts and check out all the courses available for governors on the EMED website: [Governor Learning and Development | The East Midlands Education Support Service](#)

Church schools and academies - If your school is a church school, the diocese may provide additional training for governors and, if you are an academy, the trust may offer additional in-house training.

Message from the Nottinghamshire Association of Governors (NAGs)



Dear Governors

As we kick off another school year, I just wanted to take a moment to say a big welcome back—and thank you. Whether you're a governor or a headteacher, your hard work, time, and care make a huge difference to our schools and communities. We know it's not always easy, and we're incredibly grateful for everything you do.

Please hold dates in your diaries for our network sessions for chairs and vice chairs, and for those new to governance (in their first term of office). These have been planned for **Tuesday 11th November 5-6pm – Chairs and Vice Chairs and Thursday 13th**

November 5-6pm – New to governance. It would be great to see you there!

There's been a lot happening in education lately. This year's exam results showed some ups and downs, especially in core subjects like English and Maths. It's a reminder of how important our support is for students still feeling the impact of the pandemic. The government has also highlighted their desire to tackle inequality and are reviewing how resits are managed, so we'll be keeping an eye on those developments.

We know the challenges aren't going away—funding pressures, curriculum changes, and SEND provision are just a few of the things on everyone's minds. But we also know how strong and committed this community is. Together, we've got the experience and passion to keep pushing for what's best for our schools.

The NAGs committee are still looking for governors to complement our board. Please do contact me via nottinghamshiregovernors@gmail.com if you would be interested in joining us.

Thanks again for everything you do. We're looking forward to working with you this year and continuing to support each other through whatever comes next.

Sue Beasley
Chair of the Nottinghamshire Association of Governors

Celebrating Governance – Public Service – long service award for school governance

Governors are the largest volunteer body in the country, and they freely give up their time to help make our schools better and give children the best opportunity to reach their potential. Governors do this because they genuinely believe in the power that education has to transform young lives and to make a difference in our communities. You are all truly amazing!

Nottinghamshire County Council is incredibly grateful to all of the 3000 amazing Nottinghamshire school governors, and we want to give a special thanks to those governors who have now served **10 years and over.**

If you, or someone on your governing body, has given over 10 years of dedication to your school, please let the Governor Services Business Support Team know and we will arrange for a certificate of thanks to be emailed to your governor. governors@nottsgov.uk

Governor Termly Briefing

As part of our advice and guidance, governors will have access to the pre-recorded webinars which provide governors with key information identified by NCC as important for governors to understand and act upon. We know that many governors who access this support find it very helpful in their preparation.



The benefit of this format is that officers from across the authority can present the directors reports to governors directly highlighting any governor actions and recommendations. Governors can then access all of this support at their convenience!

You could make arrangements to watch the briefing together by sharing your screen in a virtual meeting as part of your preparations for an effective governing body meeting. Once the Autumn Term 2025 briefing has been recorded, a link to the recording will be made available.

East Midlands Education Support (EM-Ed) Service – Governor Training Update

Learning, Development & Conference Bookings Now Open

As we begin the new academic year, it's the perfect time for governors to refresh their knowledge, sharpen their skills, and connect with peers across the region. The **Governor Learning and Development programme** from [EM-Ed Support](#) is now live, with a full range of courses available to book.

Whether you're newly appointed or a seasoned chair, the programme offers something for everyone. Courses are designed to be practical, engaging, and aligned with current governance priorities. Topics for scheduled events include:

- Governor Induction
- Understanding the Role of the Chair
- Health and Safety
- Finance, Benchmarking and SVFS
- Dealing with Complaints
- HR Safer Working in Schools – responsibilities of the safeguarding governor
- Governors Role in Ofsted

We also have a range of On Demand videos which gives flexibility for governors to access at times that are convenient to them. All subscribing Governing Boards also have access to NGA Learning link to make the most of this why not access one of our briefing sessions

[NGA Learning Link - Briefing Session 14/01/2026 13.30-14.00](#)

[NGA Learning Link - Briefing Session 3 0/04/2026 18.00-18.30](#)

Governor Conference 2026 - Save the Date **Friday 6th March 2026** **Confirmed Speaker: Sharon Warmington**

Recognised for her contributions to education and school governance, Sharon has been the Director of Education Governance Solution since 2016, assigned to the position by the DfE due to her invaluable experience in school governance. [Click to book your place now](#)

If you require any further information, please contact the East Midlands Education Support Service team at info@em-edsupport.org.uk or telephone: 0115 8040129

Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme

The holiday activities and food (HAF) programme is returning for October half term!

The programme, which takes place in the Christmas, Easter and summer holidays, as well as October half term, offers fully funded activities to children aged between 5 and 16 (or 4 if in school Reception). Please note this is not a food voucher scheme; all activities happen face to face.

Approximately 30,000 children in Nottinghamshire are eligible for HAF, and the programme is a key part of safeguarding children during the school holidays. **October half term bookings** open on **Wednesday 1 October 2025**. Please see www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/haf for more information.

Rachel Fletcher, HAF Coordinator E:rachel3.fletcher@nottscg.gov.uk T:0115 993 4342.

How to access the Schools' Portal

Governors will be aware that **all Governor Services information is available on GovernorHub**. However, information can also be found on the Schools' Portal in named folders for services purchased by the school from across the Authority. It is important that governors retain access to this key area of information.

To access the Schools' Portal you will need a user name and password, which may be obtained from your school administrator and then go to: <http://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/schoolsportal/governors>

The Nottinghamshire Governor Newsletter is a joint publication of the Governor Services team of Nottinghamshire County Council and the Nottinghamshire Association of Governors (NAGs)

Editors: Jayne Littlewood, Dave Hill, Ruth Palmer, Sinéad Allan, Carol Brierley and Liz Terzza.

The views expressed in the Nottinghamshire Governor Newsletter are the views of the authors of the articles and do not necessarily reflect the policy of NCC or NAGs. The editors welcome contributions from governors who feel they have information or views to share. If you wish to suggest or discuss an idea for an article, please contact Governor Services using the details below.

Governor Services - Team Contact Details

Sinéad Allan - Team Manager T: 0115 8043906 E: sinead.allan@nottscg.gov.uk

Carol Brierley – Senior Professional Practitioner T: 0115 8044623 E: carol.brierley@nottscg.gov.uk

Liz Terzza – Professional Practitioner T: 0115 8043857 E: liz.terzza@nottscg.gov.uk
(Monday – Tuesday)

Governor Services Business Support Team T: 0115 8044666 E: governors@nottscg.gov.uk