



Nottinghamshire County Council

Governors' Newsletter – Summer term (2) 2026

Governor Services contact details:

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Your termly national and local school governance updates from NCC Governor Services

Dear Governors,

Hello and welcome to the Summer Term 2 newsletter! As we move towards the end of the academic year, this is a key time for governing boards to reflect on progress and ensure that all arrangements are in place for a strong start in September. With the summer term underway, I hope you have all been able to enjoy the recent half term break and take some well-deserved time to rest and recharge.

As we approach the end of term, governing boards should be focusing on completing their annual planning documents. Ensuring these are finalised before the end of the academic year will support a smooth transition into the new school year and enable boards to maintain a clear strategic focus from the outset. Strong forward planning remains essential in helping governing boards and school leaders to carry out their roles effectively.

You may also wish to take note of recent developments from the Department for Education regarding artificial intelligence (AI). The DfE has published free support materials to help school and college leaders understand how AI can be used effectively, safely and responsibly in educational settings. As this is a rapidly evolving area, governors may find it helpful to familiarise themselves with this guidance to support informed discussions at board level.

In addition, there has been an update to Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026. This remains a key statutory document underpinning safeguarding practice. You will find further reference to this within the article from Nottinghamshire's Safeguarding Children in Education Officer, and governing boards should ensure they are aware of any updates and consider how these are reflected in their school's safeguarding policies and procedures.

As always, thank you for your continued dedication and commitment as volunteers. Your contribution is vital in ensuring strong governance and positive outcomes for children and young people across Nottinghamshire.

Sinéad Allan

Team Manager, Governor Services

ACTIONS FOR GOVERNORS:

- [Safeguarding in Education](#)
- [HR Updates](#)
- [Finance Updates](#)
- [Suspensions & Exclusions](#)
- [Annual Planning Documents](#)

INFORMATION AND UPDATES

- [Learning & Development](#)
- [Induction Training](#)
- [Ofsted FAQs](#)
- [Small Schools' Conference](#)
- [National Updates](#)
- [Message from the Chair of NAGs](#)

Plus, lots more!



[Designated Safeguarding Lead \(DSL\) Network](#)

Date: Wednesday 15th July 2026 Time: 12:30pm – 3:00pm Location: Oak House (MS Teams for governors)

Nationally, education is undergoing one of its most significant periods of reform in over a decade. The network will be bringing together key updates and practical guidance linked to major developments including the Schools White Paper 2026 (including SEND reform), Families First Partnership 2025, Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026, and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026. Please note, the network is aimed at DSLs and the content will be catered specifically towards them. Governors are welcome to attend virtually - by requesting their school DSL books them a virtual place and shares the meeting link with the governor.

[Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026](#)

The updated Working Together to Safeguard Children (2026) guidance marks a clear and important shift in how safeguarding is expected to operate across England. While the principle that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility remains unchanged, the latest version strengthens expectations about what this looks like in practice for schools. The key message for DSLs and school leaders is clear – Schools are not just contributors to safeguarding, they are active, accountable partners within a multi-agency system. The 2026 guidance strengthens how safeguarding should work across agencies, with a sharper focus on practice and impact.

- Stronger multi-agency working
 - Clearer expectations for collaboration between schools, health, social care and police
 - Greater emphasis on shared responsibility and joint decision-making
- Focus on impact, not just activity
 - Safeguarding work must demonstrate real outcomes for children
 - Increased accountability across all partners
- Earlier and more coordinated support
 - Introduction of a more integrated “Family Help” approach
 - Brings early help and statutory support into a single, joined-up pathway
- Improved information sharing
 - Stronger expectations to share information confidently and appropriately
 - Reduces barriers that previously delayed support
- Recognition of complexity and multiple harms
 - Children may face overlapping risks (e.g. domestic abuse, exploitation, online harm)
 - Responses must reflect this complexity rather than treating concerns in isolation
- Greater focus on inclusion and equity
 - Clear expectation to recognise and challenge racism and discrimination
 - Increased attention to disproportionality in safeguarding practice

Schools are expected to be fully embedded, active partners within the multi-agency system - not operating alongside it, but as a core part of it. Please refer to [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#)

Launch of a NEW – (Digital) Safeguarding Audit

Nottinghamshire County Council is introducing a new **digital safeguarding audit system called PHEW**. The Annual Safeguarding Audit is not just a compliance exercise. It is a **statutory expectation** through the Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership and plays a crucial role in:

- Sharing safeguarding practice across the partnership
- Supporting multi-agency learning, reflection and improvement
- Strengthening collective understanding of local safeguarding systems
- Ensuring schools contribute meaningfully to joined-up safeguarding arrangements

This directly aligns with the expectations in *Working Together 2026*, where schools are expected to be active and accountable partners within a multi-agency system, contributing to shared understanding and outcomes for children.

At present, Nottinghamshire County Council colleagues are undertaking training with the new system PHEW to manage the system as administrators. **Following this, the audit will be built and then rolled out to schools**, who will receive login details to access the new platform. To support access, schools have already been set up within the system. Headteachers have been assigned as the “Lead Respondent”, which provides them with full access to complete, review and submit the audit. The system has been designed to be flexible so that schools can structure access in a way that reflects their size and safeguarding arrangements. In a Multi Academy Trust context, there is also scope for a more centralised model.

Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Act – Key Points for Governors

The Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Act (Royal Assent: 29 April 2026) introduces important changes to strengthen safeguarding and multi-agency working. Most changes will be introduced gradually, with full timelines still to be confirmed.

Key Changes

- Stronger Information Sharing - New legal duty for schools and children’s social care to share information to better protect children.
- Education’s Role in Safeguarding - Schools will have a formal role within local safeguarding arrangements, alongside health and police partners.
- Single Unique Identifier (Pilot) - A new ID number for children across services aims to improve tracking and prevent vulnerable pupils being missed.
- Home Education Reforms - Introduction of mandatory Children Not in School registers in every local authority.
- Stricter checks before removing children from school where safeguarding concerns exist (e.g. child protection plans).

Implications for Governors

- Ensure systems support effective information sharing with safeguarding partners.
- Understand how the school contributes to local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.
- Be aware of new expectations around monitoring pupils not in school, particularly those at risk

Please read the DfE summary here:

<https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2026/05/the-childrens-wellbeing-bill-what-parents-need-to-know/>

Zain Iqbal

Safeguarding Children in Education Officer (SCIEO) T: 07824 482429 E: zain.iqbal@nottsccl.gov.uk

HR Updates

The HR Service has recently updated its NCC portal pages with information in these key areas, and the following is important information for governors to be aware of in relation to their strategic responsibilities:

Employee Resolution Procedure

We wish to notify governors that, from 1 May, a new Employee Resolution Procedure has replaced both the existing Grievance and Harassment Procedures. This change forms part of our ongoing work to simplify policy frameworks, support clearer decision-making, and ensure that school leaders and governors have the right tools to resolve issues effectively and at the earliest possible stage.

By merging and streamlining these into a single, unified process, we have:

- Reduced duplication and complexity, making it easier for Headteachers and governors to navigate concerns fairly and consistently.
- Created a stronger focus on resolution, reflected in the new title *Employee Resolution Procedure*.
- Clarified when issues raised should instead be managed under the Disciplinary Procedure, supporting appropriate and proportionate responses.

Alongside the new procedure, the full toolkit has been refreshed to ensure it is practical, accessible, and aligned with the updated process. Schools will now find one set of policy, guidance, and toolkit documents instead of two separate collections. Supporting materials relating specifically to sexual harassment are still being reviewed to ensure they reflect best practice.

The new Employee Resolution Procedure and accompanying toolkit is now available on the Schools Portal from 1 May at the following link: [Employee Resolution Procedure \(Formerly 'Grievance & Harassment Procedures'\) | NCC Schools Portal](#)

If there are any questions, please contact your HR Business Partner, who will be happy to advise.

Universal Policy Statement

We are currently making every effort to streamline school policies and procedures which need to be adopted by the governing body by creating a 'Universal Policy Statement'. This document sets out the overarching framework, governance arrangements, roles and responsibilities, and statutory context applicable to all HR policies, procedures and guidance, which has been embedded within individual policies to date. HR colleagues are now working to remove 'universal' wording from individual policies, making them more concise. The Universal Policy statement should still be read in conjunction with all school policies, and can be found here: [Policies and Procedures | NCC Schools Portal](#)

Unqualified teachers

We also understand from our colleagues at the LGA that the DfE will be providing clarification on the appointment of unqualified teachers. Further information to follow in due course.

As always, if you require any further information or specific HR related advice on these or any other issue, please contact your named HR Business Partner or HR Advisor [HR Contact List](#)

Finance Updates

2025/26 Governor Statement - These will be received in schools by 15th May 2026

What Governors, Headteachers (HT), School Business Managers (SBM) should do:

- Review the Governor Statement end of year position and compare this with budget monitoring information from the Autumn Term Reforecast and/or Spring Term 2025/26 projection

- Review /investigate any significant variances for both expenditure and income (including budgets). Investigate what has caused these.
- The Governor Statement 2025/26 (and its implications) must be discussed at an appropriate Governor Meeting (full GB or Finance Committee)
- The HT /SBM should be able to provide these details for governors. Governors should challenge answers as appropriate and question the following:
 - Do the areas of variance indicate that the new-year budgets need to be adjusted in these areas (increasing or decreasing expenditure / income or budgets). Governors should be involved in these decisions, or have time to review before the budget is ratified
 - Does the confirmed carry-forward for Revenue B02 (being better or worse than anticipated) mean that changes will need to be made to the budget being set for 2026/2027, to ensure this balances or more is available to be spent on school priorities
 - Compare expenditure / income (including budgets) CFR (consistent financial reporting) categories from 2025/26 with data from 2024/25
 - Are differences in expenditure and income expected and understandable?
- Ensure that any queries raised are included in the meeting minutes or, if not able to be answered at the time, are included in the minutes of the next meeting
- If the 2026/27 Budget (and Year 2 – 2027/28 and Year 3 2028/29 budgets) have already been discussed & ratified prior to receipt of the 2025/26 Governor Statement, estimates of Revenue & Capital carry forwards will have been used. These balances should be updated on monitoring reports later in the year.

2025/26 Committed Balances Return (CBR)

The blank form / return (an excel spreadsheet) is made available at the same time as the Governor Statement (by 15th May 2026)

- If you have a revenue surplus of any size the return needs to be completed. This will be a task for the HT or SBM
- The permitted categories for use of surplus revenue balances are clearly described on the form
- It is essential that the financial data on the CBR return matches that on the three years budgets submitted for 2026/27, 2027/28, and 2028/29. All three years need to be submitted irrespective of whether any financial year projects a revenue deficit
- It is important to note that it is NOT unreasonable for your school to operate with a working contingency (a revenue surplus). The size (or % of budget) of surplus should be discussed & agreed by the Governing Body / Headteacher and ratified. These discussions should be included in Governor Body minutes
- Budget / staff reports and the CBR must be submitted by the deadline of 31st May 2026. If the Governing Body meets after the deadline the CBR & budget plans should be taken to the next available GB meeting. If the GB wish to amend the Budget Plans / CBR they should be resubmitted
- Ensure that minutes of the GB meeting showing discussion and ratification of the CBR / budget plans are provided to School Finance as soon as possible after they become available

Aaron Connor, NCC Finance Business Partner

Suspensions, Exclusions and the Role of Governors (2026) – Key Points Summary

Recent updates to national guidance on suspensions and exclusions reinforce a clear, overarching principle: exclusion should always be a last resort, with a strong focus on keeping children in mainstream education wherever possible. Being on roll provides vital protective factors, including access to a full curriculum, social development opportunities, and consistent pastoral support.

Alternative provision, including Education Otherwise Than at School (EOTAS), is firmly positioned as a short-term intervention aimed at reintegration, not a permanent solution. Schools and local authorities are expected to work collaboratively to support pupils back into mainstream settings quickly and successfully.

The 2024 updates to national guidance introduce practical procedural changes, including allowing remote exclusion review meetings (if requested by parents or adult pupils) and giving headteachers discretion to withdraw an exclusion before governors review it. These adjustments aim to increase flexibility while maintaining fairness and transparency.

Prevention is central to the guidance. Schools are expected to demonstrate early intervention through targeted support, behaviour strategies, SEND provision, and partnership working. Approaches such as managed moves and off-site direction should form part of a structured reintegration plan and never be used as punishment. The guidance strongly underlines that exclusion should only occur after meaningful alternatives have been explored.

Governors play a crucial strategic role, particularly in cases of permanent exclusion. They must ensure decisions are lawful, proportionate, and free from discrimination, while scrutinising whether all alternative strategies and support have been exhausted. This includes considering individual circumstances such as SEND, safeguarding needs, and vulnerability. Access to full documentation and parental views is essential to this process.

Governors can further support this work by reviewing training plans to ensure that staff development in behaviour and inclusion is prioritised, and by scrutinising outcomes from alternative provision to ensure it is genuinely helping to prevent escalation. By maintaining a strong focus on data, culture, and accountability, governors help create an environment where early intervention is embedded and effective.

The governing board's role is to provide both challenge and assurance - ensuring that no child reaches the point of exclusion without meaningful, well-documented support having been put in place.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66be0d92c32366481ca4918a/Suspensions_and_permanent_exclusions_guidance.pdf

Kathryn Ramsay, Team Manager, Pupils Missing Education

Governor Learning and Development Package

Information about the Governor Learning and Development offer can be accessed via:

[Governor Learning and Development | The East Midlands Education Support Service](#)

Training Programme

The training programme for the **2026–2027 academic year** will be available to book from: **1st July 2026** via [the EM-EdSupport website](#).

The programme includes a wide range of live training events and on-demand learning resources, designed to support governors at all levels of experience and responsibility.

Subscription Offer

Schools and academies that have subscribed to the package have received

- Unlimited access to all scheduled live training events
- Full access to on-demand training videos and resources
- Access to the NGA Learning Link

To ensure access is activated, subscribing schools should provide the governors' school email addresses of governing board members, and provide to: info@em-edsupport.org.uk

This enables:

- Individual login access to the EM-EdSupport platform
- Booking of events
- Access to guidance materials and recorded sessions

Non-Subscribed Schools

Schools and academies that do not subscribe to the full service can still access training through:

- Pay-as-you-go (ad hoc) booking for individual training events

This flexible option allows schools to engage with specific sessions as required.

For further information, advice, or support, please contact:

East Midlands Education Support Service

Email: info@em-edsupport.org.uk Telephone: 0115 804 0129

Governor Induction Training

A reminder that all new governors must attend Governor Induction training.

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) - "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 regularly updated." [Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK](#)

The DfE guidance for maintained governing boards states [Maintained schools: governance guide - GOV.UK](#)
A governing body is responsible for:

- allocating a governance training and development budget
- identifying appropriate induction and ongoing development requirements
- providing an induction for new governors, associate members and the governance professional
- identifying specific training such as safeguarding, Prevent, and how to keep pupils safe online, ensuring that all governors and the governance professional have read and follow part 2 of keeping children safe in education guidance
- encouraging everyone on the governing body and the governance professional to develop their knowledge and skills

The DfE guidance also says:

A governor that persistently fails to attend training or development may be in breach of the governing body's code of conduct, and it may be necessary for the chair to consider their position.

Elected parent and staff governors, like co-opted governors, will need to have access to any support and training to ensure they can operate effectively in their role.

Please contact your training provider to ensure that all governors have completed appropriate governor induction training.

Strengthening Headteacher Appraisal with EM-Ed Support

As we approach the end of the academic year and put plans in place for the autumn term, it's timely to revisit an important responsibility 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.

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.

The Role of the External Adviser

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

Recommendation: Rotate Your Adviser Every 3 Years

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.

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@nottsgov.uk

Ofsted – Frequently Asked Questions

Ofsted [published the renewed inspection framework](#) on the 9th September 2025 and have put on lots of online and face-to-face engagement with schools to answer key questions.

To access Ofsted's responses to these FAQs please go to [School inspections: frequently asked questions – Ofsted: education](#)

1. When will my school be inspected?
2. Who can take on the role of nominee and what do they do?
3. What happens on the planning call?
4. How does case sampling of pupils' work?
5. How do you take into account the context of small schools?
6. How do you apply the toolkit in specialist settings or university technical colleges?
7. What is the governors' role in school inspections?
8. What do you mean by 'barriers to learning and/or wellbeing' and how do you define 'disadvantaged'?
9. How do you grade achievement in selective education/grammar schools?
10. What is the difference between the old 'best fit' model and new 'secure fit' model that inspectors use to grade schools?
11. Is 'expected standard' a high standard?
12. Is 'exceptional' the new 'outstanding'?
13. Is 'needs attention' the new 'requires improvement'?
14. What are you doing to explain the new grade system to parents?
15. How will you consider school policies on mobile phones?

There are also useful Ofsted webinars available, which you can find on our [YouTube playlist](#).

Annual Planning Documents – Key Information for Governing Boards

Governing boards that subscribe to advice and guidance services should now have received their 2026 annual planning documents. These documents are essential in supporting effective governance and ensuring statutory responsibilities are met.

Scheme of Delegation - The scheme of delegation is a critical document that sets out the decision-making powers of the governing board, its committees, and individuals. This document is typically drafted by the Headteacher and Chair before being reviewed, agreed, and formally adopted by the full board. Without an agreed scheme of delegation in place, no committees or individuals have delegated authority to make any decisions. Boards should therefore ensure that this document is finalised for the start of the new academic year. Once agreed, a copy should be uploaded and made accessible via your GovernorHub pages.

Termly Planning Document - The termly planner outlines the key actions and decisions required of the governing board across the academic year. The planner is designed to ensure that all statutory and strategic responsibilities are addressed in a timely way. Meeting agendas should align with the termly planner to ensure all required items are covered. Boards are reminded that the model agendas, provided by Governor Services, already incorporate the expected actions for each term and should be used to support effective meeting planning.

Policy Checklist - The policy checklist identifies both:

- Statutory policies required by the Department for Education (DfE), and
- Recommended policies advised by the Local Authority

Maintaining an up-to-date set of policies is a core governance responsibility.

Governing board - required action - Governing boards should ensure that all documents are reviewed during the summer term and are approved and in place by 1st September 2026, ready for the new academic year.

Small Schools' Conference 2026: Key Messages for Governors

The Small Schools' Conference held in March 2026 brought together leaders from across Nottinghamshire and neighbouring authorities to share insight, challenge, and good practice. Sessions included an update on the new Ofsted framework, discussion of shared leadership challenges, and research highlighting the strengths of small school contexts.

The conference reinforced the following best practice for governing boards:

- The importance of strong collaboration between leaders and governing boards supports shared understanding, strategic decision-making and the development of resilient models of leadership that enable small schools to thrive now and in the future.
- The need for evidence-informed leadership and ongoing professional development.
- An assurance that school leaders are well supported, and actively engaging with networks to strengthen leadership, accountability, and outcomes for pupils.
- An emphasis on the importance of ongoing conversations, with a clear focus on sustainability, that are essential in navigating the unique challenges facing small schools.

Feedback from delegates was highly positive, with leaders valuing the reassurance, clarity and opportunity for professional dialogue.

Denise Bryant,
Team Manager, Education Improvement Service

National Updates relating to School Governance

Consultation on Changes to School Food

A DfE consultation proposes updating the School Food Regulations 2014 to reflect current nutritional guidance and improve children's health, learning and wellbeing. Changes aim to reduce sugar, increase fibre, and limit foods high in fat, sugar and salt across all state-funded schools.

From September 2027 (with some secondary changes by 2028), new standards will apply to breakfasts and meals, including healthier drinks, more whole grains, pulses, fruit and vegetables, and stricter limits on desserts and processed foods. Sugary items and certain spreads will be restricted or banned. Schools are expected to engage parents and communicate changes clearly. The guidance also proposes that "Schools appoint a lead governor for school food and publish their food policies and menus online, which would strengthen accountability and improve compliance". The consultation closes on the 12th June 2026

<https://consult.education.gov.uk/school-food-policy-team/school-food-standards-updating-the-leg-framework/>

Inclusive Mainstream Fund for Schools

The DfE has announced a three-year funding commitment to support inclusive practices in mainstream state-funded schools, with 2026/27 details published and further years to follow. The funding aims to enable early support for pupils without requiring diagnosis or statutory processes. Schools must publish an inclusion strategy by 31 December 2026. Funding includes a £3,000 base per school, plus per-pupil and low prior attainment rates. Schools should use funding alongside existing budgets and focus on seven priority areas, including leadership, teaching quality, early intervention, and partnerships. The grant supports whole-cohort approaches rather than individual budgets, with allocations confirmed in May.

Guidance for Parents to Help Their Child be 'School Ready'

The DfE has published [advice and resources](#) to assist parents and carers to help their child to be 'school ready'. Additionally, the department has produced [guidance](#) for schools, nurseries and childminders, focusing on how they should work together to ensure a smooth start in reception.

The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026

The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026, which received Royal Assent on 29 April, introduces key changes requiring action by schools and governing boards ahead of implementation from September 2026. A major reform focuses on school uniform affordability, limiting compulsory branded items to three (excluding ties).

Governing boards must review and update uniform policies, confirm required items, liaise with suppliers, publish clear guidance, and ensure access to second-hand options for families.

The Act also strengthens expectations around medical conditions and allergies. Schools will be required to publish both a medical conditions policy and a separate allergy safety policy, each with named leadership responsibility. Policies **must** outline how pupils with medical needs are supported, including identification, staff training, emergency procedures, medication management, and inclusion in all school activities. There is a strong emphasis on staff awareness and training, with all staff expected to understand their roles and undertake regular allergy awareness training. Schools should also maintain spare adrenaline auto-injectors due to the unpredictability of anaphylaxis.

Governing boards must ensure policies are in place, regularly reviewed, clearly communicated, and effectively implemented to support pupil safety, inclusion and wellbeing. See DfE press release for more information [Families to save up to £1,000 as children's reforms become law - GOV.UK](#)

Changes to Data Protection

From June 2026, schools must provide a clear route for individuals to raise data protection complaints, acknowledge them within 30 days, investigate promptly, keep complainants informed, and issue outcomes without delay. Records must be maintained, including dates, correspondence, outcomes, and actions taken. Privacy notices must be updated to explain appeal rights, and complaints policies revised to clarify that data protection issues sit outside standard procedures.

Actions for governors: Ensure a compliant complaints process is in place by 19 June 2026, monitor complaint trends, review policies, and seek assurance that record-keeping meets ICO expectations.

Using AI in education: support for school and college leaders

The DfE have announced free support materials for school and college leaders about using AI (artificial intelligence) effectively and safely. [Using AI in education: support for school and college leaders - GOV.UK](#) The DfE have also announced free support materials for schools [Understanding AI in education: module 1 - GOV.UK](#)

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 in transforming young lives and to make a difference in our communities. You are all truly amazing!



Nottinghamshire County Council is incredibly grateful to all 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@nottscc.gov.uk

Message from the Chair of the Nottinghamshire Association of Governors (NAGs)

Dear Governors

As we move through a busy and fast-changing period for school governance, I want to take the opportunity to update you on the recent work of the Nottinghamshire Association of Governors (NAGs) and to thank you for your continued commitment to the children and communities we serve.

Governor Conference – March 2026 - The annual Governor Conference was held in March. NAGs were proud to play an active role throughout the day, including:

- Supporting the planning and delivery of the event
- Arranging and presenting the Nottinghamshire Governor Awards
- Providing transport for the wonderful pupil choir from Wynndale Primary School

The conference proved to be an informative and energising day for governors across the county, with overwhelmingly positive feedback about the quality of sessions, the relevance of discussions, and the sense of shared purpose. Thanks go to EMED, the NCC Governor Services team, and my fellow NAGs Executive Committee members for their hard work and collaboration in making the event such a success.



Cross-County Collaboration - I recently caught up with the Chair of the Derbyshire Association of Governors, where we reflected on the similar pressures, themes and challenges facing governing boards across both counties. Issues such as recruitment, workload, SEND pressures, and the evolving Ofsted landscape are shared across the region, and we will continue to work together to strengthen governor voice and support.

Supporting Governors Through Termly Network Sessions - NAGS invite members to attend networking sessions held each term and aimed at Chairs and Vice-Chairs and those new to governance.

Summary - Sessions in the week beginning 20th April focused on members' concerns, with both groups discussing preparation for Ofsted inspections. In the Chairs' network discussions were around the importance of understanding and clearly explaining their school's strengths and weaknesses, providing evidence, and focus governor visits on areas for improvement. In the new to governance networks, governors were encouraged to understand the school's key features, ask relevant questions during visits, and report effectively to governing bodies to demonstrate informed oversight and accountability.

Recent feedback from participants highlighted:

- The value of hearing how other boards are approaching complaints, exclusions and workload
- Appreciation for practical examples and shared templates
- Increased confidence in understanding the new Ofsted framework
- Reassurance about governor involvement in Ofsted visits
- A sense of connection and reduced isolation in the role

These sessions remain a valued space for discussion, problem solving and peer support. We will continue to shape future sessions around the themes that governors tell us matter most.

Supporting governance and provide a voice for governors in Nottinghamshire - NAGs remain committed to supporting and championing the work of governors including:

- Governor-led panel work
- Contributions to the development of the Governor Newsletter
- Attendance at the Education Trust Board – Governors meetings to consider the local authority's approach to new and emerging policy

This partnership working ensures that governor voice remains central to decision-making and that the needs of boards across Nottinghamshire are clearly represented.

Coming Soon: A New NAGs Initiative to Support Big Ideas in Tight Times - At a time when schools are navigating significant financial pressures, we know that governing boards are still being asked to think boldly, plan strategically and deliver long-term impact. In response, NAGs are preparing to launch an exciting new initiative designed to help schools turn their *big ideas* into achievable, sustainable plans. This upcoming offer will focus on supporting governing boards with strategic ambition, innovation and forward planning—especially where resources are stretched and creativity is essential.

More details will be shared in the next newsletter, but for now, we invite you to watch this space. It's an initiative shaped by governors, for governors, and we believe it will make a meaningful difference across Nottinghamshire.

Join the NAGs Executive Committee - We continue to welcome new members to the Executive Committee. If you are passionate about governance and would like an informal conversation about joining the team and staying connected, please email: nottinghamshiregovernors@gmail.com Your experience—whether as a new governor or a long-standing chair—could make a real difference.

Thank you for everything you continue to do for your schools, your communities, and the children of Nottinghamshire.

Sue Beasley
Chair of NAGs nottinghamshiregovernors@gmail.com

HEAD, CHAIRS and GOVERNORS – IMPORTANT TERMLY BRIEFINGS

As part of the advice and guidance service (purchased by your school), governors should access the pre-recorded termly webinars in preparation for your full governing board meetings at the start of each new term.

Key actions are identified for governors for that term, and senior officers from across the authority, present the director's reports to governors directly, highlighting any governor actions and recommendations. A question posed to boards by Ofsted is often, "How do you know?" The governors' briefings may provide you with this answer and evidence.

Governors can access all this support at their own convenience, or the Chair and Headteacher could diary this in to make arrangements to watch the briefing together, as part of preparations for an effective governing body meeting. **Please follow the links below for the Summer Term 2026 recorded briefings.** Agenda guidance: <https://youtu.be/DW4fm6eWCuY> Corporate Director's reports: <https://youtu.be/-K-S8tLx0XY>



Updated materials related to smoking, vaping and other nicotine use in children and young people

In the light of upcoming changes and recent trends in nicotine product use in young people, the public health team has updated the [Notts Vape-Free and Nicotine-Free Schools Resource Pack](#). From September, smoking, vaping and other nicotine products will be included at the primary RSHE curriculum. In the secondary phase, the link between stopping smoking, improved mental health and reduced anxiety is made explicit in the revised curriculum. Additions to the [local resource pack](#) include:

- updated guidance and policy templates for a whole school approach to nicotine products
- new information on novel nicotine products such as oral nicotine pouches
- links to new teaching resources to help support the new curriculum and address novel nicotine products
- new training materials for school staff to help them talk with young people about stopping smoking or vaping

Potential actions for Governors:

- ask your school about their plans for this element of the new RSHE curriculum and check that they know about the local resource pack
- consider reviewing your school's policy approaches to nicotine products

How to access the Schools' Portal

Governors will be aware that **all Governor Services information is available on the Nottinghamshire Governor Services GovernorHub pages**. Information can also be found on the Schools' Portal in named folders for all services purchased by the school from the Local Authority and which governors may need. To access the Schools' Portal, you will need a username 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 publication of the Governor Services team of Nottinghamshire County Council, with support from the Nottinghamshire Association of Governors (NAGs). Editors: Jayne Littlewood, Dave Hill, 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.

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