

Governance Updates – Spring 1 2025 For Academy Governors and Trustees

Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill 2024

The recently published Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill aims to change the law to better protect children and raise standards in education. The [Keeping children safe, helping families thrive](#) policy statement outlines in further detail some of the bill's measures including the opening of new schools, Academy orders, reducing the divide between academies and maintained schools (including teachers pay), pupil admissions and child protection (including new regulations around home-educated children). A policy summary can be found [here](#)

New Procurement Act

The Procurement Act 2023 which will go live on Monday 24 February 2025 means changes in regulation and practices, aimed at bringing about a more flexible, strategic approach to procurement. This creates challenges and opportunities for schools and trusts as they must now ensure they reduce any barriers for small- and medium-sized suppliers to being successful in their tendering and procurement processes. Training and support is available to help you prepare. Read the [Buying for Schools blog](#) for more information.

School Resource Management Self-Assessment Checklist (SRMSAC)

The [SRMSAC](#) is an annual assurance exercise which helps academy trusts check they are managing resources effectively and identify any adjustments they need to make. The online form will be available this month and the deadline for submission is 14.3.25. This year's exercise - which **must** be ratified by the Trust Board - includes the addition of the [2024-25 support notes](#)

New financial benchmarking and insights tool (FBIT)

The new FBIT tool is now live and replaces the 'View my financial insights' and the 'Schools financial benchmarking' website. FBIT can be used to benchmark a school's spending against other similar schools. [Home - Financial Benchmarking and Insights Tool - GOV.UK](#)

Updates to Get Information about Schools GIAS

A [GIAS system update](#) this week informed me that the DfE has now added the option to include the board's Governance Professional's on Get Information About Schools (GIAS). This will ensure that Clerks receive important updates directly from the DfE. This is not yet a mandatory requirement but it is another step in the right direction towards raising the profile of the Clerk and the important work that we do. .

Free and low cost Governor training

Free webinars provided by Browne Jacobson

Browne Jacobson are providing a series of free webinars and other events this term. One of these is Handling Parental Complaints which is available to school governors and trustees. To register go to:

[Spring term 2025 education sector events | Education law | Free webinars](#)

Governors for Schools / Better Governor

Click here <https://governorsforschools.org.uk/> to register for details of free upcoming webinars, including Pupil Attendance, Driving School Improvement and Managing Pupil exclusions.

DfE free Q&A sessions (including Academy Finance Professionals)

Click [here](#) to access upcoming free webinars including Academy Finance professionals Power Hour (on 13th February) and Monitor School Attendance webinar (on 21st January).

Judicium Education free Sofa Sessions

Click [here](#) to access Judicium's next free round of sofa sessions. This month's upcoming sessions include HR, Safeguarding and GDPR.

Free cyber service to protect against online threats

Schools are being encouraged to sign up for a free cyber defence service from the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) – a part of GCHQ – which helps block online threats such as malware, ransomware and phishing attacks. All educational organisations can sign up for 'PDNS for Schools' by asking their DNS provider to register for PDNS through [MyNCSC](#).

NGA free webinars

The NGA will be hosting a series of free webinars this term and some of the themes include Ofsted, Disadvantaged Pupils, Inclusions and Pupil Exclusions and SEND. Previous webinars are also available to play back. To reserve your place, go to [Events | National Governance Association](#)

Compliance / Agenda items for Spring term Trustee and Governor Meetings

- Review progress of the School / Trust Development Plan
- Receive the management accounts on a monthly basis
- Review the risk register
- Monitor pupil attendance
- Review and agree the SRMSAC (form goes live in January) [SRMSAC Checklist](#)
- Agree reporting frequency and content of HT/CEO report
- Keep safeguarding on each agenda
- Discuss staff wellbeing and mental health
- Review your recruitment processes. Spring term is recruitment season for schools.
- Discuss website compliance and involve your link Trustee / Governor
- Report on governor & trustee visits (including written reports) and encourage discussion at meetings
- Receive feedback from the chair of sub-committee meetings and any specialist panel meetings
- Produce a training / succession plan following autumn term skills audit
- Advertise trustee and governor vacancies and promote diversity on your board
- Review impact of each board meeting and ask your clerk for feedback

Key dates

January 2025

Trust action

- [Academies accounts return](#) submission deadline 28 January 2025
- Spring [school census](#) day - 16 January 2025
- [Schools resource management self-assessment checklist](#) online form available (January)
- Trusts publish their 2023 to 2024 audited financial statements on their website by 31 January 2025
- Academies expecting high needs place funding in 2024 to 2025 academic year to check place change published outcomes for use in funding allocations
- Complete consultation on admission arrangements for September 2026 (if required) by 31 January 2025

February 2025

Trust action

- Academies must submit their spring census return by 12 February 2025
- Academies must agree their admission arrangements for entry in September 2026 by 28 February 2025
- Academies must publish their admission appeals timetable for 2025 on their website by 28 February 2025

Free Governor Recruitment sites

[NASCC | Governance Connections](#)

www.inspiringgovernance.org/recruiting-governors

www.governorsforschools.org.uk

www.reachvolunteering.org.uk

Free Governance advice and Resources

[Ask A Clerk – Free Advice For School Governors and Clerks](#)

[ESFA Update - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) – subscribe to the DfE's weekly updates

[Recruitment resources for schools - Governors for Schools](#) – free Governor recruitment resources as well as free training and webinars

independentgovernor.com – free and independent support and mentoring for Governors and Trustees

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