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# School governance update: September 2022

Updated 29 September 2022

## **Applies to England**

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This publication is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-governance-update/school-governance-update-september-2022>

## Energy bill relief scheme

A new government scheme will see energy prices cut for non-domestic energy customers such as businesses, charities and public sector organisations, including schools – protecting them from rising energy costs.

The government work with suppliers will reduce wholesale energy costs – and the significant rises in bills that schools have seen.

There is further information on how the [government plans to help cut energy bills for businesses](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-outlines-plans-to-help-cut-energy-bills-for-businesses) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-outlines-plans-to-help-cut-energy-bills-for-businesses>).

## Publication of the Academy Trust Handbook 2022

We have published the [Academy Trust Handbook 2022](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/academy-trust-handbook/academy-trust-handbook-2022) (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/academy-trust-handbook/academy-trust-handbook-2022>), which came into effect on 1 September 2022. The handbook is available as a PDF to download, with the changes to the 2022 edition summarised on page 8.

This includes new information about:

- financial reporting: confirming the withdrawal of the budget forecast return outturn (BFRO)
- special payments: clarifying that prior approval of staff severance payments only applies to ‘special’ (non-statutory/non-contractual) payments
- indemnities: confirming that trusts will be able to enter into indemnities which are in the normal course of business without seeking approval (further guidance to follow)
- religious character: extending the scope from dioceses to all religious authorities in relation to ‘at cost’

## Publication of guidance for federations

We have published updated guidance on governance processes in federations, which is now available to access.

[Federations: guidance on the governance processes](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-in-federations/federations-guidance-on-the-governance-processes) (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-in-federations/federations-guidance-on-the-governance-processes>) is non-statutory guidance on the governance of a federation, including the creation, running, and dissolution of a federation.

This guidance applies to all maintained schools and maintained nursery schools. It is for:

- governing bodies in maintained schools, including governance professionals
- school leaders
- local authorities
- diocesan authorities or other equivalent religious bodies

## Find volunteers to become school governors

The [Inspiring Governance \(https://www.inspiringgovernance.org/\)](https://www.inspiringgovernance.org/) online service connects schools and trusts with skilled volunteers in their area who are interested in becoming a maintained school governor or to serve on a local governing body of an academy trust.

It is a free service open to all state-funded educational institutions in England that provide education to pupils of compulsory school age.

People can register their details if they are interested in volunteering.

Further information is available from [Inspiring Governance - become a school governor \(https://www.inspiringgovernance.org/\)](https://www.inspiringgovernance.org/).

## Your views requested: school food guidance and training

We are seeking the views of governors and trustees on their involvement with school food.

In February 2022, the [Levelling Up the United Kingdom \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/levelling-up-the-united-kingdom\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/levelling-up-the-united-kingdom) White Paper outlined several things Department for Education (DfE) is doing to strengthen adherence with the [school food standards \(https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-food-standards-resources-for-schools\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-food-standards-resources-for-schools). This includes investing up to £200,000 in a pilot governor training scheme.

We would be grateful for your views on the current school food guidance, and what more can be done to support you in this area.

The [school food survey \(https://dferesearch.fra1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_3dw2jxxjGKT94YC?jfe=new\)](https://dferesearch.fra1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_3dw2jxxjGKT94YC?jfe=new) should take less than 10 minutes to complete and closes at midnight on 14 October 2022.

# Risk Protection Arrangement members - cyber cover and regulatory mock trials

We want to remind all Risk Protection Arrangement (RPA) members that, to ensure your school is covered for cyber incidents, the school/trust must:

- have offline backups
- register with [Police CyberAlarm \(https://www.cyberalarm.police.uk/\)](https://www.cyberalarm.police.uk/)
- have a cyber response plan in place

This should be actioned by the person who is responsible for the RPA in their school or trust.

All employees or governors who have access to the member's information technology system must also undertake [NCSC cyber security training \(https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/information/cyber-security-training-schools\)](https://www.ncsc.gov.uk/information/cyber-security-training-schools). For more information, see the [cyber guidance note \(https://sway.office.com/Pa1LsAUfaMGCB31W?ref=email\)](https://sway.office.com/Pa1LsAUfaMGCB31W?ref=email).

Additionally, DfE, with Willis Towers Watson, has developed the Regulatory Mock Trial, to assist governors, trustees, and senior leadership teams to:

- understand the challenges in implementing compliant health and safety management systems
- enhance the prospects of avoiding enforcement action
- improve the school's defensive capabilities where a prosecution is pursued

Places will be allocated on a first come, first served basis and will be limited to one place per member academy. You can reserve your place through the link below.

[17 November 2022 \(https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-regulatory-mock-trial-17th-november-2022-registration-406194708307\)](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/the-regulatory-mock-trial-17th-november-2022-registration-406194708307)

For more information, contact [RPA.DFE@education.gov.uk](mailto:RPA.DFE@education.gov.uk)

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