

CLERKS' BRIEFING SPRING 2025

Iwona Bainbridge-Dyer



WELCOME



AGENDA SETTING

- Spring meeting of the governing board
- What's on agenda?
- Committees
- Q & A



Model spring term agenda 2025

Please note that your agenda will vary depending on the structure your governing board adopted. Please amend as appropriate for maintained schools and academies. As a Clerk/Governance Professional you should refer to the Governing Board Year Planner prior to drafting the agenda.

Name of School:
Address:

Spring term meeting of the Governing Board/Board of Trustees/Local Governing Body agenda

Date:
Time:
Place:
Clerk/Governance Professional:

Note: Please note that all supporting documents are available to view and download in/from *(indicate the platform/system you are using)*

1. WELCOME, APOLOGIES AND REASONS FOR ABSENCE

To receive apologies for absence.

Note: Any governor/trustee who, without the consent of the governing board, fails to attend governing board meetings for a continuous period of six months after their first absence is disqualified from continuing as a governor/trustee. The governing board may decline to accept apologies for absence from a governor/trustee, but if apologies are accepted, then the governing board has consented to the absence, and the six-month disqualification rule does not apply. [Schedule 4 para 9 of The School Governance (Constitution)(England) Regulations 2012 and Article 70 of the Model Articles of Association]

Acceptance or Decline of Apologies:

- If a governing board declines to accept apologies for absence, it has not consented to the absence. Consequently, the six-month rule would apply from the date of the first absence.
- If the governing board accepts apologies, this is considered as grating consent, and the six-month disqualification rule does not apply.

Additional Considerations:

Clarity in minutes – it's essential for the governing board to record whether apologies are accepted or declined in the minutes of the meeting.

Exceptions – some specific circumstances such as long-term illness might be handled differently, depending on the board's policies and decisions.

DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION SECTOR

Curriculum and Assessment Review

- The Department for Education (DfE) has initiated an independent review to refresh the curriculum and statutory assessment system for 5- to 19-year-olds. This review aims to ensure that the education system remains relevant and effective in meeting the needs of students.
- For those interested the Working Group on GCSE English Reform published a report and recommendations following a summit in September 2024.

<https://englishassociation.ac.uk/summit-on-the-reform-of-the-english-gcses-report-and-recommendations/>

DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION SECTOR

Additional funding for schools

- In the budget announced on 30 October 2024, the government allocated an additional £2.3 billion for mainstream schools and high needs for the 2025 to 2026 financial year. This funding is intended to support the remaining costs of the 2024 teachers' pay award and enhance resources for schools.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/esfa-update-18-december-2024/esfa-update-local-authorities-18-december-2024?utm>

DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION SECTOR

Changes to Ofsted Inspection Framework

Starting from September 2024, Ofsted inspections of state-funded schools have ceased to include an overall effectiveness grade. This change reflects a shift towards a more nuanced evaluation of school performance, focusing on specific areas rather than a single headline grade.

Read Ofsted Big Listen and School inspection handbook:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/ofsted-big-listen/outcome/hearing-feedback-accepting-criticism-and-building-a-better-ofsted-the-response-to-the-big-listen>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspection-handbook-eif/school-inspection-handbook-for-september-2023#inspection-outcomes>

Main changes

- **the removal of single headline grades** (schools will still receive grades for the four existing key judgement areas) – Ofsted is developing report cards to replace this in 2025.
- **the removal of ‘deep dives’** from ungraded inspections.
- a revised process for **pausing** and **deferring inspections**.
- **notice for all routine inspections** (graded and ungraded) in the form of a phone call will be given on a Monday with inspections to start on a Tuesday.
- **a new pilot approach to safeguarding reporting** – school leaders may be given 3 months to resolve safeguarding issues if the school is doing well in all other areas.

DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION SECTOR

Updates to School Website Requirements

- In October 2024, new guidelines were issued regarding mandatory information on school websites. These updates include clarifications on specific policies, governance details, pupil premium information, and test and assessment data that schools are required to publish online.

<https://www.schudio.com/school-website-requirements-update-october-2024/?utm>

DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION SECTOR

Updated Gatsby Benchmarks

The Gatsby Foundation have published updated 'Gatsby Benchmarks for good careers' guidance. Following a review of the benchmarks ten years after their initial release, the report explores what good careers guidance looks like now and how schools and trusts can deliver careers guidance for the next ten years.

With more than 90% of schools and colleges now measuring their careers provision using the eight Gatsby Benchmarks, the new updates follow extensive research and ideas from stakeholders including NGA members and schools, aiming to clarify, refine and strengthen their existing solid foundation.

<https://www.gatsbybenchmarks.org.uk/app/uploads/2024/11/good-career-guidance-the-next-10-years-report.pdf>

DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION SECTOR

Breakfast Clubs

- Families will soon be able to start accessing free breakfast clubs lasting 30 minutes for their children before school through our new free breakfast club programme. The clubs will provide additional childcare options and aim to help children begin their day ready to learn, positively impacting behaviour, attendance and attainment. The £30million funding announced in the Autumn Budget will fund the breakfast clubs for a year from April 2025, as well as continue to support the schools currently providing the National School Breakfast Programme.

blog.gov.uk/2024/11/free-school-breakfast-clubs/

DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION SECTOR

Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill (17 December 2024)

Key provisions of the bill include

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/legislation-breaks-down-barriers-to-opportunity-for-all-children>

- **Establishment of New Registers:** Local authorities will maintain registers to identify children not enrolled in school, ensuring they receive appropriate education and support.
- **Unique Identifier Numbers:** The bill proposes creating unique identifiers for children across services, similar to national insurance numbers for adults, to streamline support and monitoring.
- **Restrictions on Home Education:** Parents under child protection investigations or plans will no longer have an automatic right to home-educate their children. Local authorities can mandate school attendance if a child's home environment is deemed unsafe.
- **Enhanced Role for Educators in Safeguarding:** The legislation ensures that teachers and schools are integral to decisions regarding child safeguarding, recognising their pivotal role in identifying and addressing abuse or neglect.

DEVELOPMENTS IN EDUCATION SECTOR

Data Protection in Schools

Key changes

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/data-protection-in-schools>

- **Generative Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Data Protection** - With the increasing use of AI tools in educational settings, the guidance now includes a dedicated section on generative AI. It outlines potential data protection risks associated with AI applications and offers recommendations for schools to ensure compliance when integrating these technologies.
- **Responsibilities in Handling Personal Data** - Clarifications have been made regarding the responsibilities of school staff, governors, and trustees in ensuring that personal data used by pupils in projects and coursework is handled appropriately. This emphasizes the importance of safeguarding personal information within educational activities.
- **Data Protection Policies and Procedures** - The guidance now includes links to the Information Commissioner's Office's (ICO) resources, such as the data controller's checklist and guidance on documenting processing activities. Additionally, there is guidance for organisations using CCTV, aiding schools in developing comprehensive data protection policies.
- **Updates to the Digital Information and Smart Data Bill** - The guidance reflects changes to the Digital Information and Smart Data Bill, providing insights into how these legislative updates impact data protection practices in schools. Support is available from the Department for Education (DfE) to help schools navigate these changes.

DATES TO REMEMBER

- SUMMER TERM BRIEFING AND AGM – WEDNESDAY 23 APRIL 2025 5PM
- CLERKS' CONFERENCE – TUESDAY 10 JUNE 2025

