

SUMMER 1 2024

NCOGS NEWSLETTER

Newsletter for the National Co-ordinators of Governor Services

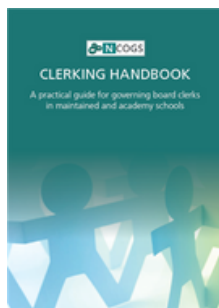


WELCOME TO THE SUMMER TERM NEWSLETTER

Looking out of the window it is hard to believe we are in the summer term, but hopefully things will dry up in time for all the events schools will have planned over the next couple of months.

The NCOGS board will be consulting with the regions on increasing the membership of the board. Currently one representative from each of the regions attends NCOGS meetings; our proposal is to change this to a minimum of one, but up to two individuals from each region. This will help increase the capacity of the board (we have lots of plans for things we would like to do and provide for the membership!) and will also assist with succession planning. We would be interested to hear your views, so do please add the suggestion to your next regional meeting agenda, so the board can consider this option at their July meeting.

We are currently updating the NCOGS Clerking Handbook to remove references to the competency frameworks and the governance handbook, as these have now been archived by the DfE. The new version should be with you shortly. We are pleased to see that the new governance guide includes a reference to the NCOGS Handbook, we know how much this resource is valued by clerks and governance professionals across the country.



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Fiona Collier
Chair



John Ashworth
Vice-Chair

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Please check the details on the back cover of the handbook and let us know of any changes we need to include in the revised edition. Please celebrate the range and depth of your membership by including MATS, SATS, Diocese and traded services who are part of your network in addition to Local Authority members. Any changes can be submitted via your regional rep, or direct to the NCOGS clerk, Bec Davey, no later than Friday 10 May, please. Friday 10 May is also the date for the next online networking and CPD event for all COGS. Further details and the link to book your free place can be found within this newsletter.

Another date to ringfence in your diary is Thursday 10 October 2024, when we are holding our autumn conference at the MK Dons Stadium in Milton Keynes. Plans are well under way for this vibrant in person event, this year's theme is 'Inspire, Innovate and Explore Together'.

As always we are happy to hear your feedback and suggestions, so do please get in touch if you have an idea to share or a question to raise. Thank you for everything you do to support board members and clerks/governance professionals!



NCOGS CONFERENCE

INSPIRE, INNOVATE & EXPLORE TOGETHER

Come and listen to keynote
speakers and have
the opportunity to network with
colleagues

Feedback from the 2023 Conference

'It was really beneficial meeting face to face and I feel far more was gained from the speakers than it being online'

'Thank you it was a great day. All the speakers especially in the morning were brilliant and I'm really glad I took the day out of usual work to come'



10th October 2024 *



Stadium MK, Milton Keynes,
MK1 1ST

* There will be a networking opportunity on the evening of 9th October 2024

NATIONAL CO-ORDINATORS OF GOVERNOR SERVICES



Start of term event with Gillian Keegan, Secretary of State for Education.

This event was held on the afternoon of Wednesday 24 April. There was an opportunity to ask questions in advance, and also to submit questions during the live session via the chat function. There were a number of questions from delegates around SEND and school finances, but also on recruitment and training for governors and trustees (the latter was not answered during the session, but Gillian assured the audience that after the event closed she would look at all the questions raised).

Gillian mentioned her priorities for this term, including attendance, exams (Gillian was pleased to share that the new GCSE in British sign language is to be launched in 2025) and the roll-out of the childcare offer. Gillian was joined by Rob Tarn, CEO of the Northern Education Trust and the DfE's newly appointed National Attendance Ambassador. He explained that attendance is a global issue, with many countries running at 35-40% absence levels. He feels that the answer (for our country) lies in practice which already exists within the sector which needs to be shared. The DfE hopes that the mandatory daily attendance data sharing will help with an informed national picture, and highlight any trends/common concerns.

Delegates asked about staff recruitment to deliver the new funded childcare provision, and the additional provision being introduced from September this year and September 2025. Gillian referred to the success of the campaign 'do something big, work with small children' in attracting people to the sector. The DfE is launching a 'skills bootcamp' with a 12-16 week intensive programme, leading to a Level 3 Early Educator apprenticeship qualification. She referenced the £1,000 incentive offer and updating the EYFS framework to reduce burdens on schools and settings. She also mentioned the increased funding rates for children and pledged security of funding for the next two years.

On SEND Gillian mentioned the parental perception that an EHCP is the only route to securing the support needed for their child, and challenged that this was a perception that needed to be changed. She agreed that there are not enough places to keep up with demand, but referenced that the government has invested £2.6 Billion to create 60,000 new places (from 2010 to the end of this parliament) and committed to opening around 200 free schools. She added that additional Ed Psych's and SENDCOs are being trained but acknowledged there is still a need to do more. EHCP's can have constrained, high cost, interventions and there is a lack of national consistency. Gillian re-iterated the need for a clear and fair system, with no differences or variations between different LA's, so parents and schools will know what to expect, with equality of provision for all parents and children. Delegates were vocal in the chat about a need for greater funding and more places as a matter of urgency, stating the 'crippling effect' the current SEND situation is having on schools.

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Finance was also raised regarding the funding of any teacher pay increase this year. Gillian responded that the increases had been funded for the previous two years (a point disputed by delegates in the chat) but until the recommendations from the STRB were received she did not know what she was dealing with, and could not make any promises. Last year's increase was not funded by the Treasury, but through reallocating funds within the Education Department, which she explained would not be easy to accomplish again this year, but she 'understood the size of the challenge'.

The question of repair and rebuilding of schools was also raised, with Gillian responding that funding had already been allocated for the Condition Improvement Funding, building new schools and RAAC. Gillian spoke of the evidence the Department now had access to through the two condition surveys which have now been conducted across schools, so funding can be decided on the basis of the actual condition of schools, not on number of FSM, or deprivation levels, as had been the case historically.

Ofsted was also raised, in particular whether the DfE will support the removal of the one-word judgements. Gillian spoke of listening to the sector as a culture that needs to be in place; she has heard the messages from schools about inconsistencies in inspections etc. She covered again some of the measures introduced already and referenced Sir Martyn Oliver's 'Big Listen' to gain views on further changes. In terms of the judgements, Gillian had looked at this previously in relation to social care, went 'round the houses', and came back to the same one-word judgements. She felt that people will still perceive judgements as being a 'level 1', 'level 2' etc, regardless of whether the judgement is expressed as a single word or a sentence. She stated that any change needs to make sense, be respectful, consistent and valued. ([The Big Listen](#) is open for responses until 31 May.)

Asked about the replacement process for Performance Related Pay Gillian responded that this should be released 'very soon' - so watch this space!



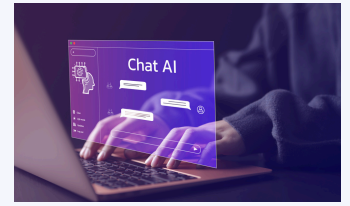
Behaviour in schools

The DfE has published a resource page for schools pulling together their resources for improving behaviour in schools. There is a new resource - 'Creating a school behaviour culture: audit and action planning tools' which the DfE states can be used to assess behaviour culture and provide a framework to implement and monitor change. The other resources on the page have been published previously, but are now more easily accessible in one place. These include guidance on a host of related topics, including mobile phones, use of reasonable force, working together to improve school attendance and the guidance for governing boards on behaviour and discipline in schools.

[Behaviour in schools DfE webpage](#)



Ofsted's approach to artificial intelligence (AI)



Ofsted has published information on how they will use AI within their own work and how they will view the use of AI in schools. The guidance states: 'Importantly, Ofsted will not directly inspect the quality of AI tools. It is through their application that they affect areas of provision and outcomes such as safeguarding and the quality of education. Leaders, therefore, are responsible for ensuring that the use of AI does not have a detrimental effect on those outcomes, the quality of their provision or decisions they take.'

Ofsted supports the use of AI by providers where it improves the care and education of children and learners. We recognise that these tools can help providers make better-informed decisions, reduce workload and lead to innovative ways of working.' The document sets out how Ofsted expects schools to comply with the principles in the AI regulation white paper.

[Read the full document](#)



EdTech roundtable looking at AI in schools



Deputy Prime Minister Oliver Dowden and Education Secretary Gillian Keegan jointly hosted a roundtable to focus on the benefits technologies like artificial intelligence (AI) could have for the education sector. Research conducted by the DfE shows that educational professionals are already embracing the opportunities offered by this emerging technology, such as reducing the amount of time teachers spent on administrative tasks.

The Department for Education has invested £2 million in Oak National Academy to create new teaching tools using AI, and the results of a hackathon hosted by the Department for Education in collaboration with Faculty AI, the National Institute of Teaching, held in November are due to be published. The roundtable considered the challenges posed, such as the need for agreed standards to ensure safe usage. [Roundtable press release](#)

Free resource for secondary schools



Free supplement from SecEd with ideas to support vulnerable learners. This year, SecEd's free 20-page annual vulnerable learners supplement focuses on attendance and SEND, with 10 in-depth articles offering practical advice, ideas, tips and case studies. The supplement looks at how schools can close the attendance gap between rich and poor and tackle school absence more generally. It also includes school case studies focusing on SEN support.

Download the free guide from the [SecEd website](#).



National behaviour survey report

The DfE has published the survey report for the academic year 2022 to 2023. The survey covers four main themes: school behaviour culture and policy; school environment and experience; frequency and impact of misbehaviour; responding to behaviour. Some of the key themes from the report include:

- The majority (81%) of school leaders and teachers agreed that there was a shared understanding amongst staff in their school of what 'good behaviour' means
- In May 2023, the majority of pupils (85%) agreed that they knew how their school expected them to behave. This is a decrease from 91% in June 2022
- Almost all school leaders and teachers (98%) reported that rules on behaviour were applied fairly to pupils at least some of the time (May 2023). However, only 38% of school leaders and 19% of teachers reported this happened 'all of the time'
- Overall, 60% of school leaders and teachers agreed that parents are supportive of the school's behaviour rules
- 59% of teachers reported that their school had been calm and orderly 'every day' or 'most days' in the past week
- 39% of all pupils said that they had felt safe at school 'every day' in the past week in May '23
- In May 2023, 76% of teachers reported that misbehaviour stopped or interrupted teaching in at least some lessons in the past week
- On average, in May 2023, teachers reported that for every 30 minutes of lesson time, 7 minutes were lost due to misbehaviour
- In May 2023, 73% of school leaders and teachers reported that pupil misbehaviour had had a negative impact on their health and wellbeing in the past week
- Overall, 22% of pupils said that they had been a victim of bullying for any reason in the past 12 months. Among pupils who reported that they had been bullied, the most common perceived reason reported for being bullied was the way they looked (40% for those bullied in person; 32% for those bullied online)
- In May 2023 school leaders were more likely than teachers to report being 'very confident' in managing misbehaviour (66% vs. 35%). Compared with March 2023, the proportion of school leaders and teachers reporting being 'very confident' has decreased (from 80% to 66% for leaders; from 47% to 35% for teachers)
- In May 2023, the interventions most commonly used by schools to manage behaviour were referrals to specialist services (89%) and targeted interventions such as mentoring and social/emotional learning (88%). These were followed by 10 removal from the classroom as a restorative measure (80%) and by the involvement of specialised pastoral support staff (76%).

Access the full report on the [DfE website](#).



National Governance Association (NGA) annual governance survey



Open to all governors and trustees, not just NGA members. Access the survey on the [NGA website](#)



Woodland Trust - free trees for schools



Schools and communities can apply for free tree packs to plant trees in school grounds and community spaces. The Woodland Trust is giving away hundreds of thousands of trees that can be planted as copses, hedges, shelterbelts or in other creative ways.

There are different packs available, each with species selected for a particular purpose:

- Hedge
- Copse
- Wild harvest
- Year-round colour
- Working wood
- Wild wood
- Wildlife
- Urban trees

Applications can be made by schools, colleges, nurseries and outdoor-education centres, as well as all kinds of different groups including residents associations, sports clubs, parish councils, scouts and guides.

If you're applying as a school, your trees should be planted on either the school grounds, land the school has arranged regular access to or in an area that is publicly accessible. The Woodland Trust is currently taking applications for tree packs to be delivered in November 2024. Applications for November delivery are expected to close in August, or sooner depending on stock availability.

[Further information and application form](#)



Leadership strategies in school trusts

Resource from Edurio, exploring what it takes to be a high-achieving leader in a Multi-Academy Trust. The guide is based on a series of detailed interviews with over 10 members of leadership teams at MATs, featuring expert commentary from leadership mentor and former Oasis Community Learning CEO, John Murphy. Edurio spoke to a range of key figures including Chief Executive Officers, Chief Operating Officers, HR Directors, and Headteachers.

[Download the resource](#)



Government response to the Select Committee's report on Ofsted



The government response has been published, with a great many of the points raised by the committee relying upon the conclusions reached following views submitted through the [Big Listen](#). The government has rejected calls to remove the single word Ofsted judgement, stating 'the Government's view is that there are significant benefits from having an Ofsted overall effectiveness grade. In our view the priority is to look for ways to improve the current system rather than developing an alternative to it. This includes considering with Ofsted the presentation of its findings and grades, and opportunities to highlight some of the detail sitting under the summary grade'.

You can read the full response on the [GOV.UK website](#)



DfE research published



This report, considering the impact on providers of recent childcare reforms, outlines findings from the seventh wave of the childcare and early years provider pulse surveys. 1,804 providers took part including 143 school-based providers, 877 group-based providers and 784 childminders.

The following topics were covered in the survey:

- Early years workforce
- Funding
- Capacity and intention to expand
- Staff:child ratios
- Space requirements
- Experiences of looking after children with SEND
- Initial teacher training
- Experiences of childminders

[Read the full report.](#)



Inspiring Governance - withdrawal of DfE funding

**inspiring
governance**

The Inspiring Governance school governor and trustee recruitment service contract was extended for 6 months but the service will close in its current form on 30 September 2024. The DfE have decided to withdraw funding for this service. Inspiring Governance assures schools that it will continue to support boards with their recruitment needs until the closure. Do make the most of this service whilst it is available. Boards can register their vacancies on the site: [Inspiring Governance](#)



Department
for Education

Safeguarding children in schools and colleges

**Safeguarding
children in schools
and colleges: a call
for evidence**

Launch date 28 March 2024
Respond by 20 June 2024

The DfE has launched their annual consultation on safeguarding, ahead of the release of the updated Keeping Children Safe in Education statutory guidance for September 2025. The Department has already pledged that there will not be any significant changes to the guidance this year, which will be published in readiness for implementation from September 2024.

The consultation seeks views on:

- The role of designated safeguarding leads
- Child safeguarding information
- Safer staff recruitment
- Filtering and monitoring
- Supporting children following reports of sexual violence and harassment
- Protecting children in boarding and residential special schools
- Quality assuring safeguarding
- Children bringing their own devices to schools
- Artificial intelligence.

The consultation closes on 20 June and can be accessed on the [DfE website](#)

S A F E G U A R D



PE and sports in schools



Non-statutory guidance from the DfE to support schools to enhance their PE provision, increasing the access to PE and extra-curricular sport.

This document explains how schools can meet the:

- Ambitions of the [physical education \(PE\) national curriculum](#)
- Aims of the [school sport and activity action plan](#) (SSAAP)
- [Chief Medical Officers' physical activity guidelines](#)



It includes a variety of schools' approaches to providing:

- a minimum 2 hours of PE per week
- equality of access to PE and extra-curricular school sport and competition

The SSAAP published in July 2023 set out an expectation for schools to give girls and boys access to the same sports and physical activities. To embed a culture of equality in PE and school sport the Government has overseen a change to the [School Games Mark](#). Equality criteria has been added to the scheme meaning that schools can review their provision and test whether they are overcoming barriers girls and boys may face and listening to the voice of the pupils as part of their planning and delivery of PE, school sport and physical activity. Schools attaining the School Games Mark will be independently verified to ensure they are delivering the equality element of the award scheme.

Read the guidance on the [DfE website](#)



New Childline campaign 'find your calm'

The NSPCC has publicised a report explaining that Childline receives almost 40 contacts per day from children who feel unhappy and they have delivered over 14,000 counselling services to children and young people who have contacted the helpline about low mood or unhappiness. In response, Childline has launched the 'Find Your Calm' campaign to encourage children to learn different ways of coping with low moods and to find strategies that work for them. Unhappiness was the second highest sub concern seen by Childline under the main concern of 'mental health'. Nearly 40% of these counselling sessions were with young people aged between 12 and 15. Many of the young people who spoke to Childline on this topic were also concerned about issues such as loneliness, confidence, loss and anxiety.

[Read more on the NSPCC website](#)



Consultation

Early years foundation stage (EYFS) safeguarding consultation

The Department for Education (DfE) is seeking views on proposals to strengthen the safeguarding requirements within the statutory framework for the EYFS. Proposals include:

- Obtaining references for staff and other safer recruitment checks and processes
- Following up on prolonged or repeated absence of children
- Hold more than two emergency contact s for each child
- Change 'lead practitioner' to 'designated safeguarding lead'
- Set out the minimum requirements and frequency for safeguarding training for staff, with details of training provided included in safeguarding policies
- Extension of the requirement to have a paediatric first aid certificate to students on long-term placement, volunteers and apprentices
- Include a new 'safer eating' section
- Consider children's privacy when changing nappies/toileting

The consultation closes on 17 June 2024. You can read the proposals in full and submit your response via the [DfE consultation page](#).



Additional EYFS consultation



The DfE have also launched an additional EYFS consultation on the experience-based route for early years practitioners, following positive feedback from settings to this proposed change. This proposal recognises the valuable skills and experience that exist in the early years sector, and aims to give providers the flexibility to use staff more effectively by counting those without an approved qualification - but with sufficient experience - in the level 3 ratios. The consultation seeks views from the sector about how the experience-based route should work, including questions about the proposed decision-making model, eligibility criteria and process requirements. Responses to the consultation are required by 20 May 2024.

The consultation can be accessed via the [DfE website](#).



Updated Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) guidance



The EEF has updated their guidance for schools on ‘putting evidence to work - a school’s guide to implementation’. The guidance explains that an educational approach or idea may seem great in principle, but what really matters is how it manifests itself in the day-to-day work of people in schools, colleges, and early years settings.

The guidance on effective implementation – and the accompanying resources – are designed to help schools make sure new approaches or practices have the biggest possible impact on children and young people’s outcomes. The guidance explains that governing board members may find the documents useful to support and challenge their school(s).

Based on a new review of the evidence, the updated guidance is focused on three key elements:

1. The behaviours that drive effective implementation
2. The contextual factors that facilitate implementation
3. A structured, but flexible, process to enact implementation.

Access the guidance and resources on the [EEF website](#)



Staff workload and wellbeing resources



Published by the DfE, these free resources have been produced by school leaders, for school leaders, to promote staff wellbeing and support workload reduction. [Access the resources](#)

School Uniform



The DfE have published a new resource: ‘Procuring school uniform’ refers to any branded items of uniform. The resources also include guidance on developing a school uniform policy.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-uniform>

Guidance released to support schools with online reputational concerns



The South West Grid for Learning (SWGfL) have released guidance for schools on dealing with online reputational concerns. The organisation offers a helpline for schools, and reports that 46% of those contacting the helpline have concerns around online reputational issues. Since 2020, there has been a significant rise in teachers and professionals contacting the helpline with concerns around online defamation, with the helpline documenting a rise from 28% of cases in 2020 to 46% in 2023. These concerns, which are predominantly affecting teachers in secondary schools, involve the reputation of professionals, or institutions, being damaged online.

Common queries involve:

- Fake/impersonation accounts purporting to be the school or school staff
- School community groups not managed by the school
- Reviews on dedicated sites or Google
- Negative discourse about the school online
- Local/national news outlets covering stories about the school and/or teachers
- Allegations of misconduct or abuse.

The guidance is intended to support school leaders, governors, federations, and trust leaders within schools in England. The guidance helps schools to navigate online reputational issues whilst giving a better understanding of what resources they have available to help manage these situations including information on:

- Responding to online posts
- Online reputational issues that can be successfully reported
- Other routes to resolution
- Support available.

Access the guidance on the [SWGfL website](#).



PSHE Association guidance

The PSHE Association has published guidance 'PSHE education: what it covers and why it works' which is free to access. The association explain 'There is compelling evidence that PSHE education — when taught well — helps keep children and young people safe, mentally and physically healthy and prepared for life and work. Yet there's sometimes a lack of understanding, or a misunderstanding, of what the PSHE education curriculum actually covers, and why.

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We have therefore put together these handy breakdowns of the PSHE education curriculum, for primary and secondary, to highlight why it is so important for schools to address each area. We've included key prevalence statistics for various issues, alongside relevant research and impact evidence to show how PSHE education can help and why all aspects of the PSHE education curriculum are there for good reason.'

The guides give useful information for governing board members and can be used by the school in their communication with parents.

Access the guidance on the [PSHE Association website](#)



Lunch & Learn



NCOGS CPD and networking sessions

The next networking event will be held virtually (via Teams) on Friday 10th May from 12.30 – 2.00pm. Bookings can be made via [GovernorHub](#).

The session will be an open forum for COGS to raise issues or topics on which they wish to seek the views of others. We will have a few 'starters for 10', but want this session to be focused on the areas of importance to you.

If you have any particular questions, or topics you would like included, please email the NCOGS clerk, Bec Davey, by 4.00pm on Thursday 9th May bdaveyclerk@outlook.com

We look forward to welcoming you!