

# **Clerks/Governance**

# **Professional Briefing**

# **Spring 2026**

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LCC Governor Services



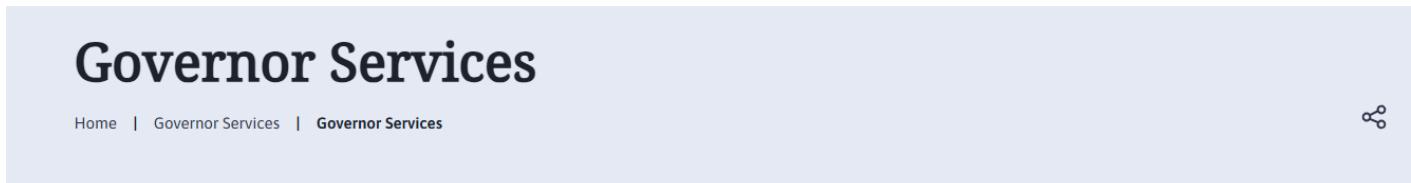
# Agenda

- **Governor Services Updates:**
  - Update on Governance Resources
  - Requirements to inform Governor Services on changes / minutes
- **Briefing Updates:**
  - Diocesan Update
  - Governance in the Spring Term
  - Governor Safeguarding Training
  - LCC and other Updates
  - Governor Recruitment and Appointment
  - Individual Leadership Pay Range (ILPR)
  - School Exclusion and Independent Review Panels

# Governor Services Updates

## Update to Governance Resources

- Governor Services Governor and Clerks Resources and all briefing presentations can now be found on the NEW Governor Services Professional web page:



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Governor Services website. The main title 'Governor Services' is at the top left. Below it are navigation links: 'Home' and 'Governor Services' (which is highlighted in blue). At the top right is a 'Share' icon. The main content area contains text about supporting governing bodies in Lincolnshire schools and a list of services provided. On the right side, there is a sidebar with links to 'Governance Resources', 'Governance Training Offer', 'Clerk Resources', and 'Governor Resources'.

We support governing bodies in Lincolnshire schools, and provide advice, guidance and support to all stakeholders. This helps ensure they remain compliant in their statutory duties, particularly in maintained schools.

This support includes:

- appointment and election of governors
- correspondence related to the governance of schools
- enquiries and requests for advice from school governors and clerks
- review of instruments of governance for school governing bodies
- signposting to relevant governance training and resources for continued development of governance
- responsibility for maintaining records of Maintained Schools' Governing Bodies

To contact us for advice and guidance please email [Governorsupport@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:Governorsupport@lincolnshire.gov.uk).

If you require telephone support, please email us to request a priority call back.

# Governor Services Updates

## Requirements to inform Governor Services

### Maintained Schools:

- **We have removed the FGB Form from use.**
- [Chair and Vice Chair Form](#)

Completed annually in Autumn Term and when necessary, through academic year

- [Governance Information Form](#)

For all governance appointments, Resignations, and updates to contact information for Clerks, HEADTEACHERS and all Governors, including associate members.

**Please ensure that you complete the “school name” box on the form.**

**Please also send details of new maintained Headteachers to [educationteam@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:educationteam@lincolnshire.gov.uk)**

**Please inform The Diocese if a foundation governor resigns**

- FGB Agenda:

Where a change of school category is being considered (ie Academisation)

- Minutes:

FGB and Extra-ordinary FGB minutes

Finance Committee (where appropriate)

**ESCALATION PROCESS IS NOW IN PLACE:**

**CoG, HT and Locality Leads will be cc'd into emails requesting outstanding information**

# BRIEFING UPDATES

## Lincoln Diocesan Board of Education Update

**For advice and support please contact Kim Dove:**  
[kim.dove@lincoln.anglican.org](mailto:kim.dove@lincoln.anglican.org)

**Termly Governor briefings**, next session 29th January 5.30 to 7pm  
book at <https://www.lincolndiocesaneducation.com/governance>  
This is free of charge, and all schools are welcome to attend.

**Termly Governor Induction training** please see the DBE website for dates and prices.

**LDBE website** includes lots of resources and guidance  
<https://www.lincolndiocesaneducation.com/governanceinformation>

**Foundation Governor vacancies.** The Diocese are keen to help schools find governors – please send adverts to Kim and we will advertise on our website and actively help in the search.

## When to contact LDBE

- **DBS checks for foundation governors**

Foundation governors should be DBS checked at the start of every new term of office, which is usually every 4 years. Please send DBS certificate numbers for foundation governors to Kim for DBE records.

- **Appointment or resignation of clerk**
- **Resignation of foundation governor**
- **Foundation governor intending to apply for a new term of office**
- **Enquiries from potential foundation governors**
- **Any issues or concerns regarding foundation governors or ex-officio foundation governors**
- **For support recruiting new foundation governors**
- **Any other changes that you think DBE should know about**

# GOVERNANCE IN THE SPRING TERM

- Please refer to your annual planner – below are areas of note:

## Meeting and membership Items

- **Apologies**
- A reminder that the governing board should be giving consent to apologies or not consenting to apologies.

**Consent should be recorded as approved/not approved to ensure that disqualification for non-attendance can be implemented correctly.**

*"A governor who, without the consent of the governing body, has failed to attend their meetings for a continuous period of six months beginning with the date of the first such meeting the governor fails to attend, is, on the expiry of that period, disqualified from continuing to hold office as a governor of that school".*

- **Declarations of Interest**

Please ensure that your governors comply with the statutory requirement to declare interests and register any pecuniary interests.

- **Skills Audit and Appointments**

- Ensure that the governing board is reviewing the skills matrix/dashboard when looking to appoint governors.
- Ensure that the governing board follows any ratified co-option policy when appointing co-opted governors.
- Ensure that the HT is using the relevant [LCC Parent/Staff election guidance](#) (maintained community and voluntary controlled) or ratified Parent/Staff Election process.
- Re-appointments of governors with responsibilities (CoG, VCoG, governance roles) – ensure that you reappoint with all roles and responsibilities to continue

- **Succession Planning**

- Please ensure that the risk register is updated around succession planning for Chair and Vice Chair roles as necessary.
- The 2026 version of Succession Breeds Success will be available from the beginning of February and signposted in the Spring Term 2 newsletter.
- NGA have a new module - [Taking the Chair](#) which aims to provide understanding of responsibilities and leadership of the governing board.

# GOVERNANCE IN THE SPRING TERM

- **ATTENDANCE**
- An area of focus for DfE and Ofsted.
- New DfE Attendance Baseline Improvement Expectations (ABIE) will be introduced in **mainstream** schools in September 2026, but an indicative ABIE has been introduced to schools during the 2025-26 academic year to allow for preparation and engagement with support.
- Launched in November 2025 via VYED portal – more information has been emailed to schools via the attendance December newsletter. We have arranged for further information to be provided by attendance team in this term's Governor Partnership briefings.
- ABIE – Minimum Expectations for improvement which will be provided on an academic year basis.
- Key that Governing Boards are reviewing attendance data (groups) and trends, engage with their indicative ABIE and continue that strategic support and challenge on attendance.
- The LCC Model Attendance Policy references an appointed attendance governor.

**Reminder – Termly data provided to LA attendance officer visits could be utilised for Governing Board reporting which would negate further workload for attendance champions/HT's.**

- **FINANCIAL PLANNING**
- Maintained School Governing Bodies will be reviewing the end of year for 2026, benchmarking and setting 2026-27 budget for ratification in May.
- This should include a review of the Individual Leadership Pay Range taking account of School Teachers Pay and Conditions guidance and seek HR advice as necessary, any pay committee recommendations and include a review of the school staffing.
- Please will governing bodies review agreement of buy-back services/contracts as part of their budget setting process.
- Please see this useful [fraud checklist](#) for educational providers which governing boards and finance governors may find useful.

**Reminder – MAINTAINED SCHOOLS** – The deadline for the ratified return of the SFVS has been set by the Schools Finance Team for **13<sup>th</sup> March 2026**. If your Governing Body is unable to meet the deadline, please contact the team to inform them: [schools\\_finance@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:schools_finance@lincolnshire.gov.uk)

# GOVERNANCE IN THE SPRING TERM

- **HEALTH & SAFETY**

- Ratification of the LCC H&S Assessment (Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools only)

- **PERFORMANCE DATA and External Testing/Exams 2026**

- Boards should continue to monitor school performance data for all groups,
- Governing Boards need to be mindful of STA/DfE requirements for external testing/exams to ensure integrity of testing procedures.
- Ensure that a governor is appointed to monitor KS2 tests in May.
- Governor resources are available through “Paul’s Padlet” – through Keystone (subject to the school buying into the necessary package).
- See [Government modernises exam records with new app](#) information.

- **POLICIES**

- HR colleagues directed maintained schools to utilise the LCC Whistleblowing Policy in a pre-Christmas HR update, however this advice has now been rescinded, and schools have been informed that it is the responsibility of the Governing Body to agree and establish the school’s whistleblowing procedure and should be published on the school website - [Whistleblowing procedure for maintained schools - GOV.UK](#). As stated on the DfE page, the procedure should be based on the [LA procedure](#) and tailored to the school setting. One member of staff and one governor should be appointed who members of staff can contact if they wish to report concerns.
- Ensure that a report is shared on staff appraisal – see [Support Staff Policy](#) for more information (P5 &6).
- Ensure that governing boards are considering their school uniform policies in line with latest guidance. See Spring Term 1 Newsletter for links and information.
- Note that the [Use of reasonable force in schools - GOV.UK](#) has been updated and the new statutory guidance should be used from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2026. [Useful blog](#) signposted to schools.
- Ensure that governing boards are reviewing and approving all necessary policies.  
[Statutory Policies for Maintained Schools](#)  
[Statutory Guidance and additional resources for trusts](#)

# GOVERNANCE IN THE SPRING TERM

- **SAFEGUARDING**
- Ensure that the governing board has completed the relevant safeguarding training to meet the LCC Safeguarding Audit requirements.
- The LCC Safeguarding Team have updated the [Governor SCR Monitoring Checklist](#)

**Reminder – the LCC Safeguarding Audit (Maintained Schools and those who purchase the Safeguarding in Schools Package) is due to be signed by governors in Term 5.**

- **SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT PLAN & EVALUATION/GOVERNANCE SELF-EVALUATION**
- Boards should continue to review the priorities outlined on the SDP and monitor of both the milestones and the impact on the agreed targets.
- Governor Monitoring/Assurance is an area of review that can be very useful for governors' evidence triangulation and referred to in the Ofsted Toolkit under Leadership and Governance.
- We would expect monitoring on areas of the SDP as well as statutory areas.
- Please also consider Governor Board Self-Evaluation – [Maintained schools governance guide - 6. Evaluation - Guidance - GOV.UK](#) – this link from the Maintained School Governance Guide contains links to the NGA Governing Board Self-Evaluation.
- **SEND**
- Again, this continues to be a key area of interest to OFSTED inspectors and Governing Boards should ensure that this is carefully monitored and ensuring that there are no disadvantages for SEND pupils.

# GOVERNANCE IN THE SPRING TERM

- **STAFF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT and WELLBEING**
- Governing Boards **should ensure** that staff receive focussed and highly effective professional development in statutory guidance areas and curriculum areas.
- CPD, wellbeing and workload falls under Leadership and Governance OFSTED inspection criteria
- **SUSPENSION AND PERMANENT EXCLUSIONS**
- Identified in the Attendance and Behaviour Section of the Ofsted Toolkit.
- Governing Boards should continue to monitor data for trends and assure themselves that strategic policies in schools are fit for purpose.
- We strongly recommend that all governors have completed exclusion training to meet their statutory duties.

**The Pupil Re-integration team continue to offer FREE training to all boards and clerks.**

- **SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE ACTION PLANS**
- Governors should ensure that strategy includes sustainability, the relevant frameworks are in place and are monitored and reported on.
- Please review the [Sustainability Support for Education](#) website for resources
- A weekly briefing is released by the [UKSSN Operations Group](#) who also issue a monthly funding bulletin which schools may find useful.

# Governor Safeguarding Training

Referenced from the Safeguarding Self-Assessment Audit 2025/26, this is the guidance identifying expectations for training:

- We would always encourage all Governors and Trustees to annually stay up to date with changes to Safeguarding in Education settings, and completion of annual training will always assist this including all school staff safeguarding training at a setting being a further expectation to receive up to date information and assist them in their strategic role to understand the training all staff are receiving. However, we have outlined the below guidance for the minimum requirements for settings to consider how you implement training this academic year, due to limited changes made to legislation and guidance such as KCSIE 2025.
- **New Governors & Trustees in post this academic year:**
  - -Encouraged to complete the LCC Safeguarding Essentials for Governors & Trustees training via Enable
  - -A full Safeguarding Training module completed by an external training provider such as NGA (we encourage you to use this if your school have had this training subsidised).
- **New Safeguarding Governors in post this academic year:**
  - -Expectation to complete the LCC Safeguarding Essentials for Governors & Trustees training via Enable
  - -A full Safeguarding Training module completed by an external training provider such as NGA (we encourage you to use this if your school have had this training subsidised).

# Governor Safeguarding Training

## All existing Governors & Trustees:

- Encouraged to consider completion of the LCC Safeguarding Essentials for Governors and Trustees training if not completed in the past two years. If not yet completed, then consideration to attend this academic year.
- -A full safeguarding training module by an external training provider such as NGA completed within the past two years. If completed within this timeframe, a refresher training course by an external training provider would suffice for this academic year. However, we would always encourage schools to utilise the training providers that are being subsidised for your school if applicable.

## Existing Safeguarding Governors:

- Completion of the LCC Safeguarding Essentials for Governors and Trustees training this academic year if not completed during the past two years.
- A safeguarding training module by an external training provider such as NGA completed within the past two years (Sept 2023-Sept 2025). If completed within this timeframe, a refresher course would suffice for this academic year.

# LCC and other Updates

- **LCC Health & Safety Assessment Ratification – Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools only**
- Please ensure that the governing body ratify the LCC H&S assessment, subject to school status.

## **Audit & Risk Management Update:**

- Please ensure that your governing body are planning to conduct a board effectiveness exercise during the academic year. The NGA have a useful 20 questions document, but others are available!  
**Please do not confuse this effectiveness exercise with a skills audit exercise.**

## **REMINDER:**

Maintained Schools should have adopted the DfE Complaints Procedure **and** Policy for Managing Serial and Unreasonable Complaints. These can be found here:

[School complaints procedures: guidance for maintained schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-complaints-procedures-guidance-for-maintained-schools)

**PLEASE ENSURE THAT THESE ARE AVAILABLE ON THE SCHOOL WEBSITE.** Complaints advice is available from Governor Services and Legal Services

- **OFSTED**
- **OFSTED FAQ's:** [School inspections: frequently asked questions – Ofsted: education](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspections-frequently-asked-questions-ofsted-education)
- The government has confirmed that [inspections of multi-academy trusts](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/inspections-of-multi-academy-trusts) will be introduced through an amendment to the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill.
- OFSTED have clarified wording around engagement with those responsible for governance.
  
- **DFE**
- [Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill 2024: policy summary](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/childrens-wellbeing-and-schools-bill-2024-policy-summary)
- [Maintained School Governance Guide and Academy Trust Governance Guide](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/maintained-school-governance-guide-and-academy-trust-governance-guide) have been issued in HTML format – use CTRL F to search.
- [Effective governance resources](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/effective-governance-resources)

# Governor Recruitment

Effective governance resources

# Governor Recruitment

## Become a School Governor – Make a Difference in Education!

### Are you passionate about education and your local community?

Join us as a **School Governor** and help shape the future of our children's learning.

### What is a School Governor?

Governors are volunteers who work with school leaders to ensure the school provides the best possible education. They help set the school's vision, monitor performance, and support strategic decisions.

### Why Become a Governor?

- Make a meaningful impact on young people's lives
- Gain valuable leadership and governance experience
- Use your skills to support your local school
- Learn more about education and community development

### • Who Can Apply?

We welcome applications from people of all backgrounds. You don't need to be an education expert - just committed to making a difference. Training and support are provided. To ensure eligibility, applicants must provide the necessary information for DBS and Section 128 checks within 21 days of appointment—otherwise, they may unfortunately be disqualified.

### • Time Commitment:

Around 6–10 meetings per year, plus occasional school visits and training. Flexible around work and other commitments.

### • Interested?

To find out more contact: [Insert contact email]  
To apply: [Insert website or application link]

## Become a School Governor!

We welcome applicants from all backgrounds—no education experience needed, just a passion for making a difference. Full training & support provided.

Interested? Get in touch: [Insert contact email or link]

SchoolGovernor #MakeADifference #VolunteerOpportunity  
#EducationMatters

Together, we can help every child thrive.

# Governor Recruitment

## Use Your Professional Expertise to Shape Education – Become a School Governor!

Are you a professional looking to give back to your community in a meaningful way? Join us as a **School Governor** and bring your skills to the heart of education.

### • Why Professionals Make Great Governors

Your experience in leadership, finance, HR, law, project management, or other fields can make a real difference in how schools are run. Governors help guide strategic decisions, ensure accountability, and support school improvement.

### • What's Involved?

- **Strategic Oversight** – Help set the school's vision and priorities
- **Support & Challenge** – Work with school leaders to drive improvement
- **Community Impact** – Influence outcomes for children and families

### • Time Commitment:

Around 6–10 meetings per year, plus occasional visits and training. Flexible around your work schedule.

### • What You'll Gain

- Board-level experience in a public sector setting
- Insight into education and governance
- Opportunities for professional development
- The satisfaction of making a lasting impact

### • Who We're Looking For

- Professionals from all sectors who are:
- Committed to improving education
- Strategic thinkers and team players
- Willing to learn and contribute

We welcome applications from people of all backgrounds. No prior experience in education needed—full training and support provided. To ensure eligibility, applicants must provide the necessary information for DBS and Section 128 checks within 21 days of appointment—otherwise, they may unfortunately be disqualified.

### • Ready to Get Involved?

-  [Insert contact email]
-  [Insert website or application link]

### • Professionals Wanted: Become a School Governor!

Use your skills in leadership, finance, HR, law, or project management to make a real impact in education.

-  Strategic board-level experience
-  Flexible commitment around your schedule
-  Full training provided
-  Make a difference in your community

No education background needed—just your professional insight and passion for helping children thrive.

Interested? Get in touch: [Insert contact email or link]

**SchoolGovernor #Leadership  
#CommunityImpact #ProfessionalDevelopment  
#VolunteerOpportunity**

# Governor Appointment

# THE ROLE OF A CLERK – Membership Capacity

## Appointment of Co-opted Governors:

- Appointed by the governing body **at a Full Governing Body meeting** – based on skill set required to contribute to the effective governance and success of school.  
(Utilise a skills audit tool for this purpose such as the NGA skills audit and dashboard).

## Appointment of Foundation Governors:

- Appointed by the relevant body. (DBE, PCC, check your instrument)
- These appointments can be lengthy, so ensure that you leave sufficient time.
- Check the Instrument of Government for the relevant body. (Diocese/PCC/Foundation)

## Appointment of Headteacher:

- A member of the governing body by virtue of office.
- May resign as a governor at any time, or withdraw resignation, by notifying the clerk in writing.

A Headteacher or an ex officio foundation governor stops being a governor when the position which entitles them to be a governor comes to an end.

## Appointment of Local Authority Governor:

- The LA Governor is **nominated** by the Local Authority and **appointed by the governing body at a Full Governing Body meeting**.
- The skills required should be discussed and minuted in a FGB meeting, and the Clerk should send a copy of the skills criteria form, (skills matrix – new vacancies only), and minutes of discussion prior to any nominee being sought.
- Governor Services has a [process guide](#) for clerks in order to ensure that the Local Authority nomination meets the requirements of the governing body. You will get a reminder.

# THE ROLE OF A CLERK – Membership Capacity

## Election and Appointment of Parent Governors

- Elections delegated to HT in schools by Local Authority.
- VA, Foundation and Foundation Special schools may choose their own process, but many adopt the [LA process](#) for ease.
- A parent election **MUST** be held when a parent governor resigns or comes to the end of term of office.
- **THERE IS NO RIGHT TO AUTOMATIC RE-APPOINTMENT.**
- Appointment dates are based on the date of the election process closing.

## Appointment of Partnership Governors:

- Appointed by the Governing Body – nominations are based on skills and there are criteria for appointing.

## Election and Appointment of Staff Governor:

- Elections delegated to HT in schools by Local Authority
- VA, Foundation and Foundation Special schools may choose their own process, but many adopt the [LA process](#) for ease.
- Elections in school to include all staff (not just teaching staff)
- If no staff member is nominated, the post is left vacant until an eligible candidate is identified and a staff election process is completed.
- **THERE IS NO RIGHT TO AUTOMATIC RE-APPOINTMENT**
- Appointment dates are based on the date of the election process closing.

# Individual Leadership Pay Range (ILPR)

# Maintained School Governance Responsibilities for Individual Leadership Pay Range (ILPR) Review

- The Individual Leadership Pay Range is the salary range (historically 7 points) which is assigned to the Headteacher role.
- This is usually set on appointment and should be reviewed when:
  - There are significant changes to responsibilities
  - Changes to the size of the school
  - To attract/retain the Headteacher
  - As outlined in line with HR policy
- Governing bodies must calculate the unit total for the school annually and review the staffing structure, including leadership roles and allowances as per the LCC Pay Policy (section 8).
- This calculation will enable Governing Bodies to assign the school to a Headteacher Group and prompt a review of ILPR (LCC Pay Policy – Section 9i).
- If there is no change to the Headteacher Group Governing Bodies can simply confirm that the current ILPR is appropriate at their FGB meeting.
- The guidance states “the relevant body may also determine the headteacher’s pay range at any time if it considers it necessary to reflect a significant change in the responsibilities of the post” – therefore Governing bodies should consider this advice and NOT review the ILPR simply because the Headteacher has reached the top of their current pay range.
- Governing bodies should NOT exceed the maximum of the assigned Headteacher group unless exceptional circumstances apply.
- Governors should take advice from their LCC HR advisor on this matter before making any determinations.
- Chairs of Governors have received correspondence from LCC HR on this matter and are now expected to provide information annually on HT pay.
- Discussions regarding ILPR should be taken in confidential session at Full Governing Body meetings and exclude HT and governors who are staff where a review is required.

# **SCHOOL EXCLUSION AND INDEPENDENT REVIEW PANEL INFORMATION**

January 2026



# SCHOOL EXCLUSION GUIDANCE

- HT's must follow the School Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Guidance - [Suspension and permanent exclusion guidance](#) which was last updated in August 2024.
- The HT of the school must meet the following two criteria to permanently exclude a pupil from the school:
  - In response to a serious breach, or persistent breaches, of the school's behaviour policy; **and**
  - Where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others (such as staff or pupils) in the school
- *A pupil's behaviour outside of school can also be considered as a reason for an exclusion if this is in line with the school's behaviour policy.*
- The Governing Body should convene a Committee/Panel in line with the statutory guidance appropriately.
- Following a decision by school Governors Discipline Committee/Governors Exclusion Panel to uphold a permanent exclusion, parents have the right to request the decision is reviewed by an IRP if they consider it to be unfair.
- A parent can still request a review by the IRP even if they do not want their child to return to the school.

# Governor Discipline Committee (GDC)/Governor Exclusion Panel (GEP)

## Advice to governors/trustees

- All Committee/Panel members should participate, ask questions, and challenge the evidence presented.
- Committee/Panel members should have due regard to the matters raised by the parent.  
(Consider the position of the parent - how would you want to be treated during the review and how would you expect as a parent for everything to be considered?)
- Important that panel **should** take this into account the views of the child, particularly if the child is demonstrating remorse.
- Parents may arrive with additional information - we advise accepting additional information.
  - If the additional information is significant, but reasonable to be read on the day, adjourn for short time for all to read.
  - If the additional information is significant, but lengthy – adjourn for longer period of time to allow all parties to have sufficient time to read and consider.
- Always allow the parent to have their “FULL” say at the GDC/GEP, as this sometimes negates the parent’s desire to go to IRP.
- Weigh the evidence consistently ensuring that minutes accurately reflect an explanation of how you reached your conclusions.
- **REMEMBER** that IRP members look at information that governors could have reasonably had before them, even tabled late, but before they made a decision.

# **Governor Discipline Committee (GDC)/Governor Exclusion Panel (GEP)**

## **Advice to Clerks**

- Ensure that you follow the relevant timescales for setting up the GDC/GEP
- Ensure paperwork is correct in the bundle
- Ensure that the school has included any relevant policies in the pack
- Ensure that all the relevant attendees have been invited
- Make sure that you follow the correct protocols on the day
- Ensure that minutes are clear, factual and have questions clearly assigned to the relevant panel member and have any adjournments clearly marked.
- Minutes should accurately reflect an explanation of how the committee/panel reached their conclusions.
- Ensure that the minuting of the decision is very clear to provide clarity for the decision letter.
- Ensure that the minutes have been approved and signed by Chair.
- ALWAYS record timings of the meeting and timings of the deliberations section of the meeting.

# INDEPENDENT REVIEW PANEL (IRP)

- The Independent Review Panel (IRP) follows the School Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Guidance - [Suspension and permanent exclusion guidance](#) which was last updated in August 2024.
- An Independent Review Panel is made up of three - five panel members (Section 161):
  - A lay member to chair the panel who has not worked in any school in a paid capacity, disregarding any experience as a school governor or volunteer.
  - Current or former school governors (of a maintained school, members of a PRU management committees and directors of academy trusts) who have served as a governor for at least 12 consecutive months in the last five years, provided they have not been teachers or headteachers during that time.
  - Headteachers or individuals who have been a headteacher within the last five years.
- The panel must apply the civil standard of proof i.e., 'on the balance of probabilities' which means that it is more likely than not that a fact is true. This should be applied rather than the criminal standard of 'beyond reasonable doubt'. (Section 202)
- Receive relevant training by the Local Authority Principal Education Solicitor
- The IRP will seek and have regard to views from all parties present, which includes School's HT, a Governor representative from the GDC/GEP, Parent, child, SEN expert, Social Worker and Virtual School HT as relevant to the permanent exclusion.

## They can decide to:

- uphold the governing board's decision not to reinstate.
- recommend that the governing board reconsiders reinstatement.
- or quash the governing board's decision and direct that the governing board reconsiders reinstatement.
- The exclusion cannot be removed off the pupil's school record, but a copy of the decision will be appended to the school file.

# INDEPENDENT REVIEW PANEL (IRP)

## What an IRP will look for:

- Solid 'evidence' pack indicating a clear and thorough process was applied – copies of all papers must be included.
- Were all the relevant parties informed and invited to attend the Governor Discipline Committee (GDC) / Governor Exclusion Panel (GEP) (particularly where the pupil has a social worker or if the pupil is LAC, the VSH).
- Evidence of relevant policies considered and where appropriate, reasonable adjustments made.
- Support in place and implemented (e.g. Pastoral Care Programme implemented and exhausted (paper copy must be provided) as opposed to 'suggestion' to put a PCP in place but not effected).
- All witness statements are signed and dated by individuals.
- The parent(s) view.

# INDEPENDENT REVIEW PANEL (IRP)

## What an IRP will look for:

- The pupil's view
- Does the pupil have an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP)/Special Educational Needs or a Disability (SEND)? Have these been factored in before reaching a decision a) permanently exclude; b) uphold the decision to permanently exclude?
- Data relating to other exclusions from the setting (academic year)
- That the decision to exclude was taken by the Headteacher
- That the decision given by the HT and GDC/GEP correlate
- Robust detailed minutes of the hearing evidencing:
  - Rigorous scrutiny and challenge by the GDC/GEP members.
  - Timings for both the start and finish time of the meeting and deliberation session.
  - Questions should be appropriately assigned (eg HT, Governor (which governor)).
- Deliberations and minutes should be detailed with clear line of understanding of decision.

# INDEPENDENT REVIEW PANEL CONSIDERATIONS

Questions that the IRP will need to consider as part of their role:

- On the balance of probabilities did the pupil do what was alleged?
  - *What did they do?*
  - *What is the evidence to support it?*
- If they did – was that a serious breach or persistent breach of the school's policy?
  - *Has there been a breach of the policy?*
- If it was, would allowing the pupil to remain seriously harm the educational welfare of the child or others?
  - *What is the impact on the child remaining?*

# INDEPENDENT REVIEW PANEL CONSIDERATIONS

Questions that the IRP will need to consider as part of their role:

- Considering only the information the governors had before them or could reasonably expect to have had before them – was the decision:
  - **Illegal**
  - *Did the governing body act outside of the scope of its legal powers?*
  - **Irrational**
  - *Did the governing board rely on irrelevant points, fail to take account of all relevant points, or make a decision so unreasonable that no governing board acting reasonably in such circumstances could have made it?*
  - **Subject to any procedural impropriety**
  - *Was the process for exclusion from the HT and governors considered fair/procedurally unfair or flawed?*
  - *Is there any evidence of bias; was there a failure to notify parents of their right to make representations; did the governing board make a decision without having given parents an opportunity to make representations; did the governing board fail to give reasons for a decision*
  - **If none of the above matters are satisfied the IRP cannot quash the decision but they can recommend reconsideration - remember that the IRP has no power to order reinstatement.**
  - **The financial adjustment is only payable following the IRP's decision to quash the PEX and direct that the governing board reconsiders reinstatement AND where the Governing Body's decision is to decline re-instatement.**

# INDEPENDENT REVIEW PANEL MEETING

## What Governors/Trustees should expect in terms of challenge at an IRP:

- That governors had the relevant training to undertake the role of the committee/panel member and understand the scope of their decision making (Equality and SEND).
- Attendance of any relevant professionals.
- **Challenge** – the IRP need to satisfy themselves the decision to permanently exclude is the right decision as it affects a child's future in terms of their education.
- Confirmation that the school offered a 'reasonable' amount of interventions / adjustments to policies to support the pupil, before permanent exclusion was applied.

## REMEMBER:

- The IRP members are testing the evidence.
- It IS not personal (although appreciate that HT and Governor may feel that)
- It IS a proper review of the evidence that was available to the GDC/ GEP.
- If the school and governors have followed the guidance there should be nothing that the IRP can do.

# Governor Services Training Offer

## 2025-26

- The [Governance Training Offer 2025-26](#) is now available via the Governor Services web page.
- Please note that this academic year we are using the Ticket Tailor platform rather than Microsoft forms to book training.

### Governance Training Offer

Home | Governor Services | [Governance Training Offer](#)

The Local Authority is committed to giving governors and trustees the opportunity to access quality training opportunities via virtual online training sessions which are free, unless otherwise stated. The Local Authority continues to purchase the NGA Learning Link platform for maintained school settings in Lincolnshire, to give governors the opportunity to access training materials online.

If you require a specific type of support that is not listed in this offer, please email [Governorsupport@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:Governorsupport@lincolnshire.gov.uk).

We look forward to welcoming you to the sessions and hope that you find them useful on your governance journey.

### Governance Training Offer

- Governor Partnership Briefings →
- Governor/Trustee Training Offer →
- Clerk/Governor Professional Training Offer →
- NGA Learning Link →



**Governor Partnership Briefing [DRAFT]**

Multiple dates and times

Online, Microsoft Teams

To support all Governing Boards, Lincolnshire County Council delivers FREE Governor Partnership Briefings in the autumn, spring and summer terms. These provide key strategic summaries so Governors/Trustees and Clerks/Governance Professionals are kept up-to-date.

All briefings are virtual - held in the afternoon at 2:00pm and repeated again in the evening at 7:00pm. There is no need to attend both sessions.

[Book tickets](#)

NEED HELP?

[Manage tickets](#)

# FUTURE CLERKING EVENTS

## CLERKS/GOVERNANCE PROFESSIONAL BRIEFINGS

- **SUMMER TERM:** Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> April 2026 – 10am

## CLERKS/GOVERNANCE PROFESSIONAL TRAINING SESSIONS

- **28/01/2026** – Induction Training for Clerks (Maintained Schools)
- **10/02/2026** – Exclusion Training
- **25/02/2026** – Complaints Training

**Due to low take up - both the forum and support sessions will not be run in the Spring Term. If there is sufficient interest, we may look to put on a forum in the Summer Term.**

# FUTURE GOVERNANCE EVENT DATES

## GOVERNOR PARTNERSHIP

### SPRING TERM:

**18/02/2026** - Governor Partnership Briefing

### SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER GOVERNANCE TRAINING:

- **22/01/2026** – Governors Health and Safety Awareness
- **30/01/2026** – An introduction to the Early Years Foundation Stage
- **03/02/2026** – Safeguarding Essentials for Governors and Trustees
- **03/02/2026** – SEND for Governors and Trustees
- **04/02/2026** – CiC and PLAC
- **04/02/2026** – Emotionally-based School Avoidance
- **11/02/2026** – Induction Training for New Governors (Maintained Schools)
- **03/03/2026** – Governors Health and Safety Awareness
- **11/03/2026** – Complaints Training for Governors (Maintained Schools)

# Thank you for attending.

Your feedback is important to us  
complete the [Feedback Form](#) or

