Spring issue 1

HILLINGDON
LONDON

# Schools Governors Update

As the spring term gathers momentum, your boards will be focusing on key areas including pupil progress, budget planning, safeguarding and preparation for the rest of the academic year. We continue to keep you informed of forthcoming activities and events delivered by the Local Authority (LA) Schools' Governance Service as well as highlighting some of the recent issues impacting education and governance.

**Hillingdon Council training and updates**
Thank you to all those who attended the governor training sessions that we delivered this term as part of our ongoing commitment to support governing boards in Hillingdon schools. We have further trainings planned for the spring and summer term.

## Upcoming events

### Understanding the governor responsibilities for SEND and inclusion provision within schools - Tuesday 24 February 2026 at 6pm.

*Book here*

This online training outlines the responsibilities governors have for championing effective special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and inclusion provision in schools. It will highlight the local and national picture whilst allowing reflection on your own setting and provides an insight into what an inclusive classroom may look like during school visits. It will also outline how the LA supports schools with SEND and the new The SEND Sufficiency Strategy.

### Understanding school performance data - Monday 23 March 2026 at 6pm *Book here*

This online training will develop governors' understanding of school data and how to interpret data to enable governors to prepare for and participate in data-driven meetings.

### Ofsted inspection updates for school governors - Tuesday 12 May 2026 at 6pm

*Book here*

This online session will explain the recently introduced Ofsted report card framework, offering practical guidance for governors. Information will be shared from the Hillingdon schools who have recently been inspected.

### An introduction into understanding the use of AI in schools for school governors - Monday 22 June 2026 at 6pm *Book here*

This online training will explore how AI is currently being used within schools and the impact this is having in classrooms. It will also look at how governors can use AI tools to support and enhance their role. Details of all previous events can be found here: *LA Training for School Governors - Leap*

### Budget planning

This is a key focus for this term, and a crucial role for all governing boards is scrutinising and approving budgets. The Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) is to be completed and submitted to the Finance team by Friday 27 March. *Schools financial value standard - GOV.UK* Q4 budget monitoring information is also to be submitted at the end of March. The 2026/2027 three- year budget plans are to be approved by governing boards and submitted to the LA's Finance team by Friday 22 May. A dedicated page on the council's School Finance Team for any information in regard to finance can be found on LEAP. For more information, visit *Finance - Leap*

### School email addresses for governors

Whilst there is no statutory requirement for governors to use a school email address instead of a personal one for discussing governing board matters, we do strongly advise the use of secure school email accounts by all governors/clerks. As a governor, the personal data you send over email must be kept secure, and by using a school email address this will help you to meet the GDPR requirement to prevent any data breaches and enables you to respond to any Freedom of Information or subject access requests quickly.

*Continued*

We would recommend that a permanent email address is set up for chairs and clerks which can be passed on, preventing information being inadvertently sent to individuals who have left the school. Please do discuss this with your boards if this is not something you currently have in place.

# National agenda for governance

## Ofsted

Further to the re-starting of inspections, please see the link from Ofsted explaining the new report cards. *Understanding Ofsted report cards and grades - GOV.UK*

## School data – Inspection Data Summary Reports (IDSR)

Ofsted has updated the IDSRs to reflect 2025 data and align with the renewed inspection framework. IDSRs are used by inspectors before and during inspections to inform lines of enquiry and discussion with school leaders. They bring together multi-year data on pupil demographics, attendance, attainment, exclusions, and prior attainment, presented in a structured and comparative format.

Ensuring that governors boards have sight of the IDSR is part of the data required in order to have a clear understanding of the school.

## Complaints

Many of you will have experienced the rise in parental complaints. A recent survey shows that there were more than five million formal parent complaints last year. New guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) in partnership with Ofsted and Parentkind outlines to parents how to formally complain in an effort to reduce the number of escalated and often aggressive disputes. As well as a five step complaint process for parents, the guidance stresses to schools the importance of accessibility, emotional intelligence and trust.

Schools are encouraged to ensure complaint policies are easy to find and understand. The guidance aims to reset relationships between parents and schools. As governors it would be useful to review your current complaints policy, ensuring it is fit for purpose. It is also encouraged to regularly review the number and types of complaints that your school is receiving. This is a useful way to track if there are any specific trends or issues in regard to parental complaints. *Parent guide to school complaints* *Schools guide to parents complaints*

## Mobile phones

*DfE guidance on mobile phones in schools*

The government has recently issued new guidance urging all schools to implement a mobile phone ban. Ofsted have confirmed they will look at phone policies and how effectively they are applied during inspections from April. Previously the DfE felt it was "for school leaders to develop and implement a tailored policy but the new guidance states "all schools should be mobile phone-free environments by default", anything other than this should be an exception only.

As a board reviewing your school's current mobile phone policy is highly recommended. The government is to launch its consultation "A safer digital childhood" A national conversation to gather views and drive action to keep children safe online. *Government to drive action to improve children's relationship with mobile phones and social media - GOV.UK*

## Attendance and behaviour

It is clear that attendance and behaviour continues to be a key focus for the government, and governors play a vital role in monitoring this in order to improve standards within schools. It is essential that data is regularly reviewed, looking at any trends that may be emerging and scrutinising whether any particular group face specific barriers to attending, as well as understanding what support schools are giving them.

As governors please ensure that you have sight of your school's Attendance Baseline Improvement Expectations (ABIE). Also understand how your school's data compares to other schools locally, as well as the national average.

As part of the Regional Improvement for Standards and Excellence programme (RISE) the DfE isholding a conference providing a fresh insight and strategies on improving attendance and attainment in your school.

Click to register *DfE RISE school attendance and attainment conference for primary schools*

**We'd like to thank you for continued commitment to the schools, children and your community in Hillingdon. Your strategic oversight and dedication as governors remain central to supporting effective leadership, maintaining high standards and promoting positive outcomes for all pupils.**


## LA Schools' Governance Service

Children's Services, Hillingdon Council,
Civic Centre, Uxbridge, UB8 1UW

Email: *schoolgovernance@hillingdon.gov.uk*

Please access education information via *LEAP*