



Welcome to our governance news update

The February half term break is upon us. We hope you have a restful break.

A few updates from us this week, and a request for your opinions and ideas on the annual schedule of governing board business. We write it to help you manage your work, so we want to ensure it remains as useful as possible.

As always, if you have any questions about the contents of the newsletter, please do get in touch.



Jeremy Masson
Interim Service Manager
for School Effectiveness
and Governance



Helen Tate
Governor Support
Officer



Ruth Pangu
Clerk to Governors
Team Lead

Contact us

For **governance** queries
email: governorservices@oxfordshire.gov.uk
Phone: 0330 0249 046
For **clerking** queries
email: clerking.service@oxfordshire.gov.uk

News Update

Oxfordshire Updates

Annual Schedule of Governing Board Business – feedback please

Governor Services



Annual Schedule of Governing Board Business

Academic Year 2025-2026

For all those involved in school governance in Oxfordshire

Introduction

Effective governance provides strategic direction and control to schools, academies and multi-academy trusts (MATs). It creates robust accountability, oversight and assurance for their educational and financial performance and is ambitious for all children and young people to achieve the very best outcomes.

The DfE published two new Governance Guides on 7 March 2024 – [Maintained schools governance guide - Guidance - GOV.UK](#) and the [Academy trust governance guide - Guidance - GOV.UK](#). These replaced the Governance Handbook, the Competency Framework for Governance and the Clerking Competency Framework.

We are about to start our annual refresh of our Oxfordshire [Annual Schedule of Governing Board Business](#) and would like some feedback to help us to ensure that it is still meeting your needs. All suggestions will be gratefully received and taken into consideration.

Please complete the form in the link below. It should take no more than 5 minutes.

Many thanks for your feedback

[Oxfordshire Annual Schedule of Governing Board Business Feedback Survey – Fill in form](#)

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News Update

Virtual School – free training 4th March 19:00-20:00

This free briefing session is designed to equip governors with a clear understanding of their statutory responsibilities for care-experienced children and those with a social worker. It aims to build confidence in governance, clarify the role of the Oxfordshire Virtual School, and empower governors to challenge and support senior leaders in improving outcomes for vulnerable children.

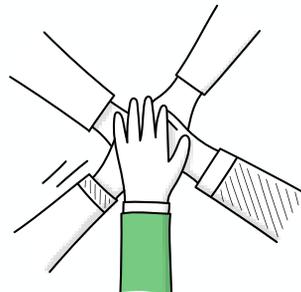
The session will include:

- Statutory duties and effective governance in relation to care-experienced children and those with a social worker
- The role of the Virtual School
- The role of the designated teacher (DT)
- Inclusion and the 2025 Ofsted Inspection Framework
- Practical guidance for governors

This briefing is recommended for all boards.

[Book here on GovernorHub](#)

FREE



Heads and Chairs briefing

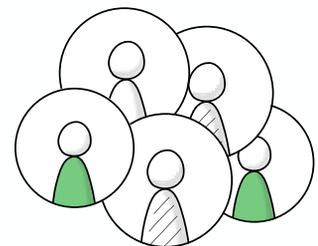
26 February 16:00-17:00

Now available to book [HERE](#)

Please mark it in your diaries, and don't hesitate to send any agenda suggestions to CEF Director Requests

CEFDirectorRequests@Oxfordshire.gov.uk.”

NOTE – this briefing is specifically for Chairs to attend with their Headteacher. If your Chair is unable to attend, please send another governor to deputise.



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News Update

Responsibilities of the governing board regarding swimming

At our last Governor Briefing, questions were asked regarding governors' responsibilities in swimming.

To provide additional clarity:

It is not explicitly stated boards have to have a 'lead governor for swimming' but rather they support the headteacher to ensure compliance with the swimming policy.

In the previous policy we did have a 'Governors Checklist' but we have dropped the 'Governor' bit as it can be filled in by either the headteacher or governor or other responsible for swimming.

The swimming policy, forms and training can be found on our SLA Online pages >Health and Safety Toolkit> School Swimming...

Extract from policy attached:

The local authority (LA) is the employer of maintained controlled, voluntary controlled and community schools and has responsibility for health and safety. Governing bodies remain accountable for complying with the LA policies and procedures contained within them. In academies, it is up to boards to decide whether and how to delegate the creation, maintenance, and approval of policy documents within their trust. Academies can use LA health and safety information as guidance and, where available, a model policy. Boards remain accountable to ensure any policies and procedures are relevant to the trust. Where schools use leisure provider pools, partnership working is vital, not only to keep pupils and staff safe, but also to ensure the inclusion of a breadth of aquatic opportunities, which meet the needs of all pupils.

3.1 Overall Oxfordshire County Council (Employer) Responsibility

Oxfordshire County Council as the Local Authority oversees swimming safety in all maintained schools through its Safe Practice in School Swimming Policy. In Academies, Foundation, and Voluntary Aided schools, this responsibility lies with the Governing Body as employer.

3.2 School Responsibility - Governors and Headteachers

The Headteacher, with support from the Governing Body, is required to designate a staff member as the 'School Swimming Co-ordinator' responsible for implementing the Safe Practice in School Swimming Policy for all school swimming activities. This includes managing either the school's own swimming facility or coordinating with third-party pool providers. Governors and Headteachers are expected to ensure that the school fulfils its 'duty of care' obligations by applying the policy and procedures.

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News Update

GovernorHub AI update

You may have noticed that GovernorHub has added an AI assistant to the website. It has been there a while, but a significant upgrade was made to it last week, with the introduction of their AI Assistant's [File picker](#).

The file picker has been designed to **add context and relevance** to your work. Alone, the AI assistant can answer your governance questions with solid advice and guidance based on best practice and legislation - *with* the file picker it can now understand your individual situation too.

The file picker allows you to choose a file (a word doc, a spreadsheet, a pdf etc.) **from your board's Documents area on GovernorHub** to help you with your task. Some brilliant examples people have shared with us so far:-

- Here's my *Headteacher's report* - give me questions to ask in my next meeting that show challenge and support
- Here's our *School Development Plan* give me key areas to discuss
- Here's our *scheme of delegation* - clarify my specific responsibilities in easy to understand language
- Here's the current *Child protection policy* and the proposed new one - tell me what's different in it

If you'd like to watch the recording of the demo it's [here](#) and [these are the slides](#). This [help article](#) explains everything too.



NEW
FEATURE

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News Update



Why Citizenship Must Start Early:

What Governors Need to Know

At

Gosford Hill School

Oxford Road, Kidlington OX5 2NT

Saturday 28th February 2026 at 10.30 am – 12.00 pm

(Refreshments from 10.00 am ~ buffet lunch to follow)

The session will be led by a speaker from **ACT**
(the Association of Citizenship Teaching)

This will be a free, practical and important session aimed primarily at school governors and trustees, but others in education or with an interest in this topic will also be welcome.

High quality citizenship education has never been more important.

Following the Curriculum Review requirements are changing. Citizenship education will be compulsory for primary schools and significantly strengthened across Key Stages 3 and 4.

The proposal to reduce the voting age, potentially before the next general election, will impact children who are in our schools now.



To book your **Free** place please email info@oga4schoolgovernors.org.uk saying whether or not lunch is required and any dietary requirements



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News Update

National Updates



Meeting Digital and technology standards

How schools and colleges can use the right digital infrastructure and technology.

The Filtering and monitoring – one of 6 core standards – has been updated to clarify when the standard should be met.

[Meeting digital and technology standards in schools and colleges - Guidance - GOV.UK](#)

Education Estates Strategy published

The strategy sets out the government's 10-year plan to improve the education estate in England to deliver a decade of national renewal.

[Education estates strategy - GOV.UK](#)

Adoption support that works for all - consultation

The government has launched a consultation on providing better, earlier, and more targeted help to adopted children and funding increased for adoption support fund

[Government unveils expanded support for adopted children - GOV.UK](#)

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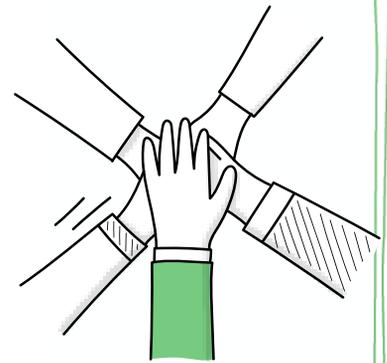
News Update

Governor Services Training

Spring term training programme

Our Spring training programme is now in full swing. Full details of our Spring term training programme are now available on the Schools website here: [Governor training | Oxfordshire Schools](#) and all sessions are available to book on [GovernorHub](#)

Don't forget to have a look at our free Bitesize training which you can access at any time [here](#)



Charging for training – a reminder

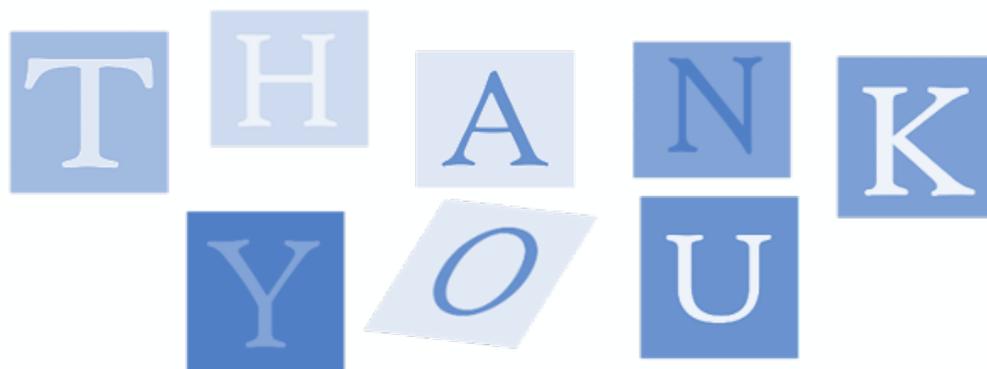
Please check if your board has subscribed to the Governor Services training package before booking. Governors at schools that subscribe can register for as much training as you like at no additional cost.

For governors at schools that do not currently subscribe, there is a charge to attend, and schools will be invoiced after the event. Any free briefings or events are clearly indicated

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News Update



...for everything you do for children in Oxfordshire

Our next newsletter will be published on 27th February 2026.

With best wishes

The Oxfordshire Governor Services Team -

Jeremy, Helen and Ruth

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