



School Governors



Governors Newsletter

Useful Information for Barnsley School Governors



I hope that you have had the opportunity to rest and relax during the festive period and that you are feeling suitably refreshed for the upcoming term.

Spring term continues to be a busy time for schools and the same goes for Governors as well. During this term Governors in LA Maintained schools will be required to complete the Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) and further information about these requirements is included within this newsletter.



Following on from a successful online Governor Briefing held in the autumn term, we will be **holding a spring term online Governor Briefing on Thursday, 23 January at 6:00pm.** To book your place please e-mail:

admin-governorsservices@barnsley.gov.uk

The Children's Well-Being and Schools Bill 2024-25 is listed for second reading on 8 January 2025. Further information about what this entails, and the changes being proposed, can be found on page 3 onwards. I would encourage all Governors to read what this means for schools moving forward, especially for Governors in schools which are currently considering becoming an academy.

Please note that where information is shown in **blue text** within this newsletter, there is a link which can be clicked on to provide additional information.

Once again, I'd like to thank you for your continued support and for the positive impact your work has on the education and life chances of Barnsley's children and young people.

Peter Bell: School Governance and Alliance Board Service Manager

Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) (Local Authority Maintained Schools Only)

The [Schools Financial Value Standard](#) (SFVS) is a requirement for all **maintained schools**, including pupil referral units (PRUs), who must submit it to their local authority (LA) every year.

The SFVS helps maintained schools to:

- Manage their finances
- Provide assurance to the LA that they meet the standards necessary to achieve good financial health and resource management



The SFVS is **not required for academies**, but they do have other annual reporting obligations.

Deadline

Local Authority Maintained schools must submit the SFVS (signed by your chair of governors) to the LA before the end of the financial year (as per section 4.16 of the [statutory guidance](#) on schemes for financing schools).

For the financial year 2024-25, your school should submit its SFVS no later than **31 March 2025**.

Summary of the SFVS Sections

There are 2 sections:

- **Introduction and outcomes** – the chair of your governing board will need to sign this page
- **Checklist** – made up of **30** questions. Schools answer these to assure their LA that resources are managed effectively

All governors should read the answers in the checklist – this is because the full Governing Body should agree on them before the chair signs the SFVS.

Finance Benchmarking and Insights Tool

This service helps schools view and improve their spending. It is replacing the 'View my financial insights tool' and the 'Schools financial benchmarking service'.

At a school level *

You can:

- see how spending compares with similar schools
- enter your own data to see how it affects the benchmarking position
- plan school curriculum finances
- see tailored commercial recommendations for each school based on data

* It may be worth contacting your Headteacher or School Business Manager to ask for this information.

At a Trust or Local Authority Level

You can:

- get an overview of all your schools and see how spending compares with similar schools
- identify where schools need more support with their spending
- see how your spending compares with similar trusts
- view risks based on the budget forecast return (trusts only)

Consultation on Proposed Admission Arrangements for 2026-2027

BMBC is running a consultation on the proposed admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools for the 2026 to 2027 academic year. They are consulting on:

- admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools for which we're the admissions authority
- the coordinated arrangements for schools in Barnsley, which includes the national closing date for entry to secondary school changing to 31 October 2025
- Penistone Grammar School post-16 admission arrangements

The consultation is open from 17 December 2024 to 28 January 2025. [Find out more about the consultation and how to take part.](#)

Children's Well-Being and Schools Bill 2024-25

The [Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill 2024-25](#) was introduced on 17 December 2024. It is bill 151 of the 2024-25 parliamentary session. The bill is listed for second reading on 8 January 2025.

The government intends the bill to improve the safeguarding of children (such as in care institutions and schools) and to raise educational standards.

This briefing does not provide an exhaustive guide to every clause of the bill. Analysis focuses on clauses that have legally or politically significant effects. See the bill's [explanatory notes](#) for further detail on other clauses.

The government has also published a [policy summary for the bill](#), which provides detailed information on its proposals.

Schools Policy

Academy schools

The bill would make very significant and wide-ranging changes to academy schools and the rules they have to follow. These are schools that are funded by the government but are not connected to the local authority; instead, they are run by an academy trust, a not-for-profit company.

In short, the bill would ‘roll back’ many of the freedoms these schools were given when the current academy framework was established under the coalition and conservative governments after 2010. Academies would be subject to most of the same duties as maintained schools – that is, schools funded and overseen by local authorities. The Conservatives’ Schools Bill of 2022-23 also included provisions on academies; these were controversial, and most were removed at Lords’ report stage (before the bill was abandoned). The current government says these changes are necessary to bring more consistency and drive up standards across the school sector.

Academies would be required to teach a revised national curriculum (currently they don’t have to follow the national curriculum), follow national pay and conditions rules for teachers, employ qualified teachers in most circumstances, and admit particular children if directed to do by a local authority.

Establishing new schools

The bill would also make changes to the current process for opening new schools, and to how school admissions work.

Since coalition government reforms in the early 2010s, most new schools have been required to be free schools – that is, wholly new academies. Some have been concerned that restricting local authorities’ ability to open new maintained schools in most circumstances conflicts with their statutory duties to manage the local supply of school places.

The bill would restore local authorities’ powers to propose new maintained schools, although opening an academy would still be an option. Schools (including academies) and local authorities would also have to cooperate more closely when taking annual decisions about school admissions criteria, and there would be new powers to challenge some admissions policy decisions by individual schools.

Breakfast clubs and school uniforms

The bill would provide for breakfast clubs to be available before school begins at all state-funded primary schools in England and ensure that the existing school food standards apply to all state-funded schools, including at breakfast.

The bill would also set limits on the number of branded items state-funded schools may require as part of their uniform, building on measures to reduce uniform costs introduced in 2021.

A register of children not in school

The bill would require children to be registered with the local authority when they are being educated outside of school for some or all of the time, such as through home education.

Similar measures have been proposed in the past, including by the previous Conservative government, and have proven controversial. Many home educating parents and campaigning organisations object to the principle of being required to register their children, as well as to the practicalities of many of the proposals that have been made.

Independent educational institutions

The bill would make a series of changes to expand the regulation of independent educational institutions that provide all or a majority of a child's education. Successive governments have been concerned that the existing regime to regulate these institutions is not sufficient. It would also strengthen Ofsted's powers to investigate unregistered, and therefore illegal, independent schools.

Regulation of teachers

The bill would make changes to the regulatory regime for teachers, following concerns that some teachers may 'fall through the gaps' and be allowed to carry on teaching in the future, despite having potentially engaged in serious misconduct or committed a relevant offence. It would extend the current law to teachers in a wider range of settings, such as further education colleges. It would also allow for teachers to be investigated regardless of whether they were employed as teachers at the time of the alleged misconduct or a relevant offence.
