

# Local Guide to the Barnsley Schools Forum

March 2026

## Foreword

Whether you are a school leader, school governor or teacher, we all have the best of intentions for children and young people learning in Barnsley.

Our ambition is for all children and young people to attend a school which has been graded by Ofsted to be of a 'Strong Standard' or better, to achieve their aspirations and realise their potential.

Schools continue to face challenges at every turn. In terms of children and young people's learning, the continuing impact of stretched finances and resources, coupled with increasing demands around special educational needs provision, have been significant and long-lasting. To restore lost learning, promote the wellbeing of everyone in the schools' sector and achieve the progress we all want for children and young people in the Borough, schools must have the necessary funding and resources to achieve this. This includes a commitment towards ensuring '*every child is in school every day*' and to significantly reduce unjustified suspensions and exclusions so that no individual or groups of disadvantaged pupils are left behind.

The '*Great Childhoods Ambition*', as part of Barnsley's 2025-2030 education strategy, is a commitment to improving the lives and futures of our children and young people. We want Barnsley to be a 'place of possibilities' for everyone. A place where all children and young people can benefit from the opportunities that great childhoods can bring. We will support them to have a great childhood and ensure they feel they belong, and can explore, dream, grow and connect.

As members of the Barnsley Schools' Forum, we share a strong responsibility with Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council and the Barnsley Alliance for School Improvement, in ensuring we

make the most sustainable decisions and have a positive influence upon school funding.

The purpose of this Local Guide is to enable you as a member of the Barnsley Schools Forum to be equipped with the knowledge and skills to be able to support the Forum in this objective and to make a difference.

The Barnsley Schools' Forum is an important partner in helping improve education outcomes in the Borough; promoting inclusion and life chances through a good and enriching education whilst at the same time making effective use of available resources and ensuring value for money, building human capital and shaping our future local communities.

.....  
Chair of the Barnsley Schools Forum

# Contents

Introduction	Page 5
Role and Responsibilities of the Barnsley Schools Forum	Pages 5 - 7
Representation and Membership of The Barnsley Schools Forum	Pages 8 - 12
Constitution of the Schools Forum	Pages 12-15
Terms of Reference of the Schools Forum	Pages 16 – 17
Induction of New Members	Page 18
Conduct of Meetings	Pages 18 – 21
Additional Information	Page 21
Feedback	Page 21
Appendix	Page 22

## Introduction

The Barnsley Schools Forum is a statutory body which is one of Barnsley Council's key partners in supporting the following:

- Improving the physical and emotional wellbeing of children and young people in the Borough.
- Improving education outcomes for children and young people in the Borough
- Enhancing the quality of practice and provision by helping improve teaching and learning standards
- Fostering inclusion through education and improving the life chances of vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

## Role and Responsibilities of the Barnsley Schools Forum

The Schools Forum (England) Regulations (2012) set out the role and responsibilities for schools' forums. In Barnsley, the purpose of the Schools Forum is two-fold as follows:

### Decision Making Role

1. To make the final decision on whether to transfer a percentage of funding (*usually 0.5%*) from the Schools Block to other blocks, notably the High Needs Block.
2. Deciding upon the criteria and allocation of funding for the following:
  - Significant pre-16 years pupil growth, including proposals to commission and procure new schools to meet demand
  - Funding for schools judged as 'Good' or 'Outstanding' which are experiencing falling pupil rolls and where a growth in pupil numbers is expected within 3 years
3. To decide expenditure on the following:
  - Early years block provision

- Enabling schools to meet the infant class size requirement(s)
- Payment of equal pay claims, including arrears
- Remission of boarding fees at both maintained schools and academies
- Places in independent schools for non-special educational needs pupils.
- Admissions to schools
- Contributions towards other responsibilities which local authorities hold for all schools
- Administrative support to the Forum

#### Consultative Role

To be consulted by the Local Authority on the following:

4. Changes to the schools funding formula (*in Barnsley, the Local Authority arranges to consult school governing bodies on the proposals*)
5. Where the Local Authority proposes to enter into a contract to be funded through the schools' budget, the Schools' Forum provides a view (*in Barnsley, the Local Authority arranges to consult school governing bodies on the proposals*)
6. To be consulted by the Local Authority on the following financial matters:
  - Arrangements for the sufficiency of school placements concerning pupils with special educational needs, together with top-up funding.
  - Arrangements for alternative education provision in the Borough, including the commissioning of places, together with top-up funding.
  - Arrangements for early years provision, including the sufficiency of places and top-up funding.

- Arrangements for the allocation of central government grant-funding
7. Proposed exclusions from the Minimum Funding Guarantee.
8. Proposed de-delegation of mainstream, maintained school funding for the following purposes:
- Contingencies
  - Free school meals
  - School insurance, licenses and subscriptions
  - Staff costs
  - Support for minority ethnic pupils and under-achieving groups of pupils
  - Support for improving pupil behaviour
  - Supporting school improvement
  - Other responsibilities which the Local Authority may hold for maintained schools
9. To also be consulted on the following matters:
- Scheme of financial management changes.
  - Membership of and changes to the composition of the Schools' Forum, together with length of office, appointment of the Chair of the Forum and voting procedures.

## **Representation and Membership of the Barnsley Schools Forum**

Whilst the School Forum (England) Regulations provide a framework for appointing members to fulfil its role and responsibilities, they afford local areas with discretion over appointments in support of local education priorities and practice.

In considering appointments to the Barnsley Schools Forum, the following factors are noted:

1. Size – there is no maximum limit to membership. However, the Schools’ Forum (England) Regulations do state that two-thirds of the membership of the Schools Forum should be composed of representatives from schools and academies.

The balance of membership between schools and academies should be reflective of the number of pupils in each category within the primary and secondary phase. Therefore, one of the tasks of the Schools Forum is to regularly review the distribution of pupils in each category to ensure its governance arrangements are proportionate to the number of maintained schools and academies and reflect the nature of the local education landscape.

In dividing members of the ‘Schools’ Group’ within the Barnsley Schools Forum both maintained primary and secondary schools and their academy counterparts should be represented in accordance with the following:

- A head teacher or head teacher’s representative
- A school governor or member of an independent executive board

In addition, a designated head teacher (or head teacher’s representative) and school governor should represent other types of school, including free schools, faith schools and studio schools. Whilst no such schools currently exist in the Borough, the Schools Forum will initiate action to ensure they are invited to be represented on the body in order to ensure discussions are balanced and the decisions taken by the Schools Forum support broader local education policy.

Membership of the Schools Forum should also consist of representation from a Non-Schools Group, including the following:

- Early years provision who will also represent the private, voluntary and independent sector.

- Alternative education provision.
- Special education provision.
- Commissioners and providers of education for young people aged 16-19.
- Local Dioceses of the Catholic Church and Church of England, together with representatives of the teaching profession.
- Parents and carers groups, youth forums, together with groups representing vulnerable groups of children including those in care and children and young people with special educational needs.

The Non-Schools Group should comprise no more than a third of the total membership of the Schools' Forum.

In all cases, members of the Schools Forum should possess or be able to develop the understanding required to be able to support the role and responsibilities indicated earlier within this document.

Councillors who are members of the 'Executive' of a local authority such as a Cabinet Spokesperson, together with the Director of Children's Services and local authority officers who have a management role or advise in relation to school funding are specifically excluded from becoming active members of the Schools Forum. However, non-executive councillors (including Cabinet Support Members) and local authority employees such as head teachers and teachers are eligible to become a member of the Schools' Forum, although it is not a specific requirement. In addition, a Cabinet Spokesperson for Children's Services can participate as an observer at meetings of the Schools Forum, subject to its constitution and terms of reference.

2. Election of Members – In larger cities, for example, the Regulations seek to promote the election of representatives to any vacancies within any of the 'sub-groups' of the Schools Group. Scope exists to adopt a local method or model scheme of appointment for members of the Barnsley Schools Forum and, in January 2019, all schools and

academy or multi-academy trusts were invited to nominate a representative to serve on the Forum.

3. Election of the Chair – The Schools Forum must ensure arrangements are in place to periodically elect a Chair who will represent the Forum in other arenas and lead its work for a period at the local area's discretion.

### Current Membership of the Barnsley Schools' Forum

Based upon the foregoing information, the current membership of Barnsley's Schools Forum during the period 2025-2028 is as follows:

#### **Schools Group**

Maintained Primary School Head Teacher Representatives x 3:

*Simon Tabbner, 2 x vacancies*

Maintained Primary School Governor Representatives x3:

*Jackie Milliner, Claire Throssell, 1 x vacancy*

Primary Academy Head Teacher Representatives x 6:

*Victoria Gorton, Joe Woffinden, Katie Adamski, 3 x vacancies*

Primary Academy Governor Representatives x 6:

*Michael Sanderson (Chair of the Barnsley Schools Forum), 5 x vacancies*

Maintained Secondary School Head Teacher Representatives x 1:

*Paul Crook*

Maintained Secondary School Governor Representatives x 1:

*Visseh Pejan-Sykes*

Secondary Academy Head Teacher Representatives x 3:

*Victoria Harrison, 2 x vacancies*

Secondary Academy Governor and MAT Board Representatives x 3:

*Nigel Leeder, Victoria Harrison, 1 x vacancy*

Nursery Schools Representative x 1:

*Simon Sykes*

Free School, Faith School and Studio School Representatives x 1:

*1 x Vacancy*

**Non-Schools Group**

Special Schools Head Teacher or Board Representative x 1:

*George Wild (Springwell Learning Community and Greenacre Special School)*

Alternative Provision (including Pupil Referral Unit) Representative x 1:

*Josh Greaves (Vice-Chair of the Barnsley Schools Forum)*

Early Years Provision x 1:

*Melanie Szoke*

Education for Young People aged 16-19 Years x 1

*Tom Smith*

Local Authority Elected Members x 2

*Councillor Deborah Pearson and Councillor Ken Richardson*

Diocesan Representatives x 2:

*2 x Vacancies*

Teaching Profession Representatives:

*1 x Vacancy*

There are currently no representatives from parents/carers and young people's bodies within the Schools' Forum. In addition, the Secretary of State for Education can appoint an observer, such as a representative of the Education and Skills Funding Agency to attend and speak at meetings of the Schools' Forum.



## Constitution of the Barnsley Schools Forum (2025/26)

### 1. Membership

#### *Schools Group Membership*

- a) Membership of the Schools Group within the Forum may comprise of the following representatives during this period:

##### Primary Maintained Schools

Up to 3 head teacher representatives  
Up to 3 governor representatives

##### Primary Academies

Up to 6 head teacher representatives  
Up to 6 governor representatives

##### Secondary Maintained Schools

1 head teacher representative  
1 governor representative

##### Secondary Academies

Up to 3 head teacher representatives  
Up to 3 governor representatives

##### Nursery Schools

1 representative

- b) Membership of the Schools Group will be periodically reviewed to ensure where the need arises that Free Schools, Faith Schools and Studio Schools are represented in the Barnsley Schools Forum

### ***Non-Schools Group Membership***

- c) Membership of the Non-Schools Group within the Forum will be comprised of the following representatives:

#### Local Authority Elected Member Representatives

#### Early Years Provision (including private, voluntary and independent provision)

1 representative

#### Education for Young People aged 16-19

1 representative

#### Diocesan Representative

2 representatives

#### Teaching Profession Representative

1 representative

- d) Membership of the Non-Schools Group will be periodically reviewed to afford an opportunity for other groups to be represented, subject to the limitation on size of the Non-Schools Group.

## **2. Appointments to the Schools Forum**

- e) Upon appointment, members of both the Schools Group and Non-Schools Group will serve the Barnsley Schools Forum for a period of 3 years. The Local Authority will notify both schools and multi-academy trust board at the appropriate time and invite them to nominate representatives to the Forum

A member may resign from membership of the Forum at any time and is required to leave if he/she ceases to be eligible. Any member of the Schools Forum who fails to attend at least 3 meetings without reason will forfeit their right to vote upon any matters requiring the Forum's decision and when this is put to a vote.

## **2. Election of Chairperson/Vice Chairperson**

The Chairperson/Vice Chairperson shall be elected at the first meeting of the Schools Forum and serve for a period of no longer than two years. If the election is contested it will be held by secret ballot. Any nominee standing for election shall withdraw and not vote.

## **3. Meeting Arrangements for the Schools Forum**

- a) A minimum of 4 meetings shall be held each academic year. Further meetings may be called at the discretion of the Forum.
- b) The quorum for meetings of the Forum shall be two-fifths of the current membership or 9 members present.
- c) The Forum may establish a sub-committee or task group for a specific or time-limited purpose. Any recommendations emerging through the work of a sub-committee or task and finish group should obtain the formal approval of the Forum as a whole before they are submitted to the Local Authority.
- d) Sub-committees or task and finish groups will be required to report to a full (quorate) meeting of the Forum for the approval of findings before such findings are published or formally passed to the Local Authority.
- e) Meetings of the Forum shall be held in public except where the Chair of the Forum feels that the nature of business to be transacted determines otherwise. The Schools' Forum (Amendment) (Regulations) (2020) allow for meetings to be held virtually until all social restrictions relating to the Covid-19 Pandemic are lifted. The Schools' Forum Regulations currently permit hybrid meetings to take place.
- f) Members of the Forum shall be required to make declarations of interest when relevant.
- g) All meetings of the Forum shall be conducted in accordance with the Standing Orders of the Council.
- h) Each member of the Forum or their substitute shall have 1 vote on any matter submitted for its attention. However, only Schools Group Members may vote on schools funding matters and any vote relating

to the de-delegation of schools funding is exclusively confined to members of the Forum representing Local Authority maintained schools. The Chair of the Forum shall have a second and casting vote should it be necessary.

- i) Any member of the Forum may raise items to be included on the agenda for a meeting by notifying the Secretary of the Forum, preferably at least 14 working days before the meeting.
- j) Extra-ordinary meetings of the Schools' Forum may be called at the request of the Chair supported by one or more members of the Forum

#### **4. Administration**

- a) The Local Authority's Service Director (Education, Early Start and Prevention) shall be appointed Secretary to the Barnsley Schools Forum and shall support the work of the Forum and prepare reports for its consideration.
- b) All meetings of the Forum will be convened by the Secretary in compliance with any direction in the matter given by the Forum in a previous meeting or given by the Chair. Notice of a meeting, together with a copy of the agenda and accompanying documents will normally be sent out at least 5 working days before the date of the meeting itself.
- c) The Service Director (Education, Early Start and Prevention) will publish an annual report on the work undertaken by the Schools Forum together with the action taken by the Local Authority in response to the Forum's recommendations. The annual report will be circulated to all school governing bodies in the Borough.
- d) The minutes of all meetings of the Schools' Forum shall be circulated to all school governing bodies within one month of the Forum meeting taking place.

#### **5. Members Expenses (Regulation 12)**

- a) The Local Authority shall pay all reasonable expenses which have been incurred by members of the Forum in respect of its work.

(Reviewed in July 2023)



## **Terms of Reference of the Barnsley Schools Forum**

*(For clarification on the decision-making and consultative role of the Barnsley Schools Forum, please see pages 5-7 of the Local Guide)*

### **1.0 Consultation on school funding formula**

1.1 The Local Authority shall consult the Schools' Forum on the following: -

- Any proposed changes in relation to the factors and criteria that have been considered or the methods, principles and rules that have been adopted, in the schools funding formula made in accordance with the relevant regulations.
- The financial effect of any such change upon schools and settings.

1.2 Any consultation under Paragraph 1.1 above shall take place to enable the Forum's observations to be incorporated in the determination of the Local Authority's proposed formula and in the initial determination of school budgets before the beginning of the new financial year.

### **2.0 Consultation on contracts**

2.1 The Local Authority shall at least one month prior to the issue of invitations to tender consult the Schools' Forum on the terms of any proposed contract for supplies or services being a contract paid or to be paid out of the Local Authority's schools' budget where either

- The estimated value of the proposed public services contract is not less than the specific threshold which applies to the relevant authority in pursuance of Regulation 7(1) of the Public Services Contracts Regulations 1993; or

- The estimated value of the proposed public supply contract is not less than the specific threshold which applies to the relevant authority in pursuance of Regulation 7(2) of the Public Supply Contracts Regulations 1995.

### **3.0 Consultation on financial and other school support issues**

3.1 The Local Authority shall consult the Schools' Forum annually in respect of its duties relating to schools' budgets, in connection with the following:

- The arrangements to be made for the education of pupils with special educational needs
- Arrangements for the use of pupil in alternative education provision and the education of children not attending school
- Arrangements for early years education
- Arrangements for schools' insurance
- Prospective revisions to the Local Authority's scheme for the financing of schools
- Administrative arrangements for the allocation of central government grants paid to schools via the Local Authority
- Arrangements for free school meals
- Arrangements for brokering services for schools
- Arrangements for strategic support to schools provided by the Barnsley Alliance for Schools.

3.2 The Local Authority will consult the Schools' Forum on such other matters concerning the funding of schools as considered necessary.

(Reviewed in July 2023)

## Induction of New Members

When new members join the Barnsley Schools Forum, the following information and resources will be provided:

- Constitution and Terms of Reference
- A list of members of the Schools' Forum, including contact details and term of office
- The Local Guide to the Barnsley Schools Forum and latest available annual report of the Forum.
- The address and link to the Barnsley Schools Forum Web page, including the schedule and location of meeting dates.
- Where there has been a substantial turnover in Schools Forum members in any one year, a half-day induction for new members will be held. This will include an introduction to the role of the Schools Forum and its responsibilities, together with national and local schools funding arrangements
- Further training sessions may be held to inform members of any significant changes in school funding policy or in the role and responsibilities of schools' forums in England.

## Conduct of Meetings

### Participation of Local Authority Officers

The following officers from Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council have authority to speak at meetings of the Schools' Forum:

- The Executive Director (Children's Services) (*Statutory Director of Children's Services*)
- The Service Director (Finance) (*Strategic Finance Manager*)

- Secretary to the Barnsley Schools Forum
- Any officer invited on behalf of the Schools' Forum to provide financial or technical advice.
- Any officer invited on behalf of the Schools' Forum to present a report. Such officers are limited to speaking only upon the report which they are presenting.

## Procedures

**Quorum** – Meetings of the Barnsley Schools Forum will only be quorate if 40% of the membership (both Schools Group and Non-Schools Group but excluding supporting officers are present. Meetings may still proceed if they are inquorate in order to respond to matters including local authority consultations and to provide an informal view on a specific matter. However, the Schools Forum cannot make decisions requested by it under the Schools' Forum (England) Regulations (2012)

**Voting** – Aside from the election of a Chair and Vice-Chair of the Barnsley Schools Forum, arrangements for voting at meetings Are as follows:

- Voting on matters relating to the schools funding formula is restricted to members of the Schools Group within the Forum.
- Voting on matters concerning the de-delegation of schools funding back to the Local Authority is confined to those members of the Schools Group representing Local Authority maintained primary and secondary schools.
- Voting upon the Local Authority's retention of funding for statutory duties relating to maintained schools is also confined to those members of the Schools Group representing maintained primary and secondary schools.

Any decisions of the Schools' Forum requiring a vote should be made via a simple majority. These decisions should include the recommendations of a temporary sub-committee or Task and Finish Group of the Forum.

**Substitute Members** – The Barnsley Schools Forum permits members of both the Schools and Non-Schools Group to designate substitutes from their organisation to attend on their behalf if they themselves cannot attend a specific meeting. Substitute members have the same voting rights as permanent members of the Forum.

**Vacancies** – In the event of a representative giving notice that they will be stepping down, arrangements will take place to find a successor. In the meantime, any vacancies within the Barnsley Schools Forum should not invalidate its proceedings or decision-making capability.

**Access for the Public** – Due to the importance of its decisions concerning the use and expenditure of public money, the Barnsley Schools Forum is as accountable to local communities as the Local Authority. Therefore, arrangements should be included to enable the public and press to attend meetings of the Forum. The schedule of dates for meetings of the Forum during the School Year, together with the agenda and the minutes of previous meetings and the location of meetings should be published on the Barnsley Schools Forum Web page. This can be accessed via the link below:

<https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/services/children-families-and-education/schools-and-learning/schools-forum/>

If a member of the public would like to submit a question to the Forum, they should do so by sending the question to the Secretary of the Forum. The member of the public submitting the question can attend the next meeting of the Forum and if this is not possible a written response to the question will be sent.

**Urgent Business** – In instances where the Local Authority wishes to consult the Barnsley Schools Forum on an urgent issue during a period between its formal meetings it can do so by e-mail. Where this occurs the Chair of the Forum cannot take a decision on its behalf unless the Forum has expressly declared that the Chair can do so.

Where an urgent matter emerges which, with the Chair's agreement can be addressed at a formal meeting this can take place as part of the 'Urgent Matters' item on the agenda for the meeting.

**Agendas and Reports** – In order to ensure that the work of the Barnsley Schools Forum is open, transparent and has clarity of communication, all documentation will be consistent, concise and

informative. The recommendations of all reports will be outlined at the beginning of each report and at the same time each report to the Schools' Forum will indicate whether it is for decision or for information. A copy of the template for reports to the Schools' Forum is appended to the Local Guide.

**Effectiveness of Meetings** – The Secretary to the Barnsley Schools Forum supports the Chair in ensuring its work adds value in supporting schools towards improving education outcomes in the Borough. As part of this, the Secretary's role will be to:

- Maintain timely information on the membership and meeting dates of the Forum on its Web page.
- Support the quality of communication and decision-making through using colour-coded name plates at meetings
- Ensure outcomes arising from meetings of the Forum and any of its proposed sub-committees or 'task and finish groups' are recorded and published on its Web page as part of promoting the public's interest in its work.

## **Additional Information for Members**

Further information on the role and responsibilities of School Forums can be viewed through the links shown below:

1. Schools Forum (England) Regulations (2012)


<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2012/2261/contents>

2. Education and Skills Funding Agency: Schools Forums Operational and Good Practice Guide (March 2021)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/schools-forums-operational-and-good-practice-guide-2015>

## **Feedback**

We hope you will find the Local Guide to the Barnsley Schools Forum useful. In addition, we would welcome your comments on how to improve this document

	Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council <b>Barnsley Schools Forum</b>
	Agenda Item: Document Reference:

**Title of the Report**

**1.0 Purpose of the Report**

**2.0 Recommendation(s)**

**3.0 Introduction**

**4.0 Issues to Consider**

**5.0 Next Steps**

**6.0 Appendices**

Author:

Designation: