

SGC Training Pack Complete

Army Safety and Environmental Management System Audit (ASEMSA)

Asking the right questions

Assurance

Attendance

Behaviour management

Careers

Chair role

Code of Conduct

Data

Defence Accident Investigation Branch (DAIB) Recommendations

Early Help (Safeguarding)

Early Years role

Education and Care Strategy

Effective Governance

External Inspection (3LoDA)

Governance and Performance Lead

Health and Safety

Holding to account

Induction

Keeping Children Safe in Education summary

Monitoring educational performance

New to governance

Paper ROSE (2LoDA)

Pupil mental health and well-being

Pupil Voice

Risk

ROSE Visit (2LoDA)

Safeguarding

Safeguarding role

Safeguarding sub-committee TORs

Safer working practices

School Improvement

Secretary role

Self-Evaluation Form (SEF)

SEND role

SGC Terms of Reference

Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND)

Stakeholder engagement

Stakeholders sub-committee TORs

Standards sub-committee TORs

Supporting Service children

Watch words and buzz words

Well-being

Army Safety and Environmental Management System Audit (ASEMSA)

1. Head Teachers or Setting Managers (HT/SM) must publish the current Hd DCS Statement of Intent for Safety, Health, Environmental, and Fire (SHEF) and ensure the Organisation and Arrangements (O&A) to execute the Chief of the General Staff (CGS) statement of Intent are signposted
2. The HT/SM must ensure that the Statement of Intent, has been brought to the attention of school and setting personnel
3. Staff must take appropriate and proportionate action, in support of the O&A Statement, to demonstrate their leadership, commitment to SHEF and safety culture at all levels
4. HT have oversight and coordinating responsibility for the security and safety of personnel on site. The Head Teacher is responsible for maintaining a safe and secure learning and working environment within their establishment
5. The HT/SM must appoint, in writing a competent person as 4C's Accountable person to manage the procedures to ensure the safety of visitors and contractors
6. Each establishment must have a nominated SHEF Coordinator, Fire Safety/ Representative or Warden, Caretaker/Site or Estate Manager.
7. HT/SM must ensure that those who have been given SHEF Responsibilities have been adequately trained for their roles and remain up-to-date
8. The establishment must ensure, and record, that all personnel are provided with adequate health and safety training, both on induction and as part of regular refresher training as appropriate
9. HT/SM must ensure that all personnel receive Army Safety Risk Management (SRM) training commensurate with their rank/grade and appointment. This training must be recorded
10. Personnel who carry out or teach/instruct higher risk activities that are covered under CLEAPSS (Science, Art, Technology etc) must be given the necessary information, guidance and training to be able to safely undertake practical activities so that they work, are safe and are effective at supporting learning
11. HT must establish a suitable and sufficient SHEF Committee with appropriate TORs. The school/setting SHEF Committee must meet as often as necessary, usually no less than twice per year, and must be chaired personally by the Headteacher at least once per year to demonstrate their commitment
12. As part of the DCS SHEF Committee, the establishments' SHEF Performance must be subject to formal and documented review on a quarterly basis as per DCS SHEF Delivery Plan (DP)
13. Establishments must record and make available to HQ DCS their SHEF Committee Minutes. The minutes must be effectively promulgated and accessible to all affected by them
14. The establishment must identify, record, and communicate what is to be achieved in terms of SHEF, through a SHEF Delivery Plan
15. The Statement of Intent requires managers at every level to have adequate resources at their disposal to discharge their SHEF responsibilities. The school/setting must produce and maintain a Risk Register that identifies priorities, focuses resource, allocates and records Responsibility, Accountability and Authority (RA2) and tracks risk controls where shortfalls or lack of resource occur. The risk register must be brought to the attention of HQ DCS

16. Each establishment must launch and maintain an effective system of SHEF communication
17. Each establishment must promptly and effectively promulgate SHEF Directives to all personnel who may be affected by them
18. Each establishment must ensure a documented assessment of the First Aid requirements for their area of responsibility has been undertaken and the outcome of the assessment implemented
19. Each establishment must ensure First Aid information is provided to all, detailing the First Aid arrangements on site, display of First Aid information including location of First Aid kits, contact details for the designated First Aiders and emergency services, and if applicable the locations Automated External Defibrillators (AED)
20. Each establishment must ensure at all times there is access to suitably stocked First Aid Kits, including Eye Wash Kits where appropriate, which are subject to frequent and regular recorded inspections
21. Each establishment must ensure a sufficient number of current and competent personnel to support First Aid for the school/setting. This will be based on a formal assessment of First Aid Requirements
22. Each establishment must have suitable and sufficient Risk Assessments in place, appropriate to the activities being undertaken by the staff and students of the establishment
23. HT/SM must produce and implement fire safety arrangements, known as Fire Safety Orders. These orders must be kept current, relevant to the nature of its activities, and brought to the attention of all affected
24. Suitable arrangements must be in place for all Fire Safety Equipment to be regularly tested and maintained
25. Fire Evacuation Drills must be regularly practiced, and the outcomes of the practice must be recorded
26. Capita Fire and Rescue (CFR) has a role to assist school/setting by conducting Fire Risk Assessments (FRA). Establishments must take the appropriate action to implement any recommendations within the FRAs and engage with CFR to ensure timely review of FRAs when due or where there have been significant changes that may impinge on fire safety. FRAs must be brought to the attention of those affected by them
27. CFR has a role to assist school/settings in producing a Fire Safety Management Plan (FSMP)
28. Each establishment must comply with fire safety standards and ensure that fire prevention measures are effective
29. HT/SM must identify and nominate competent personnel to conduct and record routine SHEF inspections for designated areas or activities
30. Corrective action must be taken to rectify shortfalls identified during SHEF inspections
31. An effective system for keeping records is an essential element of SHEF Management and as a basis for continuous improvement. The school/setting must hold copies of all SHEF Documentation as required within legislation and Army and DCS Policy
32. Each establishment is required to have suitable arrangements in place to ensure the safety and welfare of all visitors

33. All accidents, incidents, near misses, dangerous occurrences and equipment failures must be reported to the Army Reporting Cell (ARC) using the AF510 or DURALS
34. All accidents, incidents, near misses, and dangerous occurrences must be thoroughly investigated at the appropriate level
35. Each establishments must manage, or have in place systems or processes to manage, the environmental impacts of its activities

Asking the right questions

There exist, and have done for many years, banks of questions to assist those with responsibility for governance to know its school or setting well. They were intended to support monitoring and evaluation procedures and begin to hold people to account. Such lists are not exhaustive or a checklist for coverage. Neither are they intended to be handed over to a Head Teacher or Setting Manager to provide an answer (verbal or written). It is not a test for leaders but a tool to help board members.

Some examples include:

[Presentation Title \(governorsforschools.org.uk\);](https://www.governorsforschools.org.uk/)

[Microsoft Word - Governance Toolkitv1.docx \(schudio.com\);](https://www.schudio.com/microsoft-word-governance-toolkitv1.docx)

[Asking-the-Right-Questions-23rd-June-2022.pdf \(governor.support\)](https://www.governor.support/Asking-the-Right-Questions-23rd-June-2022.pdf)

Visits to schools or settings

These should be strategic, rather than operational. In practice, this means:

1. Strategic priorities agreed by the board – for example, linked to the DCS Education and Care Strategy
2. Evaluation of progress (are the things leaders say are happening actually happening?)
3. Seeking confidence that the need of all pupils are being met e.g. transitions safeguarding or special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)

Planning and preparation

Boards should consider a schedule of visits each academic year. When making plans, boards should consider:

1. Milestones (things that the board expects to have happened) outlined in SDP
2. How the visits schedule fits with board meetings
3. Avoiding visits clashing with important events e.g. sports day or trips
4. The board's capacity to fulfil the schedule – is it manageable and realistic?

General questions include:

1. What's the board's vision for the school or setting?
2. How does it fit with the DCS vision?
3. What is the strategy for achieving the vision? Who determines this?
4. How does the Board ensure that progress is made on strategic priorities?
5. What training is there for governors and how do you know it is effective?
6. Do pupils feel safe at the school? How do you know (what evidence is used)?
7. How do you know safeguarding is robust?
8. What safeguarding training for staff and governors takes place?
9. What sources of information do you use to find out the views of parents, staff and pupils?
10. How do you ensure that pupils gain the essential knowledge they need to be educated citizens and/or are ready to re-enter the education system in England?

Exclusion:

1. Does the data point to a gap in provision for individuals or groups of pupils that are avoidably disengaged from education?
2. What local help has been utilised? Does this include sharing practical information and expertise with other school leaders, local commands, etc?
3. What training has staff had to support pupils at risk of exclusion?
4. How does the school identify individual pupils or groups of pupils displaying specific types of behaviour in order to meet their needs?

Attendance (Equity):

1. Do all pupils feel welcome and supported at school?
2. Are parents aware of the attendance directive and know is expected of them?
3. How well are staff supported to communicate the importance of attendance?
4. How does absence data compare to national averages, including for SEND?
5. Which groups of pupils should we be particularly concerned about?
6. What can we do to improve their attendance?
7. What patterns or trends are emerging from data?
8. How is absence impacting on attainment, behaviour or safeguarding?
9. What plans are in place to support persistent absentees who require more support and challenge? What impact are these plans having?

Data and evidence (Equity):

1. Do we look for patterns across a range of sources, for example? Progression by subject attainment, attendance, behaviour rewards, participation in sport etc.
2. Where disparities are identified, do we know why?
3. Is the Board satisfied that appropriate plans are in place to address this?
4. Is there evidence that teachers and leaders have high expectations of every pupil?

Pupil Voice (Equity):

1. What mechanisms are in place for the board to hear from learners?
2. How are the experiences and voices of young people centred and involved in decision making in the school?
3. Does this help the board to gain understanding of the experience of every pupil?
4. Can the board give examples of where pupil voice has influenced decision making?

Professional practice and staff development (Equity):

1. What formal and informal opportunities are there for staff to develop their knowledge and confidence in whole school equity and inclusion issues?
2. Are all school staff (teaching and non-teaching) trained and encouraged to recognise the impact of their own biases and those of pupils and colleagues?
3. Has staff development resulted in a culture of safety and openness?
4. Do all staff feel valued?

Assurance

Assurance is the mechanism by which the Army satisfies itself, and others, that the processes in place both enable or support the delivery of objectives and manage risk. It is about providing confidence that the Army is operating effective internal control. Army assurance is defined as an evaluated opinion on:

1. Governance
2. Risk management
3. Internal control
4. Resources

These are based on evidence gained from reviews, processes and audit activities.

Lines of Defence Assurance (LoDA)

The dynamic that drives the assurance model is that the level of independence increases as activity moves along the LoDA (from first to third) and further from management of actions and control. Each level of assurance provides evidence to inform DCS of the overall assurance assessment.

First LoDA (1LoDA)

Leaders who are responsible for delivering specific processes or objectives and to provide assurance that performance is monitored, risks are identified and addressed, and core objectives are being achieved. This type of assurance comes from those who know the business and the day-to-day challenges. Principle first Leaders in DCS include: Head Teachers or Setting Managers. An example process is the self-evaluation form (SEF).

Second LoDA (2LoDA)

Principle second LoDAs in DCS are: The chain of command of 1LoDAs who are responsible for conducting, monitoring or directing assurance of their subordinate areas. This includes School Improvement Advisors, Early Years Advisors, Assistant Chief Education Officers etcetera and members of the HQ DCS Executive. Secondary 2LoDAs in DCS are: Assistant Heads of Service (Pillar Leads) who provide chain of command for 1LoDA. Example processes include the Paper ROSE or ROSE Visit.

Third LoDA (3LoDA)

External bodies and processes, such as Ofsted inspections or any of the three inspectorates who are approved to inspect British Schools Overseas (using the [BSO standards](#)). In 2010 the UK Government established a voluntary scheme (BSO) to recognise overseas schools which describe themselves as “British” and which are able to meet a set of standards set by the Department for Education (DfE). The scheme applies to schools which provide full-time supervised education for pupils of compulsory school age.

There exist different boards to consider assurance processes. For example, a two-star board, chaired by the General Officer Commanding (Regional Command). This meets bi-annually (typically in May and November). The terms of reference for this board, including its purpose, can be read [here](#).

Attendance

Improving attendance is everyone's responsibility. Metrics alone can hide a multitude of sins or celebrations. Although seeking to sustain high-attendance rates (95%+), does this mean 100% for everyone and 0% for one or two pupils? Or maybe every learner in school achieves 95%, and no one achieves full attendance. The Department for Education (DfE) guidance is clear that improving attendance begins at board level. This means:

1. Take an active role in attendance improvement, supporting establishments to prioritise attendance and communicate a clear culture (attendance matters!)
2. Ensure leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
3. Ensure staff receive training on attendance
4. Regularly review attendance data to ensure support is focused on the pupils who need it most. This may already be included in termly Head Teacher or Setting Manager reports. Don't forget to compare key groups e.g. boys vs girls; SEND vs non-SEND pupils; English as an Additional Language (EAL) vs non-EAL pupils

The DfE guide has been updated to reflect changes in **'Working together to improve school attendance'** which became statutory in August 2024. Whilst responsibilities have not changed, updates include:

1. An emphasis on working partnerships with families to improve attendance
2. New absence thresholds to consider a penalty notice
3. Considerations for pupils absent due to mental-health, physical-ill health or their special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)
4. Clarified expectations for families via the directive or website
5. Requirement to share daily attendance data

Working in partnership with families

Good attendance starts with productive relationships with families. In the first instance, establishments are expected to:

1. Work with families to address any in barriers or perceived to attendance
2. Understand any barriers that may exist, either inside or outside of, schools or settings
3. Meeting with families, agreeing actions and making referrals to services were appropriate.

Where absence intensifies, additional action may include:

1. Individual and specialist support e.g. mentoring for out of hours learning
2. Formal conversations with families, providing an opportunity to listen, but also to set out expectations and potential consequences if attendance does not improve
3. If voluntary support has not been successful, establishments should work to intensify support.
4. Issue notices to improve and pursue action if all other routes have failed.

Questions to consider:

1. Is our SDP clear about what we're doing to improve school attendance?
2. Are parents aware of the school attendance directive and their responsibilities?
3. What are our biggest challenges? Persistent absence? Apathy? Severe absence?

Behaviour management

Effective behaviour management is fundamental to creating supportive and inclusive environments. Leaders are key to the development and maintenance of successful cultures, but boards also have a crucial role to play. They can work collaboratively to:

1. Develop behaviour principles and a culture which reflects the values and ethos
2. Minimise the risk of suspension or exclusion
3. Involve and support families and other stakeholders
4. Engage all pupils in a meaningful and relevant curriculum
5. Establish a calm, safe and supportive environment conducive to learning

The DCS Directive for Behaviour in MOD Schools, is written collectively for schools and settings. Leaders make the Directive bespoke to their own establishment, adding specific items to their own location, for examples rewards or sanctions. Schools and settings' culture is manifested through the behaviour of all members of the community. The Directive should define expected behaviours and actions that reflect the aims and values of the establishment. The Directive should be:

1. Easy for pupils, staff and parents to understand
2. Align to other key Directives such as special educational needs and/or disabilities or SEND, safeguarding or the Code of Conduct
3. Consider the needs of all pupils and staff so all members of the school community feel safe and that they belong, meaning it is inclusive and not exclusive
4. Sufficiently detailed to ensure meaningful and consistent implementation
5. Clear on how pupils will be supported to meet high standards of behaviour, including those with additional or specific needs (SEND) or those who have recently joined for example from a RIB move (mitigating mobility, transition etc)

The directive must also set out measures which aim to:

1. Promote good behaviour, self-discipline and respect
2. Prevent bullying in any of its forms, including online interactions
3. Ensure that learners complete assigned work or tasks
4. Regulate the conduct of learners

Reports and data

Boards should ensure establishments have effective systems in place to monitor behaviour culture, as well as an evaluation cycle that provides regular opportunity for data analysis. Such data includes behaviour incidents, group analysis, incidents of searching or screening or confiscation. Boards must also receive suspension and exclusion data on a termly basis. Data is typically recorded via Bromcom and analysed or reported via the Head Teacher's or Setting Manager's termly report. Boards should be wary of being told by leaders 'nothing new to report' over a three or four month period. Issues such as bullying, sexual violence or harassment, racist or derogatory language etcetera should be commented upon, even if it is a nil return. Boards should be able to answer simple questions themselves. For example:

1. Are our learners safe? How would we know?
2. Do they behave well and are they taught to do so?
3. Is behaviour improving or deteriorating?
4. What evidence helps us understand changes?

Exclusion and suspension

Suspension and exclusion are often necessary measures to keep pupils and others safe. However, the outcomes of excluded pupils are often poor. Even suspensions can have a negative impact on academic progress and contribute significant safeguarding risks. Repeated suspensions can signal missed opportunities to address underlying issues. Blanket approaches such as zero tolerance are statistically unlikely to be helpful. Those with responsibility for governance should seek confidence from school leaders that exclusion is being used consistently, fairly and only as a last resort. Those with responsibility for governance should provide support and challenge in this area, covering items such as:

1. How pupils are being supported to improve their behaviour
2. The effectiveness of interventions to prevent suspension or exclusion
3. Reasonable adjustments being made to support pupils with specific or additional needs (SEND)

Other questions to consider:

1. Is the behaviour Directive used and accessible to all staff and parents?
2. Does it create a safe environment in which pupils can learn and reach their potential?
3. Do designated staff and leaders understand their roles?
4. How are routines used to teach and reinforce the behaviours expected of all learners?
5. How are adjustments made to routines for those with additional needs (SEND)?
6. What regular training for behaviour do staff receive?
7. How has training supported staff to fulfil their duties set out in the Directive?
8. What support to pupils receive during transition, including induction and re-induction following suspensions?
9. Do staff understand the rules around the confiscation of banned items, and the screening and searching of pupils?

Careers

Ensuring pupils not only achieve good academic outcomes, but that they are equipped for life beyond school is a crucial role. Aside from being a statutory responsibility, providing good careers guidance helps strengthen the economy, drive down youth unemployment and drive up social mobility. A good quality careers offer can have a significant impact on reducing or closing the attainment gap. And those with responsibility for governance play a crucial role in how that happens. Secondary schools must provide careers guidance to its pupils in years 7 to 13, ages 11 to 18, and implement a plan that sets out the delivery of their careers programme led by an appointed careers leader. The [Gatsby Benchmarks](#) are useful non-statutory framework around which schools can build their careers programme to meet legal requirements. The programme will be published on the DCS website along with the policy statement. Those with responsibility for governance will need to review, monitor and evaluate the plan, ensuring it is a regular agenda item providing the opportunity to discuss delivery and impact with senior leaders.

Chair role

Purpose

To provide leadership to the board, ensuring that it fulfils its functions well, and to work closely with the Head Teacher or Setting Manager. Chairs support, advise and help shape proposals to be discussed meetings, ensuring the focus is strategic.

Leading support and challenge in providing high-quality education

- ensure members and Head Teacher have a shared vision and sense of purpose
- ensure members annually revisit the vision, aims and values
- lead in monitoring the implementation of the DCS Education and Care Strategy
- set the culture of the board, balancing and valuing the support and challenge responsibilities and modes of operation
- ensure the board acts as a team, sustaining the Nolan Principles of public service, adhere to the agreed Code of Conduct and uphold the values of the school itself
- where required, represent members in their dealings with external partners and be an advocate for the school – for example by dealing with complaints
- attend school functions (performances/sports days/prize-giving) as appropriate and encourage others to do so

Leading and developing the team

- ensure the board has the required skills and commitment to hold leaders to account well, and that identified skills gaps (skills audit) are filled
- seek to ensure a diverse team that reflects the communities served with a variety of backgrounds and experiences
- ensure all members have a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities and that they receive appropriate induction and training as required
- encourage the board to consider and engage in self-evaluation activities
- ensure that members are included, active participants and feel valued
- model the agreed Code of Conduct and hold members to account
- develop a good working relationship with the Vice Chair, ensuring they are kept fully informed and delegating tasks as appropriate
- seek to ensure that there is a plan for succession for the Chair, Vice Chair and any individual roles or sub-committee Chairs
- setting the agenda, managing meetings and ensuring the minutes are an accurate record before they are published.

Working with the Head Teacher or Setting Manager

Some schools also have responsibility for an early years setting in the locality. Where this is the case, the Chair will liaise equally between the Head Teacher and Setting Manager.

- build a professional relationship with the HT/SM that allows for honest conversations, acting as a sounding board and ensuring there are no surprises at meetings e.g. issues, risks
- meet regularly (normally monthly) with the Head Teacher and Setting Manager
- offer governor involvement in recruitment, if required for example short-listing, interviewing etcetera
- ensure members concentrate on their strategic role and hold leaders to account

- ensure that leaders provide information that allows the board to fulfil its function
- ensure the workload and well-being of leaders is considered and discussed
- ensure the Head Teacher or Setting Manager provides staff with an understanding of the role of the board and acts as link between the two

Leading improvement

- ensure board is involved at a strategic level in the self-evaluation process and that this feeds into its key priorities for improvement planning (SDP)
- ensure the board's business is focused on the strategic priorities, not operational
- ensure the board has the information it needs to monitor the progress of pupils and consider appropriate challenge or support to improve outcomes
- ensure the board has good knowledge of the context, character and journey
- ensure there are mechanisms in place to canvas and listen to the views of parents, pupils and staff (stakeholder engagement) either face to face, via surveys and analyse the results
- reporting annually to parents including successes, challenges and risks.

Leading board business

- appoints a secretary, who does not need to be a board member, capable of advising on its functions and relevant procedure and that they are appraised
- collaborate with the Governance and Performance Lead to establish effective working procedures and, where relevant, sound committee structures
- work with the Head Teacher or Setting Manager and secretary (and GPL if required) to plan for meetings, ensuring that agendas focus on the key responsibilities and strategic priorities and avoid unnecessary paperwork
- Chair meetings effectively, promoting an open culture that allows ideas and discussion to thrive while ensuring clear decisions and/or capturing answers
- ensure that decisions agreed at the meetings are implemented and recorded
- ensure that effective arrangements are in place for dealing with complaints under the complaints procedure

Code of Conduct

You may discuss the code of conduct in your first board meeting, or it be included in your induction. You may also be asked to sign a copy to say you agree to follow it. Boards must remain strategic and not operational. The board contributes to the setting-up and review of the operational framework, focusing on raising standards of achievement, establishing high expectations and promoting effective teaching and learning. As a member of the board, you agree to:

1. Fulfil roles and responsibilities assigned by the Chair
2. Accept that the role is strategic and so will focus on core functions rather than involve themselves in day-to-day management
3. Develop, share and live the ethos and values of the school or setting
4. Adhere to directives, practices and procedures as set out by the MOD through Defence Children Services and the school and setting
5. Work collectively for the benefit of all stakeholders (equity)
6. Be candid but constructive and respectful when holding leaders to account
7. Strive to uphold the school or settings' reputation in the community and in private communications (including on social media)
8. Not discriminate against anyone and work to advance equality of opportunity for all

To demonstrate our commitment to the role, members will:

1. Involve themselves actively in the work of the board and accept their fair share of responsibilities, serving on committees or as a link where required e.g. SEND or SG
2. Make every effort to attend all meetings and where I cannot attend explain in advance why they are unable to
3. Arrive at meetings prepared, having read all papers in advance, ready to make a positive contribution (including asking questions, listening attentively etc) and observe protocol
4. Get to know the school or setting and become involved in activities where practicable
5. Visit the school or setting and when doing so will arrange this with the relevant staff in advance

To build and maintain relationships, board members will:

1. Develop effective working relationships with leaders, staff, parents, DCS and other relevant stakeholders from the local community/command
2. Express views openly, courteously and respectfully in all our communications with board members and staff both inside and outside of meetings
3. Work to create an inclusive environment where each board member's contributions are valued equally

To respect confidentiality, members will:

1. Maintain confidentiality both inside and outside of school when matters are deemed confidential or where they concern individual staff, learners or families
2. Ensure all confidential papers and electronic documents are held and disposed of appropriately
3. Maintain confidentiality even after leaving the role

To declare conflicts of interest and be transparent, members will:

1. Declare any business, personal or other interest that I have in connection with the board business when accepting the role
2. Declare any conflict of loyalty at the start of any meeting should the need arise
3. If a conflicted matter arises in a meeting, offer to leave the meeting for the duration of the discussion
4. Act in the best interests of the school as a whole and not as a representative of any group or individual
5. Accept that in the interests of open governance, our names, date of appointment, terms of office, roles on the committee, category of board member and photo may be published on the DCS website or Staff noticeboards in schools or settings.

If board members fall short of these expectations or the following Nolan Principles:

1. Selflessness
2. Integrity
3. Objectivity
4. Accountability
5. Openness
6. Honesty
7. Leadership

Members of the board fully accept that the Chair may cease their role if the code of conduct or Nolan Principles are not upheld consistently.

Data

Those with responsibility for governance have access to a range of data to help them evaluate educational performance. This includes the following:

1. Internal data that tracks the attainment, progress, safeguarding, attendance and behaviour of all pupils and of different groups of learners
2. Analysis of School Performance (ASP) data provided by the Department for Education (DfE), which provides key headline and comparative performance measures for pupils. The data can be filtered to show the performance of different groups of pupils in the school and be compared to national averages over time. However, this is usually done in November when outcomes are validated.
3. Data analysis provided by software such as Bromcom or Nexus. [Bromcom](#) is used by schools to capture internal data and is analysed by HQ DCS data team ([Vision](#) platform). [Nexus](#) is a web based education portal to support Local Authorities in their quality assurance role.

When looking at data, those with responsibility for governance should consider where that data is coming from and what it's based on, looking at both progress and attainment. Wherever the data comes from, it should be as up-to-date as possible, presented in a format non-subject matter experts (SME) understand and contains the right level of detail. This means detailed enough to tell what it needs to know, but not so detailed to make it difficult to interpret. Data should help readers answer simple questions about how well learners are performing.

External data

Those with responsibility for governance need information about how different schools and settings perform to ensure that DCS as a whole is successful. This does not mean that all schools and settings will achieve the same key stage or GCSE results. But those with responsibility for governance should receive reports or indications about the quality of teaching and be able to see evidence of progress or improvement. Those with responsibility for governance particularly need to be aware of following indicators in relation to external data. This might be for example:

1. In Early Years (age 4-5), the proportion of children achieving a good level of development (GLD)
2. In Year 1, Phonics Screening Check or the retake success rate for Y2 pupils who did not pass the first time around
3. KS1 data in primary schools. This will appear in ASP data but is not externally published
4. Key stage 2 (age 11), KS4 (age 16) or KS5 (age 18) data for progress and attainment
5. They will also be attendance rates - as we know poor pupil attendance will almost certainly have a negative effect on performance where attendance is low. Those with responsibility should seek reasons and ask what strategies are in place to improve it.

Internal data

Internal data is comprised of assessments generated by teachers on how pupils are progressing or learning the curriculum during the school year. This is just as important as

the external data, which is historical by the time it appears. Once the exam results are published, it's too late to change the outcome for pupils who sat those tests. Those with responsibility for governance need to be clear with the Chief Education Officer (CEdO) at the outset what internal data information it requires to carry out its oversight function. The level of detail may vary depending on the size of schools and what local arrangements or capacity exists. Given that attainment and achievement data is so key to the performance of both individual schools and DCS itself, this is an area where it is easy for duplication to creep in. Reducing teacher workload is a key focus for government and data collection and reporting is one of the main areas of concern. There is a balancing act for those with responsibility for governance and the CEdO in ensuring they receive the right level of data to fulfil their responsibilities without overburdening staff. Those with responsibility for governance could ask the following questions:

1. Am I clear on the purpose of the data being collected?
2. How will it help improve our decision making?
3. What impact on staff workload does this data collection have?

Whatever system is adopted, it needs to be capable of producing useful comparison information for all levels. When looking at data, a classroom or a subject teacher has different needs to the Head Teacher or Setting Manager, who in turn has different needs to the CEdO. Typically, schools use Bromcom to collect data four times in the year. Typically in the first two weeks in September for on- entry or baseline data, then in December, in March and then June for end-of term judgements. This serves to check how 'on-track' pupils are to meet particular standards for core subjects such as reading, writing or mathematics.

Progress vs Attainment

There are lots of words that are often used inter-changeably regarding performance. These include outcomes, standards, achievement, progress and attainment. However, they do not mean exactly the same thing. For example progress and attainment. The education landscape has undergone significant transformation over the years, striving to provide pupils with the best possible learning experience. Progress and attainment are two crucial aspects that define the effectiveness of this system. Progress refers to the continuous improvement of pupils knowledge, skills and understanding throughout their educational journey. Attainment is the actual level of achievement, and their outcomes pupils achieve at various stages of their education. This is captured via exams and testing and the awarding of grades and scoring or levels such as GCSE's or A levels/BTECs. The foundation of progress and attainment in the education system lies in the carefully crafted curriculum and learning standards offered by schools.

Ofsted, use a different definition for progress. In essence do learners know more, remember more and are able to do more. This is a simple and useful description. Over time certain words change their meaning or importance. Up-until 2016, it was usual to hear the phrase 'expected progress'. This has now been debunked from multiple sources.

Defence Accident Investigation Branch (DAIB) Recommendations

1. Provide a safety, health, environment and fire (SHEF) direct that complies with the latest JSP 375 and ACSO 1200 documents in order to direct DCS SHEF activity in a manner that meets Army TLB requirements
2. Ensure that all schools SHEF policies are compliant with issued policy in order to have common practice across DCS
3. Include a statement in each local policy of how the DCS organisation structure aligns with terminology of line manager, commanding officer and head of establishment with regard to accountability and responsibility in order to have a positional read across to Defense's higher-level policy
4. Issue a SHEF Statement of Intent to comply with ACSO 1200
5. Chair (or appoint a safety champion to conduct on their behalf) regular SHEF coordination meetings, to comply with ACSO 1200
6. Liaise with Regional Command SO1 Corporate assurance to establish a formal assurance framework that complies with ACSO 4001 in order to give an effective method of establishing corporate confidence in performance delivery and risk management
7. Ensure, before purchase, that all future fixed equipment playground installations, in DCS schools will be managed by the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) (or equivalent organisation) to allow playground installation specialists to conduct the installation task
8. Ensure all school SHEF policies for pre-use and/or daily inspections of playground equipment are correctly documented, and actions justified against their risk assessment's mitigations for playground use, in order to ensure only required checks are mandated and that these are undertaken
9. Liaise with the Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO), or equivalent organizations at sites where DIO do not provide the infrastructure maintenance, to fully understand the capability and mechanism for adding infrastructure items to the DIO asset register (or equivalent) to correctly capture any planned and reactive maintenance activity that might be required to be included on the DIO forward maintenance register
10. Review all fixed infrastructure playground equipment within MOD schools and settings to establish if any fixed items are required to be added to the Defence Infrastructure Organisation's (DIO) asset register and forward maintenance register (or equivalent at non-DIO locations)
11. Direct a first aid needs assessment/risk assessment for each school and setting location, in accordance with Joint Service Publication 375 to identify the quantity and level of first aid requirements
12. Consider a written method in MOD schools and settings, to supplement verbal briefs, when sharing information about an injured child to parent or carers
13. Consider the Defence Unified Reporting and Lessons System (DURALS) to manage its occurrence and reporting activity to benefit from enhanced functionality that modern cloud based digital systems provide, and align with the rest of the Army's reporting process
14. Detail, within their safety, health, environment and fire policy, the investigation process that schools should take immediately after an accident or incident, and provide links to sources of published good practice, to ensure immediate follow-on

investigations are conducted promptly and effectively by those in the best position to identify and share learning

15. Determine how different MOD schools provide their parental community with visibility of the SGC terms of reference, membership, and minutes, in order to identify good practice for sharing information across MOD schools
16. Provide a DCS policy that allows for occurrences to be investigated at the lowest possible level across the organisation to foster an empowered workforce and normalise a continuous improvement culture owned by those delivering DCS's output

Early Help (Safeguarding)

Early Help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges at any point in a child's life. Where a child would benefit from co-ordinated Early Help, an Early Help inter-agency assessment should be arranged. Working Together to Safeguard Children provides detailed guidance on the Early Help process. All staff should be aware of their local Early Help process and understand their role in it. Any child may benefit from Early Help, but all staff should be particularly alert to the potential need for Early Help for a child who:

- is disabled or has certain health conditions and has specific additional needs
- has special educational needs (whether or not they have a SCAN or a statutory Education, Health and Care plan)
- has a mental health need
- is a young carer
- is showing signs of being drawn in to anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups or county lines
- is frequently missing/goes missing from education or home
- has experienced multiple suspensions, is at risk of being permanently excluded
- is at risk of modern slavery, trafficking, sexual and/or criminal exploitation
- is at risk of being radicalised or exploited
- has a parent or carer in custody, or is affected by parental offending
- is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues and domestic abuse
- is misusing alcohol and other drugs themselves
- is at risk of so-called 'honour'-based abuse such as Female Genital Mutilation or Forced Marriage
- is a privately fostered child

If staff have any concerns about a child's welfare, they should act on them immediately. They should follow their own organisation's Directive and speak to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or their deputy. Options will then include:

- managing any support for the child internally via the school's own pastoral support processes
- undertaking an Early Help assessment.
- making a referral to statutory services. For example, as the child could be in need, is in need or is suffering, or likely to suffer harm.

Early Help assessment

If Early Help is appropriate, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (or a deputy) will generally lead on liaising with other agencies and setting up an inter-agency assessment as appropriate. Staff may be required to support other agencies and professionals in an Early Help assessment, in some cases acting as the lead practitioner. Further guidance on effective assessment of the need for Early Help can be found in Working Together to Safeguard Children. Any such cases should be kept under constant review and consideration given to a referral to local social care for assessment for statutory services if the child's situation does not appear to be improving or is getting worse.

Early Years Governor role

Early Years is the bedrock of education – that is one of the reasons it is called the Foundation Stage. Early Years goes well beyond child care, it's where the learning journey really starts. Strong foundations set the tone and standard for future development.

Being the link Governor for Early Years is not about being an expert or judging provision as an inspector might. It's not about knowing as much as the Head Teacher or Setting Manager. It's not even about whether you've had young children or not. It is about being an advocate for the Early Years. It is about asking the right questions for the right reasons. It is and then reporting back what you see, hear and understand. In a nutshell:

1. Early Years' Governor to maintain oversight of provision and practice, including any Setting linked with the School
2. Meeting with the Foundation Stage Leader and/or Setting Manager during visits, including discussions with children and staff
3. Reviewing and discussing provision, including the intent, implementation and impact of the curriculum
4. Hold leaders to account for provision, agreed outcomes and progress
5. Reviewing and discussing how the Early Years meet the standards outlined in the statutory framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage (DfE 2021)
6. Monitoring and evaluating the impact of development plans (SDP) relevant to Early Years
7. Reporting back to the board and completing visit reports as required

The job of the Early Years link is to bridge Governors and staff and report back to the SGC on such things as the curriculum delivery, impact of interventions, use of resources and attainment and progress (FS2). The Early Years Adviser (EYA) from the district School Improvement Team can really help with this. Early Years Governors maybe aware of the introduction of the EYFS framework, which became statutory from September 2021. There are also two non-statutory documents, the updated Development Matters guidance or the Birth to Five guidance, which can be used alongside the EYFS framework. Below are points to consider as a Governor linked to these changes.

Communication and understanding

Are all members of the team fully aware of the changes in the framework, the Development Matters and the Birth to Five guidance?

Do the staff including the Head Teacher, know what this means for day to day practice?

As a Governor, it is important to ensure all staff involved in Early Years have clarity on what has changed and discuss with staff what this means for practice. Ensure this does not lead to increased burdens on the team linked to workload. The framework focuses on a workload reduction.

Deeper understanding of child development

A child-centred, play-based approach should still be at the heart of the Early Years provision in school. There is more flexibility with assessment procedures. There is a shift in emphasis which places greater trust in the professional judgement of staff. This should save time and reduce paperwork. Questions governors might want to ask:

How secure and confident are the staff in their knowledge of child development?

How might these changes affect how the staff collate evidence of learning?

How will we ensure parental communication and engagement remain a high priority?

Assessment systems

There is a clear shift away from tracking in the revised EYFS and a greater reliance of professional judgement. As a School or Setting you will need to create a system that is suitable for your children e.g. Family App. You need to consider and agree terminology for progress of children – for example ‘on track, not on track’ as they monitor progress. If everyone agrees and understands the terminology it will help you as Governors to monitor progress from starting points and evaluate the effectiveness of the provision. Each child’s development is understood well by at least one person in the team. Without progress data, they need to be able to describe the progress that a child has made in their different areas of learning. In Early Years, there are a variety of outcomes that could become important and tracked e.g. independence, resilience, team work. These can be in addition to Early Learning Goals and whether children achieve a Good Level of Development (GLD) by the end of Foundation Stage 2 (end of Reception Year).

The Early Learning Goals (ELGs) are the goals or targets that children should achieve at the end of their reception year. They will be working towards these goals throughout their time in EYFS (birth to 5) across all 7 areas of learning in the EYFS curriculum. Some children will exceed these goals. Children are deemed to have achieved GLD if they have achieved the ELG (Early Learning Goals) in the EYFS curriculum areas of: Personal, Social and Emotional Development; Physical Development; Communication and Language Development; Literacy and Mathematics.

Governors should be aware of how children with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) or who have additional needs are supported. These children should be taught within their class and changes made to the curriculum or the environment to allow them to access all the areas of learning. Interventions should be considered within the early years provision. Additional assessment tools made be used for these Early Years’ children e.g. Communication tools or the Early Years Developmental Journal. The Reception Baseline assessment (RBA) became statutory in September 2021.

Curriculum and pedagogy

The guidance does not mean you should be moving away from a play-based approach to the curriculum. It does not mean large curriculum documents. The curriculum should be planned to develop children’s knowledge, skills and abilities to apply what they know and can do with increasing fluency and independence. It is really important that the curriculum is not narrowed, and it is accessible and ambitious for all children. Children need to be taught by adults and guided by adults to help them build the knowledge and skills they need to learn and for life – this is through child-led, adult-led and direct and guided teaching opportunities. As a Governor it is important to check that Subject Leaders in School are familiar with teaching and learning in the Early Years and how this is built upon into Key Stage 1. This can be reflected in curriculum progression maps for different subject areas. Consider how the environment enables high-quality play.

Are there other approaches, beyond play-based learning, that might be important for children’s development?

Staff need to feel confident that they understand how a child would typically progress to achieve a particular skill. Any monitoring or evaluation of provision should be based around the effectiveness of the provision including the environment, quality first teaching, parental engagement, and the use of adults.

During monitoring visits Early Governors may consider:

Exploring the way children learn in the Early Years and seeing this in action in the provision:

Can you see how children learn through their self-chosen play, careful structuring of the environment, quality adult interactions, playful guided learning or direct teaching?

How does the curriculum build on strengths of children and families in the community?

Are starting points, gaps in knowledge or experience and clear end points known?

How do we work with families to strengthen this and find out more information?

Advice and support from the EYA is invaluable and readily available via:

tricia.wood@modschoools.org (Rest of the World)

helen.lakey@modschoools.org (Cyprus)

Education and Care Strategy

Effective Governance

Area of focus	Boards demonstrate effective through:
Vision and strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative working with leaders and stakeholders to develop a clear and ambitious vision. • A strategy document that sets out how the vision will be achieved. • Evaluating data that helps to monitor agreed strategy outcomes.
Quality of Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring the impact of what pupils are taught, including the impact to the curriculum on all pupils, particularly those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) • Checking the schools performance and asking questions about standards • Being familiar with statutory assessment systems (Phonics screening or key stage 2 SATs) as well as the school's own system of non-statutory assessments (internal tests etc)
Stakeholder engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging with staff parents pupils and the wider community • Using stakeholder insights to support triangulation of information • Monitoring staff workload and well-being. • Ensuring that the school has mechanisms in place to engage with all parents and the community.
Safeguarding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that safeguarding directives and procedures are effective and comply with the law • Ensuring that pupils in the school know how to keep themselves safe • Engaging in appropriate safeguarding training • Monitoring the number and types of safeguarding incidents are there patterns or trends?
Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building board awareness of legal and compliance responsibilities through induction, attending meetings, carrying out board-business and undertaking further development as required • Ensuring the school is compliant with all aspects of discrimination. Law
Self-evaluation processes (optional)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An induction programme that helps new board members to understand their role and responsibilities and how they differ from being a governor or trustee in the UK • Regular self-evaluation and external reviews that improve the quality and impact of governance • Conducting a skills audit and addressing any gaps

External inspection (3LoDA)

Assuring the Quality of Education in DCS was disrupted by the pandemic and by changes to how Ofsted inspects overseas. Indeed, some establishments have not been inspected for nearly a decade. Therefore the judgements and published reports are quickly outdated. How external inspections by Ofsted occurred were covered by a protocol with the Ministry of Defence (MOD). The protocol provided for Schools and Settings to be inspected every four years, but pressures on Ofsted and declining resources have seen a reduction in the frequency of inspections. In addition, the protocol set out the prohibitive charges to inspect from 2020 onwards. Also, the Education Inspection Framework (EIF) does not consider for regular throughput of pupils, who often change schools every two or three years. After considerable thought, the protocol was withdrawn in December 2023. In Spring 2024, a commercial process began - to seek an alternative inspectorate to Ofsted, to better meet DCS requirements. Organisations accredited by DfE must comply with a common set of standards, which are also used to inspect schools abroad, called the British Standards Overseas (BSO Standards). An essential element of the inspection is the extent to which the British character of the school is evident in its ethos, curriculum, teaching, care for pupils and pupils' achievements. Membership of the BSO scheme ensures that DCS schools provide their pupils with the skills and qualifications they need to enter and re-enter the British education system. The scheme also helps to inform parents about how the standards in DCS schools measure up against the standards that apply to independent schools in England. It also provides parents and others with assurance that a school has been robustly inspected. The DfE host the BSO inspection reports on their website to allow unrestricted public access for parents and other key stakeholders. Inspections of establishments are to be scheduled for every three years and must be conducted during term-time and within education hours. The inspections must determine whether the performance meets all the standards, and the inspection report must cover:

- The extent to which the standards are met;
- The quality of education or care being provided;
- The distinctiveness of each school;
- Whether there is evidence that local requirements are being met;
- Whether the school is providing a British education that has similar characteristics to an education in an independent school in England in terms of its ethos, curriculum, teaching, care for pupils and pupils' achievements;
- Whether the school is providing their pupils with the skills and qualifications they need to enter and re-enter the British education system.

Only three approved DfE organisations can 'bid' during this process (currently these are EDT, ISI and Penta International). If inspectorates bid, a selection process will follow to recommend a preferred provider. If inspectorates do not apply, or if the finances are not forthcoming, the MOD will need to rethink. In the meantime, DCS has two quality assurance processes. First is a Paper ROSE, a desktop process hosted at HQ DCS. This has run successfully, with leaders visiting the UK, since January 2023. The outcome letters are published and repeated on a three year rolling programme. Second is a ROSE Visit, which is due to start in November 2024. This involves a two day visit to schools, led by an independent reviewer (also a serving Ofsted Inspector). These visits will be every three years unless there is an urgent need to revisit more frequently.

Governance and Performance Lead

Roles and responsibilities

- advising on legal duties and practice
- advising on constitutional requirements with respect to the various boards
- advising on procedures and responsibilities
- advising on statutory guidance and policies
- advising on annual tasks and decisions
- advising and delivering core and bespoke training
- accessing external advice e.g. NGA, The Key etc as required
- supporting issue resolution, if appropriate
- clarifying positions, in writing, when required e.g. finance, safeguarding

In addition, provide oversight for essential documentation – for example self-evaluation forms (SEF) or improvement plans (SDP).

- advise and co-ordinate board monitoring to ensure high quality local support and assurance
- reporting to Assurance Board on board returns e.g. minutes, termly reports from Chairs, quality/coverage of work (secretary)
- supporting the efficient and effective operation of boards
- ensuring governance at all levels is carrying out its functions
- leading on development work of DCS governance framework and driving improvements to its systems, processes and structures
- managing and coordinating the delivery and ongoing improvement of governance support across DCS
- advise on resignations or expiry of term of office and the impact e.g. skills mix
- advising the board on succession planning for all board roles
- maintaining governing documents such as terms of reference, scheme of delegation (SOD) also known as a Responsibility/Accountability/Consulted/Informed (RACI) matrix

Health and Safety

Questions

For those with responsibility for governance, the following would be pertinent:

1. Has the Headteacher communicated health and safety information to the board?
2. Is a copy of the Health and Safety Law poster displayed in an easily accessible location?
3. Is there an up-to-date Head DCS SHEF statement of intent, and Head Teacher Health and Safety policy in place (SHEF Notice board)?
4. Have all occurrences been reported and investigated?
5. Has progress been made in mandatory training?
6. Have all new starters received induction training?
7. Evidence of the SHEF dashboard being updated?
8. Has the DCS H&S and Well-being checklist been completed?
9. Has a school SHEF committee meeting been held?
10. Does the school have an memorandum of understanding with the local Station?
11. How many electrical items have been tested this month?
12. Have DIO provided the school a record of inspections; observations and actions required?
13. Has progress been made towards the DCS audit action plan?



[20230922-September 2023 SHEF Manual V009-O.pdf](#)

Holding to account

Firstly, it cuts both ways. Secondly this is not always rooted in authority, power or liability. Finally, it is based on respect. It means to make someone accept responsibility for their actions, inactions or decisions and explain them satisfactorily. It is usually wise to be clear in how you are going to play your parts so that there are no surprises or blind-siding. Empty threats about telling the line manager or simply stepping down rarely serve the greater good i.e. children's education. Some examples of holding to account, which can apply within a school or setting as well as for Governors:

- Help them understand their goals (what they want to achieve and why)
- Support their capabilities (tools and space to ask for what they need)
- Measure their results (acknowledge when meaningful things are achieved and offer advice or feedback if they do not; similarly, ask why not – it helps understanding and empathy and is not intended as confrontational)
- Discuss how to succeed (be clear on what success looks like, what the indicators are and what the impact should be)
- High expectations of the goals or tasks (ensure they know what you expect of them to meet their goals and act if required*)
- Conflation caution (do not be seduced by tick lists of actions e.g. staff meetings held, training attended. Inputs are clearly not outputs)
- Reflect and take some time (ambition is important, but unrealistic expectations or workload help no one. Sometimes, incremental improvement that is sustainable is more desirable. For example, value for money is the effect not the cost)

Many School Governance Committees can only meet three times a year due e.g. capacity, recruitment challenges, high turnover etc. Therefore, time is precious, every moment counts. Sometimes, important work can be completed and checked in the down beat such as monthly or fortnightly meetings with school or setting leaders. Remember, the minutes or RODs are summative and not always formative. It is never a bad idea at the end of any meeting for the Chair to summarise what has been done or learned, what decisions were discussed and the next steps moving forward. This helps to focus the mind of attendees to check and challenge at the next event. Triangulation is not about a lack of trust in an individual's perception. It can, if framed properly, confirm a position using other sources of evidence to build a stronger perspective that builds confidence.

Induction

The following few steps are laid out by the National Governance Association (NGA). The NGA is the most recognised, and arguably most respected, membership organisation for governors, trustees etc for state schools in England. The NGA is a web-based subscription service that provides valuable resources, expert support and e-learning to shape stronger governance.

DCS establishments and are not part of a local authority or a multi-academy trust. However, there is sufficient overlap to use the NGA advice and guidance wherever practicable.

Step one - introductory visit and meeting. Extend an early invitation to visit the school or setting as an opportunity to:

1. Be welcomed by the Chair, Head Teacher (HT) or the Setting Manager (SM)
2. Meet wider staff from the school improvement team (SIT) such as the ACEO (Assistant Chief Education Officer who line manages the HT) or SIA (School Improvement Adviser) or EYA (Early Years Adviser who line manages the SM)
3. Have a guided tour, experience the culture, meet the staff and talk to pupils
4. Complete any preliminary tasks such as appointment verification, photos for the staff board, or completing a biography
5. Discuss any support that the member may need to participate fully. Be open to talk about individual needs and circumstances, such as caring responsibilities (i.e. attendance limitations or email details for attending virtually via MS Teams) or any disabilities or prior experience.

Step two – introduce other contacts. This could include:

1. Other volunteers who may be parents or from local command
2. The Governance and Performance Lead (can help with training, advice or support)
3. A mentor assigned to help answer questions or explain responsibilities

Step three – provide essential information:

1. Roles, responsibilities and Code of Conduct
2. Current context, challenges and priorities
3. A high level summary of the performance of learners
4. How things work e.g. calendar of meetings, terms of reference, access to previous minutes etc
5. Access to useful resources e.g. [NGA Glossary](#), example questions, local handbooks produced by some schools, ground rules for meetings

Step 4 – informal discussion with the Chair or HT/SM for what to expect in meetings.

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KSCIE) Summary

KCSIE should be read annually and understood by all governors, paying particular regard to Part 2 which sets out the management of safeguarding.

Part 2: the management of safeguarding

This part is for Head Teachers or Setting Managers, DSL teams and those with responsibility for governance.

Boards have strategic leadership responsibility for the safeguarding arrangements.

The board must:

- Make sure it complies with its duties under legislation
- Make sure the policies (directives), procedures and training are effective, comply with legislation and are in line with KCSIE

And should:

- Appoint a board member responsible for the school's safeguarding arrangements (sometimes called a nominated governor or safeguarding link)
- Receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection (usually online) training at induction, which is regularly updated, to equip them with the knowledge to provide strategic challenge. This is so they can be confident that safeguarding documents and procedures are effective, and support establishments to deliver a robust approach to safeguarding
- Be aware of their obligations under the Human Rights Act 1998, the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) and their Local Safeguarding Partnership (LSP)
- Support a whole-school or setting approach to safeguarding – making sure that safeguarding and child protection are 'at the forefront' and underpin all relevant aspects of process and policy development. It is not enough to say that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and not demonstrate it

Make sure your Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

- Is from the Senior Leadership Team (SLT)
- Has the duty of lead responsibility for safeguarding and child protection (including online safety and understanding the filtering and monitoring systems and processes in place) explicitly in their job description
- Has the appropriate status and authority, and additional time, funding, training, resources and support needed to carry out their role effectively
- Has the authority to check and challenge the impact of training
- Ensure that staff and volunteers are appropriately trained to spot the signs and symptoms of abuse and what exactly they should do. This includes identifying low-level concerns (LLC) about adults working in schools or settings
- Ensures children are taught about safeguarding, including online safety and, where necessary, that teaching is adapted for those with specific needs and vulnerabilities, including victims of abuse and some pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)
- Ensures any systems, processes and policies operate with the pupil's best interests at heart

Monitoring educational performance

Those with responsibility for governance have a duty to hold leaders to account for the educational performance of all learners. They can carry out this duty through analysis of progress and attainment data compared against national benchmarks and over time. They can ensure there are clear processes of monitoring and overseeing school improvement, including providing constructive challenge to leaders. Please note that very small cohorts can skew figures from very high to very low year-on-year.

Questions to ask:

1. How does attainment compare to previous years, national averages or other DCS schools?
2. Is low attendance having an impact on pupil outcomes?
3. Do leaders have plans in place to address underperformance?
4. How will we know that things are improving?
5. Which year groups or subjects get the best or worst results and why?
6. What is the strategy for improving the areas of weakest performance?
7. Which groups of pupils are the highest and lowest performing and why?
8. How well do pupils with additional needs, such as those with SEND, achieve?
9. Is school adequately engaged with the world of work and preparing learners well?
10. What does destination careers data, including for pupils with their SEND, tell us about the schools educational performance?
11. How have these weaknesses impacted the school?
12. What's going well?
13. How are you prioritising certain subjects or key stages for improvement?
14. To what extent is our curriculum currently match the schools vision and values?
15. What have you done to make sure the curriculum reflects the vision in each phase, subject or year group?
16. How can the board help you improve educational performance?
17. What training have you received? What difference did it make?
18. What training to improve performance have wider staff received?
19. Do staff feel supported and challenged?
20. How many learners are off-track? How are they supported and challenged?

Triangulation

Those with the responsibility for governance need to have a mechanism to satisfy themselves at the picture they are receiving from reports, is an accurate reflection of what is actually happening. This is a difficult area for governors and leaders alike because it can appear to be distrustful or not believing what Head Teachers or Setting Managers say. It requires triangulation of data, comparing internal data from sources such as Bromcom received from schools with external sources such as published data e.g. IDSR from Ofsted or ASP from the Department for Education. This may be in addition to personal findings from structured visits. In the simplest terms, this involves comparing what those with responsibility for governance are being told against three sources of information:

1. Reports from other sources, both internal and external (CVP, ROSE Visit etc)
2. Data provided (external e.g. IDSR or ASP and internal e.g. HT/SM Report or Bromcom, surveys)
3. Information gained from visits, including talking to staff, learners or parents

New to governance

Thank you for stepping up and joining the board. You join a force of over a quarter of a million people who volunteer to govern in state schools, academies or independent schools across the UK. Although DCS establishments are not technically the same as any of the above, the principles are. If you have been a governor or a trustee of a school in the UK you will notice there are many differences compared to being a board member for DCS. The differences bring both positives and negatives. For example, on the positive side, the portfolio of duties is significantly and substantially less (for example finance, recruitment and curriculum). However, board members have no accountability, less delegated responsibility and less authority to enact change or hold individuals to account. The main areas include:

Safeguarding	Monitor safeguarding practice, ensuring compliance with DCS directive and statutory responsibilities.
SEND	Ensure pupils with SEND get the support they need and seek promise that staff are adequately trained.
Standards	Monitor school performance – reviewing data, including exam results, attendance and achievement. Work with Schools and Settings to identify areas for improvement.
Stakeholders	Develop communications channels, consult stakeholders and work in partnership with the local community. Ensure stakeholder views e.g. pupils and staff are accounted for.

General advice:

1. Take the role seriously, it really matters and makes a difference if you do so. Keep to the Code of Conduct at all times.
2. Listen attentively, even when things do not make sense instantly. You do learn very quickly, and you are not expected to be a subject matter expert (SME) in education. That's not your role. Keep in your lane for the right reasons
3. Ask questions, lots of them! Not just the suggested ones in handrails or to appear busy or engaged. The simplest questions are often the best place to start. For example, So what? What is this telling me? Does this really make sense? What more do I need to know? Should we be worried?
4. Questions can help you begin to see if things stack up. Sense check with those around you, reflecting on what you read and have been told. Don't be afraid to say, 'So I think I am hearing...I think that means...how do you know?'
5. Don't apologise for not knowing something. You may not have learned it yet.
6. Bear in mind Hitchen's Razor – 'that which can be asserted without evidence can also be dismissed without evidence.'

Key things to bear in mind to keep things simple and effective:

1. Good relationships based on trust and doing the right thing
2. Having the right people around the table
3. Engage in courageous conversations
4. Know the school and the context
5. Ask the right questions for the right reasons, don't get sucked into 'managing upwards'. There is a time and place, called the chain of command.

Paper ROSE (2LoDA)

Assuring the Quality of Education in DCS schools and settings was significantly disrupted by the covid-pandemic and changes to how Ofsted inspects overseas (frequency, capacity and cost). Indeed, some DCS schools have not been inspected for nearly ten years. Therefore the judgements and reports are quickly outdated and less relevant to the current successes, challenges or contexts. In response to this, HQ DCS created a desk-based review process called the Paper ROSE to bridge the gap and provide assurance. The acronym ROSE stands for a Review of School Effectiveness. All schools and settings will have visited HQ DCS by October 2024. Quality assurance involves the systematic review of educational provision to maintain and improve its quality, equity and efficiency.

The Paper ROSE is completed at HQ DCS in Upavon, UK. The Head Teacher or Setting Manager (HT/SM) attends with a school improvement colleague of their choice e.g. School Improvement Adviser (SIA) or Early Years Adviser (EYA) to support them. The process takes two full days. Day one includes planned meetings with Schools and Settings (Governance and Performance Lead), Specialist Support Services (Assistant Head SSS) and School's Interface Services (Assistant Head SIS). Day two is structured around individual meetings with HQ DCS Team Leaders. This aims to discuss support or resources for the school or setting, through agreed actions and timescales. Typical topics of discussion typically include:

S&S: Outcomes; SEF/SIP; Staffing; Performance management, Lesson observations

SSS: Attendance; Behaviour; Safeguarding; SEND/supportability; TACT

SIS: Finance; Health and safety; Resources/INFRA/IT; Workforce (recruitment/HR)

The process is not intended to create additional work, beyond business as usual. These might include the self-evaluation form (SEF), reports or minutes. These documents are listed in the initial invite letter approximately forty days before the visit and requested 14 days prior to circulate to HQ staff. As a professional courtesy and for full transparency, Chairs are copied in to invites.

The Head Teacher or Setting Manager (HT/SM) are initially invited to present the context of the school to Senior Leaders and Team Leaders before a brief question and answer session. Visitors to DCS HQ typically book accommodation and stay in one of the mess facilities nearby, such as Larkhill. There is an opportunity to meet with DCS HQ staff socially. The Paper ROSE process is an opportunity to improve communication, understanding and mutual support between our schools and settings and the HQ functional branches.

The draft outcome letter is sent to HT/SM for a factual accuracy check. When completed, the findings, including the actions, are then published in a letter written to the Chair, copied to the HT/SM as well as the district ACEO, commands and HQ Senior Leaders. The final outcome letter is stored on the MOD SharePoint as matter of record.

Pupil mental health and well-being

Promoting and supporting mental health and well-being in schools guidance is available [here](#). The guidance outlines the role in supporting and promoting mental health and well-being:

1. **Prevention** - Creating a safe and calm environment where mental health problems are less likely, improving the mental health and well-being of all learners and equipping them to be resilient
2. **Identification** - Recognising emerging issues as early and as accurately as possible
3. **Early support** - Helping learners access evidence-informed early support and interventions. Support may be face to face or signposted to online resources which evolve quickly by their very nature
4. **Access to specialist support** - Working effectively with external agencies to provide swift access or referrals to specialists for support and/or treatment

Responsibilities:

Those with responsibility for governance have a statutory duty to promote to promote well-being. As set out in the Education Act, in this context, well-being includes:

1. Physical health, mental health and emotional well-being
2. Protection from harm and neglect
3. Education, training and recreation
4. Contribution children make to society
5. Social and economic well-being

Mental health and well-being should be considered as part of the board's statutory safeguarding responsibilities outlined in Keeping Children Safe in Education. Safeguarding includes preventing the impairment of children's mental and physical health or development. It also includes taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes, especially the most vulnerable.

For pupils diagnosed with mental health conditions, board should refer to their statutory duties on supporting pupils with medical conditions at school. Where these conditions amount to a special educational need or and or disability (SEND), this should form part of the board's SEND responsibilities.

A whole school approach:

The most effective way for boards to meet their statutory duties is by promoting a whole school approach. A whole school approach embeds well-being in all aspects of school life and decision making with a commitment and involvement from everyone across the establishment or community. This could include:

1. Leadership and management that supports and champions effort to promote emotional health and well-being
2. An ethos and environment that promotes respect and values diversity
3. Curriculum, teaching and learning to promote resilience and support social and emotional learning
4. Enabling pupil voice to influence decisions and provide essential feedback
5. Staff development to support their own well-being and that of pupils

6. Identifying need and monitoring impact of interventions
7. Working with parents and the community
8. Targeted support and appropriate referrals

Questions to consider:

- Have we identified and/or trained senior mental health lead?
- Do they have the resource is in capacity to effectively lead the approach?
- Do we need a link member similar to SG or SEND?
- Do they have the knowledge needed to undertake this role?
- How does the board and senior leadership visibly champion and lead by example and well-being?
- Our resource is available and directed to our specific priority areas of well-being?
- Is our approach to well-being reflected in our vision, values and ethos?
- Is our school a place where learners feel safe and listened to?
- How do we know?
- Are there trusted adults that children can turn to when they are troubled?
- Are there visible signs around the school to show mental health and well-being is a priority?

Pupil Voice

Using pupil voice, or pupil participation in school, means listening to pupils' wishes and opinions and involving them in decision making. Establishments that are committed to pupil voice:

- Provide time, space and resources for learner participation
- Train and develop staff so they can support participation
- Encourage and value the voices of all, especially the most vulnerable

Pupil voice benefits

Effective pupil participation can support success and well-being. It encourages buy-in, agency and citizenship skills by making pupils active contributors. It can also help build positive pupil-staff relationships. Engaging directly with pupils can help those with responsibility for governance to:

1. Understand how the vision and approach work in practice
2. Remain accountable to the community it serves by being visible and transparent
3. Provide insights that support triangulation and effective challenge
4. Support the culture of safeguarding and equity
5. Assess the effectiveness of curriculum planning and delivery

Effective pupil engagement

Establishments should use a range of methods to regularly engage with learners. Methods vary based on the phase of education, capacity and expertise. Examples include:

1. Regular surveys of pupils' ideas, views or feedback
2. Listening to their suggestions to improve their own education e.g. opportunities, extra-curricular experience, things to develop their talents or interests
3. Focus groups
4. One to one discussions
5. Working groups which could include pupils, staff and those responsible for governance
6. School councils and other peer-led activities

Some schools use schemes such as the UNICEF Rights Respecting School Award to support their work around pupil engagement.

Questions to consider

1. What mechanisms are in place for regular meaningful engagement?
2. When are learners' views gathered?
3. Are they involved throughout the decision making process?
4. Are those with responsibility for governance involved in a range of different pupil groups?
5. Are the methods used suitable for different age groups and those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND)?
6. Do pupils have the knowledge and skills they need to get involved?
7. How are engagement activities managed safely? For example, considering data protection, confidentiality and safeguarding responsibilities

Clear scope and responsibility

Pupil engagement should have a clearly defined scope and purpose which is communicated to all of those involved. This means:

1. Pupils' understand the purpose for which they are sharing their views e.g. how their views will be used and what may, or may not, happen as a result. Over-promising and under-delivering can be problematical or tokenistic
2. Leaders are able to manage conflicting views, including from pupils and staff
3. Pupil voice is not used as a tool to provide judgement on teaching practice or judging individuals

Tangible outcomes and feedback

Pupil voice activities should have tangible outcomes and feedback should be shared with pupils. In practise this means:

1. Engagement has real impact on pupil's education, their well-being or wider school experience (for example, you said we did...)
2. Pupils know how their views have been used and what action has been taken as a result – decisions could and should be explained even when not agreed to
3. Engagement is a continuous and intentional process. It should never become 'can you guess and agree to what leaders want for you without consulting...'

Those with responsibility for engagement

While school staff are responsible for pupil voice activity, there are occasions that those with responsibility for governance to engage with pupils. Examples include:

1. Talking to pupils on school monitoring visits
2. Inviting pupils to board meetings or functions
3. Attending school councils or similar forums
4. Pupil reports to the board

Monitoring and evaluation questions to consider:

1. How do we capture what learners think about school?
2. How do we know they feel safe?
3. Do we take the views of pupils into account when developing our strategy?
4. Do we include pupils in the development of our vision and values?
5. Do pupils and staff feel comfortable sharing their views?
6. How are pupils equipped through the curriculum to express themselves?
7. What training do we provide to staff to facilitate effective pupil voice?
8. Do pupils know about the work of the of the board?
9. Are there any common themes appearing in pupil surveys?
10. What changes have we seen since previous surveys?

Risk

Effective risk management helps to ensure that strategic priorities and development plans are maintained or met. Risk management is not an isolated activity, but a continuous cycle central to monitoring an establishment's ability to meet its strategic priorities. The Department for Education (DfE) guidance explains why risk management is an essential feature of effective governance: "Effective boards have a framework for identifying and managing risk. They explicitly set and manage their risk appetite and tolerance. In particular, they consider the risks associated with their strategic priorities and improvement plans." In practise, this means that board should:

1. Be aware of the risk register (although overseen by HT or SM)
2. Consider risk as part of strategic planning
3. Show the approach to risk identification management and reporting is robust

Developing a risk management framework

Those with responsibility for governance work with senior leaders, leaders and relevant stakeholders to identify risks. All major risks may be categorised as one of the following:

1. **External risks.** These exist outside of the school or setting and a largely beyond their control, such as funding or a falling birth rate
2. **Internal risks.** These exist inside the school or setting and arise during normal operations. This could relate to clarity of vision, recruitment and retention of staff or premises management
3. **Governance risks.** These can be external or internal. They relate to the ability and capacity of the boards to provide robust accountability, oversight and assurance. For example individual skillset and capacity

Measure. Assess and evaluate through the use of a risk register the extent to which risks threaten the achievement of strategic objectives. Evaluating the likelihood and impact of the risk occurring. Evaluating should involve debate to help determine the appetite for risk.

Manage. Once risks have been evaluated, the establishment will need to ensure there are appropriate plans to manage them. This may include preventative controls, mitigation and contingency plans. Those with responsibility for governance need to be confident that controls are appropriate and effective.

Monitor. Consider how risks change over time and whether the controls in place are still relevant and sufficient. Monitoring should be continuous, providing assurance on the extent to which mitigating actions and controls are operating as intended and whether risks are being managed to an acceptable level. Reviewing the register is part of monitoring.

Report. The widespread nature of risks means the information may come from a range of sources. Other information relating to risk management could be contained in reports from committees or internal audits or come from external agencies.

Risk register. The Risk Register records and defines specific risks. It should provide a level of detail that enables individual risks to be assigned to an owner and appropriate control measures identified. The register should include strategic risks, assign an owner and indicate the severity of the risk should it occur. It should also set out the internal controls in place for each risk (for example directives). The content may cover safeguarding, cybersecurity, staffing levels or estate infrastructure.

ROSE Visit (2LoDA)

A ROSE (Review of School Effectiveness) Visit is part of a suite of assurance processes. It checks, challenges and supports the Quality of Education and Care provided across all DCS schools and settings. It sits in the second level of defence assurance (LoDA) and reports to the 2* Assurance Board. A lead reviewer, external to the chain of command (CofC) in the organisation, controls the process. The review focuses on whether schools and settings meet clear and ambitious standards. The published findings will provide organisational confidence and celebrate the unique offer in each locality. Crucially, it will provide quality assurance but also complement school improvement through peer-review.

A framework sets out how we review schools and settings, and the handbook is the 'rulebook' for reviewers and the establishments. External frameworks such as Ofsted, rightly focus on the Quality of Education. Peer-review frameworks tend to focus on school improvement. The ROSE Visit framework seeks to do the best of both. It also acknowledges the unique circumstances and 'Britishness' of DCS schools and settings.

A ROSE Visit (RV) checks if leaders know their schools or settings, and their next steps on their improvement journey. This means checking the impact of their work to achieve the agreed goals set. A review determines if a school or setting is effective or still working towards becoming effective. The criteria for these are set out in agreed descriptors. For example, it looks to see if learners are achieving as much as they could during their education. It may also consider learners' well-being, behaviour and attitudes, and their personal development. The review carefully considers the most vulnerable learners, such as those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Other themes considered include safeguarding, leadership at all levels, quality of provision and outcomes etcetera. The review team will seek to answer some simple questions and explain why this is so. For example:

- Do schools and settings deliver a unique experience?
- Are learners' needs known and being met – especially pupils with SEND?
- Do learners get a good deal and achieve well?
- Do they benefit from an education equivalent to British schools and settings?
- Is leadership at all levels effective?
- Do school improvement strategies make a difference?
- How effective is teaching?
- Are learners' safe and well behaved?
- What's working well (www) and what are the 'even better ifs' (areas to improve)

The RV determines the 'what' (which strengths or areas for improvement) including which are most important and should occur first. The School Improvement Team picks up the report findings and determines 'how' this will be delivered. This is a stronger model to create a self-improving system, but also holds leaders to account at various levels. A team of professionals conduct a ROSE Visit in a school or setting. An external, experienced reviewer leads and manages the team. Team sizes may vary depending on the size. This means larger schools may have larger teams. Also, the length of the review may vary. This means that an EY setting may only last one day, but a larger school could last for at least two days. A team should typically include someone from within the district (e.g. ACEO/SIA/EYA/Leaders from a school or setting). The process seeks to build capacity, confidence and competence. It also seeks to empower, engage and energise.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is an overarching term that covers all matters relating to pupil safety and welfare. It encompasses child protection arrangements and anti-bullying policies. Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) is statutory guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) that schools and settings must follow when carrying out their duties. It prioritises promoting and safeguarding the welfare of all children and young people. Those with responsibility for governance fulfil their safeguarding duties by providing strategic leadership. This supports an overarching culture of safeguarding in the schools and settings and checking that the culture is embedded. The duty for those with responsibility for governance must comply with is threefold:

1. Safeguard and promote the welfare of children
2. Follow statutory guidance on safeguarding issued by the Secretary of State, wherever practicable
3. Ensure the suitability of staff, supply staff, volunteers, contractors and proprietors

The roles and responsibilities for Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL), and their wider Senior Leadership Team (SLT), have become more demanding and complex in recent years. This is because of shifting landscapes, advancements in technology and evolving safeguarding risks. This has resulted in more guidance for schools. There exist more categories of harm, resulting in more children and young people being identified as being at risk and/or requiring specialist support. The growing prominence of online harm has exacerbated longstanding risks, such as child criminal exploitation (CCE) and child sexual exploitation (CSE) and increasing levels of mental-ill health concerns.

Prevent Duty

The official definition is the legal obligation to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism or radicalisation. This includes actively promoting fundamental British values of democracy, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance towards those with different beliefs. Board's must ensure that DSLs are familiar with the Prevent duty guidance and the all staff complete prevent training on a bi-annual basis.

Specifics for board members:

1. Are expected to provide strategic challenge to school and setting senior leadership and assure themselves that the safeguarding policies and procedures in place are effective in the delivery of a robust approach to safeguarding
2. A member of the board must be appointed as the link or nominated governor, who is responsible for reporting any ongoing concerns to the Assistant Chief Education Officer (ACEO)
3. The board will facilitate a whole-school approach to safeguarding, ensuring that the safety and welfare of children underpin the ethos and culture. All members of the board will read KCSIE in its entirety and attend safeguarding training and relevant updates. They will pay particular attention to Part 2
4. The Chair or safeguarding link, will work with the DSL, Head Teacher or Setting Manager to undertake an annual self-assessment to ensure that all arrangements and functions are carried out in line with section 175 Education Act 2002
5. Where an EYFS Setting is linked to the school, the oversight and responsibility of the board for safeguarding matters may extend to the EYFS Setting also.

Safeguarding questions

Some examples as a handrail. However, these are not a checklist!

Learners

- Who is your trusted adult to share any worries or concerns you may have?
- What if your trusted adult was away - who would you talk to instead?
- What are the top 3 things you would tell a friend why this school is a safe place?
- What helps you feel safe at school? How are you taught to raise concerns?
- Have you ever felt unsafe? What did you do about it?
- What does the word consent mean to you, and do you ever discuss it in lessons?
- What things do you learn about in lessons to keep yourself safe online or offline?
- If your best friend had a big problem and were scared to tell their trusted adult, would you tell yours about it? Why?
- Are there any unsafe parts to the school or 'no go areas'?
- What do staff do to keep you safe?
- Is there anything more staff could or should do to keep learners safer in school or outside in the community?

Staff

- What can you remember from the last safeguarding training undertaken? What difference did it make to your work?
- What is a low-level concern (LLC) about an adult in school and what are the procedures to report it?
- How has safeguarding changed in the school in the last 12 months?
- How would you describe the safeguarding culture in the school?
- What did you cover in your training regarding code of conduct (staff behaviour policy), the safeguarding directive or keeping children safe in education?
- Would you be able to show me how you log-in to My Concern? How often do you report concerns? Do you always get feedback on the issues raised from safeguarding leads?

Parents

- What does the school do to keep your children safe, including online and offline?
- How do you know what school do about safeguarding?
- Do you know how safe your on child is e.g. social media? Could school help you?
- If you had a concern about the safety of children in school

Safeguarding role

Although the accountability for safeguarding sits with above the local board, they must have a nominated safeguarding member to lead on maintaining oversight. However, the board as a whole retains collective responsibility for making sure that safeguarding procedures are properly followed. It is not incumbent on one individual to bear the responsibility alone, but strong practice to have one person to lead, and be the point of contact.

Work with the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The DSL is a senior leader appointed within the school, though is not always the Head Teacher. The DSL takes the lead responsibility for safeguarding, which also includes child protection. The safeguarding link role is the board's main point of contact with the DSL so they should:

- build an effective relationship with the DSL that allows for appropriate support and challenge
- complete the s175 self-assessment, monitoring impact of safeguarding actions from s175 or School Development Plan (SDP), every autumn (Sep/Oct) and report to the board
- arrange termly monitoring visits with the DSL to learn more about the context, challenges and community so that they can understand how these influence the approach to safeguarding. Also discuss anonymised safeguarding incidents or changes in reporting e.g. more early help referrals, impact of RIB moves etc
- through discussion with the DSL and action plans, understand the school's strengths and area for development
- use meetings with DSL to monitor progress of strategic safeguarding priorities
- ensure that the DSL, and Deputy DSLs (DDSL), receive the time, training and support they need to carry out their role properly
- talk to the DSL about staff training, seeking assurance that all staff, including new starters, are up to date with policy (safeguarding directive), practice (how we actually do things e.g. use My Concern) and guidance (adhere to latest version of Keeping Children Safe in Education).

Monitor and understand how safeguarding works in practice

The safeguarding link should be aware of the legal duties the board, must comply with to keep learners safe. To understand how safeguarding procedures work in practice, the link member should:

- read the current KCSIE in its entirety but focus on Part 2
- read the Safeguarding Directive 3.2.1 and check with staff and learners that they are briefed and given appropriate updates and/or reminders
- observe (through arranged termly visits) how the culture of safeguarding works in the school e.g. transitions between lessons, how learners raise concerns, who trusted adults are, supervision arrangements etcetera
- understand how safeguarding is built into the curriculum and how learners are taught how to keep themselves safe (including online) – does this develop over time as learners do?

- complete the s175 self-assessment (MS Form) with the DSL to help ascertain the robustness of systems and procedures
- use data from HT/SM report or core visit programme (CVP) to spot trends e.g. reporting increased (RIB move, better training etc), referrals decreasing, types of issues emerging e.g. self-harm or absence rates for the most vulnerable
- focus on the implementation of safeguarding directive, speak to stakeholders and check the culture

Report to the board and keep them up to date e.g. emerging issues, successes

The safeguarding link should:

- use and encourage other members to use drop-in questions (see handrail) to spot check the impact of training and practice, in addition to the safeguarding culture
- stay current with relevant guidance and the directive, ensuring the board are made aware of any changes
- report to the board following monitoring visits to the school with the DSL (typically termly) including interactions with learners or staff
- ensure safeguarding is considered at each board meeting or sub-committee meeting so it has the prominence it deserves in strategic discussions
- ensure that any decision making from the board is consistent with directives, practice and culture
- ensure the results and subsequent action plans from the autumn s175 self-assessment are shared and any concerns addressed
- support strategic oversight of the pre-appointment check (single central record); often this oversight comes from HT/SM reports on who has checked it recently, not through the safeguarding link administering the record
- work with the Head Teacher or Setting Manager to monitor the estate, ensuring that appropriate strategies and practice are followed to keep learners and staff safe

Safeguarding Sub-Committee Terms of Reference
<p>Purpose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To implement a culture that prioritises the safety and wellbeing of all learners and staff - To work closely with the designated safeguarding lead (DSL) through the link, and ensure necessary procedures are in place - To monitor and review the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements
<p>Membership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - approximately one third of - Link for Safeguarding (not staff)
<p>Big questions to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are learners safe in school and well prepared for life outside? - Is the s175 self-assessment completed and action plan followed up on? - Are we meeting our responsibilities, including training and reading?
<p>Quorum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Minimum of 2, must include the safeguarding link - If number falls below 2 or does not include the link, the meeting will be terminated
<p>Role:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - build an effective relationship with the DSL that allows for support and challenge - complete s175 alongside DSL, monitoring impact of actions from s175 or SIP - ensure that SCR is being checked regularly and recorded (via HT/SM report) - arrange termly monitoring visits with the DSL to learn more about the context, challenges and community - through discussion with the DSL and action plans, understand the school's strengths and area for development - use meetings with DSL to monitor progress of strategic safeguarding priorities - ensure that the DSL, and DDSLs, receive the time, training and support they need to carry out their role properly - talk to the DSL about staff training, seeking assurance that all staff, including new starters, are up to date with policy (safeguarding directive), practice (how we actually do things e.g. use My Concern) and guidance - observe (through arranged termly visits) how the culture of safeguarding works in the school - understand how safeguarding is built into the curriculum and how learners are taught how to keep themselves safe (including online and in the community) - use data from HT report or core visit programme (CVP) to spot trends e.g. reporting increased (RIB move, better training etc) - to ensure that policies and practice prioritise health & safety (inc estates), welfare and well-being within the local context (checking the challenging)
<p>Frequency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 3 x a year, between full board meetings
<p>Sources of evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HT Report - s175 self-assessment and action plan - CVP

Safer working practices

All adults who come into contact with children in their work, have a duty of care to safeguard and promote their welfare. References made to staff and adults refer to all those who work or have responsibility, in either a paid or unpaid capacity. To be clear, this would include DCS staff, sports coaches or supply teachers, parent volunteers and various boards. The updated document (Guidance for safer working practice for those working with children and young people in education settings is available [here](#)). Although, this summary is based on the update practice, it is not statutory guidance from the Department for Education (DfE). However, as an employer, DCS has decided to use as the basis for their code of conduct and staff behaviour guidelines. The principles and guidance should be followed by all those whose work brings them into contact with children, both officially (on site, term time) as well as off site. This is because of the unique circumstances where governors live, and work is in such close proximity to children and staff on camp or bases. The latest guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' is available [here](#).

If implemented correctly, this should encourage an open and transparent culture; enable schools to identify concerning, problematic or inappropriate behaviour (including comments in person or online) early; and minimise risk of abuse. A culture of vigilance will help ensure that adults working on behalf of the school are clear about professional boundaries and act within these boundaries, in accordance with the ethos and values of the school.

It is recognised that the vast majority of adults behave impeccably, securing the well-being and best outcomes for learners. However, achieving those aims are not always straightforward, as much relies on relationships and interactions where misunderstanding or tension can occur. This summary, and the update guidance, seeks to reduce the risk of these. The underlying principles also cover staff consumption of alcohol or being under the influence of any substance including medication, as it may affect their ability to care for children. Given the close proximity, complex friendship groups and essential social occasions (for school, military work or neither) adults should be mindful of their behaviour and that of others.

The safeguarding culture of the school is, in part, exercised through the development of respectful, caring and professional relationships between adults and children. Indeed, the behaviour and choices by the adult that demonstrates integrity, maturity and good judgement. Legislation also imposes a duty on employees to care of themselves and anyone else who may be affected by their actions, inactions or failings. This includes those with responsibility for governance. Safe practice can be demonstrated through the use and implementation of these guidelines. This includes having clear processes in place to raise concerns and ensure that any adult is not placed in a situation which render them particularly vulnerable. All adults should be aware of the expectations, responsibilities and systems to protect everyone. Members have a duty to protect children, themselves and the school they serve. Therefore, if a governor becomes aware of impropriety, concerns of a safeguarding nature or information that could bring an individual or the school into disrepute they should action fast. This means contacting the Chair as well as the Head Teacher. Regardless of how intel is gathered e.g. overheard conversations in a governors' home or by disclosure, they must pass on the information verbally and followed up by email to create an audit trail.

School improvement

The Department for Education (DfE) defines school improvement as organisations working quickly to improve standards within all of their schools and settings. The focus for DCS is about the interventions and strategies it undertakes for underperformance. This is in addition to ensuring those schools and settings that already have high educational performance are able to maintain standards. The DfE describes four quality descriptors:

1. **Culture** - Creates a culture of continuous improvement through robust self-evaluation, challenge and support, as well as appropriate action or intervention
2. **School improvement model** - Has a clearly defined and effective strategy to improve and maintain the performance of all schools and settings
3. **Transformation** - converts previously underperforming schools or settings by delivering broad and sustainable improvement
4. **System-led improvement** - supports the wider system in sharing best practise helping underperforming schools to improve; and contribute to building an organisation led system.

The National Association of Headteachers (NAHT) describes the situation as, “School improvement should be seen as a continuous journey, not a destination to be reached. School improvement should be a collaborative, collective endeavour within and between schools because collaboration enriches teaching and learning, and spreads expertise so that all children can benefit.”

School improvement is largely about what it says on the tin, the process of enhancing how establishments are improving in terms of its terms of its educational standards or outcomes. This may initially be focused on recovery if performance is dipped but reflects the ambition for iterative improvement.

Given that cohort size can change dramatically, published results can place some schools at the very top of league tables and the bottom the following year. This statistical skewing reminds us that published data is only one piece of the puzzle, not the picture itself.

Secretary role

Role purpose

To provide limited guidance on governance and procedural matters. The Secretary will contribute towards the efficient and effective functioning of the board and any sub-committees by providing

- administrative and organisational support e.g. booking accommodation for meetings, sending calling notices, chasing actions from minutes, collating minutes for the Chair to sign-off, publishing in the archive etc
- ensure that the board works in compliance with the appropriate legal and regulatory framework and understands the potential consequences for non-compliance
- may provide advice on procedural matters

Key Duties

Organising meetings

The secretary prepares for and administrates meetings, allowing the board to make effective use of their time and focus on strategic matters. The secretary supports the effective running of meetings by:

- working closely with Chair and Head Teacher to prepare agendas and liaising with those preparing papers to make sure they are available on time
- convening meetings and distributing papers/notice as required by legislation, at least five working days before the meeting
- ensuring meetings are quorate (at least a third), inclusive and well-structured
- overseeing any election of governors, if required
- recording attendance/apologies and taking appropriate action in relation to absences
- taking minutes indicating who is responsible for any agreed actions with timescales, and circulate as agreed
- publishing draft and approved minutes in the archive to all governors, the head Teacher and other relevant bodies within the timescale agreed with the board
- following up on agreed action points with those responsible and informing the Chair of progress
- taking responsibility to record the meeting via MS Teams, access the transcript and upload to the archive.

Administration and record keeping

The Secretary supports the board in maintaining records of procedural documents and ensures these are accessible.

- provide an induction pack is provided by the Secretary for new governors (board member induction) and the Board must agree and complete the Code of Conduct
- assisting with the management of governor elections and induction
- maintaining and collating governing documents
- collating, maintaining and ensuring correct publication of information in the archive
- maintaining records of board correspondence and archive
- drafting correspondence on behalf of the board

- taking minutes of all meetings attended, submitting draft minutes to the Chair for approval within 10 working days of meeting and distributing minutes to all SGC members, district ACEO, SIA, EYA and additional individuals determined by the board.
- distributing induction packs to new governors including maintaining a record of board CPD and any expirations

Maintaining relationships and communication

- maintaining professional working relationships with the chair, the board and school leaders
- occasional communicating on matters outside of meetings.
- where appropriate, liaising on behalf of the board (such as for external reviews of governance)
- contributing to the coordination of learning and development opportunities for those involved in governance, including induction and continuing professional development

Ensuring compliance

- ensuring meetings are quorate
- publish information via GPL and/or the [DCS website](#) when required
- overseeing any recruitment processes e.g. induction or elections
- assisting with skills audits when required

Self-evaluation form (SEF)

The main aim of a SEF is to assist school and setting leaders in assessing both their achievements and areas of improvement. Reviewers or inspectors (e.g. Ofsted) will then analyse the report and use it as partial evidence when completing assurance work on site. Self-evaluation is an important and valuable process that should not just be viewed as something that has to be completed for the sake of an external visitor.

This is a 1LoDA process completed by Head Teachers or Setting Managers. The main aim of a SEF is to assist leaders in assessing both their achievements and areas of improvement. It gives leaders a chance to look deeply into all areas and reflect on the insights gained from completing it. It holds significant importance in aiding schools and settings as they plan for future changes such as staffing budgets. Schools and settings might also want to see what's changed since new leadership came into force.

What should be included?

The format is not set in stone. It should, ideally be aligned to whichever external inspection framework is being employed. It will also be aligned with the Head Teacher or Setting Manager report submitted on a termly basis. Schools and settings do not have to have a SEF but do need to self-assess themselves.

1. **School context** - This is where you set the scene for all that you do, being clear about your profile, your challenges, your characteristics and being especially aware of where you might be vulnerable.
2. **Quality of Education** - assessment of teaching methods, classroom practises and the impact on learning.
3. **Behaviour and attitudes** - analysis of pupil's well-being and behaviour within the school community.
4. **Personal development** - analysis of pupils Personal development within the school community.
5. **Leadership and management** - an evaluation of leadership effectiveness, governance, and the overall management structure of the school or setting.

Other areas to consider:

1. Outcomes for pupils - These include examination results, published outcomes, internal performance, progress and attainment levels
2. Safeguarding - An assessment of safeguarding practises and policies in place to ensure safety and well-being
3. Effectiveness of special educational needs and or disabilities (SEND) provision. Review of support for learners with learners with SEND
4. Early Years Foundation stage - Evaluation of early years provision for children (age 3 to 5)
5. Sixth form stage - evaluation of six form provision for children who are post-16, attending sixth form.

Those with responsibility for governance play an important role in checking and supporting what are identified as strengths or areas for improvement. As non-SMEs they do not necessarily have the SQEP (being suitably qualified or experience person) to challenge but they are essential sense-checkers and ensuring it is not too lengthy, full of jargon or acronyms and that the evaluative writing stacks up.

SEND role

Special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) is increasing in the population. Some may relate to better understanding, identification or impact of the pandemic. Either way, approximately one in six pupils in UK state schools is deemed as having SEND. Some at the lower level of need, often called SEN Support (13% of all pupils) and increasing numbers with education health care plans (EHC plans at 4.3%). They are referred to as pupils with SEND, never SEND pupils.

The link governor leads on the board's monitoring of SEND arrangements, helping ensure that pupils who need additional help are identified appropriately (this also includes rushing as schools can 'too quickly' identify a need that is just settling or adjusting), given the support they need to learn well and benefit from the ambition to succeed and be fully involved in the life of the school. They also act as the champion or advocate for pupils with SEND and protecting provision.

Working in partnership with the Special Needs Coordinator (SENCo or SENDCo)

The SENCo is the lead member of staff for SEND within the school, with responsibility for overseeing the day-to-day operation of the SEN policy (directive) and coordinating provision for pupils (all learners) with SEND. The link governor should engage with the SENCo on a regular basis in order to:

- develop an effective working relationship that allows for appropriate support and challenge e.g. termly meetings to ensure pupils with SEND have the resources/provision needed.
- work with other stakeholders across the community to ensure that pupils with SEND are well-supported, considered and included in all aspects of school life.
- conduct monitoring visits to learn about the school's context and the varying needs of pupils with SEND
- discuss SEND provision, focusing on how policies are applied and whether any changes are needed
- understand the school's strengths in relation to SEND provision and areas for development
- ensure that the SENCo has received appropriate training and is well supported
- seek assurance that all relevant staff have received appropriate training and are well supported e.g. how to adapt the curriculum, using resources, adaptive teaching strategies
- report to the board on all meetings with the SENCo, including pupil outcomes and relevant data
- new staff induction, identification, implement pupil strategies/interventions, provision mapping or individual support plans.

Understanding and monitoring effective SEND practice

The SEND link governor should have a good understanding of the legal duties of schools and governing boards in relation to pupils with SEND. They also need to learn how SEND provision works in the school and/or setting. This should focus around:

- understand the scope and profile of pupils with SEND

- investing time in appropriate development and learning: attending training on SEND and inclusion and reading and understanding chapter 6 of the [SEND code of practice](#).
- read and understand briefing papers or summaries provided by HQ DCS
- understanding the views of all key stakeholders in relation to SEND (pupils, families, staff and command).
- checking that the school makes good use of financial resources to support pupils with SEND

Supporting the board to monitor SEND provision

As the board's advocate or champion for SEND, the link governor should:

- champion an inclusive culture (fully immersed in the life of the school), reminding the SGC to consider the impact of decisions on pupils with SEND
- use their knowledge to challenge and support command about SEND provision. In line with the SEN strategy
- ensure members of the board have the knowledge and understanding they need to make informed decisions
- make sure that the school complies with their statutory duties around SEND
- include findings in termly reports to command
- confirm the school has an up-to-date SEND policy and SEND Information Report (for parents)

School Governance Committee Terms of Reference
<p>Purpose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To ensure clarity of vision and ethos - To hold school and setting leaders to account for the educational performance - To support leaders in providing positive outcomes for all learners and their families - To act in the best interests of learners, helping secure a comparable UK education <p>This committee is authorised to advise, monitor, challenge and support and evaluate. Links may also meet termly with key staff e.g. EY Lead/SM; or DSL (safeguarding) HT/SM (H&S); or SENDCo (special educational needs co-ordinator)</p>
<p>Big questions to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do learners receive the highest quality of education and care they deserve - What difference will this decisions/actions/inaction make to the learners? - Do leaders use evidence to judge themselves objectively and robustly? - Do leaders prioritise the right things in the right way to improve performance?
<p>Membership: 7-11</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chair (nominated by the local Garrison Commander) - Secretary (selected by the Chair) - Head Teacher (HT) or Deputy HT in lieu; <i>ex-officio</i> - Setting Manager – <i>ex officio</i> - Staff representatives elected (e.g. teaching staff/support staff/early years) - Parent representatives elected (minimum of 2) - Community representatives e.g. Unit Welfare Officer, Padre, Child Protection Officer - MOD schools representative (usually SIA or EYA or ACEO) - Link for Finance - Link for Early Years (EY) (advocate for provision and practice) - Link for SEND (advocate for inclusion) - Link for Safeguarding (advocate for culture, policy and practice)
<p>Quorum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - at least half of full complement - if numbers fall below that during the meeting the meeting should be terminated
<p>Role:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work closely with leaders to shape and communicate the vision, ethos and strategic direction of the school - Work with leaders to ensure safeguarding policies and procedures are robust and that the school provides a safe, healthy environment for pupils and staff - Balance support and challenge for leaders to continuously improve - Understand the outcomes (statutory assessments and internal data) that all pupils achieve (impact of the curriculum) - Ensure that that the curriculum sets out the knowledge and skills learners need (intent) and is well delivery (implementation) - Monitoring, alongside the headteacher, how the school's finances are used to support priorities and outcomes for pupils, as well as the use of non-public funds.
<p>Frequency of meetings:</p> <p>3 x a year – at least termly</p>
<p>Sources of evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HT Report and/or Setting Manager Report (includes standing items) - Self-evaluation form (SEF)

- Development Plan (SDP) plan
- Core visit programme (CVP) notes of visit
- Paper ROSE assurance (2LoDA)
- ROSE assurance (2LoDA)
- External inspection (3LoDA)
- School Improvement Adviser attending (SME)
- Statutory assessments YR (Good level of development); Y1/2 (Phonics Screening Check); Y4 (Multiplication Test Check); Y6 SATs (reading, writing and mathematics); GCSEs; A-levels

Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND)

Those with responsibility for governance have a legal responsibility to ensure that the schools and settings meet the needs of individual pupils, including pupils with SEND. A child or young person has SEND if they have a learning difficulty or disability that calls for special education provision to be made for them. A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if they have significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age. Or have a disability that prevents or hinders them from making use of the facilities generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream school. The legal responsibilities for those with responsibility for governance in relation to pupils with SEND are set out in the Children and Families Act 2014 and in the statutory guidance, the SEND Code of Practice 2014 (0-25 years). They require those with responsibility for governments to:

1. Use best endeavours, meaning do everything they can, to ensure that pupils with SEND get the support they need
2. Ensure that relevant policies have been approved and monitor their effectiveness
3. Ensure the necessary SEND information is published on the DCS website, such as a SEND policy and an SEND information report for parents
4. Ensure the adequate resource is allocated to the provision for pupils with SEND
5. Ensure a suitably qualified or experienced special education needs coordinator (SENDCo) has been appointed and is working effectively.

Board knowledge of SEND

Those with responsibility for governance should know:

1. The proportion of pupils that require additional support and how many of these have an educational health care plan ([EHC plans](#)) or Service children's assessment of need ([SCANs](#))
2. The proportion of pupils that have specific needs relating to communication and interaction, cognition and learning, social, emotional and health difficulties, sensory and or physical needs - Characteristics of the pupils identified as having SEND such as age, sex and ethnicity
3. How staff are deployed and resources allocated to meet the needs of SEND pupils
4. How the curriculum is adapted to meet the needs of pupils, including those with SEND.
5. Strengths and areas for development highlighted
6. How the attainment and progress of pupils with SEND is assessed

Working with the SENCo, NGA recommends:

1. Termly meetings or school visits take place between the SEND link and SENCo
2. The SENCo has protected time to undertake the role, has received appropriate training and is well supported
3. The SEND link collaborates with the SENCO to produce an annual report for the Board on progress against priorities.
4. SENCo attends board meetings at least once a year and report back receive appropriate challenge and scrutiny

Those with responsibility for governance may seek assurance that:

1. Roles and responsibilities for SEND provision are clear. As a result, all staff understand what they're responsible and accountable for
2. Staff are deployed effectively according to their skills, knowledge and experience
3. Gaps are identified in SEND knowledge, skills and understanding and appropriate professional development opportunities put in place to address these
4. Relevant professional development is undertaken by staff and disseminated across the school
5. Staffing and leadership structures actively support the strategic priorities associated with SEND
6. The SENCo works collaboratively alongside the Head Teacher parents and external agencies, including using pupil voice.

Schools need:

SEND Policy (Directive):

1. Outlines the vision, values and aims of the Schools SEND provision
2. Explains the schools approach to SEND
3. Is written with school staff in mind
4. Sets out the key legislation
5. Highlights any stakeholder engagement that took place during the creation of the directive
6. Sets out how pupil needs will be identified
7. Gives details of who is responsible for implementing the directive
8. States how its effectiveness will be monitored

SEND Information Report:

1. Must be published on the website.
2. It should clearly explain to parents how the directive is implemented
3. States the kinds of SEN that I provided for
4. How pupils and parents are consulted
5. How the school works with external bodies or agencies
6. Arrangements for supporting pupils moving between phases of education and preparing for adulthood
7. How pupils with SEN are supported and how adaptations are made e.g. curriculum
8. Named contacts within the school for situations where parents or have concerns

Look for evidence:

1. An inclusive culture is embedded and pupils with additional needs are fully supported.
2. All pupils are able to access the curriculum and are involved in all aspects of school life. For example: school trips and extra-curricular activities
3. Funding and resource is allocated to meet the needs of pupils with SEND

Review data on the following to identify any trends that suggest pupils with additional needs are disproportionately represented in.

4. Behaviour incidents
5. Attendance or safeguarding concerns
6. Numbers of suspensions and exclusions

Stakeholder engagement

A stakeholder is either an individual, group, community or organisation that's impacted by the success or failure of the school or setting. Stakeholders voice is an important measurement in triangulating the assessment of success. Meaningful engagement with stakeholders contributes powerfully and directly to providing enriching experiences and high-quality education for our children and young people. It also helps to ensure the experience is relevant to the real world.

Why is stakeholder engagement so important?

A growing number of pupils and families are finding themselves more reliance on schools and settings as something that helps them get from one day to another and so their role as the community is increasing. Meaningful engagement with stakeholders, pupils, parents, staff and the wider community helps the various DCS boards to make informed decisions and build trust. Strategic engagement is now defined by the Department for Education as one of the three purposes of governance, along with strategic leadership and accountability and assurance.

Indicators an engagement strategy is working

1. The vision and strategy set by DCS, and individual schools and settings have the support of the communities they serve.
2. Stakeholders and the wider community have a role in shaping the values.
3. All significant players demonstrate buying and apply their voice.
4. The Assurance Board challenges and questions executive leaders from an informed position because they know what stakeholders think.
5. Schools and settings themselves remain accountable to the communities they serve.
6. DCS, and not just the schools and settings themselves, remain visible among all stakeholders.

Engaging with Parents

In recent times, parents have played a greater part in their children's education than ever before. This has presented a valuable opportunity to capitalise on parental investment, influencing academic achievement. Research suggests that the relationships parents have with schools and settings impacts upon the aspiration, achievement and experiences of children and young people. Listening to what parents say and think adds a valuable dimension to holding leaders to account. SGCs should seek opportunities to engage with parents and see this as a crucial element of their monitoring role, like a litmus test. The information and knowledge gained from parents helps SGCs evaluate progress towards achieving the DCS strategy.

Top tips for successfully engaging parents

1. Analyse responses to regular parent surveys and consultations
2. Hold specific parent focus groups on key areas of development
3. Have conversations with parents at school events and parents' evenings
4. Use popular and trusted social media platforms to actively engage with parents and share the information they know.

Engaging with pupils

Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child states:

“All children have the right to express their views and have them taken into account and given due weight according to their age and maturity in all matters affecting them.”

Pupil engagement is one of the most powerful things that SGCs can promote. Research shows that pupils voice activities:

1. Promote emotional well-being, feeling feelings of agency and independence
2. Foster a sense of belonging to their school and community
3. Encourage buying into their learning.

Pupil voice provide a clear indication of how the vision is being implemented and crucially, whether the strategic decision making is doing what it should do. This can be achieved in a number of ways:

1. Giving learners the opportunity to express their views and feelings about their school or settings
2. Making the most of opportunities to meet with and learn from pupils experience of school life
3. Regular Pupil surveys.
4. Meeting with representative groups e.g. school council.
5. Recording or writing specific messages from them to pupils on who they are, what they do and why it matters.
6. Embracing pupil-led action on issues that affect them from climate change to sexual harassment to social justice

Engaging with staff

No group will know a school or a setting better than its staff. This is why their knowledge and views should be sought and used to inform a range of key decisions. Staff engagement is essential to knowing how they feel and what they think about how their school or setting is doing. The mental health and well-being of staff can have a huge impact on the environment and its learners. Where education staff are mentally and physically healthy, quality of work can be better and ultimately pupils benefit. Teacher well-being is significantly shaped by the culture and the values fostered. SGC's need to engage to see how these are being understood and communicated. Fostering good relations with staff can be achieved through the following:

1. Attending visits and functions helps to build a positive culture.
2. Taking up opportunities to learn how the staff feel about workload and well-being
3. Seeking to engage with both HQ DCS staff and school level staff
4. Routine evaluations of staff surveys
5. Involving staff in a constructive and strategic way to monitor the impact of initiatives

And finally...

Sir David Carter, former national schools commissioner, said, “You cannot have a credible vision that talks about supporting and developing school communities if you do not give them a voice.”

Stakeholder Sub-Committee TORs
<p>Purpose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To ensure the needs and concerns of all stakeholders are considered in the decision making process - To consult with key stakeholders, including wellbeing and satisfaction, and work in partnership with the local community - To consider the mitigations of mobility and meeting the needs of Service children <p>This sub-committee is authorised to advise, monitor, evaluate and report to full group</p>
<p>Big questions to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Are we delivering on the unique offer promised and how would we know? - Is our approach clear and staff well-informed? - Is mental health and wellbeing prioritised? - How well do we communicate and how well do we listen to children and parents?
<p>Membership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One third appointed by the Chair
<p>Quorum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Any 2 - If the number does not constitute a quorum, the meeting will not be held. If during the course of the meeting the number of attendees falls below 2 the meeting will cease and be rescheduled.
<p>Role:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Analyse surveys e.g. staff, learners and parents and report - Monitor the process of sampling to represent the widest representation of 'pupil voice' - Consider the validity of satisfaction metrics – does this stack up with what we know? - Keep staff wellbeing and workload a high priority e.g. feedback from visits, surveys - Follow up on initiatives or updates e.g. HT/SM report to check and challenge - Visit the school to talk to staff and learners e.g. mitigations of mobility, transition etc - Monitor up-to-date attendance analysis for all groups and behaviour data analysis - Consider initiatives to understand any barriers and improve attendance - Are there any persistent absence (PA) or severe absence (SA) - Work with school leaders to check that the unique offer is experienced by all learners - Provide insight into the challenges and opportunities faced by the local community.. - Celebrate the successes e.g. achievements and improving attendance and behaviour - Consider community pride and assess the community footprint - Consider Specific needs of Service children
<p>Frequency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 3 x a year
<p>Sources of evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Staff surveys - Parent surveys - Pupil surveys

Standards (inc SEND) Sub-Committee
<p>Purpose:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To monitor performance and improvement – regular review of performance data, including exam results, pupil progress to ensure school is meeting targets <p>This sub-committee is authorised to advise, monitor, evaluate and report to the board.</p>
<p>Big questions to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Do all learners achieve well enough and get a good deal? - How well do we support and challenge the most able and most vulnerable? - Are leaders aware of quality of teaching and learning and how do they check? - Is the school doing all that it reasonably can to improve attendance?
<p>Membership:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - One third appointed by the Chair - Link for SEND
<p>Quorum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Any 2 - If the number of does not constitute a quorum, the meeting will not be held. If during the course of the meeting the number of attendees falls below 2 the meeting will cease and be rescheduled.
<p>Role:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Work with leaders to identify areas for improvement and develop strategies to address them in line with DCS strategic objectives - Monitor school performance and improvement through regular reviews of performance data, including exam results, and pupil progress - Ensure the curriculum is being provided to pupils, appropriate for the school's context - Ensure that the required policies and procedures are in place and that the school is operating effectively in line with these policies or directives - Establish strong relationships with the Head Teacher to provide support and challenge - Monitor improvement plans, strategies or performance against targets e.g. attendance - Seek assurance that staff are trained to implement SEND strategies and support plans. - Ensure pupils with SEND are well-supported and included in all aspects of school life - Monitor the overall effectiveness of the school's SEND provision, referring to pupil outcomes and other relevant data
<p>Frequency:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 3 x a year, between full meetings
<p>Sources of evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - self-evaluation form (SEF) - School or setting development plan (SIP) - IDSR (Information data summary report) if applicable (updated termly) - Analyse school performance (from Oct for previous academic year)

Supporting Service children

The Ministry of Defence defines Service children as those under the age of 18, who are children of Service members or Service partners.

Armed Forces Covenant

The Armed Forces Covenant is a promise from the nation that those who serve or have served in the armed forces and their families are treated fairly. The Covenant's purpose is to redress the disadvantage that the armed forces community might experience in contrast to other citizens and to honour the sacrifices they have made.

Specific needs of Service children

The statutory guidance identifies the following education related disadvantages that can arise for Service children:

1. An interrupted education
2. A disrupted social experience
3. Negative impact on mental well-being
4. Difficult or longer journey times to school, for example having no chance but to take a bus ride
5. Being unable to take holidays with parents during normal holiday periods
6. Delays relating to support for Service children with specific or additional needs (SEND)

Some of the specific concerns voiced by learners include:

1. Being worried when one of their parents is deployed, not knowing what's happening to them
2. Having lots of feelings that they may not know how to deal with
3. Trying to concentrate on homework when they're worried about their parents
4. Moving schools, moving house and sometimes moving to a different country
5. Having to leave their friends and make new friends at a new school
6. Seeing their friends come and go, depending on deployments
7. Feeling that they have to look after the family when their parent is away.

Governance role

Leaders and their staff are best placed to understand the specific needs of their learners. Those with responsibility for governance can fulfil their responsibilities by:

1. Exploring the barriers to learning faced by Service children, including online pressures
2. Using data, information and research to both support and challenge the school's approach
3. Contributing towards and approving the Strategy for Service children
4. Monitoring the implementation and impact of the Strategy

Providing effective support

It is important that the support available to Service children is effective in meeting their unique needs. The Service Children's Progression Alliance has created the [Thriving Lives Toolkit](#) which provides schools with an evidence based framework of seven principles of effective support:

1. **Our approach is clear.** Leaders understanding and approach ensures that resources and policies improve Service children's outcomes
2. **Well-being is supported.** Tailored pastoral provision supports Service children's mental health and well-being
3. **Achievement is maximised.** Teaching, assessment and support ensures the continuity of Service children's learning and progression
4. **Transition.** Effective systems and support ensures seamless transitions for Service children arriving at and leaving school
5. **Children are heard.** Service children's diverse voices are heard and inform the support they receive
6. **Parents are heard.** Strong home school partnerships help Service families feel valued as part of their community
7. **Staff are well-informed.** Supportive training and networks ensure all staff understand and support each Service child.

The Service Children's Progression Alliance provide a wide range of case studies where schools have successfully used the toolkit to provide effective support for Service pupils.

Strategy for Service children

Schools and settings are encouraged to develop a Service children's Strategy to ensure effective monitoring, mitigating mobility, considering transitions and the impact of interventions. This could include a summary of the main barriers faced by eligible learners or how you measure the impact of the Strategy. Local commands may consider using welfare funding to bridge any gaps to optimise the educational experience.

Watch words and buzz words?

Several buzz words exist that are used interchangeably or are not always fully understood. These include:

1. Culture - The way things are done - customs of the organisation
2. Ethos - Guiding attitudes and aspirations that characterised the organisation
3. Identity - unique qualities that the organisation is recognised for
4. Mission - Declaration of core purpose
5. Strategy - Priorities needed to achieve the vision
6. Values - Principles that guide actions and behaviours
7. Vision - What the organisation wants to achieve

Those with responsibility for governance need to know the difference and use them appropriately. The [DCS vision](#) is set out on the new website that covers every school and setting.

DCS Vision:

Demonstrating best practice for the education and care of children of military personnel.

DCS Mission:

- To provide guidance, intervention and supervision to safeguard children in DCS Schools and Settings, and other commissioned locations.
- To deliver education and care for Service and Entitled children in DCS Schools and Settings.
- To provide expert advice and guidance for Service and Entitled personnel regarding education and care in the United Kingdom and overseas.
- To provide professional advice, intervention and challenge to support education and care in DCS Schools and Settings, and other commissioned locations.
- To provide professional oversight of MOD contracts, licences and policies related to the delivery of education, care and safeguarding of our children in DCS Schools and Settings and other commissioned locations.

DCS Values: (directly align with the core civil service values which we all strive to meet)

- **Integrity:** putting the obligations of public service above personal interests.
- **Honesty:** being truthful and open.
- **Impartiality:** acting solely according to the merits of the case and serving equally well governments of different political persuasions.
- **Objectivity:** basing advice and decisions on rigorous analysis of the evidence.

Schools and settings will have their own vision and values that support and complement the DCS over-arching approach.

Watch words (see induction book)

Those with responsibility for governance should be vigilant about key functions and remember to stay in their lane. This could include holding school leaders to account through monitoring activities. Their job is to work closely with school leaders to **ensure** (v.

make certain that (something) will occur or be the case) as opposed to **assure** (v. tell something to someone confidently, or to cause someone to feel certain by removing doubt). Assurance is provided in other ways e.g. external inspection (e.g. Ofsted), visit from DCS school improvement teams, school reviews (2/3 Level of defence assurance) etc. Governors must keep their thinking **strategic** and not **operational**; this is the responsibility of school and setting leaders. Your job is to hold them to account by asking questions, listening carefully and waying up if it stacks up. Remember, **empowerment** and power differ deliberately.

Well-being

The most effective way for those with responsibility for governance to meet their statutory duties is by promoting a whole-school approach. A whole-school approach embeds well-being in all aspects of school life and decision making with a commitment and involvement from everyone across the school. Those with responsibility for governance need assurance that leaders support all pupils to address issues so that pupils can stay in school wherever possible. This may take many forms, including:

1. Mental health and well-being support and guidance
2. Inclusive pastoral support
3. Enrichment opportunities

Strategy

1. Ensuring School has given thorough thought to how mental health and well-being can be embedded in the curriculum and other school activities
2. Working with the school to complete an audit of their current provision to understand other areas it could be incorporated
3. Understanding best practice and research successful ways other schools have approached mental health and well-being
4. Being ready to challenge and guide the school leadership team.

Actions (Possible link governor role)

1. Acting is the point of contact for the SGC and staff members tasked with overseeing mental health and well-being provisions within the school.
2. Ensuring mental health and well-being is discussed in sub-committee meetings as well as the SGC.
3. Acting is a mental health champion for the school.
4. Building links between the school and professional or personal networks who can offer guidance and support in developing the schools provision.

Monitor and review

1. Visiting the school to monitor how effectively mental health and well-being is present in the schools actions including learning walks, discussions with staff and pupils etc.
2. Writing reports for those who are responsible for governance to build their understanding of the work the school is doing and enabling others to offer challenge and support.
3. Ensuring policies are up to date and cover best practise that is evidenced in the schools work.