Somerset Council | Education Governance

Clerks' Briefing Autumn 2026

Aims

- To provide support and professional development opportunities to clerks and governance professionals to enable you to carry out your role effectively
- To provide relevant, up to date information to governance boards via their clerks/governance professional
- To provide an opportunity to connect with other clerks and governance professionals

Agenda

- Safeguarding Updates
- Statutory updates
- Non-statutory updates
- General reminders
- Website Demo
- Anything Else?
- Networking

A briefing paper will be shared with you after the sessions for your reference and to share with your board

Expectations

We welcome:

- Your point of view and relevant experiences
- Your active participation
- Your questions, please use the “raise hand” or use “chat”  

Collaboration:

- Listen, be patient and respect others
- Retain confidentiality
- Mute your microphone when not speaking
- Please keep cameras on where possible

Tutor responsibilities:

- Keep to time
- Ensure the core knowledge is delivered and understood

Safeguarding Updates

Somerset Council

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026

Updates

- All staff must now read Part One of KCSIE. The former shortened version in Annex A has been removed, although a separate overview is available as a quick reference.
- Child-on-child abuse is explicitly recognised as a safeguarding issue for both the victim and the child alleged to have caused harm. Expectations around early identification, prevention and support have been strengthened.
- Harmful sexual behaviour guidance now gives greater emphasis to misogyny, escalation and online behaviour. Sharing nude or semi-nude images, including images generated using AI, requires a safeguarding response.
- Guidance has been strengthened on serious violence, criminal exploitation, information sharing and cover arrangements when the DSL is unavailable.
- Governing boards and proprietors remain responsible for ensuring that safeguarding policies, procedures, training and monitoring reflect the revised guidance.

Regulated Activity Changes

Update

- The previous supervision exemption for volunteers has been removed.
- Supervision by a member of staff will no longer, by itself, take a volunteer outside regulated activity.
- A volunteer who **teaches, trains, instructs, cares for or supervises** children on **more than three days in a 30-day period**, or overnight, will be undertaking regulated activity.
- Where the role meets the definition of regulated activity, an Enhanced DBS check with Children's Barred List information must be obtained before the person undertakes that activity.
- This does not mean that every volunteer automatically requires a barred-list check. Schools must assess the actual activities and frequency of each role.
- Record board assurance that required checks have been completed and that the Single Central Record is accurate.
- The governance role does not meet this requirement and governors/trustees do not require a Children's Barred List check as standard. Requesting barred-list information for a person who is not undertaking regulated activity is not permitted.

Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026

Actions

- Approval of the updated child protection and safeguarding policy at the first meeting of the year and assurances it will be published online.
- Ensure the minutes record that the board has received assurance on staff training, reading of Part One, DSL cover and implementation of the changes.
- Review the board's safeguarding monitoring arrangements and questions for the safeguarding link governor or trustee.
- Filtering and monitoring reports mandatory at least annually
- Reminder: reports on restrictive interventions must be presented to the board
- S175 audit summary from last year showed that the board meeting to ratify the audit had not been done for a large number of schools due to the earlier date for submission being prior to board meetings. This academic year the audit launches on 14th October and will close 8th January, so it would be advisable to have this as an agenda item in the second half-term.

Safeguarding Separations

New clarification in the July 2026 exclusions guidance

- A school may, in rare circumstances, temporarily prevent a pupil from attending its premises where this is necessary to separate pupils for safeguarding purposes.
- This is not a suspension or permanent exclusion and must not be used as a behaviour sanction, informal exclusion or substitute for the statutory exclusion process.
- Separation should be used only where it is essential and cannot practicably be achieved while allowing the pupils to remain on the school premises.
- The DSL or deputy DSL must be involved, parents must be informed of the reason, and the governing board must be notified without delay via the Chair and Clerk.
- Suitable education must continue. The arrangement must be temporary, risk-assessed, regularly reviewed and supported by reintegration planning.
- Governing boards must monitor the use of safeguarding separation to ensure it is lawful, proportionate, time-limited and not being used as an informal exclusion or inappropriate pupil movement. *Added to the statutory committee terms of reference.*

Safeguarding Separations

Actions for the board

"The governing board should also be notified without delay and ensure this is used for rare circumstances and only when separating pupils is essential and cannot practicably be done in a way that lets one or more pupils remain on school premises." *page 17 DfE Suspension and Permanent Exclusion statutory guidance.*

- Ensure notification is handled confidentially and recorded without unnecessary personal detail, we recommend that the notification of safeguarding separation is anonymised.
- Record that the board has received high level assurance about the safeguarding rationale, education arrangements, review date and alternatives considered, this could be via a committee and again should be anonymised.
- The board's role is strategic oversight, not deciding which pupils should be separated.
- Generally the board should monitor anonymised patterns to ensure safeguarding separation remains exceptional, proportionate and is not being used as an informal exclusion.

Other Statutory Updates

Somerset Council

Statutory Updates:
Relationships, Sex and Health Education 2026

The requirements to teach updated RSHE topics including online influences on sexual behaviour, public safety, and positive gender representations are now in force.

Boards must ensure that:

- The RSE policy has been reviewed and approved (before September 2026).
- Parents have been consulted appropriately.
- The curriculum complies with the revised statutory guidance.
- Arrangements are in place for pupils with SEND.
- Appropriate safeguarding procedures are in place for lessons and disclosures.
- External providers and resources are subject to quality assurance and available to parents.
- Staff have received appropriate training.
- The school can demonstrate how it meets its statutory duties while reflecting its ethos and values.

Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education and Health Education guidance

Statutory Updates:
Statutory Guidance: Allergy Safety

New statutory requirements from September 2026

Governance boards must ensure that the school:

- has a separate, published allergy safety policy, reviewed annually;
- identifies and actively manages allergy risks, including through the school's risk register;
- provides regular staff training in allergy awareness, recognising anaphylaxis and emergency response;
- has suitable Individual Healthcare Plans and allergy or anaphylaxis action plans where required;
- keeps spare adrenaline auto-injectors available, in date and accessible; and
- records and learns from allergy incidents and near misses.

The link role proposed as part of the consultation on the new guidance is not included as a requirement however this is best practice.

We have new guidance in our resources on:

- Medical Needs and Allergy Safety Link Governor/Trustee
- Medical Needs and Allergy Safety Responsibilities of the Board

Statutory Updates:
Careers Guidance Changes (June 2026)

Greater emphasis on work experience – schools should work towards delivering two weeks of meaningful work experience by the end of Key Stage 4, including workplace experiences in Years 7–9 and work placements in Years 10–11.

Updated Gatsby Benchmarks remain central – careers programmes should continue to be built around the revised Gatsby Benchmarks, with a stronger focus on inclusion, SEND and whole-school leadership.

Ofsted expectations clarified – inspectors will consider how effectively schools are progressing towards the Gatsby Benchmarks.

Qualifications and skills reform reflected – guidance has been updated to reflect recent qualifications reforms and skills policy developments.

New tools and resources available – including updated support to identify and support pupils at risk of becoming NEET

Statutory Updates:
Suspension & Permanent Exclusion

- The guidance reinforces that suspension and permanent exclusion remain important behaviour management tools but should be used lawfully, fairly and only where appropriate.
- Schools are expected to give greater consideration to the needs of vulnerable pupils, including those with SEND, social workers and looked after children, before decisions are made.
- New guidance has been added on remote access meetings for governing board meetings and Independent Review Panels, including principles for conducting meetings remotely.
- The roles of governing boards, clerks, Independent Review Panels, SEN experts, social workers and Virtual School Heads have been clarified.
- Greater emphasis is placed on early intervention, reintegration planning, alternative provision, managed moves and ensuring excluded pupils continue to receive suitable education.

"[Governing boards] should deploy maximum challenge to school leadership to understand these movements and identify any emerging patterns that may require further scrutiny or action" *page 41 DfE Suspension and Permanent Exclusion statutory guidance.*

Lessons Learned from Recent Case Law :
Suspension & Permanent Exclusion

Permanent exclusion is not a punishment – its purpose is to protect the pupil and/or others from serious harm and must remain a genuine last resort.
Governors must reach their own decision – panels should not simply review or defer to the headteacher's decision; they must independently assess whether the statutory test for exclusion has been met.
Proportionality matters – governors should be able to demonstrate they have carefully considered whether permanent exclusion is a proportionate response in the circumstances, particularly where SEND or disability is involved (that regard has been given to any protected characteristics).
Clear reasons are essential – decision letters should explain why the panel reached its conclusion rather than simply stating that the exclusion threshold has been met.
Evidence must be considered carefully – governors should ensure that all relevant evidence has been scrutinised and that their reasoning is clearly recorded in the minutes

ALWAYS adhere to the statutory guidance. Ensure governors/trustees are trained, have read the DfE guidance before sitting on a review meeting, that accurate and concise minutes detail the reasoning for decisions.

Statutory Updates:
Academy Trust Handbook Updates

Stronger expectations around inclusion and collaboration
How does the trust monitor outcomes for disadvantaged pupils, pupils with SEND and other vulnerable learners? How is the trust working with local partners to support inclusion?

Increased focus on trustee financial expertise
Does the board have the financial expertise it needs? Are trustees receiving appropriate financial training?

New CFO qualification requirements
For larger trusts (over 3,000 pupils), any CFO recruitment process starting from 1 October 2026 should specify a recognised accountancy qualification. This becomes a mandatory requirement from September 2027.

Greater transparency about funding distribution
Can stakeholders clearly understand how resources are allocated across the trust?
Is the funding methodology transparent and evidence-based?

Statutory Updates:
Academy Trust Handbook Updates

Additional controls on executive pay
Trusts must obtain DfE approval before advertising certain highly paid senior posts (FTE £174,000 per annum). The handbook also reinforces expectations that executive pay decisions should be well evidenced, documented and justifiable.

Procurement requirements have tightened
Several previous recommendations have become stronger expectations. Trusts are expected to make greater use of approved procurement frameworks and demonstrate value for money in purchasing decisions.

Digital and technology standards
The handbook strengthens expectations that trusts should be actively working towards meeting the DfE's Digital and Technology Standards by 2030.
Does the trust have a digital strategy? How is progress against the standards being monitored?

Academy trust handbook 2026: effective from 1 October 2026 - GOV.UK

Statutory Updates:
Inclusion Strategy

Mainstream schools must publish an inclusion strategy by 31 December 2026 and review it annually. The strategy should set out how inclusive practice will be strengthened and how relevant funding will support delivery. A template is now available on the DfE website.

Actions for clerks

- Add the inclusion strategy to the second half of the autumn term agenda.
- Ensure the board has sufficient time to review and approve the strategy before 31 December 2026.
- Check that publication and annual review are included in the policy cycle.
- Record how the board has tested alignment with school priorities, pupil needs, funding and impact measures.

Statutory Updates:
Pay

NJC Pay Award

The Local Government Services National Joint Council (NJC) 2026/27 pay award has been agreed.

Pay Award Details – effective from 1 April 2026:

- An increase of 3.3% on NJC pay points 3 – 43 inclusive (and including locally agreed SCP44)
- An increase of 3.3% on all allowances covered under NJC Terms and Condition

Back pay will apply for all support staff in maintained schools.

School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document 2026

This is currently subject to a period of consultation with statutory consultees until later this September.

For maintained schools, once the STPCD is a legal document any agreed pay uplift is mandatory.

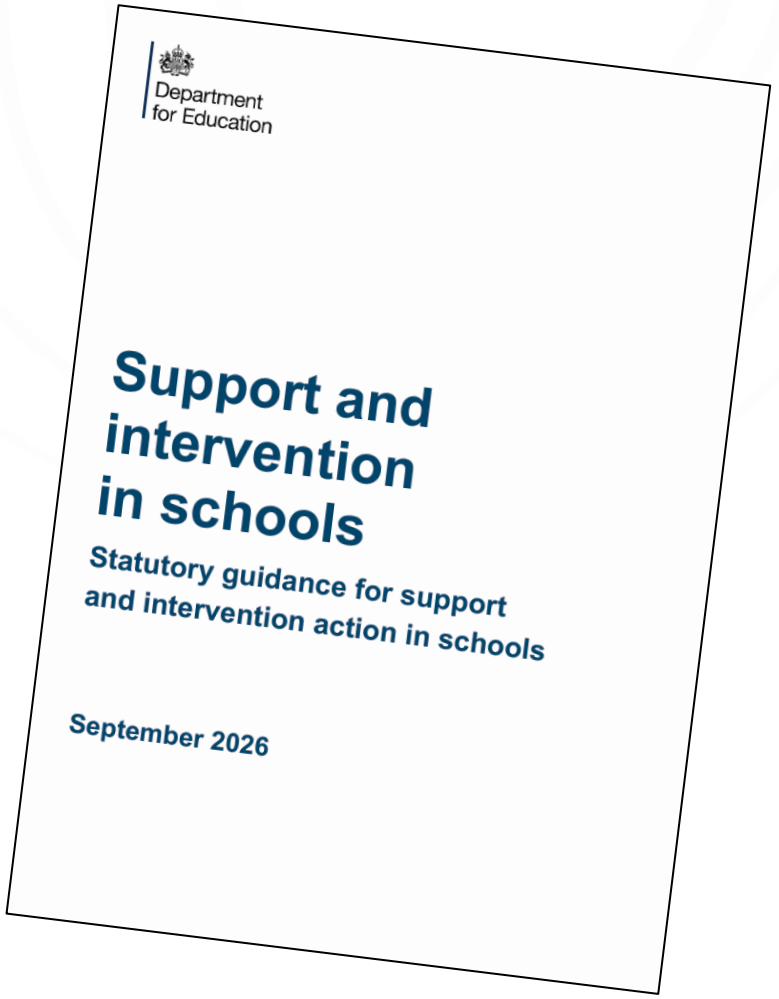
Headlines from Draft STPCD 2026 from 1 September 2026:

- a 3.5% increase will be applied to all pay and allowance ranges and advisory points, except for the minimum of the unqualified teacher range (rest of England) where a 5% increase will be applied
- from 1 September 2027 a 3% increase will be applied to all pay and allowance ranges and advisory points.

Statutory Updates:
Support and Intervention Guidance

Following the enactment of the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act 2026 the statutory duty to make an Academy Order for maintained schools in a category of concern has been repealed and replaced with a discretionary power to make an Academy Order.

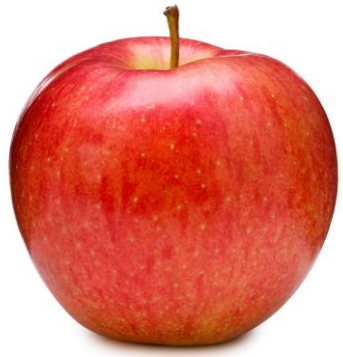
The Secretary of State has a new power to direct academy trusts to comply with their legal responsibilities under their funding agreements. Where a trust is found to be in breach of a legal requirement and does not comply with the direction within the specified timeframe, enforcement can be sought through a court order.



Statutory Updates:
School Food Standards

What schools should do now

- review the proposed changes to the school food standards, as described in annex A in the government response to the School Food Standards: updating the legislative framework consultation
- discuss the changes with their catering provider
- review existing menus, contracts and procurement arrangements to identify any changes that may be needed
- **plan to appoint a lead governor for school food from September 2027**
- prepare to publish their school food policy and menus on their website from September 2027
- keep up to date with further guidance and legislation when published



Statutory Updates:
School Estate Management Standards (SEMS)

- The DfE's School Estate Management Standards (SEMS) establish a baseline expectation that schools have both an Estate Strategy *(the LA or Trust will be responsible for this)* and an Asset Management Plan in place.

- Boards should ensure the estate supports educational priorities, pupil numbers, SEND provision, sustainability objectives and long-term financial planning.

- From autumn 2026, boards should be able to demonstrate estate oversight which should become a regular part of the governance cycle, alongside finance, health and safety, sustainability and school improvement.

- This will support with funding available in Spring 2027.

School Estate Management Standards

Expected by first annual return cycle autumn 2026 →

Expected standard →

Estate Management Standards	Overview
Level 1 - Baseline	The basic essentials that all schools and their responsible bodies should have in place as they begin their journey to becoming fully effective. Some of these are already set out in legislation.
Level 2 - Transitioning	Building on level 1 - the key transition points in good practice in a school's ongoing journey.
Level 3 - Fully effective	All the components that should be in place for schools and their responsible bodies to manage their estate effectively.
Level 4 - Advanced	Additional activities schools and their responsible bodies could undertake to become advanced practitioners in estate management.

What all Responsible Bodies must have in place

Across all governance models, there is a consistent baseline expectation (Level 1) to be in place for the first annual return (autumn 2026):

- A documented estate strategy (if applicable) and **asset management plan**
- A clear understanding of condition (based on independent, professional survey data)
- Up-to-date compliance registers and statutory checks
- Core estate data that is accurate, retrievable and auditable
- Defined responsibility for estates within governance and management structures
- Evidence that estates oversight sits within formal governance
- Readiness for MYEE and annual returns

Non Statutory Updates & Information

Somerset Council

Non-statutory updates:
New DfE Enrichment Framework

The Enrichment Framework applies to all schools and colleges, including post-16 providers. Ofsted will consider enrichment provision from this term as part of personal development and wellbeing.

Enrichment may provide opportunities across:

- Civic engagement
- Arts and culture
- Nature, outdoors and adventure
- Sport and physical activities
- Developing wider life and future skills

Enrichment may be delivered within timetabled lesson time or outside of it (for example, lunchtime, before or after school or college, weekend events).

Governance question: "How do we know all pupils, particularly disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils, are accessing a high-quality enrichment offer that supports our strategic priorities and improves outcomes?"

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-enrichment-framework-for-schools-and-colleges

Reminders:

- Inclusion Strategy for mainstream schools must be published by 31 December. Template for school leaders is available: Inclusive mainstream fund: support for school leaders - GOV.UK
- Update Get Information About Schools, SSE and the school website with any board membership changes.
- Declarations of Interest
- Code of Conduct – new e-learning slides available on our website
- Maintained Somerset Schools are encouraged to use the revised Model Health and Safety Policy in the Burgundy Pack when they next review their health and safety policy.
- The DfE has published the academies planning calendar for the 2026/27 academic year, giving key dates for payments, publications and actions.
- From 1st September pupils must not have access to mobile phones throughout the school day. Statutory guidance on mobile phones

Information

Free school data check

Good governance is not about generating documents. It is about asking the right questions. The School Data Check gives every board member a shared picture of the school, drawn from the same public datasets Ofsted uses. This free tool contains seven sections drawn from published DfE sources, with national comparisons included and suggests questions you may wish to ask. You will need your school URN number to access the data.

Access the free tool

Ofsted Frequently Asked Questions

Useful blog for governors/trustees about Ofsted inspections:

School inspections: frequently asked questions – Ofsted: education

AI Policy Toolkit

The National Governance Association (NGA) has worked with Google for Education to produce an AI toolkit and policy builder. The resources are designed to help governors and trustees build an understanding of AI in education, start meaningful conversations with school leaders and provide effective oversight.

The resources include:

- AI toolkit with clear definitions, an exploration of risks and benefits, guidance on AI tool selection and questions for governors and trustees to ask.
- AI policy builder with practical discussion points and examples to help schools and trusts develop their own approach to using AI safely, effectively and ethically.
- AI discussion slides to provide a starting point for board conversations ahead of AI policy development

https://www.nga.org.uk/knowledge-centre/ai-toolkit/

AI Literacy for Governors & Trustees training Wed, 30 Sep 2026, 12:30 - 13:30

Resource Updates

New and updated guidance resources

- Governance Compliance Checklist
- Clerks Guide to the Complaint Panel Process
- Policies Guidance
- NEW: Guidance on the Separation of Pupils for Safeguarding Purposes September 2026
- Delegation Arrangements in Maintained Schools
- Statutory Committee Terms of Reference

Continues…

Resource Updates

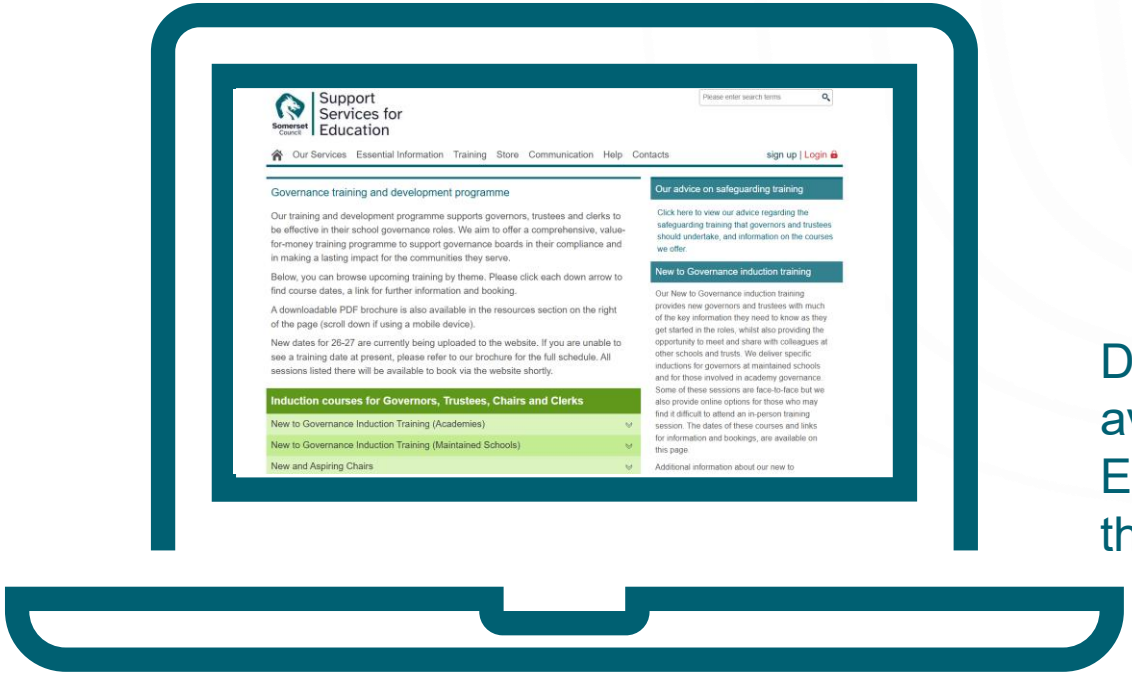
New and updated guidance resources

- Complaints toolkit and LA Maintained School Model Policy
- Suspensions and Exclusions Toolkit
- NEW: Medical Needs and Allergy Safety Link Governor/Trustee
- NEW: Medical Needs and Allergy Safety Responsibilities of the Board
- Careers Link Governor/Trustee
- NEW: Removal & Suspension of maintained governor guidance
- EYFS Guidance

Training and development



Link to the brochure



GovernorHub

Discounted GovernorHub available, access via Education Governance on the ‘Store’ on SSE

Contact SGS@somerset.gov.uk or visit www.supportservicesforeducation.co.uk/governancetraining

Upcoming dates – online development

Full list and details available in the brochure and on our website.

Climate Change and Sustainability in Schools: The Governor Role Wed, 23 Sep 2026, 17:30 - 19:30

Headteacher performance management and appraisal Tue, 29 Sep 2026, 17:30 - 19:30

AI Literacy for Governors & Trustees Wed, 30 Sep 2026, 12:30 - 13:30

Safeguarding for Governance Boards & Trustees Thu, 01 Oct 2026, 17:30 - 19:30

Managing teachers & leaders pay in your school Tue, 06 Oct 2026, 17:30 - 19:30

Role of the Governance Safeguarding Lead Thu, 08 Oct 2026, 17:30 - 18:30

Strategic Governance & Monitoring Mon 12 Oct 2026 , 17:30 - 19:30

What's the worst that could happen? Cybersecurity and board responsibility Tue, 13 Oct 2026, 17:30 - 19:30

Being Ofsted Ready: For Governors and Trustees Thu, 15 Oct 2026 , 17:30 - 19:30

Inclusion and SEND Responsibilities for Governance Boards Tue, 20 Oct 2026, 17:30 - 19:30

Understanding Finance for Maintained School Governors – postponed until November

(Academy finance training available via Education Financial Services | Support Services for Education)

Upcoming induction dates

New to governance - Academies - Online session plus e-learning

Tue, 01 Dec 2026, 17:30 - 20:00 | Microsoft Teams

New to Governance - Maintained schools - face to face session

Sat, 17 Oct 2026, 09:15 - 13:00 | Victoria Park Community Centre, Victoria Park Drive, Bridgwater TA6 7AS

New to Governance - Maintained Schools - Online session plus e-learning

Thu, 26 Nov 2026, 17:30 - 20:00 | Microsoft Teams

New and Aspiring Chairs

Thu, 05 Nov 2026 & Thu, 12 Nov 2026, 17:30 - 19:30 | Microsoft Teams

New Clerks' Induction training

Wed, 07 Oct 2026, 09:30 - 15:30 | Broughton House, Blackbrook Park Ave, Taunton, TA1 2PP

Prevent Duty Training

The Department for Education (DfE) regional Prevent coordinators support and improve Prevent delivery in each region of England. Their role includes implementing Prevent duty responsibilities in education institutions.

Tuesday 19 January 2027: 5pm to 6:15pm Register

Thursday 17 June 2027: 5pm to 6:15pm Register

(Regional CONTEST co-ordinators: virtual training sessions - GOV.UK)

Online prevent training to undertake anytime can be found via the Home Office website here: Prevent duty training

Integrated Curriculum and Financial Planning (ICFP)

The guidance has been updated to add information about using ICFP in a school and a trust, and making financial savings. The resources have also been reordered and regrouped by type and user. The latest guidance has reinstated the fundamental equations guidance and workbook for school business professionals.

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/integrated-curriculum-and-financial-planning-icfp

There are free DfE funded training events on using ICFP effectively taking place across the country book you place here

Clerking Vacancies

Area	School
Taunton	Creech St Michael C of E Primary School (Maintained)
Taunton	Cotford St Luke Primary School (Maintained)
Glastonbury	St Benedict's Junior School (Maintained)
Street - Bridgwater	Ashcott Primary (Maintained)
Bridgwater - Street	Catcott Primary (Maintained)
Somerton	King Ina *Local Board* (Academy)

SSE Website

Useful Governance Board Tools

Somerset Council

Updates to our website

www.supportservicesforeducation.co.uk/sgs

- Website redesign:
  - New site navigation and look
  - New approach to accessing resources. Direct login to access all Education Governance resources: https://supportservicesforeducation.co.uk/P47572
  - Updated structure for finding our training courses: https://www.supportservicesforeducation.co.uk/boardtraining
  - You can now ‘follow’ pages to receive notification when they are updated.

- New document libraries functionality
  - Store and provide governor access to meeting papers and board documents
  - Limited functionality – a useful resource but not interactive like Governorhub is
  - Login required and board details and user rights need to be correct
  - Has to be ‘switched on’ for your board – request setup at sgs@somerset.gov.uk

Website demo

- Document libraries
- Updating governor website access rights
- Accessing our resources
- Accessing the training programme
- Following a webpage

Questions?



Got a question? Or simply want to connect?

Join us for

Q & A Drop In

12/11/2026 12:30 - 13:00

More information can be found here

Thank you



0300 790 6855

SGS@somerset.gov.uk

www.supportservicesforeducation.co.uk/sgs

Networking

