

GOVERNANCE NEWSLETTER.



WELCOME

As we approach the end of 2023 and start thinking about the festivities and celebrations to come, please take the time to reflect on what you have achieved as a governor over the past year and the impact you have had on improving the outcomes for the pupils in our schools.

Our world is undoubtedly a troubled place at the moment, but as the Christmas festivities in schools take place governors can take pride in the work that they have done to support schools now more than ever.

The Governance Team has been pleased to support boards in Hertfordshire and beyond as they plan and prepare for the year ahead. This term saw a continued focus on high quality training for governors with new courses both “live” and online being produced to support governors with current issues and hot topics. As always, our Chairs Strategic Briefing and Clerks Networks were well attended keeping your boards up to date with the latest information and support on offer.

This issue contains the usual mix of useful information, reminders, updates, and interesting articles, so we hope you find it useful and then have a great Christmas and New Year!

Governance services will be taking a break over Christmas so the phones will not be manned during w/c 25th December but we will be open for business on Tuesday 2nd January 2024.

THE HFL EDUCATION SMALL SCHOOLS' PROGRAMME. GREAT THINGS COME IN SMALL PACKAGES.

Join us for the first session of our new Small Schools' Programme on Thursday 8th February 2024 for just £20+VAT. These half-termly briefings, including bite-sized training and follow-up discussion groups, are designed to meet the ever-evolving needs of leaders of small schools. Designed to inform and support, briefings will focus on small schools making the right decisions for their context. They will include case studies shared by those at the chalk-face and time to discuss leaders' thinking.

For more information and to book, [click here](#).

THE HFL EDUCATION SMALL SCHOOLS' PROGRAMME.

Great things come in small packages

Half-termly briefings, including bite-sized training and follow-up discussion groups, designed to meet the ever-evolving needs of leaders of small schools.

An illustration of a hand holding a small school building. The school is a two-story red brick building with a white roof and a chimney. There are green trees and a blue sky with white clouds in the background.

Join us at the first, taster session on Thursday 8th February 2024 for just £20+VAT

Live sessions will run as twilights from 3:30 – 5:00pm half-termly.

HFL

Find out more

NEW FREE DISADVANTAGED RESOURCES FOR SCHOOLS

Although we are yet to receive validated KS4 and 5 assessment data, the summer test and exam outcomes in Hertfordshire at all key stages - from Early Years to A level - show a widening gap in outcomes between those learners eligible for Pupil Premium funding and their more economically advantaged peers. Never has there been more of a need to focus on strategies to better serve our underserved learners.

In her new role as Lead Adviser for underserved learners, Rachel Macfarlane has produced two new resources to support schools and staff in their closing the gap work. These have been shared with all Herts schools and Governors and now have been added to the resources section in GovernorHub. You can follow these links to the resources, a newsletter about **Eliminating Economic Exclusion (EEE)** and a **Guide to An Effective PP Strategy**.



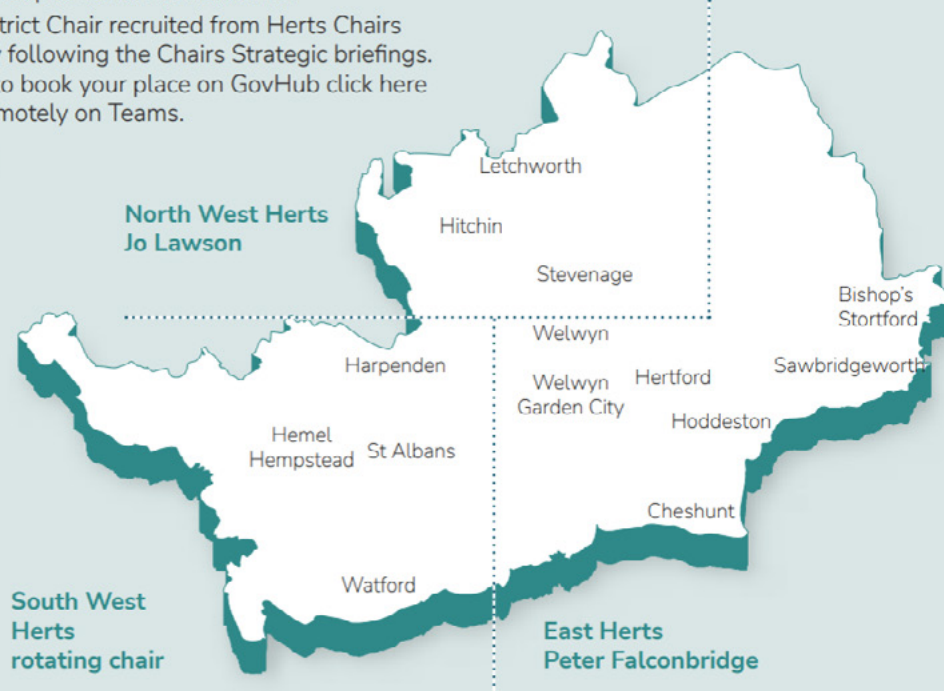
CHAIRS NETWORKS

CHAIRS NETWORKS – RUN BY HERTFORDSHIRE CHAIRS FOR HERTFORDSHIRE CHAIRS.

Three networks are now set up to cover Hertfordshire.

- Each network has a District Chair recruited from Herts Chairs
- Meetings will be termly following the Chairs Strategic briefings.
- For further details and to book your place on GovHub click [here](#)
- Meetings are hosted remotely on Teams.

Three districts cover and are chaired as follows:



These meetings are an opportunity to meet with other Chair of Governors in your locality to share experiences, discuss current concerns, share good practice and create a supportive network of fellow Chairs. The meetings are chaired voluntarily by Hertfordshire Chairs and look forward to you joining them.

There are three meetings on each date - you can choose to attend anyone of these regardless of where you are located:

North West Herts - District Chair: Jo Lawson

East Herts - District Chair: Peter Falconbridge

South West Herts - District Chair: Rotating chair

Delegates will be sent clear guidance on how to log in and join the meeting a week before the event. You will be able to join the briefing from 5.55pm, to allow sign in prior to the start time of 6.00pm. The session will end at approximately 7.30pm.

There is no charge for attending this event

Upcoming dates: **Monday 25th March 2024 & Monday 8th July 2024** all 6-7.30pm.

OCTOBER WAS BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Once again HFL recognised Black History Month through October, to help recognise the journey of the community and the positive impacts so many historical and present-day pioneers and individuals have contributed into society.

Our anti-racist agenda is alive throughout the year and our work internally and with schools is not limited to one period of the year, but this national event serves as a critical opportunity for reflection and reminding of both progress – and of continuing challenges many individuals still face in society and workplaces due to bias, barriers and injustice.

CLERKING SERVICE UPDATE

Due to the rising demand for clerks to support panels over the last academic year, and to provide clarity on what the HFL Education clerk's role is when supporting panels; we have reviewed the HFL Education clerking services that we can provide when supporting adhoc panels and special meeting requests.

For supporting complaint and exclusions panels, we will now offer two levels of service. A brief but not inclusive summary of our new services can be found below. For further information and costs, please contact clerking@hfleducation.org

Standard

- the clerk will provide procedural advice to the panel prior to the panel date.
- the clerk will attend the hearing, produce notes of the hearing and support the drafting of the outcome letter.

Premium

- In addition to the standard service the clerk will co-ordinate the complaint/exclusion and associated correspondence and collate electronically any supporting evidence

Please note that demand for panel clerking is currently extremely high, so support from an HFL Clerk for either service will be subject to availability.



Exclusions panels – be prepared!

Is your board prepared for the possibility of having to convene a governor disciplinary panel following a permanent exclusion? All governors should have a good understanding of the exclusions process and statutory guidance and the panel members need to be impartial and trained within the last two years. We recommend to get as many governors on the board trained as possible so that a panel can be formed if necessary.

Governors can book onto two hour live exclusions training sessions (remote) [here](#) and if they have already done the training but it is out of date or they need to refresh themselves before a hearing, they can do an online refresher module in Modern Governor [here](#).

Are you an experienced clerk or governor who would like to do some additional work supporting governing bodies? The HFL Clerking Service is looking to recruit a number of experienced clerks or governors to support the clerking of Governor Disciplinary Committees (GDCs) and complaints due to increased demand. The role has flexible hours and training is available. To have a chat about the role contact clerking@hfleducation.org.

AN APPROACH TO PREVENTING PERMANENT EXCLUSIONS

One secondary school's approach in Hertfordshire.

Although not a formal policy, Governor Disciplinary Hearings (GDHs) have been used in our secondary school for the past 10 or more years as a strategy to reduce permanent exclusions in the school and enable pupils to remain in the mainstream setting. It has been a successful strategy with many pupils avoiding the risk of going onto permanent exclusion.

More recently this approach feels aligned with the changes in the [DfE Exclusions Guidance](#) (as published September 2022) where governing boards should give consideration to the following alternatives to exclusion:

- Managed moves – what they are and how should they be used.
- Use of off-site direction as a short-term measure as part of the school's behaviour management strategy
- Guidance on the practice encouraging pupils to participate at all stages of the suspension or exclusion process.
- Guidance for governing boards to ensure that they review data to consider the level of pupil moves and the characteristics of pupils who have been permanently excluded to ensure the sanction is only used when necessary and as a last resort.

The hearings are generally used where pupils have already had a number of behaviour sanctions such as detentions and suspensions. They are run in a similar way to GDC's (Governor Disciplinary Committees) which are mandatory following a permanent exclusion, although with less formality and are not clerked.

The usual process is for the pupil and parents to be invited to attend the GDH. The school prepares an evidence pack which usually includes the school's behaviour policy, relevant details on the pupil's background, what behaviours have led to this point and what strategies have been put in place by the school to support the pupil's behaviour. Importantly this is an opportunity to discuss if an offsite direction or managed move would be in the best interests of the pupil.

A panel of 2-3 governors (ideally with at least one who is exclusion trained) will hear from the school, parents and if agreed the pupil. The governors can then ask questions of the school, parents and if agreed the pupil also. The GDHs have been most effective when the pupil agrees to participate in the discussion which is something the DfE encourages (see third bullet point above)

The desired outcome is one where the pupil agrees to modify their behaviour such that they don't find themselves 'in front' of governors again and that the parents and school have clear expectations to support the pupil not only in the short term, but over their remaining time in school.

It is made very clear to the pupil that this is their chance to avoid a permanent exclusion, and it is explained to them in some depth how exclusion will impact them in both the short and longer term if it were to happen, and how with a number of achievable changes in behaviour their time in school will be more fulfilling and with much improved work/ life outcomes in the future.

Following the GDH, the key points that have been agreed are sent to the parents/ pupil and relevant school staff.

If, in time, the pupil does end up being permanently excluded, we allow the same governors (if exclusion trained) to sit on the GDC. This has helped governors, who have a greater depth of knowledge of the pupil's journey to exclusion, and a familiar face or two on the panel works well to put the parents and pupils more at ease at the GDC.

This holistic and strategic approach by governors to reducing permanent exclusions with the best interest of the pupil and parents at the heart of the process is something that all schools could consider trying when the circumstances merit.

October 2023



MODERN GOVERNOR UPDATE

If you haven't had a look yet, Modern Governor has:

- Access to over 75+ eLearning modules covering a wide range of topics
- Ongoing reviews of modules to ensure they are up to date and relevant, along with changes due to legislation updates. This includes September's KCSiE and updated Prevent legislation ready by the end of this month
- Progress is saved to allow for interruptions or change of device
- Personalised CPD certificate on completion, which can be added to training record on GovernorHub

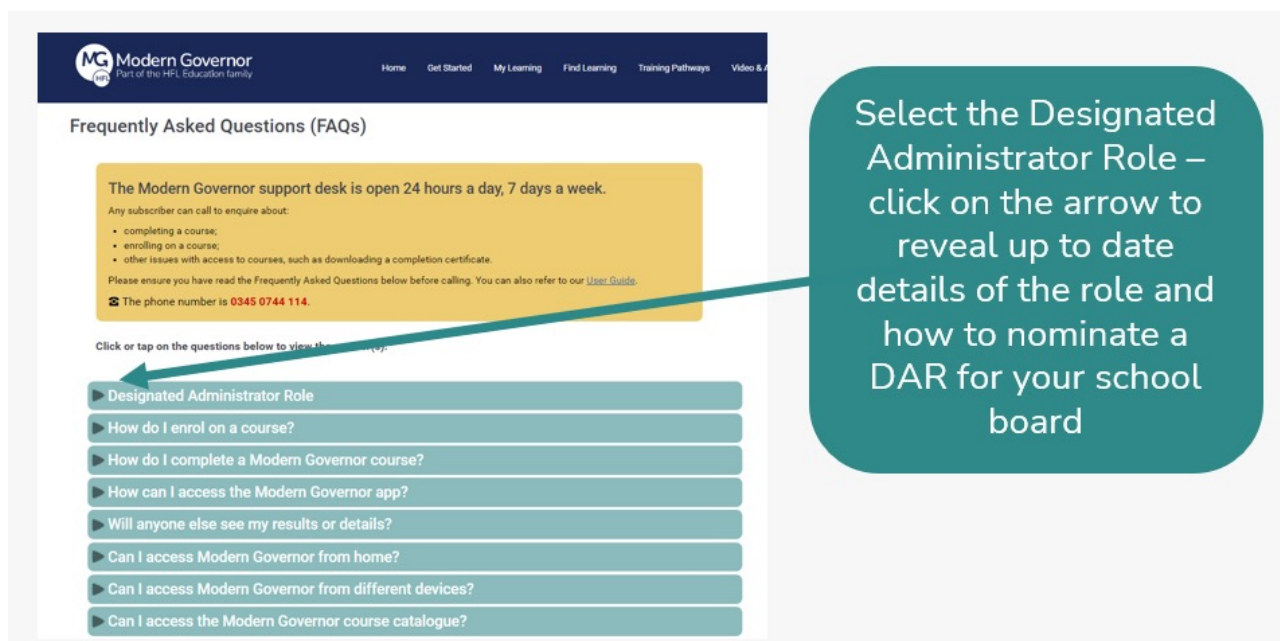


We have also just launched the new DAR (Designated Administrator Role) feature which will enable a nominated user to have an overview of the school/ trust board on Modern Governor including:

- Personal profile data set up under the school board, including name, email address and date user last accessed
- Training records for each user, showing named module completions

How can a school board nominate a DAR?

Complete an online form by someone on behalf of the school board. Follow this link to complete the form: <https://forms.office.com/e/cn5HG5yThf>



The Modern Governor support desk is open 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Any subscriber can call to enquire about:

- completing a course;
- enrolling on a course;
- other issues with access to courses, such as downloading a completion certificate.

Please ensure you have read the Frequently Asked Questions below before calling. You can also refer to our [User Guide](#).

The phone number is 0345 0744 114.

Click or tap on the questions below to view the answer:

- ▶ Designated Administrator Role
- ▶ How do I enrol on a course?
- ▶ How do I complete a Modern Governor course?
- ▶ How can I access the Modern Governor app?
- ▶ Will anyone else see my results or details?
- ▶ Can I access Modern Governor from home?
- ▶ Can I access Modern Governor from different devices?
- ▶ Can I access the Modern Governor course catalogue?

Select the Designated Administrator Role – click on the arrow to reveal up to date details of the role and how to nominate a DAR for your school board

Can the DAR be changed in the future?

Yes, just complete a new form.

Further information can be found on the Getting Started section of the platform

Top three courses completed by schools in Herts this term so far:

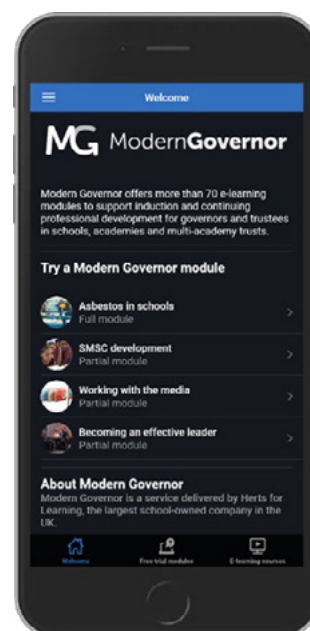
1. Safeguarding and Governance
2. Prevent
3. Intro gov 1 / Governor visits / Exclusions

In September we launched, 'School complaints: a refresher module'. New modules coming soon are around monthly budgeting for maintained schools and academies.

Modern Governor is part of your Governor Training subscription and is accessed either directly on the MG website or via GovernorHub. To make the most of your subscription:

- Access the platform via GovernorHub - instructions [here](#)
- Update your training record so you have a full record of your training – instructions [here](#)
- Nominate a governor to be the administrator to make use of the DAR function
- Use the training pathways - there are four pathways to choose from depending on your experience
- Report your training to the board so that areas for development can be identified

We have a **free** Modern Governor web-based app which can be accessed



via PC, laptop or phone giving access to your e-learning modules, free trial modules to share with colleagues and a searchable glossary of educational terms and acronyms.

To access the current Catalogue of Modules: [CLICK HERE](#)

This can also be found within the Getting Started section on the platform.

If you have any queries, there are two ways to contact us:

Technical helpdesk available 24/7 - 0345 0744 114

Email support: support@moderngovernor.com

<https://app.moderngovernor.com>



GOVERNANCE BLOGS

Click here for more Governance blogs, and to subscribe straight to your inbox click [here](#).



GOVERNORHUB UPDATE

Diversity data collection

The DfE says:

Diversity is important and we want governing boards to be increasingly reflective of the communities they serve.

We encourage schools to collect and publish governing board members' diversity data.

Information should be widely accessible to members of the school community and the public.

Board members can opt out of sharing their information, including protected characteristics, at any given time including after publication.

Schools must ensure that individuals cannot be identified through the publication of data, particularly when board member levels are low. Read more about this in the [data protection toolkit for schools](#) and [Equality Act 2010: advice for schools](#).

Diversity information needs to be accessible, but schools and trusts must make sure that individuals cannot be identified when they publish the data so GovernorHub have added a section to the personal profile of every user. Governors can choose whether to complete the new section and can remove the data at any time if they change their minds.

This is what the section looks like:

Personal Information Who can see this?

Gender None	Sex None
Ethnic group None	Education None
Religion None	Long-term conditions Not filled
Sexual orientation None	Date of birth

[Fill personal information](#)

- Click on your name in the top right-hand corner of the page and select “profile”
- Scroll down to the new section called “Personal Information”
- Click on “Fill personal information”
- Privacy Statement – “Continue”
- Choose from drop down boxes which include “prefer not to say”
- Click on “update”

FAQs

Q. Who can see the data?

A. Only you can see the data – clerks, admins on the board, Governor Services, MAT trust boards cannot see this section.

Q. Can someone else complete this section for me?

A. No – only you can fill this section in. You can update it or remove it at any time.

Q. What will it be used for?

A. The data will be used to report on governing board diversity at national, regional and local level. Once they have enough data to be anonymous, boards will be able to download a report to publish on their websites.



Department
for Education

Declarations on GovernorHub

Boards must:

- Keep a register of the up-to-date business and pecuniary interests of governors and the headteacher
- Publish the register online in a “readily accessible form” with information available on a webpage “without the need to download or open a separate document”

www.gov.uk/government/publications/constitution-of-governing-bodies-of-maintained-schools
www.gov.uk/government/publications/academies-financial-handbook

Clerks/governance professionals will usually ask you to update their declarations annually or when your circumstances change e.g. a new job or an additional governor role.

You can add your declarations of interest to your Governor profile to make it easier for the clerk to keep a record of them. [How do I make declarations of interest and other confirmations? | GovernorHub Help Centre.](#)

What do you need to declare?

This is what GovernorHub advises:

Maintained Schools

Interests are anything that might sway your decision making or affect your ability to act in an impartial way.

For example, if you:

- Are a governor at another school

- Work for a company that the school might engage the services of (a catering or payroll provider, etc.)
- Have a personal relationship with any staff at the school (spouse, partner, relative, etc.)
- Have a partner who supplies a service to the school

Academies

Interests are anything that might sway your decision making or affect your ability to act in an impartial way.

For example, if you:

- Are a trustee or governor at another school or charity
- Have any directorships, partnerships and employments with businesses
- Have a personal relationship with any members, trustees, local governors or employees of the trust (e.g. spouse, partner, relative, etc.)

IF IN DOUBT – DECLARE IT!

Confirmations on GovernorHub

Governors need to confirm that they have read the **whole of KCSiE** every year. There is a link on the page that will take you straight to the document.

This is essential because all governors have a responsibility for ensuring the safety of the children in their schools.

NB. HCC have confirmed that completing this section on GovernorHub is sufficient to meet the requirement so hard copies of signed forms are not required in addition to this.

Go to your profile by clicking on your name in the top right hand corner of the page then choose the “declarations and confirmations” tab.



Keeping Children Safe in Education

I have read and understood Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023

This confirmation has been added by GovernorHub to support great governance and cannot be changed or deleted. We recommend that **all governors read the whole of KCSiE**.

Click below to confirm you have read and understood [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#).

Confirm

Not confirmed



There may be additional confirmations that you will also need to confirm. These could be that you agree to a policy or the governor code of conduct and you should be able to find copies of these in your school's documents section. If you have any issues with confirming something, speak to your chair of governors or the clerk.

SFVS RETURN

The SFVS return is a mandatory annual requirement from the Department for Education (DfE). The deadline for the submission of this to the Local Authority is 29th March 2024.

To ensure that you comply with the DfE requirements please ensure that you submit your completed SFVS return to SIAS (sias@hertfordshire.gov.uk) in word format, by the above date. SIAS will continue to post any further updates on the Grid and via Bulletins should any further changes be announced.

Remember that there is an online course on Modern Governor which gives governors an understanding of why the SFVS is now, not only important from a compliance perspective, but also because using the tool can develop and evidence your board's practice and approach to financial security.

Click here to access the course in GovernorHub if your board subscribes to Governor Training.

SFVS requirements

The SFVS process is outlined across the three pages below:

SFVS returns process

SFVS timetable

Extra information

Please contact sias@hertfordshire.gov.uk if you have any questions regarding the SFVS return.

HERTFORDSHIRE SEND TOOLKIT

Hertfordshire's fifth SEND Toolkit on special educational needs or disabilities for schools produced by HFL Education and Hertfordshire County Council has been updated for 2023-24 with a significant number of new tools and resources.

Highlights include:

- updated SEND context poster reflecting the latest English and Hertfordshire data.
- new information from health services including integrated therapies service with a fantastic poster full of links to useful resources.
- new universal/universal+ tools and training for adapting the English and maths curriculum for learning with SEND.
- updated information from the Virtual School and Mental Health services
- links to all the essential local authority SEND tools and templates.

This refreshed resource continues to support professionals to deliver great provision for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Governors can access a copy from the **GovernorHub resources area**.

Schools can download a copy at no charge from **here**.



PROMOTING INCLUSION IN SCHOOLS AND REVISING BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

Governors know that schools and students are in challenging times. Referrals for SEND are at an all time high, children and young people are telling us that their mental health is poor, school attendance is a concern and has reduced, that the outcomes for children, particularly for the most vulnerable to education disadvantage, have fallen and the attainment gap has widened, eradicating much of the hard-won gains made pre-pandemic.

What can School Governors do to help?

In Hertfordshire we acknowledge that our systems need review. We know that colleagues

working in schools, parents and caregivers, local communities, council officers and elected members and school governors are ambitious for each and every child in the county.

- Our mission is to *reflect, rethink and reset* the system for all children and young people, driving the change needed through a Head Teacher and Local Authority Collaborative that has already identified actions to make a substantial change to the way pupils and staff in school experience the process of education. Clear promotion of the vision and why now is the right time for change by delivering a presentation of the core principles at every possible educational meeting.
- Commitment to and investment in high quality affordable professional learning for the entire school staff throughout the **academic years 2023-24/25** to develop a trauma-aware workforce who understand and use relational practice to improve outcomes for children and young people.
- Regular reports of high-quality data and research evidence shared and used intelligently to strengthen ambition and inform about what works for schools and in the delivery of Children's Services.
- Building on existing Hertfordshire communities of learning that share practice within and across schools 2023 and beyond.
- A comprehensive and regular communication strategy to engage the support of parents and carers, children and young people, teachers and local authority officers, Trustees and School Governors.



As a Governor or Trustee you can:

1. Give commitment to and investment in high quality affordable professional learning for the entire school staff throughout the **academic years 2023-24/25** to develop a trauma-aware workforce who understand and use relational practice to improve outcomes for children and young people. You and your colleagues on the Governing or Trustee Board can then **Reflect** on the culture of your school and what could or should be altered.
2. Encourage and enable your school staff to participate in the Learning Offer. The online training made available by the 'When the Adults Change' is affordable and effective at £37.50 per license. A small Primary school for example will need only to invest in two licenses. (www.relationshipsinhertfordshirematter.com)
3. Discuss the Behaviour Policy Checklist from the Kinder by Design portfolio available to School Governors on the Virtual School website (www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/virtualschool) at a full Governors meeting. With your school senior leaders, **Rethink** the Behaviour policy so that it fits on one side of A4 and that it also fits your vision for your school.
4. Collaborate with other local schools and settings to share what works and to learn from each other to help **Reset** the day-to-day experience in school for both children and young people and the whole staff team.

You will find out more information in the following ways:

1. The Aiming for Excellence website: www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/aimingforexcellence where you will find the Learning Offer for all schools
2. The Autumn Chairs bulletin/Chairs portal in September
3. A training course for all Governors delivered by Marcus Cooper and Felicity Evans booked

through HFL Governance Training. (www.hfleducation.org) or The Governor Hub.

Improving outcomes for Each and Every Child (Via MS Teams)

- Tues 27th February 2024, 7-9pm
- Tues 11th June 2024, 7-9pm

4. Regular articles in The Hertfordshire Governor.

A live presentation on the progress of the Aiming for Excellence strategy for each and every child at the Chairs Briefing on the 5th of March 2024.

Felicity Evans

Former Virtual School Head for Hertfordshire

(Felicity Evans was awarded an MBE in the Kings first New Honours, for Services to Children in Hertfordshire.)

NSPCC PRIMARY SCHOOLS PROGRAMMES AND RESOURCES FREE

Hello! We are the NSPCC Schools Coordinators for Hertfordshire and would like to share with you and your schools all that we can offer you from our Speak out. Stay Safe. programme.

- * KS1 and KS2 virtual pre-recorded assemblies
- * Face to face workshops for your Year 2, 5 & 6 children, presented by our trained NSPCC Volunteers
- * A fantastic SEND Speak Out. Stay Safe. programme
- * TALK Pants lesson plans and resources [PANTS resources for schools and teachers | NSPCC Learning](#)



We are encouraging ALL primary schools (including SEND schools), to book our Speak out. Stay safe. programme for the Spring/Summer Terms 2024.

Speak out. Stay safe. online programme

With the amazing support of Ant and Dec we have an online Assembly- Speak out. Stay safe. programme. This offer, available for children aged 5 to 11, includes access to video assemblies and supporting resources for use in the classroom. A BSL version is also available for d/Deaf children. Our specially adapted SEND version of *Speak out. Stay safe.* is also available.

For more information about this please do head to our website [Speak out Stay safe programme | NSPCC Learning](#) or alternatively contact one of us on the details below;

Jo Douse - Schools Coordinator, (South Hertfordshire), NSPCC Schools Service
Email: Jo.Douse@nspcc.org.uk Tel: 02037729662

Cat Taylor - Schools Coordinator, (North Hertfordshire), NSPCC Schools Service
Email: catherine.taylor@nspcc.org.uk Tel: 02037729275

NSPCC SECONDARY SCHOOL PROGRAMME

Talk Relationships is the NSPCC's **new secondary** education service which supports schools to deliver inclusive sex and relationships education. It consists of **e-learning courses** for educators to feel confident when delivering sex and relationships education, **14 ready-to-teach lesson plans** created by experts from the PSHE Association and the NSPCC and a **dedicated helpline** to provide advice and guidance to educators delivering sex education. We want all young people to understand healthy behaviours in relationships and recognise their right to be safe, heard and respected. And we want them to know how to get help from a safe adult if they need it.

Please do take a look here; [Talk Relationships: resources to deliver sex and relationships education | NSPCC Learning](#) or contact Jo or Cat on above details.

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THE 2024 PEARSON NATIONAL TEACHING AWARDS ARE NOW OPEN FOR NOMINATIONS

Celebrating impact

The Pearson National Teaching Awards were set up to celebrate the impact of invaluable education within the UK. Run by The Teaching Awards Trust and supported by Pearson and the BBC, they are the UK's most prestigious celebration of transformational teaching.

[The 2024 Pearson National Teaching Awards - The Pearson National Teaching Awards](#)

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