

Busy Governance Guide to Training

1. **Why?** Governors and trustees are lay people and not expected to be educational experts but, in order to be effective, governors should have an understanding of educational and school issues. Ofsted expects governors to be well informed and knowledgeable and may ask about the training offered and taken up by governors and trustees.
2. **Agree:** Agree with your board what the training priorities should be and make sure this is noted in the minutes, so everyone signs up. Specific areas of training will depend on your type of school and your governor responsibilities and could also include any burning issues of the moment. As a start, boards could consider new governor's induction, safeguarding, personnel, finance, and curriculum. Also ensure that the clerk to governors/governance professional is included for training for their role in supporting the work of the board.
3. **Prioritise:** Consider a two-tier system where every governor undertakes basic induction and safeguarding training and then additional specific key responsibilities training relating to their role on the board and within committees.
4. **How:** Consider face to face training at venues and in house along with online training as the obvious ways to upskill your governing board, but don't forget that staying up to date includes attending conferences and events. You should also consider if external job-related training could be relevant and if so, add the details to board records.
5. **Evidence:** Make sure that you have records to hand – Ofsted may ask to see them. Use your clerk/governance professional or appoint a training governor/trustee, or board development governor to monitor the training, collect the paperwork or certificates and encourage new and existing governors to view the need for training as ongoing. If your board is undertaking online training, then ensure that all the training undertaken is recorded by the board. Consider how the impact of training can be linked to pupil outcomes and use this information when talking to Ofsted. Ask governors to report back to the board on training undertaken.
6. **Review:** Make a note in your Annual Cycle to review progress, check that everyone has completed their agreed training and establish what the impact has been then review if the training list needs to be amended for the forthcoming year.
7. **Reluctant learners?** Sometimes the more long-standing governors are the very ones who need to be persuaded that things have moved on since they first underwent training a long time ago. Have 'Training' as an agenda item and be specific in terms of asking reluctant learners directly if they will do a piece of training and report back to the Board on any key issues and whether it was useful. If there are genuine reasons why governors find it difficult to engage with training, then consider what the board can do to support governors. Also consider commissioning whole Board in-house training and asking external organisations and internal specialists to lead.

8. **Cost:** Not only to the Board but also to individual governors and clerks, the expense of training can be a worry. A low-cost option could be to use the skills you have amongst your own governors, staff or even parents to deliver training or consider working with wider networks within trusts, federations or teaching schools. There is free training available online, but it can take time to track it down. Discuss the amount to be allocated in the school budget to support governors to train and become more effective. Make sure that your Governors Expenses Policy is up to date and encourage governors to make a claim. Many governors do not claim for travel or childcare costs and whilst this is viewed as volunteers supporting their schools, boards will need to consider if this approach may be discriminating against governors that may not be able to afford to be so generous.
9. **Time:** Consider the time involved in travelling to training venues and discuss what the board can do to facilitate online training that governors or clerks can carry out in their own homes or in school for those that find it hard to attend outside venues. Consider if governors will need support to access online training effectively.
10. **Remember:** Effective governors are not born they are trained.