

Supporting schools, headteachers and governors to deliver excellent outcomes for children and young people

School & Governor Support Service Offer 2023-24



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 **Birmingham**
City Council

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Contents

Welcome.....	3
Introduction.....	4
Advice.....	5
Guidance.....	6
Consultancy.....	7
Subscriber Events and Training.....	8
Additional Services Not Covered by Subscription.....	9
Service Guarantees.....	10
Terms and Conditions.....	11

Welcome

Welcome to the 2023-24 **Service Offer from School and Governor Support (S&GS)**. This brochure, which provides an overview of the services offered to subscribing schools and academies together with the information you will need to access them, is also available at birmingham.gov.uk/SGS and birminghameducationsupportservices.co.uk/Services/4357

As always, our support is focused on **all aspects of school leadership and management** other than those relating to the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning. We continue to review our offer to subscribing schools each year and the invaluable feedback given by headteachers, governors and trustees helps ensure that the service continues to meet your developing needs and crucially provides excellent value for money.

S&GS remains a **traded service** and is, therefore, required to recover the majority of its operating costs. During the last financial year, nearly two thirds of the family of Birmingham schools (academies, maintained and free schools alike) – including virtually all the maintained schools – made the decision to continue subscribing to S&GS. Your continued support is much appreciated and will only enhance our ability to respond to the wide range of issues that you face on a day-to-day basis.

We have continued to support all our subscribers during this very challenging year and appreciate the overwhelmingly positive feedback we receive from you. We would welcome any ongoing **feedback** from you regarding anything that has gone well, as well as any suggestions for aspects of our service that you feel we could improve. Your feedback is vital in helping us to achieve this.

As you will undoubtedly know, we have moved our governor training programme to an online platform and, as a result, have been able to offer this at a very competitive price. More details can be found in the **Governor Training Programme 2023-24**.

We appreciate the continuing pressure on school budgets and remain committed to maintaining our costs at as low a level as possible. The cost of your subscription charge for 2023/24 will be **£2,205** which represents a 5% increase on last year's fees, the first increase for 4 years. Those who signed up to our 'subscription commitment for 3 years' will be eligible for the 5% off that we committed to last year. Maintained schools and recently converted academies will be invoiced early in the new financial year. Existing academies will be invoiced, as usual, during September 2023 in line with their own funding arrangements.

We urge you to take a really good look at our updated service offer laid out in this brochure. In the Introduction, on the next page, we would like to take an opportunity to share some of the things that you tell us you value most from your subscription as well as highlighting some additional benefits that you can look forward to this year. We hope that you will continue to subscribe to S&GS which, you tell us, is highly valued by school leaders and governing boards (GBs).

Regards,

Levain Preston

Interim Head of Service

School and Governor Support – Birmingham City Council

Introduction

School and Governor Support (S&GS) is available, through BCC, to maintained schools and academies for an **annual subscription**. It provides a range of services that support schools, academies and their governing boards (GBs) to deal effectively with day-to-day leadership and management issues and create strong governance.

Subscribers have access to the following **core elements of S&GS**:

- **advice** on routine matters relating to the day-to-day management and governance (see page 5); e.g. agenda briefing, audit tool;
- updated **guidance** on managing key roles and responsibilities (see page 6) and
- **consultancy** in complex and challenging situations which require a tailored solution leading to a satisfactory outcome (see page 7).

You tell us that what you value as a benefit of your subscription includes:

- **Unlimited telephone and email access for advice** from team members with a vast range of knowledge, skills and experience. This advice is often enhanced by our unique partnerships with other BCC colleagues and services;
- **Generous support via face-to-face consultancy** on more complicated or sensitive matters that often require a visit to your schools or attendance at meetings;
- **A number of customised guidance documents** aimed specifically at Headteachers, Governing Boards and Governance Professionals/Clerks;
- Spotlight on Governance, our **fortnightly update** for governors, identifying upcoming training and linking this to current issues for note and action;

- **Termly briefing sessions** for Chairs and also for Governance Professionals/Clerks;
- **Training Sessions** for Governors – some at no additional cost and some included in our Training Programme subscription.

Additional benefits include all of the above as well as:

- **Focused training** on various current and significant issues for school leaders and governors, at no additional cost (previously charged and detailed in our service offer and training programme);
- A **renewed and revised relationship** with consortia where more of you get to see more of us, as well as hearing about our work on the things that prove most challenging to school leaders;
- A **termly briefing document** that looks back at the five most significant issues that we have dealt with over the term (**5 to Thrive**). This will be shared via the consortia and can be expanded upon when we meet in person or kept as a useful guide for future use;
- **Increased advice and support** with governor recruitment.

S&GS continues to be both proactive and responsive to the needs of its subscribers. We **work collaboratively with other BCC education services and partners** to ensure that subscriber needs are met in a consistent and timely manner. Another significant aspect of our work is to ensure the **effective oversight of our ‘governor estate’**. We have a lead officer who works exclusively, as part of the team, to manage and coordinate resources that will ensure an effective focus on strong and robust governance.

We will continue to provide the same great service, delivered by a committed team which remains determined to achieve yet further improvement, to gaining a better understanding of and adapting to the challenges you face.

Advice

Subscribers to School and Governor Support (S&GS) have direct access to expert **advice on day-to-day school management issues as well as on all matters relating to the governance** of maintained schools and academies. Our advice is typically shared with you by telephone, email or in virtual meetings and is delivered by experienced professionals, with a wealth of knowledge that they can apply to the needs of your education setting.

We pride ourselves on being approachable, adaptable and knowledgeable in school leadership and governance matters.

The advice offered aims to enable you to focus on your key roles and responsibilities and, wherever possible, we will ensure that the same person will support you with your query until its conclusion.

Our **advice**, for example:

- is solution-focused and directed towards supporting you to arrive at logical conclusions;
- has been developed, over time, through close collaboration with a range of expert services, including other BCC service areas;
- supports compliance with local procedures, statutory regulations, non-statutory guidance, and aspects of education law;

- draws upon and reflects our published guidance that is updated regularly to reflect current effective practice;
- supports you when faced with unforeseen circumstances so that risk is minimised and safeguarding is assured;
- encourages a proactive and timely approach to resolving any concerns so that escalation is less likely; and
- includes reviewing/commenting on correspondence relating to concerns.



Guidance

School and Governor Support (S&GS) provides subscribing schools / academies and their governing boards (GBs) with a range of useful, up-to-date guidance that supports them in their role. The guidance is regularly updated, adapted and added to in consultation with subscribers and to reflect statutory and regulatory changes.

Our guidance is often tailored with an eye to a Birmingham perspective – we know our schools well and have an in-depth knowledge and understanding of the uniqueness and diversity of the city.

Every term subscribing GBs are provided with an **Agenda Briefing** to help plan their business and carry out key tasks.

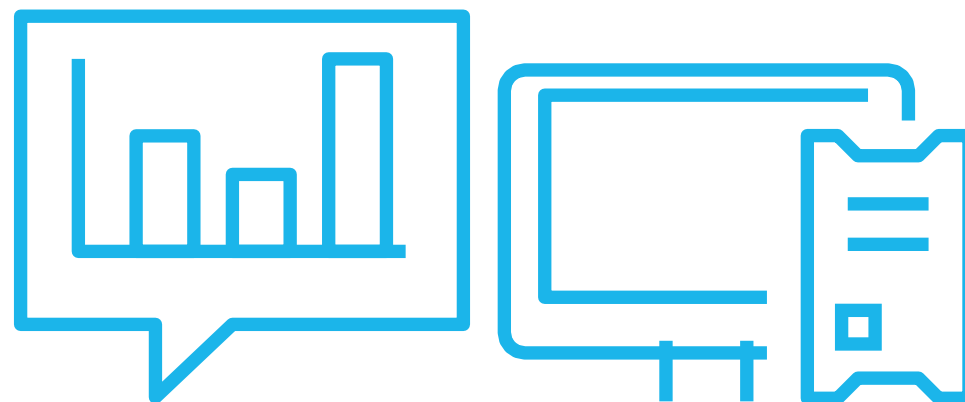
Every year subscribing GBs are provided with a **comprehensive self-evaluation document (Audit Tool)** to help them review their effectiveness and aid improvement. This includes an **Annual Planner** for GBs.

The **guidance documents** that are available on request to subscribers include:

- guidance on dealing with school complaints;
- framework code of conduct for visitors, including parents, to school premises;

- guidance that covers key requirements and compliance areas for GBs such as the publishing of information on the school or academy website;
- briefing notes for governors allocated key roles such as SEND governor, safeguarding governor, training and skills link governor (available to all schools); and
- sample terms of reference for a GB collaborative agreement.

Subscribers can also request **tailored and/or specific guidance** to help them understand and manage the latest education legislation and procedures. **Contact us** and we will work with you to provide the guidance that you need.



Consultancy

School and Governor Support (S&GS) consultancy is based on the principle that the **school/academy leads** on resolving the issue and achieving a sustainable outcome. Our aim is always to build resilience in leadership and maximise your school/academy's ability to deal with any situation.

Subscribing schools and academies, including their governing boards (GBs), can consult S&GS on issues that are more complex or challenging and/or that require a clear strategy and sustainable outcomes. These include, but are not restricted to, a **solution focused strategy and approach to situations:**

- arising from school complaints or concerns, such as conflict resolution, serial and unreasonable complaints, persistent complainants – including tailoring correspondence and advice on the conduct of meetings;
- presenting reputational risk to the school and avoiding escalation of these issues;
- impacting upon the on-going, effective operation of the GB, such as unforeseen resignations, succession planning, attendance and participation issues, by providing proactive support with recruitment of governors and knowledgeable advice;
- impeding the management of GB business and decision making; and
- relating to governor conduct and applying the required procedures.

The S&GS team has considerable experience of working with schools and academies in diverse and challenging situations. We are sensitive to the circumstances of your school/academy and will maintain levels of confidentiality as appropriate.

Please note: *Consultancy support does not extend to attendance at meetings convened under adopted procedures or relevant regulations, unless there is a clearly prescribed role for S&GS. Requests will be considered on a needs-basis and with an assessment of risk.*

For information on **Bespoke Consultancy**, that we can also offer on demand, please see page 9 of this brochure.



Subscriber Events and Training

Schools and academies that subscribe to School and Governor Support (S&GS) can **attend the following events and/or training at no extra cost**, as a benefit of their subscription.

For the foreseeable future, all events will be delivered virtually using Microsoft Teams.

Termly briefings for Chairs of Governing Boards (GBs)

We encourage Chairs and Vice Chairs to attend these termly briefings as they include contributions from senior officers in Birmingham City Council and timely governance updates relating to changes in regulatory and statutory guidance. These meetings also provide opportunities for networking (refine depending on whether doing face-to-face or virtual).

Termly briefings for Clerks and Governance Professionals

These termly briefings are essential to help clerks and governance professionals keep abreast of changes and developments in school

They are also a great opportunity to share good practice and network with fellow clerks and governance professionals.

Introduction to Chairing a GB

Whether you serve at a maintained school or an academy, we facilitate sessions that provide invaluable induction training for newly appointed Chairs. **They can also act as a useful refresher for those experienced in the role of Chair.**

The session provides an overview of the work and main responsibilities of the Chair and how to ensure the effective functioning of the GB through the following: leading governors and building an effective team; leading the business; the management of meetings and working with the governance professional/clerk; the relationship with the Headteacher and making school improvement the focus of the GB's work.

For details of training being offered, please see our Governor Training Programme or visit

birminghameducationsupportservices.co.uk/Training

Additional Services Not Covered by Subscription

Governor Training

School and Governor Support (S&GS) provides a **comprehensive programme of high-quality training** that develops the skills and knowledge needed for effective governance in maintained schools, academies and multi-academy trusts. The training is provided virtually via Microsoft Teams and takes place throughout the year. Schools have an option to subscribe to a training package or pay on a 'pay as you go' basis; both options are available at a discounted rate for schools who subscribe to our main offer.

The training programme includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- induction training;
- effective challenge;
- introduction to finance and managing financial resources;
- complaints management;
- training for specific governor roles - safeguarding, SEND, Headteacher appraisal

We aim to be responsive to the training needs of our governors so if you identify a course that you feel we should offer, please do let us know. For example, we recently provided training for the role of governors in managing attendance.

Booking is via:

[birminghameducationsupportservices.co.uk/Training](https://www.birminghameducationsupportservices.co.uk/Training)

(select School and Governor Support under Provider and click Search).

Bespoke Whole Governing Board Training

In addition to the programme of published courses, S&GS also provides bespoke training to GBs and groups of schools/academies on request. Bespoke training is designed to meet the current needs of your school/academy governors; popular areas include Effective Challenge and Complaints Management. It can be delivered in person or virtually and at a time to suit your GB.

Email us at governortraining@birmingham.gov.uk to arrange bespoke training and explore your options.

Bespoke Consultancy

If you are interested in something tailored to your individual needs and delivered in a setting organised by you, please contact us to discuss your requests. This work will be charged on a flexible scale according to length of session and number of people involved. We are committed to remaining competitive and providing good value for money.

S&GS can offer External Reviews of Governance and can also provide an independent advisor for Headteacher appraisals.

Email us at governors@birmingham.gov.uk to arrange bespoke consultancy/training and explore your options.

Service Guarantees – School and Governor Support

Our advice, guidance and consultancy provided to our subscribers will be factual, impartial and consistent with BCC's commitment to equality and diversity.

We collaborate with other services and partners to ensure that, as far as is reasonably possible, the advice, guidance and consultancy given to our subscribers are both definitive and consistent.

Our service complies with and works within BCC's procedures for the handling of comments, compliments and complaints.

Our team is contactable by phone during the core service period of 08:15-17:15 (Monday to Thursday) and 08:15-16:15 (Friday) during school term time.

Subscribers emailing enquiries to any of our shared email inboxes will receive a response within three working days during school term-time.

All our team members have an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service Certificate.

Terms and Conditions

Any references to 'school(s)' are intended to cover all educational establishments that subscribe to our traded service.

1. In order to access the services referred to throughout the service offer document the school must be a subscriber to S&GS. The school must have paid the subscription charge for the current subscription period within 30 days of being invoiced for it.
2. The S&GS (School & Governor Support) subscription year for maintained schools starts on 1 April, and for academies on 1 September.
3. Where a new school subscribes part-way through the year, the subscription fee may be negotiated. Any such negotiation as to the potential discount will be entirely at the discretion of S&GS.
4. New or in-year subscribers to S&GS i.e. subscribing after the 1 April (maintained schools) and respectively 1 September (academies), may cancel their subscription within 30 days of notifying us in writing of their intention to subscribe, otherwise they will incur the full year subscription charge. Any courses and/or services procured during these 30 days by the prospective subscriber from S&GS will be charged at the non-subscriber rate if the subscription request is cancelled. Cancellation notification must be sent by email to school.support@birmingham.gov.uk.
5. All existing subscribers will have their subscription automatically renewed and will be deemed as re-subscribed on 1 April (maintained schools) and 1 September (academies) respectively each year, unless the subscription is cancelled by email to school.support@birmingham.gov.uk within 30 days of the applicable renewal date. In the event that the subscription is not cancelled in accordance with this paragraph, the school will incur the full annual subscription without a further right to cancel.
6. The subscription services and options are only available and valid during the current subscription year and may be subject to change. Subscribers will be given 30 days' notice of any changes to services that may be necessary within the current subscription year.
7. Training course booking cancellations must be confirmed by email to governortraining@birmingham.gov.uk. S&GS is liable for cost of venue hire as well as facilitators and will therefore charge the full cost for booked places even if delegates do not attend on the day, unless S&GS receive at least 7 working days' notice by email of cancellation to the email address stated in this paragraph.
8. Any bookings received and confirmed within 7 working days of a course will be charged the appropriate course fee and will be non-refundable.
9. S&GS reserves the right to amend or cancel should it, for whatever reason, be unable to deliver an advertised governor training course. In these circumstances S&GS will endeavour to provide adequate notice. A full refund will be given to the delegate's school in the event of cancellation. S&GS will also endeavour to provide adequate notice and to reschedule the course as soon as is feasible.
10. While the provision of initial legal advice forms part of your annual subscription to our service, please note that S&GS cannot fund any legal costs resulting from the legal advice given to the school.
11. From time to time S&GS may facilitate services on a paid-for consultancy basis using third-party providers. Such provision will be delivered in line with S&GS service guarantees and S&GS retains responsibility for the quality of the service provided.
12. Concerns about the quality of service provided should, in the first instance, be directed to the Head of Service, School and Governor Support, who will investigate and respond to the concerns within agreed timescales.

School & Governor Support

Education and Skills Directorate

Birmingham City Council

Email addresses:

School Support – school.support@birmingham.gov.uk

Governor Support – governors@birmingham.gov.uk

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