



Education & Skills  
Funding Agency

# **Welcome pack for new academies and free schools.**

**October 2019**

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## Introduction

Welcome to the large and growing group of academies, free schools, studio schools and university technical colleges that are helping to improve educational standards for children and young people.

At the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) we recognise that there's a great deal for you to do to ensure your academy is successful. While most of our work will be directly with your academy trust, we've developed this publication to introduce you to our areas of work and guide you through your first few months on matters relating to funding, funding agreement compliance, finance and financial assurance. We're grateful to a number of established academies, as well as other stakeholders, for the advice they've kindly offered in developing this welcome pack.

To help you this publication:

- introduces our areas of work to give you a broad overview of where you can expect to interact with ESFA or, more likely with your trust
- introduces you to our services and systems and what you need to know and do to use these services successfully
- outlines where you can find more information about some of the detailed guidelines that you'll need
- introduces other finance related activities for which we're not responsible and signposts to where you can find further information.

### **Help us to make this publication better**

We're always looking for ways to improve the information we provide to academies. If you think we've missed something or there's something you don't fully understand, please let us know by contacting our [enquiry service](#).

## Actions for new academies

The table below lists important actions for academies to complete within their first few months of opening. We've included additional actions for your academy trust, as it's highly likely that you'll need to work alongside your academy trust to complete these.

When	Actions
On opening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Contact your local government pension scheme fund to provide details of any relevant staff</li> </ul>
Within 28 days of opening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Activate your DfE Sign-in account and add users to your academy. (See page 8)</li> </ul>
Within 28 days of opening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide head teacher contact information using your academy DfE Sign-in account to access the Get Information About Schools system. (see page 8)</li> </ul>
Within 28 days of opening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Familiarise yourself with the <a href="#">school resource management tools</a> and work with your academy trust to use them in your financial management and planning (see page 16)</li> </ul>
Within 6 weeks of opening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with your academy trust to complete and submit your land and buildings valuation information form (see page 12)</li> <li>Apply to the Land Registry for a restriction to be placed on the land as outlined in your funding agreement</li> </ul>
Within 10 weeks of opening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with your academy trust to submit an <a href="#">in-year budget forecast return</a> (BFRIY) for your academy, outlining your current spending plans</li> </ul>
Within 2 months of opening	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Submit a <a href="#">national non-domestic rates claim form</a> for the current financial year. This is a one off payment academy trusts can claim for each of their academies, to meet the cost of your business rates (NNDR) commitment, adjusted for the period to March 2020.</li> </ul>
Within 2 months of academies forming a new trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Work with your academy trust to submit a <a href="#">financial management and governance self-assessment (FMGS)</a> return.</li> </ul>

When	Actions
Within 4 months of opening or by 31 August whichever is sooner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Academies without a sponsor to finalise their closing balance with their local authority (LA)</li> </ul>

## Census returns 2020

When	Actions
3 October 2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete the autumn school census return</li> </ul>
16 January 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete the spring school census return</li> </ul>
21 May 2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Complete the summer census return</li> </ul>

## Working with ESFA

Our [customer commitment](#) shows how you can expect to see us work. This section outlines what you can do to make sure you get the best possible service from us.

### Our enquiry service

We expect individual academy schools to work with their academy trust on most issues relating to funding, finance, and funding agreement compliance.

We aim to provide clear and comprehensive information about all of our areas of work. If there's anything you don't understand or you need clarification on a specific issue relating to your individual academy, our [enquiry service](#) will be able to help or point you in the right direction.

### ESFA link officer (free schools only)

You will be made aware if your school has been allocated a link officer. The role of the link officer is different to that of the lead contact you worked with before opening. The expectation is that free schools have the freedom, autonomy and responsibility to run their school.

Contact with the link officer will depend on any issues that arise requiring the link officer to keep in touch, either through visits or phone calls. Free schools can contact their link officer directly to discuss any concerns but should refer first to published guidance.

### Planning calendar

We've produced a [planning calendar for academy trusts and their academies](#) showing key dates about ESFA activities and returns required for the 2019 to 2020 academic year. The dates relate to academy funding, finance and trust compliance with your funding agreement.

### Our website

We've gathered key information for academies into a GOV.UK document collection called [Academies: funding, payments and compliance](#). This includes our publications, detailed guides about funding and finance, and information with links to forms you can use to make a claim for funding, such as rates.

We'll include a brief item and link in our ESFA Update when anything is added or changed, such as when we request a financial return. You can also set your own [general alerts on GOV.UK](#) so you'll always know when anything ESFA publishes changes.

## ESFA update

ESFA Update is our weekly email bulletin for academies and trusts. Articles are brief and focus on important updates and key actions for you.

We send ESFA Update to the person – usually the headteacher – who is listed on [GIAS](#) as the academy's head of organisation.

We also publish [ESFA Update](#) on GOV.UK. Anyone can set up a [news and communications alert](#) to receive an email as soon as it's published.

## Social media

For the latest updates on funding and finance relating to academies, follow us on Twitter [@ESFA\\_academies](#).

For updates from across ESFA you can follow [@ESFAgov](#).

You can also subscribe to ESFA's [YouTube channel](#) which hosts our latest video guidance and webinars.

# Setting up your ESFA business systems

## DfE Sign-in

A DfE Sign-in account enables academies to use Information Exchange to receive and exchange information with ESFA. You will also be able to access the [Get Information About Schools](#) (GIAS) service to update your new academy's details.

We will set up a new account for your academy within two weeks of opening. The contact details you supplied on the bank account (ban1) form will be used to set up your approver account. The approver will receive an email and must activate the account within 48 hours. To set up additional users the approver must then:

- go to their [user's area](#) within DfE Sign-in and register additional users by using the 'invite user' button.
- assign the correct services and roles to each user account, for example Information Exchange, Get Information About Schools and Collect.

## Supplying contact details

Academies must provide ESFA with contact details for the headteacher by using the Get Information About Schools (GIAS) service. You will need a [DfE Sign-in](#) account to be able to do this.

Where there is a subsequent change in roles, notification must be made within 14 days.

## Information Exchange

It may take us a little longer to set up Information Exchange. This is usually completed in the third week after opening. You'll be able to view documents for your academy towards the end of the month after you become operational.

## Identity and Access Management System (IDAMS)

IDAMS is our secure system that trusts use to prepare and submit their financial returns to ESFA. You'll be contacted by your trust if someone in your academy is asked to register to use the trust's account. The person setting up the account will be an administrator (Super User), who will control access to the system and can assign specific roles to people to enable them to complete the online forms.

## Funding and payments

You will have already received your draft funding allocation for this academic year. We'll write soon to confirm your final funding allocation if we haven't already done so. It will not contain funding for National Non-Domestic Rates which, if you were a former LA maintained school, you are entitled to [claim separately for](#).

We've published a range of [funding information](#) which aims to answer many of the most common questions we're asked. We've also produced a series of short [videos](#) to explain how we calculate funding allocations.

The [funding allocation delivery schedule](#) outlines the ESFA timescales for issuing general annual grants (GAG) to new academies in their first year.

## Your funding allocation

We fund academies from September to August, in line with the academy sector's financial year. This is different to maintained schools which are funded from April to March, in line with their local authority's financial year.

We've published more details about [funding allocations](#), including [16 to 19 allocations](#) and [high needs place funding](#) arrangements, on GOV.UK.

We calculate most of an academy's revenue funding using the pupil numbers taken from either the autumn census return or an agreed estimate of pupil numbers, as outlined in the academy's funding agreement. It's important that your estimates of pupil numbers are reasonable and evidence-based.

Academies should retain evidence to support the census return, including that needed to support the entitlement to free school meals.

## Schools census returns

It's the academy trust's responsibility to ensure their census data is correct. Once a school census has closed and the data is finalised, it cannot be changed. Revenue funding allocations cannot be amended where it is based on census information.

Incorrect census information can lead to a loss of academy revenue funding. Investigate dual registered subsidiary pupils, (under the age of four on 31st August of the year before they enter school), and guest pupils, before submitting your school census returns, as these pupils will not attract revenue funding. Page 11 of the [schools block technical specification](#) gives further details.

We've published [guidance to support academies to submit their school census data](#). If you have 16 to 19 funding, the [post-16 interactive census tool](#) will help you understand

how your data is used to calculate your post-16 funding. It will also help you understand common errors and how they impact on the funding we calculate.

## Payment schedules

If you haven't done so already, you'll need to [provide information about your banking and payments](#) to DfE. You can also use this form to change your academy or trust bank details, or the person who receives your remittance advice notes.

The monthly general annual grant (GAG) payment will be sent via BACS and will arrive in your nominated bank account on the 6<sup>th</sup> working day of your month of opening and on the first working day of every subsequent month.

Your GAG allocation will be paid in 12 equal payments across the academic year (depending on your opening date). The only exceptions are some elements of start-up grants for full sponsored academies, which are paid within the first 3 months of opening, and bursary funding for those with post-16 provision, which is paid twice a year.

A monthly remittance advice note will be emailed to your nominated contact. We've published information to help you [understand remittance advice notes](#) which accompany funding payments.

We're responsible for non-GAG payments for [universal infant free school meals](#), [year 7 catch-up premium](#), [pupil premium grant](#) and [PE and sport](#) grant allocations.

Local authorities are responsible for non-GAG payments for early years funding and high needs top-up funding.

## Pupil premium payments

[Pupil premium](#) is additional funding to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and close the gap between them and their peers. It's paid on a financial year basis, in arrears and in quarterly instalments. You can view the census data and per-pupil amounts used to calculate your allocation using [Key to Success](#) within your DfE Sign-in account.

Information about the [pupil premium conditions of grant for 2019 to 2020](#) has been published on GOV.UK.

## Claiming for national non-domestic rates (NNDR)

Trusts need to submit an [online form](#) to claim funding for [national non-domestic rates](#) (NNDR) for each academy. It's removed from the initial GAG allocation as the conversion process may change the value of the bill. We'll provide funding as a one off payment to

meet the value of the bill for the period to March 2020. You need to claim for NNDR each subsequent year.

We'll make one payment within 2 months of receiving a claim, depending on our monthly payment deadlines.

## Capital funding and estate management

You can read information about [school capital funding allocations](#) on GOV.UK.

Most MATs with 5 or more academies and at least 3,000 pupils as of 1 September 2019 will receive a formulaic capital funding allocation for all of their academies.

The condition improvement fund (CIF) is an annual bidding round for trusts not eligible for a formulaic capital funding allocation. The core priority for CIF is to address significant condition need, keeping academy, sixth-form college and non-diocesan voluntary aided (VA) schools buildings, safe and in good working order. This includes funding projects to address health and safety issues, building compliance and poor building condition.

CIF also supports a small number of expansion projects for academies, sixth-form colleges and non-diocesan VA schools that Ofsted rates either good or outstanding. This is where there's a need either to increase the number of admissions in the main year of entry or to address overcrowding.

You can read further information about [CIF](#) on GOV.UK. You can also find information on what to do as a CIF-eligible academy with an immediate need for [urgent capital funding support](#), that can't wait until the next CIF round.

## Good estate management for schools

We expect academy trusts to manage their estate effectively. Academies should work closely with their trust. We've published guidance for schools, academies and trusts on [Good Estate Management for Schools \(GEMS\)](#), to help you manage and make the most of your resources.

Trustees and governors of academies, academy business professionals and those involved in the day-to-day management of the estate will find the information useful.

Depending on your role, you may not need to review every section. Whatever your role, you should, at the very least, review the [fundamentals of good estate management](#) and use the [self-assessment tool](#) provided, to assess your organisation's approach.

Further [GEMS tools](#) are also available to help you make sure your organisation has the right skills, processes and policies in place.

## Condition data collection programme (CDC)

The [CDC programme](#) is gathering information about the condition and management of school buildings from all government maintained schools in England. The results will help us identify how the condition of the school estate is changing over time and where to target future investment.

The CDC programme will provide schools and responsible bodies with condition information to add to their own commissioned surveys. It does not replace the need to undertake detailed surveys for specific capital works. A surveying organisation will visit each school to collect the data. We will provide information about what to expect and how to access your condition information before the visit takes place.

## Managing asbestos in schools

Responsible bodies have a duty to [manage asbestos](#) in their schools and provide assurance that their schools are compliant with the asbestos management regulations ([Control of Asbestos Regulations 2012](#)). The responsible body is the main employer of staff in a school, which may be the academy trust.

You must provide information on your management of asbestos in your school estate. The [Asbestos Management Assurance Process - user guide](#) (AMAP) provides information to help trusts and academies to submit their assurance declaration.

Responsible bodies must ensure the AMAP form is submitted for all of their schools, though they can delegate responsibility for completing the form to the individual school.

The [online AMAP form](#) captures information on how asbestos is managed in schools and provides further guidance on the process. The AMAP must be completed every time there is a change in the information you have provided and reviewed at least every two years.

## Land and buildings valuation

Each year, ESFA undertakes an exercise to have the [land and buildings valued](#) for all new academies that opened between 1 September of the previous year and 31 August of the current year.

We commission professionally qualified valuers to carry out desktop valuations of all new academy trusts' sites in order to consolidate valuations into the academies [sector annual report and accounts \(SARA\)](#).

Newly opened academies should complete the [information request form](#) to provide basic background data to support the valuation within 6 weeks of opening.

If your academy is currently in temporary accommodation, please confirm this on the form together with the date you expect to move to your permanent site. You'll then need to complete a new land and buildings form for your new accommodation when you move in.

## Governance

The [governance handbook and competency framework](#) provides information on the governance structure of academy trusts. Everyone involved in the governance of the trust, or of its individual academies, should be familiar with the expectations in the handbook.

In academies, statutory governance sits at an academy trust's company director level (called trustees due to the company's charitable status). Governors are those individuals who sit at the trust's local level for individual academies.

The board of trustees is responsible for determining the governance arrangements for individual academies, but there should be a scheme of delegation between the trust's board and any committees of the board, including local governing bodies.

## Useful resource for trustees

We have published [Understanding your data: a guide for school governors and academy trustees](#) to support the use of data in reviewing school or academy trust educational performance and financial sustainability.

The guide aims to help trustees to engage and challenge executive teams in their school or academy trust

The guide was developed with trustees who serve on boards and local authorities and is about collecting the right information, understanding it and using it.

## Funding agreement

The [funding agreement](#) is the contract every academy trust signs with the [Secretary of State](#) to describe the operation of their new academy. It provides the operating framework for the academy trust and academy, and trustee bodies must ensure they're compliant with it.

## Academies Financial Handbook

The [Academies Financial Handbook](#) sets out the responsibilities and requirements relating to academy trusts' financial governance and management. It's taken from the requirements in trusts' funding agreements with the [Secretary of State](#), and compliance with the Handbook is a condition of the funding agreement.

## Non-financial statutory returns

In addition to financial returns, academy trusts are required by law to make 2 further statutory data returns for:

- the [school census](#) (termly)
- the [school workforce census](#) (annual)

Information is provided at school level and academies use [COLLECT](#), which is accessible via DfE's Secure Access system, to supply the data.

Information from these data collections underpins much of our decision-making, funding allocations and many statistical outputs that are made publicly available. They're also published in the school performance tables.

## Publishing requirements

The [current legislation](#) details the information all schools are required to publish online, including contact details, admission arrangements, academic performance and how pupil premium funding has been spent.

Your funding agreement requires you to publish curriculum information on your website.

Curriculum information is important for parents so that they know precisely what is taught and when, enabling them to support their children in their studies. It's also important information for parents when choosing new schools and you should advise parents how they can obtain more information in relation to your academy's curriculum.

Information should include details of the content of the curriculum, its approach to the curriculum, the GCSE options and other key stage 4 qualifications offered by the academy. Where appropriate, you should include the names of any phonics and reading schemes in operation for key stage 1.

You can find further information on the GOV.UK page, [what academies, free schools and colleges should publish online](#).

# Finance

## Academies financial returns

All academy financial returns will be prepared and submitted by your trust. You'll work with your trust on arrangements for submitting individual academy financial information at trust level.

You can read information about [financial returns academy trusts submit to ESFA](#) on GOV.UK.

## Surpluses and deficits

Schools becoming academies without a sponsor must finalise their closing balance with their local authority within 4 months of conversion.

We've published guidance about what happens if a school has a [budget surplus or deficit](#) when it converts to academy status.

## Practical tips for managing resources

The [School Resource Management Strategy](#) sets out the support the department provides to help schools reduce costs and get value for money. To receive regular updates on the latest information, your school business professional can sign up to our [contact list](#). Our support includes:

### Improved data and transparency of information

The schools [financial benchmarking service](#) can help you compare your academy spending in various categories with other similar academies and create reports that:

- give a clear picture of an academy's expenditure and financial performance
- identify areas where you're spending more than similar academies, that may be a focus for further improvements

The [school resource management self-assessment tool](#) helps to provide academies and trusts with assurance that they are meeting the basic standards necessary to achieve a good level of financial health and resource management. The tool can be used to identify potential areas for change to ensure that resources are being used most effectively. The tool is in two parts:

- a checklist, which covers questions on how resources are being managed
- a dashboard, which shows how a school's data compares to thresholds on a range of measures for good resource management and outcomes

The [top 10 planning checks for governors](#) sets out a list of questions for school and academy governors to explore, to help schools manage resources and money effectively.

### Reducing recruitment costs

[Teaching Vacancies](#) is a national search and listing service for teaching jobs, and is now available to all publicly-funded schools providing primary and secondary education in England. It's free to use for schools and for teachers looking for their next role. Schools can use the service to list a teaching job and to view jobs they have previously listed.

The [agency supply deal](#) helps schools hiring supply teachers and agency workers to get value for money. The agencies registered complete thorough background and safeguarding checks on teachers and agency workers.

## Better value procurement

The [buying for schools](#) guide outlines initiatives to help academies and academy trusts to improve how they purchase goods and services, and save money on the things they buy regularly.

The '[Find a Framework](#) service is a one-stop-shop providing quick and easy access to approved suppliers, saving time searching for the right deal. The list of recommended deals for schools is updated as new deals are launched.

[Education Technology](#) provides products and services designed for the education sector. You can buy small volumes of hardware and audio-visual equipment, broadband infrastructure and technology services, quickly and easily.

[Schools Switch](#) is a free online price comparison and switching tool to help you compare energy prices and switch supplier to save money. The simple price comparison tool removes the need for a broker and their associated fees. Prices are fixed allowing greater certainty with your budget planning and are generated by entering a few details about your current energy use.

The [risk protection arrangement](#) (RPA) is an alternative to commercial insurance for academies, underwritten by the government. Academies can opt in to RPA by completing the [registration form](#). Once an academy has opted in, the EFSA will automatically renew membership every year. Details of the losses RPA will cover are published in the [RPA membership rules](#) information on GOV.UK.

The [agency supply deal](#) helps schools who are hiring supply teachers and agency workers to get value for money. Agencies registered complete thorough background and safeguarding checks on teachers and agency workers.

The Regional Schools Buying Hubs pilot offers free procurement advice and support to schools when buying goods and services. The support includes:

- expert advice and guidance on buying
- sharing market intelligence
- help with complex contracts, particularly services such as catering, cleaning and premises
- local collaboration and aggregation, providing an opportunity to reduce costs in areas such as business services, ICT, stationery and utilities.
- access to templates and exemplar documents including sample contracts and specifications which schools can tailor to their specific needs.

If your academy is in either the [North West](#) or [South West](#) region, you can join now.

## Workforce planning

The [workforce planning guidance](#) is for anyone who has a strategic leadership position within a school or academy trust, for example, trustees, finance directors and academy CEO's. This non-statutory guidance aims to support schools and academy trusts that are reviewing staff structures as part of financial planning.

The strategy includes guidance on integrated curriculum and financial planning, including an [explanatory video](#) and signposts to tiered [financial health checks](#).

## Regional Schools Commissioners (RSCs)

ESFA works with regional schools commissioners (RSCs) who act on behalf of the Secretary of State for Education and are accountable to the [National Schools Commissioner](#).

RSCs and ESFA work with members, trustees and leadership teams to build financial expertise, support better resource management and strengthen governance oversight.

Each RSC is supported by a [headteacher board \(HTB\)](#). HTBs are made up of experienced academy headteachers and other sector leaders who advise and challenge RSCs on the decisions they make.

RSCs main responsibilities include:

- deciding on [applications from local-authority-maintained schools to convert to academy status](#)
- improving underperforming maintained schools by providing them with support from a strong sponsor
- encouraging and deciding on [applications from sponsors\[SS3\]](#) to operate in a region
- advising on proposals for new free schools
- taking decisions on the [creation and growth of multi-academy trusts](#)
- deciding on applications to make [significant changes to academies and free schools](#)
- taking action where academies and free schools are underperforming
- intervening in academies where governance is inadequate
- taking action to improve poorly performing sponsors/academy trusts
- advising on whether to cancel, defer or enter into funding agreements with academies and free schools

DfE appoints RSCs for their extensive knowledge of the education sector within their regions.

There are 8 RSCs that operate across 8 regions in England:

- [Sue Baldwin: East of England and North-East London](#)
- [John Edwards: East Midlands and the Humber](#)
- [Vicky Beer: Lancashire and West Yorkshire](#)
- [Katherine Cowell \(interim\): North of England](#)
- [Kate Dethridge \(interim\): North-West London and South-Central England](#)
- [Claire Burton: South-East England and South London](#)
- [Hannah Woodhouse: South-West England](#)
- [Andrew Warren: West Midlands](#)

## Admissions

Admissions law is set out in both primary and secondary legislation and the statutory [School Admissions Code](#) (the Code) and [School Admission Appeals Code](#) (Appeals Code), which both carry the force of secondary legislation.

The Code exists to ensure that places in all state funded schools are allocated in a fair and transparent manner. The Appeals Code is statutory guidance designed to ensure the independence of admission appeal panels and ensure that all admission appeals are conducted in a fair and transparent way.

## Publishing your admissions arrangements

With the exception of further education and sixth form colleges, academy trusts are their own admissions authority and must meet all the mandatory provisions of the [School Admissions Code](#). Once admission authorities have determined their [admission arrangements](#), they must notify the appropriate bodies and publish a copy of the determined arrangements on their website, displaying them for the whole offer year (the academic year in which offers for places are made).

Academies and free schools that cater for 16 to 19-year-olds have admission policies which they're required to keep under review and which must be 'fair, objective and transparent'. They don't need to seek DfE's agreement for changes post-opening.

## The admissions code and appeals

Any applicant refused a place at a maintained school or an academy has a [right of appeal](#) to an independent appeal panel.

The academy has to ensure that the independent admission appeal panel is trained to act in accordance with all relevant provisions of the [School Admissions Appeals Code](#) published by the DfE.

ESFA is responsible for handling [independent admission appeal panel complaints](#) from parents and legal guardians.

## Safeguarding

The [Education \(Independent School Standards 2014\)](#), (the regulations) parts 3, 4 and 5 set out the obligations of the trust for ensuring the safety and wellbeing of pupils attending an academy.

The regulations set out the requirement for trusts to have regard to **any** relevant guidance issued by the Secretary of State and stipulates the written policies that need to be in place to be compliant.

[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) (KCSIE) sets out the legal duties with which academies must comply. It provides statutory guidance on safeguarding children and information about safer recruitment.

Academy trusts must appoint a senior board level lead to take responsibility for the organisation's safeguarding arrangements. Trusts must meet their duties under legislation by having appropriate policies in place. They must ensure that their academies have:

- an effective child protection policy in place at each individual school
- a staff behaviour policy (also known as a code of conduct)
- safeguarding responses in place for children who go missing from education to help identify those at risk of abuse and neglect
- a senior member of staff from the academy leadership team appointed to the role of safeguarding lead
- clear whistleblowing procedures and a culture that enables issues about safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children to be addressed
- a process for sharing information with other professionals and safeguarding partners as set out in [Working together to safeguard children](#)
- robust recruitment practices, including meeting legal obligations on when to obtain a criminal record check
- procedures for all staff members to receive appropriate safeguarding and child protection training and to make sure they are aware of the systems within their school

It is a matter for the academy trust and its schools whether to put additional arrangements in place.

## ESFA's role in safeguarding

ESFA will consider safeguarding and child protection policies in line with the regulations. We'll refer to other organisations, such as Ofsted or the local authority, cases where specific child protection action or inspection is required. We expect academies to work closely with their trust and the appropriate agencies to protect their pupils.

Failure to comply with statutory guidance and/or the regulations places a trust in breach of its funding agreement.

## **Further information about safeguarding**

[What to do if you are worried a child is being abused – Advice for practitioners](#) – this guidance is non-statutory, and is aimed to help practitioners identify child abuse and neglect and take appropriate action in response.

[Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges](#) – the guidance sets out what sexual violence and sexual harassment is, how to minimise the risk of it occurring, and what to do when it does occur, or is alleged to have occurred.

[Teaching on-line safety in schools](#): This guidance is for school leaders, teachers and governing bodies. It outlines how schools can support pupils to understand how to stay safe and behave online, within new and existing school subjects.

## Complaints and whistleblowing

Academies are required to have complaints procedures meeting certain requirements, set out in Part 7 of [The Education \(Independent School Standards\) \(England\) Regulations 2014](#). Procedures must be available to parents of pupils and parents of prospective pupils.

We've published information about [setting up an academies complaints procedure](#) to help you when drawing up and administering a complaints procedure. Similarly, we've published information about [how ESFA handles complaints about academies](#) to explain ESFA's role in investigating complaints that come to us.

Trusts must have an appropriate [procedure for whistleblowing](#), at both the trust and academy operational levels, in place that protects staff members who report colleagues they believe are doing something wrong or illegal, or who are neglecting their duties. The whistleblowing charity Public Concern at Work offers [support packages](#) on developing policies.

## Counter extremism

Concerns relating to extremism affecting young people or their education can be reported by [email](#) or by calling the helpline: 020 7340 7264.

The purpose of the helpline is to enable school staff and governors to raise concerns relating to extremism directly and in confidence.

## Other useful information

### Apprenticeships

We have published a [guide to apprenticeships for the school workforce](#) to explain how the apprenticeship levy applies to academy trusts and how academies can use apprenticeships.

### Working with stakeholder groups

Representatives from across the range of stakeholder groups and membership organisations work with the ESFA to check our plans for service development, support our communications, deliver substantial amounts of training and development, and most importantly, provide feedback to us on things that could be improved or issues that you might have.

We believe that autonomous academies are best served by the organisations whose purpose is to represent the sector. We treat all representative bodies equally and make no recommendations. The following list is not definitive but is a sample of peer-to-peer networks of organisations with whom you're encouraged to consider engaging:

- Inspiring Governance
- Academy Ambassadors
- [Freedom and Autonomy for Schools – National Association \(FASNA\)](#)
- [The Schools Network \(SSAT\)](#)
- [Institute of School Business Leadership \(ISBL\)](#)
- [Association of School and College Leaders \(ASCL\)](#)
- [National Association of Head Teachers \(NAHT\)](#)
- [National Governors' Association \(NGA\)](#)
- [Association of Colleges \(AoC\)](#)
- [Finance Directors Forum \(the FD forum\)](#)

Stakeholder groups may publish advice from time to time to support academies. In particular, there's a best practice library on the [ISBL](#) website that provides guidance on a number of financial and governance issues and includes model policies, procedures and templates.

You might also find the [Charity Commission](#) useful for best practice in financial management for charities, as well as the [Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accounting](#) (CIPFA), which offers financial guidance for academies.



## Education & Skills Funding Agency

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