



Department
for Education

Schools causing concern

Statutory guidance for local authorities

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Summary

About this guidance

This is statutory guidance given by the Department for Education, on behalf of the Secretary of State, relating to maintained schools causing concern.

Section 72 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a statutory duty on all local authorities in England, in exercising their functions in respect of schools causing concern as set out in Part 4 of the 2006 Act, to have regard to any guidance given from time to time by the Secretary of State. Local authorities must have regard to this guidance.

It also provides non-statutory guidance on approaches which local authorities should take in overseeing effective governance in the schools which they maintain.

Expiry or review date

This guidance will be kept under review and updated as necessary.

What legislation does this guidance refer to?

- Education and Inspections Act 2006 (“the 2006 Act”)
- Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act, 2009 (ASCL Act) (amended the 2006 Act)
- Education Act 2011 (amended the 2006 Act, and Schedule 14)
- Education Act 2002, including Schedule 2
- Education Act 2005
- School Standards and Framework Act 1998
- The School Governance (Transition from an Interim Executive Board)(England) Regulations 2010 (Transition Regulations)
- Academies Act 2010

Who is this guidance for?

- Local authorities, who must have regard to it.
- Dioceses, School Foundations and Governing Bodies of maintained schools.

- Other persons or bodies, such as maintained schools, who may find it useful.

Key points

- This guidance provides information on the legislative requirements for intervening in maintained¹ “schools causing concern”. Those using this guidance, particularly local authorities, who must have regard to it should also be familiar with the actual wording of the legislation to which this guidance relates, as listed above, in particular Part 4 of, and Schedule 6 to, the 2006 Act, but also the Academies Act 2010.
- This guidance covers “schools causing concern” (within the meaning of section 44 of the Education Act 2005) that are “eligible for intervention” (within the meaning of Part 4 of the 2006 Act), but also other maintained schools about which the local authority and/or the Secretary of State have serious concerns which need tackling.
- For the purpose of this guidance, a “warning notice” is one that is issued to the governing body of a maintained school by the local authority where one or more of the grounds in section 60(2)(a-c) are satisfied: unacceptably low standards of performance of pupils, serious breakdown in the way the school is managed or governed that is prejudicing (or likely to prejudice) standards of performance (this could include where there is evidence of very poor financial management), and/or safety of pupils or staff of the school is threatened.
- For the purpose of this guidance, “unacceptably low standards of performance” includes: standards below the floor, on either attainment or progress of pupils; low standards achieved by disadvantage pupils; a sudden drop in performance; sustained historical underperformance; performance of pupils (including disadvantaged pupils) unacceptably low in relation to expected achievement or prior attainment; or performance of a school not meeting the expected standards of comparable schools.
- In these situations, the local authority should issue a warning notice unless there is a particular reason not to do so. In cases of sustained underperformance, the warning notice should make clear that an academy solution is expected.
- The local authority should also consider issuing a warning notice in cases where schools have not responded robustly or rapidly enough to a recommendation by Ofsted to commission an external review of the use and impact of the Pupil Premium and/or an external review of their governance arrangements.

¹ Note that a maintained school means (a) a community, foundation or voluntary school, (b) a community or foundation special school, or (c) a maintained nursery school.

- A maintained school will be “eligible for intervention” under the 2006 Act if it has not complied with a warning notice and the local authority have also given the school written notice of their intention to exercise their intervention powers under Part 4 of the 2006 Act, or where the school has been judged by Ofsted to require “significant improvement” (a “serious weaknesses” judgment under the September 2012 Ofsted framework) or “special measures”².
- Where maintained schools are eligible for intervention local authorities have powers under the 2006 Act to: suspend the delegated budget of the school; appoint an Interim Executive Board (IEB); appoint additional governors; or require the governing body to enter into specified arrangements with a view to improving the performance of the school. Local authorities should also consider contacting the Department for Education to discuss academy sponsorship as soon as they are being made aware that a maintained school is likely to be rated as inadequate by Ofsted.
- Where maintained schools are eligible for intervention, the Secretary of State has the power to appoint additional governors, appoint an IEB, or direct the local authority to close a school. The Secretary of State also has the power under the Academies Act 2010 to make an academy order, subject in certain cases to consultation³.
- Academies are accountable to the Secretary of State for Education. Therefore, local authorities should focus their school improvement activity on the schools they maintain. Local authorities should raise any concerns they have about an academy’s performance directly with their Regional Schools Commissioner.
- Local authorities can, if they choose, look at overall performance in their area (including academies) using data available to them such as RAISEonline. This can then be used to flag up concerns with Regional Schools Commissioners; or to facilitate fora where all local schools (including academies) are able to compare data, hold each other to account and discuss school to school support.
- Local authorities are responsible for those children and young people (under age 25) in its area who have, or may have, special educational needs (SEN) and must exercise its functions to identify children and young people with SEN. These SEN duties apply regardless of where the child is educated.
- Local authorities have overarching duties under the Children Act 1989 in respect of the safeguarding of children in need, or those suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm, regardless of where those individual children are educated or found. To comply with these duties, local authorities may need to work with

² School Causing Concerns are defined in section 44 of the Education Act 2005

³ see further detail in Section 5 of this guidance

maintained schools, academy trusts or independent schools (wherever the individual child concerned is educated) to investigate what action they need to take to safeguard such a child.

- Where a local authority has concerns about an academy's safeguarding arrangements or procedures (arising as a result of investigations about individual children or otherwise), these concerns should be reported to the Education Funding Agency (EFA) who have responsibility to take any necessary improvement action and to monitor the situation.
- Where a local authority has a concern about an independent school's safeguarding arrangements or procedures (arising as a result of investigations about individual children or otherwise), these concerns should be reported to the Independent Education and School Governance Division at the Department for Education, who have responsibility for enforcing the independent school standards and taking regulatory action as necessary.
- Where a local authority has a concern about safeguarding at a maintained school, the authority can use the intervention powers set out in Sections 2, 3 and 4 of this guidance. In addition to the Schools Causing Concern guidance there are two other statutory documents that provide guidance on the roles and responsibilities for safeguarding: 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' and 'Working Together to Safeguard Children'. The guidance makes clear what all education institutions (including academies) should do to safeguard children in their care.
- Local authorities should take an active interest in the quality of governance in the schools they maintain and have appropriate monitoring arrangements to spot early signs of failure in relation to finance, safety or performance standards.

Section 1: Introduction

This statutory guidance sets out the local authority's role in relation to maintained schools that are causing concern. It sets out the importance of early intervention and of swift and robust action to tackle failure, including the use of Warning Notices and Interim Executive Boards (IEB) in maintained schools. The guidance is clear about the Government's expectation that academy status, with the support of a strong sponsor, is the best way of securing lasting improvement in these circumstances.

Local authorities' statutory responsibilities for educational excellence are set out in section 13a of the Education Act 1996. That duty states that a local authority must exercise its education functions with a view to promoting high standards. Local authorities are discharging this duty within the context of increasing autonomy and changing accountability for schools, alongside an expectation that improvement should be led by schools themselves.

Local authorities should raise any concerns they have about academy performance directly with the Department for Education.

Beyond this statutory guidance, local authorities have considerable freedom as to how they deliver their statutory responsibilities. The 2010 White Paper, *The Importance of Teaching*, set out the role of local authorities as champions of educational excellence.

Local authorities that champion educational excellence:

1. Understand the performance of maintained schools in their area, using data to identify those schools that require improvement and intervention.
2. Take swift and effective action when failure occurs in a maintained school, using Warning Notices and IEBs whenever necessary to get leadership and standards back up to at least "good".
3. Intervene early where the performance of a maintained school is declining, ensuring that schools secure the support needed to improve to at least "good".
4. Encourage good and outstanding maintained schools to take responsibility for their own improvement and to support other schools.
5. Build strong working relationships with education leaders in their area and encourage high calibre school leaders to support and challenge others.
6. Delegate funding to the frontline, so that as much as possible reaches pupils.
7. Enable maintained schools to purchase from a diverse market of excellent providers.
8. Signpost where schools can access appropriate support.

9. Secure strong leadership and governance for maintained schools that are not providing a good enough education, by identifying and supporting successful sponsors.
10. Seek to work constructively with academies and alert the Department for Education when they have concerns about standards or leadership in an academy.

Section 2: Schools causing concern

Part 4 of, and Schedule 6 to, the 2006 Act set out that a (maintained) school is “eligible for intervention” where:

1. a warning notice has been given (section 60) with which the school has failed to comply or has failed to comply to the satisfaction of the local authority and the local authority have also given the governing body a written notice that they propose to exercise one or more of their powers under Part 4 of the 2006 Act;
2. teachers' pay and conditions warning notice has been given (section 60A)⁴ with which the school has failed to comply and the local authority have also given written notice to the governing body that they propose to exercise one or more of their powers under Part 4 of the 2006 Act;
3. a school requires significant improvement (section 61); and,
4. a school requires special measures (section 62).

1. Schools eligible for intervention as a result of a warning notice

Warning notices should be used as an early form of intervention, particularly where standards are unacceptably low and other tools and strategies have not secured improvement.

A warning notice may be given by a local authority in one of three circumstances:

1. the standards of performance of pupils at the school are unacceptably low and are likely to remain so unless the authority exercise their powers under Part 4 of the 2006 Act; or,
2. there has been a serious breakdown in the way the school is managed or governed which is prejudicing, or likely to prejudice, such standards of performance; or,
3. the safety of pupils or staff at the school is threatened (whether by a breakdown of discipline or otherwise).

⁴ This guidance is not concerned with warning notices given under section 60A of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 but only those given under section 60 of the 2006 Act

Low standards of performance

The definition of what constitutes “low standards of performance” is set out in section 60(3) of the 2006 Act. This is where they are low by reference to any one or more of the following:

- I. the standards that the pupils might in all the circumstances reasonably be expected to attain; or,
- II. where relevant, the standards previously attained by them; or,
- III. the standards attained by pupils at comparable schools.

For the purpose of this guidance, “unacceptably low standards of performance” includes: standards below the floor, on either attainment or progress of pupils⁵; low standards achieved by disadvantaged pupils; a sudden drop in performance; sustained historical underperformance, performance of pupils (including disadvantaged pupils) unacceptably low in relation to expected achievement or prior attainment, or performance of a school not meeting the expected standards of comparable schools⁶.

In these situations the local authority should issue a warning notice unless there is a particular reason not to do so. Local authorities are not limited to giving a warning notice only to those schools which are persistently below the floor.

There is a clear expectation that where the school has a history of sustained underperformance, conversion to an academy with a strong sponsor will be the normal route to secure improvement. The warning notice for such schools should make that expectation clear.

Pupil Premium

Local authorities should also consider issuing a warning notice to schools that have not responded robustly or rapidly enough to a recommendation by Ofsted to commission an external review of the use and impact of the Pupil Premium. Such recommendations are normally made as part of Section 5 inspections in schools ‘requiring improvement’ where the standard of performance of disadvantaged pupils is judged to be unacceptably low.

Since it is a core function of governing bodies to create robust accountability for the educational performance of the school, failure to address such recommendations by Ofsted should be seen as an indication that the school is causing sufficient concern for the local authority to consider issuing a warning notice. Following the inspection, where no significant improvement is realised by the school within reasonable timeframes, local authorities should consider using their powers of intervention to stimulate and drive change.

⁵ This includes standards below the interim 16-19 minimum standards

⁶ This includes when a school receives an Ofsted inadequate grade for its sixth form provision

Schools do not need to wait for an Ofsted inspection recommendation to seek an external review of the Pupil Premium. Local authorities may themselves consider issuing such a recommendation where they have concerns about the quality of a school's performance, before considering more formal intervention. Guidance is available from the National College for Teaching and Leadership on commissioning and conducting such external reviews.

Breakdown in the way the school is managed or governed

Local authorities should provide tailored support or consider issuing a warning notice, depending on the severity of the case, to maintained schools where the governing body is failing to deliver one or more of its 3 core strategic roles resulting in a serious breakdown in the way the school is managed or governed.

The strategic role of a governing body is to:

1. Ensure clarity of vision, ethos and strategic direction;
2. Hold the headteacher to account for the educational performance of the school and its pupils, and the performance management of staff; and
3. Oversee the financial performance of the school and making sure its money is well spent.

Evidence that governors may be failing to deliver on one or more of these strategic roles could include: high governor turnover; a significant, unexplained change to the constitution; and/or the governing body having an excessive involvement in the day to day running of the school. These situations could all indicate a failure of governance that may prejudice standards and the local authority may want to investigate and intervene early by issuing a warning notice.

In the examples described above, a warning notice can be issued even if the school passes the "low standards of performance" test. Other options available to the local authority could include the use of a financial audit or seeking an external review of governance. If the governing body fails to act following the issue of a warning notice, the LA may then consider; co-opting of additional governors, withdrawal of financial delegation or the replacement of the governing body with an Interim Executive Board. Local authorities should raise any concerns about governance arrangements in academies with the Department for Education.

Local authorities should also consider issuing a warning notice to maintained schools that have not responded robustly or rapidly enough to a recommendation by Ofsted to commission a robust and objective external review of their governance arrangements. Such recommendations are normally made as part of Section 5 inspections in schools 'requiring improvement' where governance is judged to be weak.

Schools do not need to wait for an Ofsted inspection recommendation to seek an external review of their governance arrangements. Local authorities may themselves consider issuing such a recommendation where they have concerns about the quality of a maintained school's governance, before considering more formal intervention. Guidance is available from the National College for Teaching and Leadership on commissioning and conducting such external reviews.

Eligibility for Intervention

A school is "eligible for intervention" and intervention powers may be exercised in the case where a warning notice has been given and the school has failed to comply or has not complied with the notice to the satisfaction of the local authority and where the local authority have also given the school written notice that they propose to exercise one or more of their powers under Part 4 of the 2006 Act.

2. Schools eligible for intervention as a result of having been judged as "requiring significant improvement" or "special measures"

If, following an inspection under section 5 of the Education Act 2005, Ofsted judges a school to be inadequate for overall effectiveness (Grade 4), it will give a judgement that the school requires either "significant improvement" (described as a school with "serious weaknesses") or "special measures". Where a school is eligible for intervention by virtue of this judgement, it is not necessary for the local authority to give a warning notice to the school. If the school has already been given a warning notice by a local authority, a Grade 4 Ofsted judgement means the school is eligible for intervention whether or not the period of compliance in the warning notice has expired or the governing body has made representations or intend to make representations to Ofsted.

There is a clear expectation that in these cases, where the school has been judged by Ofsted to have "serious weaknesses" or require "special measures", conversion to an academy with a strong sponsor will be the normal route to secure improvement and that this is set out clearly in the local authority statement of action⁷.

Inspectors make a judgement on the fitness for purpose of local authorities' statements of action. From September 2012, this judgement is made at the first monitoring inspection of all schools judged to require "special measures" and those that have been judged to have "serious weaknesses". If the statement of action is judged to be not fit for purpose at the first monitoring inspection, a revised version must be made available to Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI) at the second monitoring inspection. HMI will judge whether the revised statement is fit for purpose and report accordingly.

⁷ See section 15 of the Education Act 2005 and Schedule 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006

Section 3: Warning notices

Section 60 of the 2006 Act sets out the provisions relating to warning notices. A warning notice should be used where there is evidence to justify both the local authority's concerns and the school's reluctance or inability to address those concerns successfully within a reasonable time frame. Before deciding to give such a warning notice, local authorities must draw on a suitable range of quantitative and qualitative information to form a complete picture of a school's performance.

1. Giving a warning notice

When used effectively many local authorities have found that giving warning notices has had a positive impact on schools causing concern, often providing a catalyst for more focused and appropriate action from both the leadership team and the governing body. It is expected that local authorities will use these powers more frequently as part of their wider plans to accelerate improvements in standards.

A warning notice must be given in writing to the governing body of the school and must set out:

1. the matters on which the local authority's concerns are based. These should be set out in some detail and explain the facts that exist in that particular school and the circumstances which are giving the local authority cause for concern;
2. the action which the governing body is required to take in order to address the concerns raised;
3. the initial compliance period beginning with the day when the warning notice is given and ending 15 working days following that day, during which time the governing body is to address the concerns set out in the warning notice, or make representations to Ofsted against the warning notice; and,
4. the action which the local authority is minded to take (under one or more of sections 63 to 66 of the 2006 Act or otherwise) if the governing body does not take the required action.

In addition to giving the governing body a warning notice, the local authority must also give a copy to the head teacher; and in the case of a Church of England Church school or a Roman Catholic Church school, the appropriate diocesan authority; and in the case of a foundation or voluntary school, the person who appoints the foundation governors.

All warning notices must be copied to Ofsted at the same time using the email address: warningnotices@ofsted.gov.uk

Where a warning notice has been given which has not been complied with to the satisfaction of the local authority within the compliance period, the local authority must also give the school reasonable notice in writing. Whilst what is reasonable will vary depending upon the circumstances, the expectation is that the local authority will notify the school that they propose to exercise one or more of their powers under Part 4 of the 2006 Act within two months from the end of the compliance period. When a school has failed to comply with a warning notice and the local authority have also given a further written notice, a school is eligible for intervention.⁸

2. Making representations against the warning notice

The warning notice must state that the governing body of a school can make representations in writing to Ofsted. The 2006 Act does not specify the grounds for making representations, but it could be that the school believes that the local authority have:

1. Given the warning notice without sufficient objective evidence
2. Proposed action that is disproportionate to the scale of the issues facing the school

The representations must be made in writing within 15 working days⁹ of receipt of the warning notice. For the representations to be valid, they must be sent to warningnotices@ofsted.gov.uk and *must* also be copied to the local authority.

Ofsted must consider any representations and may confirm the warning notice or not. This will usually be within a period of 10 working days after receipt of the representations, although this is not set out in legislation. Ofsted may ask either party to submit further evidence where this is felt to be insubstantial, prior to deciding on the representations.

If Ofsted confirms the warning notice, the school is eligible for intervention after 15 working days beginning with the day on which Ofsted confirms the warning notice.

Irrespective of whether the governing body have made representations to Ofsted, the Secretary of State may make a direction under section 496 and/or 497 of the Education Act 1996 pursuant to a complaint or otherwise. This enables the Secretary of State to make a direction, if expedient to do so, where he is satisfied that a local authority have acted, or are proposing to act, unreasonably with respect to the exercising of a power or performance of a duty under the 1996 Act, or certain other Acts which are read together with the 1996 Act (including the 2006 Act), or where the local authority have failed to discharge a duty.

⁸ See section 60(1)(e) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006

⁹ Working day does include the school holidays. See the definition in section 60(10) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

3. Power of the Secretary of State to direct the local authority to consider giving and to give a warning notice

The Secretary of State has the power to direct a local authority to first consider giving a warning notice in specified terms and then, to direct the local authority to give a warning notice in those terms where a local authority have decided not to do so.

A direction to give a warning notice in specified terms may be given if the Secretary of State thinks there are reasonable grounds for the local authority to do so and:

1. the local authority have not given a warning notice to the governing body; or
2. the local authority have given a warning notice, but in inadequate terms; or
3. the local authority have given a warning notice to the governing body but Ofsted have failed or declined to confirm it; or
4. the school has become eligible for intervention, but the period of two months following the end of the compliance period has ended¹⁰.

The local authority may then decide to give the warning notice to the governing body in the specified terms and must give the Secretary of State a written response to the direction confirming this within 10 working days beginning with the day on which the direction was given. They must then give a warning notice to the governing body within 5 working days from the day on which a response is given to the Secretary of State and, on the same day, give the Secretary of State a copy of the warning notice and send it to warningnotices@ofsted.gov.uk

If the local authority decides not to comply with the direction, then they must respond to the Secretary of State within 10 working days¹¹ beginning with the day on which the direction was given setting out the reasons for that decision. If, having considered these reasons, the Secretary of State believes that a warning notice is still necessary then the local authority will be directed to give a warning notice in those specified terms. The local authority must then give this warning notice to the governing body within 5 working days beginning with the date when the direction is given.

Once this warning notice has been given, the school has 15 working days to comply with the terms of the warning notice or make representations to Ofsted as with any other warning notice given.

¹⁰ Note that the time period does not apply where the school is eligible for intervention by virtue of being judged to require special measures or significant improvement.

¹¹ The 2006 Act states that "working day" means a day other than a Saturday, a Sunday, Christmas Day, Good Friday or a day which is a bank holiday under the Banking and Financial Dealings Act 1971 (c.80) in England

The local authority must judge whether the school has complied with the terms of the warning notice. If the local authority concludes that the school has failed to comply with the warning notice and has also given written notice to the governing body that they propose to exercise one or more of their intervention powers, then it is “eligible for intervention” as set out in Part 4 of, and Schedule 6 to, the 2006 Act, and the intervention powers of the Secretary of State and the local authority may be exercised.

The Secretary of State may also request Ofsted to inspect and report on a school where there are serious concerns under provisions in the Education Act 2005.

Section 4: Local authorities' powers of intervention

Where a school is eligible for intervention there are a number of powers the local authority or the Secretary of State may use to drive school improvement. These interventions are set out in sections 63-66 of the 2006 Act in respect of local authorities.

1. Power to suspend the delegated authority for the governing body to manage a school's budget

Section 66 of the 2006 Act enables a local authority to suspend the governing body's right to a delegated budget by giving the governing body of the school notice in writing. This applies where a maintained school is eligible for intervention and the school has a delegated budget within the meaning of Part 2 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

Local authorities are strongly recommended to withdraw delegation from all schools eligible for intervention at the time the intervention position is confirmed since doing so can secure local authority control over staffing and spending decisions in order to secure improvements. It may be best used, for example, where the governing body is providing insufficient challenge and support to the headteacher or senior management team of the school, or where management of the budget is providing a distraction from improvement priorities for governors.

A copy of the notice to suspend the right to a delegated budget must be given to the head teacher of the school and the governing body. If the local authority has appointed an IEB, during the period when the governing body is constituted as an IEB (the interim period) the local authority cannot suspend the school's right to a delegated budget.

Timeframe

Where a school is eligible for intervention as a result of being given a warning notice, this power must be exercised within a period of two months following the end of the compliance period. If the local authority fails to exercise this power within this time, it can no longer be exercised and a new warning notice must be given in order to do so. There is no requirement for the local authority to consult before exercising this power.

2. Power to appoint an Interim Executive Board (IEB)

Section 65 of the 2006 Act enables the local authority to apply to the Secretary of State for consent to constitute the governing body as an IEB in accordance with Schedule 6 to the 2006 Act. An IEB can be used to accelerate improvement in standards and attainment and provide challenge to the leadership of the school to secure rapid

improvement or where there has been a serious breakdown of working relationships within the governing body of the school.

Timeframe

This power may be exercised at any time a school is eligible for intervention and is not subject to the time limitation set out above in respect of other intervention powers.

Consultation

Before the local authority can exercise this intervention power they must consult:

1. the governing body of the school;
2. in the case of a Church of England school or a Roman Catholic Church school, the appropriate diocesan authority; and,
3. in the case of any other foundation or voluntary school, the person or body by whom the foundation governors are appointed.

A fair consultation must be undertaken when proposals are at a formative stage and include sufficient detail to allow those consulted to give a considered response. The local authority may offer a meeting with the governing body as part of this consultation. A final decision should only be taken after consideration of any representations received. There is no statutory time scale in which the consultation process is to be completed and it is likely that this will vary depending on the circumstances in which the IEB is required. We would expect a normal consultation process to take about 10 (ten) days.

IEB applications should be made using the form on the DfE website¹² and should follow the guidance for the completion of an IEB application form.

After obtaining consent in writing from the Secretary of State, the local authority must write to the governing body to give them notice that the IEB will be established. This notice should specify a date when the IEB will commence and will usually also give a date when the IEB will cease but may not always.

Delegated budget

An IEB has a right to a delegated budget. If the school's budget has previously been withdrawn from the governing body, then the local authority must restore the budget from the date when the IEB commences its work. If a notice has been given to the normally constituted governing body specifying a date when it is proposed to withdraw the right to

¹² See the 'Further sources of information' section

a delegated budget, the notice will cease to be valid from the date of commencement of the IEB.

The role and duties of the IEB

The IEB's main function is to secure a sound basis for future improvement in the school and this should include the promotion of high standards of educational achievement.

The IEB is the governing body of the school and any reference in the Education Acts to a governor or foundation governor has effect as a reference to an interim executive member. During the interim period, when the governing body is constituted as an IEB, the requirements concerning the governing bodies constitution set out in the School Governance (Constitution) (England) Regulations 2012 do not apply.

The IEB will take on the responsibilities of a normally constituted governing body, including the management of the budget, the curriculum, staffing, pay and performance management and the appointment of the headteacher and deputy headteacher. An IEB may recommend to a local authority, or recommend that the Secretary of State give a direction to a local authority, that a school should be closed. However, the IEB cannot itself publish proposals for closure. If, following the statutory consultation and other procedures, it is agreed that the school will be closed, the IEB should continue to hold office until the implementation date of the proposal. The IEB may also seek an academy order from the Secretary of State which enables the school to convert to an academy. Where a school has been found by Ofsted to be inadequate, the department is clear that academy status with a strong sponsor is the best way to bring about its rapid improvement. In these cases, we would expect the IEB to undertake its duties with a view to achieving this outcome.

Membership of the IEB

As set out in Schedule 6 to the 2006 Act the number of interim executive members must not be less than two. Once the IEB has been established, further interim executive members can be appointed at any time. An IEB should be a small, focused group appointed for the full period which it is expected to take to turn the school around. Members of an IEB should be chosen on a case by case basis, depending on the needs of the school but should normally include individuals with financial skills and experience of transformational educational improvement. Where the school is underperforming and there is already an agreed sponsor, we would expect that the sponsor should be on the IEB. If a sponsor is agreed during the operation of the IEB we would expect that a sponsor representative would join the IEB at that point. Members of an IEB bring a fresh outlook to the governance arrangements of the school, marking a clear break from the previous management of the school. In most cases, therefore, we would not expect existing governors who are vacating office to be nominated as IEB members (although

this is not prohibited by the law). Local authorities who are considering doing this should contact the DfE to discuss the particular circumstances of the school.

The IEB may arrange for the discharge of their functions to other people as they see fit (under paragraph 11(2) of Schedule 6 to the of the 2006 Act). In this way the IEB could continue to benefit from the experience of existing governors and help engage future governors.

The local authority is able to nominate one of the members of the IEB to act as Chair.

Interim executive members may be removed in limited circumstances. This can be for incapacity or misbehaviour or where their written notice of appointment provides for termination by the appropriate authority on notice. The appropriate authority may be the local authority or the Secretary of State depending on who made the original appointment.

The local authority should produce a written notice of appointment for each member of the IEB. Copies of this notice should be sent to all other members of the IEB; the school's existing governing body; the Secretary of State; and, in the case of foundation or voluntary schools, the diocesan or other appropriate appointing authority. A local authority or the Secretary of State may choose to pay interim executive members such remuneration and allowances as is considered appropriate.

3. Power to appoint additional governors

Section 64 enables a local authority to appoint additional governors where a school is eligible for intervention. The local authority is likely to appoint additional governors when they would like a school to be provided with additional expertise and may appoint as many additional governors as they think fit. In the case of a voluntary aided school where the local authority have exercised the power to appoint additional governors, the appropriate appointing authority in relation to that school may appoint an equal number of foundation governors to those appointed by the local authority, in order to preserve their majority.

Timeframe

Where the school is eligible for intervention as a result of being given a warning notice, this power must be exercised within a period of two months following the end of the compliance period. If the local authority fails to exercise this power within this time, it can no longer be exercised and a new warning notice must be given in order to do so. Where the local authority appoints additional governors there is no requirement to consult.

4. Power to require the governing body to enter into arrangements

Section 63 enables a local authority to require a school which is eligible for intervention to enter into arrangements with a view to improving the performance of the school. The local authority may give the governing body a notice requiring them:

1. to enter into a contract or other arrangement for specified services of an advisory nature with a specified person (who may be the governing body of another school);
2. to make arrangements to collaborate with the governing body of another school;
3. to make arrangements to collaborate with a further education body; or,
4. to take specified steps for the purpose of creating or joining a federation.

Timeframe

Where the school is eligible for intervention as a result of being given a warning notice, this power must be exercised within a period of two months following the end of the compliance period. If the local authority fails to exercise this power within this time, it can no longer be exercised and a new warning notice must be given in order to do so.

Consultation

Before the local authority can exercise this intervention power they must consult:

1. the governing body of the school;
2. in the case of a Church of England school or a Roman Catholic Church school, the appropriate diocesan authority; and,
3. in the case of any other foundation or voluntary school, the person or body by whom the foundation governors are appointed.

A consultation must be undertaken when proposals are at a formative stage and include sufficient detail to allow those consulted to give a considered response. A final decision can only be taken after consideration has been given to any representations received. There is no statutory time scale in which the consultation process is to be completed. We would expect a normal consultation process to take about 10 (ten) days but this may vary depending on the circumstances of the case.

Section 5: Secretary of State's powers of intervention

Where a school is eligible for intervention there are a number of powers the local authority or the Secretary of State may use to drive school improvement. These interventions are set out in sections 67 to 69 in respect of the Secretary of State¹³.

1. Power to appoint additional governors

Section 67 of the 2006 Act allows the Secretary of State to appoint additional governors at any time a maintained school is eligible for intervention; the Secretary of State may appoint any such number of additional governors as he sees fit.

Before making any appointment, the Secretary of State must consult:

1. the local authority;
2. the governing body of the school;
3. in the case of a Church of England school or a Roman Catholic Church school, the appropriate diocesan authority; and,
4. in the case of any other foundation or voluntary school, the person or body by whom the foundation governors are appointed.

The Secretary of State may pay any governor appointed such remuneration and allowances as is considered appropriate. Where the Secretary of State has exercised this power, the local authority may not exercise their power to suspend the governing body's right to a delegated budget. The legislation provides that a voluntary aided school is not authorised to appoint foundation governors for the purpose of outnumbering the other governors appointed by the Secretary of State.

2. Power to direct the closure of a school

The Secretary of State may direct a local authority to cease to maintain a school where that school is eligible for intervention other than by virtue of section 60A of the 2006 Act. (non-compliance with teachers pay and conditions).

This will usually be done where there is no prospect of the school making sufficient improvements. Before this power can be exercised the Secretary of State must consult¹⁴

1. the local authority and the governing body of the school;

¹³ Powers of intervention regarding Pupil Referral Units are included in the alternative provision statutory guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/alternative-provision>

¹⁴ See Section 68 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006

2. in the case of a Church of England school or a Roman Catholic Church school the appropriate diocesan authority;
3. in the case of any other foundation or voluntary school the person or body by whom the foundation governors are appointed; and
4. such other persons as the Secretary of State considers appropriate.

If the direction to close a school has been given, the local authority will be expected to meet any costs of terminating staff contracts and make appropriate arrangements for the pupils' continuing education, whether in a replacement school, or through transition to an alternative school.

3. Power to provide for the governing body to consist of interim executive members

Under Section 69 of the 2006 Act the Secretary of State may require the governing body of a school to be constituted as an IEB in accordance with Schedule 6 to the 2006 Act where the school is eligible for intervention.

Before this power can be exercised the Secretary of State must consult¹⁵:

1. the local authority;
2. the governing body of the school;
3. in the case of a Church of England school or a Roman Catholic Church school, the appropriate diocesan authority; and,
4. in the case of any other foundation or voluntary school the person or body by whom the foundation governors are appointed.

This requirement to consult the bodies in 2, 3 and 4 above does not apply if the local authority has already done so in respect of their own proposal to appoint an IEB or if an academy order has effect in respect of the school.

4. Power to make an academy order

Section 4 of the Academies Act 2010 permits the Secretary of State to make an academy order in two circumstances: firstly, on the application of a school's governing body; or secondly, if the school is eligible for intervention within the meaning of Part 4 of the 2006 Act.

¹⁵ See Section 69(2) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006

Before making an academy order in respect of a foundation or voluntary school with a foundation that is eligible for intervention, the Secretary of State must consult:

1. the trustees of the school;
2. the person and persons by whom the foundation governors are appointed; and,
3. in the case of a school which has a religious character, the appropriate religious body.

If an academy order is made in respect of a school, the Secretary of State must give a copy of the order to:

1. the governing body of the school;
2. the headteacher;
3. the local authority; and,
4. in the case of a foundation or voluntary school that has a foundation:
 - (I) the trustees of the school;
 - (II) the person and persons by whom the foundation governors are appointed; and,
 - (III) in the case of a school which has a religious character, the appropriate religious body.

If an academy order is made in respect of a school which has a Foundation holding the freehold or leasehold of publically funded land, the Secretary of State may direct the Foundation to transfer the relevant land and buildings to the academy provider¹⁶.

Under section 5 of the Academies Act 2010 before a maintained school can convert into an academy, the governing body must consult on the question of whether conversion should take place.

In the case of a school eligible for intervention under Part 4 of the 2006 Act, the consultation may be carried out by the governing body of the school (or an IEB where appointed) or the person with whom the Secretary of State proposes to enter into academy arrangements in respect of the school or an educational institution that replaces it.

The expectation is that a persistently underperforming school or a school that is in Ofsted category will become an academy. Any such academy would be a “sponsored” academy, meaning that the school would adopt governance arrangements, involving a strong external body (such as an organisation or a sponsoring school), that will ensure that the school is supported in turning its performance around.

¹⁶ Education Act 2011 Schedule 14

The expectation would be that any strong school which was proposing to act as a sponsor would themselves also be an academy or willing to become an academy in order to take on the sponsorship role. Being an academy will allow the sponsoring school to use its academy freedoms to secure rapid improvement in both the school it is sponsoring, as well as its own school.

Section 6: Governance

Non statutory guidance relating to governance

Local authorities should take an active interest in the quality of governance in maintained schools. To prevent schools becoming “eligible for intervention” (as described in Section 2) local authorities should promote and support high standards of governance. To do so, they should be champions for high quality in school governance; help ensure that governors have the necessary skills; and have in place appropriate monitoring arrangements to identify signs of failure in relation to governors’ oversight of finance, safety or performance standards.

Local authorities should also be able to provide governors with high quality training that is necessary to prevent schools from becoming “eligible for intervention” or at least be able to signpost governors to such training. Section 22 of the Education Act 2002 and the Ofsted inspection framework of local authority school improvement arrangements places strong expectations on local authorities in relation to promoting and providing appropriate training programmes for governors. Local authorities should note that governing bodies have the power to suspend governors where they refuse to undertake necessary training.

Local authorities should have arrangements in place for maintaining records of governors in maintained schools. This can be used by the authority to aid communication with governors and provide for them to undertake any necessary due-diligence. Ideally, the records should also include schools registers of interests and enable identification of governors who sit on more than one governing body. Information held by the local authority should also be made available to the Department for Education upon request.

Where a local authority has concerns about governance within an academy in their area they should raise this with their local Regional Schools Commissioner or the EFA.

Further sources of information

Associated resources (external links)

- [The Academies Act 2010](#)
- [The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009](#) (amended the 2006 Act) - makes provision for apprenticeships, education, training and children's services.
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education Act 2011](#) (amended the 2006 Act and also the 2010 Academies Act in respect of land transfers to academies. Schedule 14 applies)
- [Education Act 2002 Schedule 2](#) Effect on Staffing on suspension of delegated budget
- [School Governance \(Transition from an Interim Executive Board\) \(England\) Regulations 2010](#) – you can download the School Governance Regulations 2010 from the Opsi website
- [The School Governance \(Role, Procedures and Allowances\) \(England\) Regulations 2013](#) – associated departmental guidance can be found [here](#).
- [The School Standards and Framework Act 1998](#) - contains provisions for schools and nursery education. This covers further education for young people at school, and in FE institutions across the UK.
- [Ofsted: monitoring inspections for maintained schools and academies - information about the types of monitoring inspections carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005.](#)
- [The framework for the inspection of local authority arrangements for supporting school improvement](#)

Other departmental resources

- [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) statutory guidance
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#) statutory guidance
- [Interim Executive Board application form](#) and guidance
- [Performance tables – user guide and resources \(includes progress measures\)](#)



Department
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