

# Hillingdon Schools Forum Constitution

September 2025



**HILLINGDON**  
LONDON

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# Constitution for the Hillingdon Schools Forum

September 2025

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# 1. Powers and Responsibilities

Hillingdon Schools Forum is set up under the requirements of Section 47A of the School Standards & Framework Act 1998, in compliance with the requirements of the [Schools Forums \(England\) Regulations 2012](#). Where any procedural matter relating to the working of the Forum is not specifically covered in the Constitution, the [Schools Forums: Operational and Good Practice Guidance](#), issued by the Department for Education (DfE) in December 2015 (or the latest version thereof) shall apply.

The Constitution will be reviewed annually, in the summer term. This will include reviewing the proportionality of membership against the January School Census data.

The Schools Forum is a statutory consultative body, with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. It is not a committee of the Council and therefore sits outside the legislation relating to Council Committees. Its powers and responsibilities have been defined by the Department for Education (DfE): [Schools forum powers and responsibilities](#).

## 2. Purpose and strategy

The purpose of Schools Forum is to oversee financial decision making in relation to funds designated for the benefit of all pupils in Hillingdon. Schools Forum oversees all aspects of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG), including funding for high needs and Early Years.

Schools Forum will be effective if:

- School leaders have confidence that the Dedicated Schools Grant for Hillingdon is being deployed to provide the most value possible for all pupils in state-funded schools.
- School leaders have confidence in decisions made by the Forum, and feel they have been given clear, timely and suitable opportunities to make their views known on matters that affect them.
- Members of Schools Forum feel they have benefitted from their time as members through the learning and development available to them.

## 3. General Principles of Conduct

In carrying out their duties in respect of Schools Forum, Members will be expected to observe the following Nolan Principles of conduct.

### Selflessness

Members should take decisions solely in terms of the public interest. Members should serve only the public interest and should never improperly confer an advantage on any person or individual school.

### Integrity

Members should not place themselves under any financial or other obligation to outside individuals or organisations that might influence them in the performance of their official duties. Members should not place themselves in situations where their honesty and integrity may be questioned, should not behave improperly and should on all occasions avoid the appearance of such behaviour.

### Objectivity

In carrying out public business, including making public appointments, awarding contracts, or recommending individuals for rewards and benefits, members should make choices on merit.

### Accountability

Members are accountable for their decisions and actions to the public and must submit themselves to whatever scrutiny is appropriate to their office. Members should be accountable for their actions and the manner in which they carry out their responsibilities, and should co-operate fully and honestly with any scrutiny appropriate to their role

### Openness

Holders of public office should be as open as possible about all the decisions and actions that they take. They should give reasons for their decisions and restrict information only when the wider public interest clearly demands.

### Honesty

Holders of public office have a duty to declare any private interests relating to their public duties and to take steps to resolve any conflicts arising in a way that protects the public interest.

### Leadership

Holders of public office should promote and support these principles by leadership and example.

Should any member of Schools Forum be found to have committed a serious breach of any of the seven principles in any dimension of their professional role, whether in relation to matters relating to Schools Forum or in any other matter, that member may be subject to a motion of censure by the Forum:

This may only be considered in relation to the most serious matters.

A breach may only be established by prior investigation under formal powers (e.g. safeguarding, council complaint procedures, DfE, Ofsted).

- Any member of the Forum may propose a motion in relation to a breach of conduct, which must be made in writing to the Clerk. (see section 3.4).
- A decision must be taken by the local authority within a calendar month whether to allow the motion to be proposed to a vote by the Forum at a formal meeting.

- The local authority, having decided to allow the motion to be proposed, must first seek the resignation from the Forum of the member subject to the motion, and must do so at least ten working days before a meeting agenda is published containing such a motion.

## 4. Composition of Hillingdon Schools Forum

Regulations prescribe that:

- School and academy members must make up at least two-thirds of the membership of the Schools Forum.
- Representation for each sector (e.g. primary, secondary, special etc) must be proportionate to the number of pupils in the sector and will be reviewed annually based on January census data of pupil numbers. This review will take place in the July meeting.
- School representation may be provided by Headteachers or Governors, or for academies, alternative representatives can be members.

In accordance with the regulations, the Schools Forum must comprise of members from maintained schools, academies (if they exist) and non-school members. School members and Academies members must comprise at least two thirds of the membership of the Schools Forum and at least one member must be a representative of the governing bodies of maintained schools and at least one member must be a representative of the headteachers of maintained schools. For the maintained primary sector, a minimum of 50% of members must be Headteachers. Ideally a similar proportion of representatives for academies to maintained settings would be preferable, however, academies can decide to put forward any representative, therefore, this will be guidance for academies only.

The determination of the number of school representatives on Schools Forum will be based on the proportionality of pupil numbers in schools within a given category of school membership (e.g. primary maintained, secondary academy etc) when compared to the total number of pupils in schools.

To become a member of the Schools Forum, the relevant group is responsible for electing their own representative.

The membership of the Schools Forum is set out in the following table:

| Category   | No. of reps | Number of pupils | Elected by                                     |
|--|-------------|------------------|--|
| <b>Maintained School members - 9</b> (min 50% Headteachers for Maintained) |             |                  |  |
| Nursery  | 1           | n/a              | Automatic                                      |
| Primary/ Infant/ Junior  | 6           | 15,930           | Primary Forum                                  |
| Secondary  | 1           | 2,655            | HASH   |
| Special  | 1           | 474              | Agreed between the 2 x schools                 |
| <b>Academy members - 14</b>  |             |                  |  |
| Primary /Infant/Junior   | 4           | 10,371           | Formal election process with academy schools   |
| Secondary  | 8           | 19,836           |  |
| Special  | 1           | 664              | Formal election process with special academies |
| Alternative Provision  | 1           | 45               | Automatic                                      |
| <b>Non-School members - 4</b>  |             |                  |  |
| PVIs   | 2           | 4920 (approx.)   | Local Authority                                |
| 14 – 19 Partnership  | 1           | n/a              |  |
| Diocesan Representative  | 1           | n/a              |  |
| <b>Total</b>   | <b>27</b>   |                  |  |

(1:2500 pupils)

## 4.1 Conduct of elections

In the conduct of elections, all persons eligible to stand for Schools Forum must be given a reasonable opportunity to stand:

- A communication must be delivered to all eligible institutions who must be given a window of opportunity to express an interest in standing for office.
- Notice of the opportunity to stand must also be published by the local authority and in regular communications to all schools.
- If the number of persons expressing an interest in standing for election does not exceed the number of available places, no ballot will be held.
- If a ballot is held, this must be conducted by email and not in a general meeting, and the voting record of individuals must remain confidential.
- Ballots will be counted by the Clerk and Director of Education & SEND. The candidate with the most votes will be elected, followed by the next most votes, continuing until all available positions are filled. Any remaining candidates will not be elected.

## 4.2 Conduct of School members elections

### Maintained schools

The Clerk to the Forum will write to all Headteachers and Clerks inviting nominations (either via the weekly briefing and/or directly). Nominations must be submitted to the Clerk to the Forum. Once received, all nominations for Headteachers and governors will be shared with

Primary Forum or HASH for secondaries who will vote (maintained schools only) for the representatives for maintained schools.

### **Academies**

The Clerk to the Forum will write to all Headteachers and Clerks/ Chairs of Trustees of Hillingdon academies (either via the weekly briefing and/or directly) to alert them to the vacancies and request nominations. Secondary academy representatives will be selected via an election process by HASH. For primary academy representatives, Primary Forum will manage the election process.

### **Special Schools**

The Clerk to the Forum will write to the Headteacher and Clerks/ Chair of Governors/ Trustees of Hillingdon special schools (either via the weekly briefing or directly) to invite self-nomination. An election will be run by the LA with special academy schools to select the representative. For maintained special schools, as there are only two maintained special schools in the borough, the schools will decide who is best to be represented as a member.

## **4.3 Conduct of Non-Schools members elections**

Non-Schools members refers to:

- PVI's representatives
- 14-19 representatives
- Diocese representatives

### **Private, Voluntary and Independent Providers (PVI)**

The Head of Education Improvement & Partnerships will write to all Hillingdon PVI members to invite self-nominations. A ballot will be undertaken at the Early Years Sub-Group.

### **14-19 Partnership**

The Clerk to the Forum will write to the Principals of 14-19 settings which serve the locality. The LA will identify the representative from nominations put forward.

### **Diocesan Representative**

The Head of Education Improvement & Partnerships will write to the Diocese to ask for the representative they wish to put forward.

## 5. Membership

### 5.1 Terms of Office

Members are representatives not delegates. They should act in accordance with what they consider to be the best interests of Hillingdon's children and young people. A forum member remains in office until:

- a. The member's term of office expires. In accordance with this constitution, this is 4 years from the anniversary date of appointment.
- b. The member ceases to hold the office by virtue of which the member became eligible for election, selection or appointment to the forum
- c. In the case of a non-school member, the member is replaced by the local authority, at the request of the body which the member represents, by another person nominated by that body.
- d. The member fails to attend 3 consecutive meetings
- e. The member resigns, providing 1 months' notice
- f. A member has served two terms (2 x 4 years) or more, at which point an election will take place. Members who have served two terms or more can be nominated again, however, new members will be prioritised over those members who have served two terms or more, to enable a broad representation across the settings and a range of contributions from different members.

### 5.2 Appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair

Schools Forum will need to elect a Chair and Vice-Chair in the first meeting at the beginning of the academic year running from September through to August. The Schools Forum must elect a Chair from amongst its own members, so it is not possible to elect an independent Chair. In addition, any elected member of the local authority or officer of the local authority who is a member of a Schools Forum may not hold the office of Chair.

The Chair and Vice-Chair will remain in office for two years from the date of election unless:

- a) The member ceases to hold the office by virtue of which the member became eligible for election, selection or appointment to the forum
- b) The member resigns, providing 1 months' notice

The Chair and Vice Chair can remain in post for up to two terms (four years), following elections, if members vote to agree to a second term. Following this period, the Chair and Vice Chair should change to an alternative member.

A local authority officer will be responsible for the conduct of any election required. The method for voting will be by a confidential ballot.



Only voting members of the Forum can be elected as Chair or Vice Chair.

At any meeting where both the Chair and Vice Chair are absent the Forum shall elect, from those voting members present, a person to take the Chair for that meeting only.

The Chair and / or the Vice-Chair may be removed from office by a majority of votes cast by secret ballot. Any call for a ballot to remove the Chair and / or Vice-Chair must be made in writing, signed by at least 25% of the total voting membership and received by the Clerk at least 7 days in advance of the meeting at which the ballot would be taken. The Clerk must advise the Chair and Vice Chair immediately any such motion is received.

### **5.3 Local Authority officers and elected members**

Professional advice to the Forum will be provided by officers of the local authority who will be entitled to attend and speak at meetings of the Forum and any sub-groups/ task and finish groups that it convenes. Local Authority officers do not have voting rights.

Regular attendees of LA officers will be:

- Director of Education & SEND
- Assistant Director of SEND & Inclusion
- Head of Education & SEND Commissioning
- Head of Education Improvement & Partnerships
- Finance Business Partner
- Head of Children's Finance
- Clerk

Other LA officers will attend the forum meetings as appropriate, depending on the agenda and items to be discussed.

Executive members with responsibility for education/children's services or resources of the local authority are able to participate in Schools Forum meetings. By doing so such elected members are able to contribute to the discussion and receive first-hand the views of the Schools Forum. The regulations provide the right for executive members to attend and speak at Schools Forum meetings. However, there is no requirement for this to happen. There should be clear channels of communication between the Schools Forum and executive members.

### **5.4 Appointment of Sub-Group Chairs**

In the event that Schools Forum sets up subgroups, Schools Forum will need to elect a Chair at the meeting where it was decided to set up such a sub group.

The Chair of the Subgroup will remain in office for two years from the date of election unless:

- a) The member ceases to hold the office by virtue of which the member became eligible for election, selection or appointment to the forum

- b) The sub group is no longer required
- c) The member resigns, providing 1 months' notice

## **5.5 Changes to membership:**

- If a member is moving from their current school, they must inform the Schools Forum Clerk who will advise on whether this will affect their ability to continue as a member of Schools Forum.
- A member will be seen as a non-attender when they have failed to attend three consecutive meetings. At this stage, their position will be advertised as a vacancy and the nomination process will begin.
- Where a member has resigned, or been deemed to resign, a nomination and election process will be held within a 3 month period following the resignation. Their membership will be ratified at the first meeting following their election.
- Membership will be reviewed each July following the school census where any changes will be reflected.

## **5.6 Quorum & substitute members**

For meetings to be quorate, at least 40% of members (excluding vacancies) must be present. Schools Forum may not legally take decisions when it is not quorate. Voting methods will be confirmed within each meeting.

If a member is unable to attend a meeting, they may send a representative on their behalf to act as a substitute. Substitute members will have the same constitutional powers and responsibilities as full members.

It is the responsibility of the elected representative to:

- Notify their substitute if they are unable to attend a meeting.
- To forward any papers and meeting invites to the substitute.
- Notify the Forum Clerk that their substitute is attending on their behalf at least 2 working days before the meeting.

# **6. Conduct of Meetings**

## **6.1 Agenda and documentation**

- The agenda will be agreed at a pre-meeting of the Chair, Vice Chair and local authority officers, held at least 10 working days prior to the meeting. All items for the agenda must be raised and agreed in the pre-meeting.

- Members wishing to add items to the agenda should notify the Chair, Vice Chair or clerk one month before the meeting.
- Agendas, including relevant papers, will be published at least 5 working days prior to the meeting, via the Schools Forum pages of the local authority website and via email to members.
- Reports to the Schools Forum should be submitted using the standard template which indicates the purpose of the item and which members are eligible to vote if applicable.

The Schools Forum should set its own agenda within the remit as set out in the regulations. A forward plan will be in place to detail the key items that will be presented at each meeting. Additional items can be agreed through the pre-meetings or via agreement in forum meetings. Meeting dates will be set at/ by the last meeting of the academic year for the next academic year.

The Schools Forum must meet at least **four** times in a year, where the timing and location of meetings should be determined by the Schools Forum.

Meetings should take place in public, although confidential items, such as commercially sensitive information regarding contracts, may be considered in private with the agreement of the forum.

The Regulations provide that the Secretary of State can appoint an observer to attend and speak at Schools Forum meetings, e.g. a representative from the Department for Education (DfE). This allows a conduit for national policy to be discussed at a local level and provide access for Schools Forum to an additional support mechanism, e.g. where there are highly complex issues to resolve.

## 6.2 Frequency

The Forum will meet formally at least four times a year.

Meeting dates will be set at the last meeting of the academic year for the next academic year.

Dates will be set to fit with key decision points in the year. Forum members may be invited to join informal meetings for the purposes of CPD.

Where necessary, additional meetings may be called. This includes Task and Finish groups for specific pieces of work. The Forum will agree clear terms of reference for such groups, using a standard template.

## 6.3 Record of meetings

The meeting record will include formal minutes of the meeting and a record of actions. These will include:

- Details of any papers presented before or during the meeting
- Details of attendees, and any declarations of interest
- Main discussion points
- Decisions and actions

- Voting record
- Details of subsequent meetings

These will be published within 10 working days of the meeting, via the [Schools Forum](#) pages of the local authority website, following sign-off by the Chair.

Notification of decisions made in Schools Forum meetings will be included in the weekly Schools Bulletin circulated to all Hillingdon schools and governing bodies.

The minutes will be ratified at the next formal meeting of the Schools Forum.

Meetings will be recorded in line with the process for public meetings.

Although the business of Schools Forums must be open and transparent, it is recognised that from time to time items of a confidential nature will need to be discussed.

## 7. Urgent matters

- Where the Chair or Local Authority identifies an urgent issues / proposal needs to be considered outside the planned meetings, members may be consulted via email.
- The Chair & Vice Chair may also give a view to the Local Authority on an urgent issue but have no power to take a decision on behalf of the Forum in any circumstances.
- If a decision is needed outside of the planned meeting, the Chair may call an additional meeting to discuss the urgent issue and make a decision. The additional meeting will be held in public and every effort will be made to ensure that as much notice as possible is given and papers published ahead of the meeting.

## 8. Support to the Schools Forum

### 8.1 Clerk to the meetings

Hillingdon Council will provide a Clerk to support the Schools Forum. The Clerk will work with the Chair, Vice Chair and local authority officers to arrange and support meetings, including additional meetings of the Forum as the need is identified. This includes:

- Meeting invitations for members
- Publication of meeting details via the Schools Forum website
- Collation and publication of papers prior to meetings
- Preparation and publication of minutes
- Managing the voting process (private or public) at meetings
- Advertising membership vacancies
- Overseeing the nomination, election and ratification of new members

- Providing new members with the relevant information to support them in undertaking the role
- Preparing communications for schools and providing written updates to be published in the weekly Schools Bulletin
- Ensuring up to date information about the Forum is available via the Schools Forum website.

## **8.2 Training and development**

In order to be effective in their role, a member of Schools Forum should have a good understanding of financial management as it relates to education. This understanding is not assumed, and all members of Schools Forum have the right to expect that good learning and development opportunities be made available to them to enable them to meet their obligations.

Hillingdon Council will provide:

- An induction pack to newly appointed Schools Forum members
- A programme of learning and development in relation to financial management for Schools Forum members to access on a voluntary basis.
- Information about relevant learning and development opportunities available to Schools Forum members including, but not exclusively, the programme provided by the Department for Education (DfE).
- Opportunities for staff employed in education in Hillingdon who are not members of Schools Forum to be informed about the workings of the group, and about financial matters generally.

# **9. Functions**

## **9.1 Consultation on financial issues**

The London Borough of Hillingdon must consult the Schools Forum annually in respect of the authority's functions relating to the schools budget, in connection with the following:-

- a) amendments to the school funding formula;
- b) arrangements for the education of pupils with special educational needs;
- c) arrangements for the use of pupil referral units and the education of children otherwise than at school;
- d) arrangements for early years provision;
- e) administrative arrangements for the allocation of central government grants paid to schools via the authority

## **9.2 Consultation on contracts**

The London Borough of Hillingdon must consult the forum, at least one month prior to the issue of invitations to tender, on the terms of any proposed contract for supplies or services (being a contract paid or to be paid out of the schools budget) where the estimated value of the proposed services

contract is not less than the specified threshold which applies to Hillingdon in pursuance of Regulation 8 of the Public Contracts Regulations 2006.

### **9.3 Powers under Department for Education regulations**

Schools Forums generally have a consultative role. However, there are situations in which they have decision-making powers. The overarching areas on which Schools Forums make decisions on local authority proposals are:

- a) De-delegation from mainstream school budgets (approval will be required by the relevant phase members of Schools Forum), for prescribed services to be provided centrally.
- b) To create a fund for significant pupil growth in order to support the local authority's duty for place planning and agree the criteria for maintained schools and Academies to access this fund.
- c) Funding for prescribed historic commitments where the effect of delegating this funding would be destabilising.
- d) Funding for the local authority in order to meet prescribed statutory duties placed upon it. Approval is required to confirm the amounts for each duty and no new commitments or increases in expenditure from 2014/15 are permitted.
- e) Funding for central early years expenditure, which will include funding for checking eligibility of pupils for an early years place and/or free school meals.
- f) Authorising a reduction in the schools budget in order to fund a deficit arising in central expenditure that is to be carried forward from a previous funding period.

In each of these cases, the local authority can appeal to the DfE if the Schools Forum rejects its proposal.

## **10. Support for Schools Forum**

Hillingdon Council will provide a Clerk to support the Schools Forum

The Clerk will work with the Chair, Vice Chair and local authority officers to arrange and support meetings, including additional meetings of the Forum as the need is identified.

### **10.1 The treatment of forum costs in relation to the LA's budgetary arrangements.**

The costs of administering the forum and any expenses reimbursed or the costs of any work commissioned by the Schools Forum will be a charge against the Schools' Budget for the year.

## **11. Register of Interests**

All members of the Schools Forum are required to provide and maintain their entry in the register of interests.

## Appendix 1: London Borough of Hillingdon Schools Forum Member Roles & Voting

| De-delegation<br>Primary | De-delegation<br>Secondary | Schools<br>Block<br>Transfer to<br>High Needs | Scheme for<br>financing<br>schools | Schools<br>Funding<br>Formula | Central<br>spend –<br>pupil<br>growth/<br>falling rolls | General<br>Duties | Retained<br>Duties | Central<br>spend – EY,<br>CSSB | last updated 2025       |                |
|--------------------------|----------------------------|---|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|---|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|
| 1                        | 2                          | 3   | 4                                  | 5                             | 6   | 7                 | 8                  | 9                              |                         |                |
| Voting                   |                            |   |                                    |                               |   |                   |                    |                                | Phase                   | Role           |
| Schools Members          |                            |   |                                    |                               |   |                   |                    |                                |                         |                |
|                          |                            | x   | x                                  | x                             | x   | x                 | x                  | x                              | Maintained nursery      | Head           |
| x                        |                            | x   | x                                  | x                             | x   | x                 | x                  | x                              | Maintained Primary      | Head/ Gov      |
|                          | x                          | x   | x                                  | x                             | x   | x                 | x                  | x                              | Maintained<br>Secondary | Head           |
|                          |                            |   | x                                  | x                             | x   | x                 | x                  | x                              | Maintained Special      | Head/ Gov      |
| Academies Members        |                            |   |                                    |                               |   |                   |                    |                                |                         |                |
|                          |                            | x   |                                    | x                             | x   |                   | x                  | x                              | Primary Academy         | Head           |
|                          |                            | x   |                                    | x                             | x   |                   | x                  | x*                             | Secondary Academy       | Head/ Gov      |
|                          |                            |   |                                    |                               |   |                   | x                  | x*                             | Special Academy         | Finance<br>Rep |
|                          |                            |   |                                    |                               |   |                   | x                  | x*                             | Alternative Provision   | Head           |
| Non-School Members       |                            |   |                                    |                               |   |                   |                    |                                |                         |                |
|                          |                            |   |                                    |                               |   |                   |                    | x                              | PVI                     | Head           |
|                          |                            |   |                                    |                               |   |                   |                    | x*                             | 14-19                   | Head           |
| Other Attendees          |                            |   |                                    |                               |   |                   |                    |                                |                         |                |
| No voting rights         |                            |   |                                    |                               |   |                   |                    |                                | INMSS                   | Finance<br>rep |
|                          |                            |   |                                    |                               |   |                   |                    |                                | Shadow reps             | Head           |

\*for CSSB only

## Appendix 2: Weblinks

Schools Forums (England) Regulations 2012 - <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2012/2261/contents/made>

Schools Forums: Operational and Good Practice Guidance - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/schools-forums-operational-and-good-practice-guide-2015>

Schools forum powers and responsibilities -

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/971711/2021\\_Schools\\_forums\\_powers\\_and\\_responsibilities.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/971711/2021_Schools_forums_powers_and_responsibilities.pdf)

Schools Forum - <https://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/schools-forum>