
GBA News – Friday 28th February 2025



Supporting Voluntary Grammar Schools: GBA Hosts Health & Safety Information Session

The GBA has been engaging with the Health & Safety Executive NI (HSENI) to identify key health and safety matters in schools and to support schools with their responsibilities in this area.

As part of our ongoing engagement with HSENI we recently hosted an information session for our member schools to look at a range of health and safety areas in the context of voluntary grammar settings as employers of staff.

The session was delivered by HSENI Principal inspector, Kyle Carrick, and HSENI Inspector, Linda Murphy who provided attendees with an overview of the following areas:

- Health and safety legislation
- Reporting of incidents/injuries/accidents
- Asbestos management
- Slips, trips and falls
- Lifting/handling
- Vehicle movements
- Legionella
- Radon

The session was well attended with representation from 29 voluntary grammar schools - thank you to all who attended. We hope to run an extended session in the next academic year.

A copy of the presentation delivered by HSENI is available [here](#).

Please also see the article below regarding HSENI's 2025 Legionella initiative.

HSENI Legionella Initiative

During 2025, HSENI will be conducting a series of inspections in relation to the management of legionella in hot and cold water systems. These inspections will take place in buildings that provide facilities for vulnerable populations and/or the general public, including schools.

As you will be aware, as employers of staff, the Board of Governors of a voluntary grammar school has a responsibility to ensure that any risk from Legionella is appropriately managed. This includes making sure the right precautions are put in place to reduce the risk of exposure to Legionella bacteria.

The initial phase of HSENI's initiative will assess the measures currently in place to comply with health and safety legislation and the Approved

Code of Practice and guidance, The Control of legionella bacteria in water systems (L8) **via a questionnaire, which has been issued to a sample of schools.**

The premises chosen reflect the risk presented by Legionella bacteria and the potential for exposure.

If your school has received a questionnaire we would encourage you to complete this and return to HSENI by 27th March 2025.

The second phase of this initiative will entail a series of focused inspections to selected premises, with the emphasis being on those premises where the risk is perceived to be high or where completed questionnaires have not been received.

Further guidance in relation to the management of legionella in hot and cold water systems is available online at www.hseni.gov.uk/legionella

Save the Date

The GBA's Annual General Meeting is taking place on the morning of **Wednesday 7th May 2025 at the Malone House, Belfast.**

Further information will be issued to schools shortly.

Area Planning

Development Proposals: Pre-Publication Consultation and Statutory Objection Period

When a significant change to a school is proposed (including opening, closing, amalgamating), and significantly altering its size or character, publication of a Development Proposal is a statutory requirement.

The Development Proposal process is complex and involves a number of

phases which includes a pre-publication consultation and a statutory objection period, before a decision on the proposal is made.

The pre-publication consultation seeks the views of those most directly affected by the proposed changes at a local level. The Education Authority also conducts further consultation with schools that may be affected by the proposal.

A list of current pre-publication proposals is available [here](#).

Following the pre-publication consultation, proposals are published on the Department of Education website and subject to a two-month objection period prior to a decision being made.

A list of Development Proposals published and awaiting a decision is available [here](#).

If you wish to have a discussion about the Development Proposal process, or any other aspect of Area Planning, please contact us.

Specialist Provision

The GBA is currently engaging with EA, ETI and our member schools to discuss SEN provision in voluntary grammar school settings. Please [contact us](#) if you have any comments or feedback you would like to share in relation to SEN provision.

Student Mobility Across the Island of Ireland - A Level Equivalencies

The GBA recently received correspondence from Professor Becky Whay, Interim Deputy President and Registrar at the University of Galway regarding equivalency of A Level qualifications across higher education

institutions in the Republic of Ireland.

New equivalencies are now in place and A-level students no longer have to earn 4 top grade results to get maximum points in the Republic's third level entry system. Instead, A-level students can use their best 3 A-levels, along with a 4th A-level or an Extended Project or an AS subject.

This will mean that applicants can attain a score of 600 points with 3 A levels and 1 AS, and 625 points if one of the A-levels is Maths. NI students will also be considered for a place in a university in the Republic by applying with 2 A-levels and 1 or 2 AS levels.

We would like to thank GBA Executive Committee member, Dermot Mullan, for his engagement with the Universities Ireland Working Group to raise the issues around student mobility and drive forward this welcome change.

A full copy of the correspondence from Professor Whay is available [here](#).

School Uniforms Bill Introduced

A new Bill to reduce the costs of school uniforms has been introduced in the Northern Ireland Assembly by Education Minister Paul Givan.

The Bill completed First Stage at the Assembly on 18 February 2025 and the Second Stage is scheduled for Monday 3rd March 2025 which will entail a full debate on the Bill's general principles.

The GBA has received this information and will provide further briefing to schools in due course.

A copy of the Bill as introduced, is available [here](#).

NI Assembly Education Committee

This week at the Assembly, Education Committee MLAs met with the Panel for Educational Underachievement to discuss their report "[A Fair Start](#)" and the progress of the recommendations contained within.

One of the key actions arising from the report "Promoting a whole community approach to education' with a 'place-based focus that delivers the greatest concentration of effort in those localities with the greatest concentration of educational underachievement" has provided impetus for the [RAISE programme](#) which aims to address this area.

MLA's also heard a briefing from University of Ulster researchers in relation to their [report on Classroom Assistants](#) which aimed to establish a profile of the Classroom Assistant post in mainstream and special schools in Northern Ireland, including Classroom Assistant perceptions of the role and the future of the role.

The full session is available [here](#).

The GBA issues a weekly political update to our member schools which contains key information about NI Assembly activity as it relates to the Education sector. If you would like to receive these updates, please [contact us](#).

Consultancy Offers Trading Insights

Belfast-based [OCO Global](#) is one of the UK's largest advisory firms specialising in economic and trade development. The company's clients include The Department for Business and Trade, New York's Empire State Development Agency, InvestHK and the City of London Corporation.

OCO would like to share their expertise and experience with pupils

studying GCE Business Studies and Economics.

FDI & Trade 101

OCO provides a 'FDI & Trade 101' training course for economic development professionals and they have modified this to provide an excellent introduction to students interested in the world of international business. The module would contribute to learning outcomes in the GCE Business Studies and GCE Economics syllabus, exploring areas such as globalisation, international business expansion and impacts on the local economy.

The module will introduce students to the world of Trade and Foreign Direct Investment through theory and practice. It includes real-life market and sector-specific insights to help make the content relevant and engaging.

Course Delivery

The module will be delivered in-person by Gareth Hagan, CEO and or Colin McCullagh, Chief Revenue Officer who both have considerable international experience in North and South America, Europe and the Middle East. The full module takes around three hours but can be broken up into smaller sessions. Apart from being a useful study aid, this is also an opportunity to provide career insights.

Availability is limited but for more information, please contact therese.mccrory@ocoglobal.com

Live Consultations

Department of Finance: Draft Budget 2025/26 Consultation

The NI Executive agreed the Draft Budget on 19th December 2024 and is encouraging people to get involved in the consultation and have their say on how to prioritise the finite funding available.

After the consultation concludes and responses are collated and analysed, the Executive will consider and agree a final Budget for 2025-26.

The public consultation will close on 13th March 2025. For further information and to respond, please click [here](#).

The GBA is currently developing a response to the consultation and will share this with you in due course. Please [contact us](#) if you wish to provide any comments.

British Council Opportunities

Below is a list of some of the opportunities currently offered by the British Council

- [Language Assistants Programme](#): Applications are open to host a modern language assistant in 2025-26. Modern Language Assistants are speakers of French, German, Irish, Italian, Mandarin Chinese and Spanish who can help students in the UK build their cultural capital by developing their linguistic and cross-cultural skills. **Applications close 30 April 2025 (for Chinese Language Assistants, 2 April 2025)**
- [International School Award](#): Start your International School Award journey with just one classroom activity for the Foundation level award. Get free expert support with international activities to progress towards accreditation.
- [Partner with a School](#): Whether you want to increase understanding of global issues or enhance language learning, a school partnership can help you better engage pupils, reinforce existing projects, introduce new teaching approaches and, ultimately, improve learner outcomes.

Shared Education Resources

Shared Education Teacher Professional Learning (TPL) modules aim to build the capacity of the workforce across the school system to deliver high quality Shared Education.

A link to each TPL module is provided below and can be accessed by practitioners, schools, partnerships and wider clusters at any time.

The menu will grow and develop each academic year. The modules will be developed based on system needs and practitioner feedback.

- [Promoting, Encouraging and Facilitating Shared Education](#)
- [Teaching Sensitive and Controversial Issues](#)
- [Planning & Evaluating Shared Education through the Pupil Pathway](#)
- [Skills for Sharing](#)
- [Using ICT to Support Partnership Working](#)
- [Creating and Developing a Shared Education Partnership](#)
- [Leading a Shared Education Partnership](#)
- [Developing Community Connections through Shared Education](#)
- [Promoting Pupil Voice in Schools and Partnerships](#)

If you have any feedback or comments in relation to Shared Education, please [contact us](#).

Useful Links

- [School Fees, Charges and Remissions: Chapter 19 from School Governor Guide](#)
 - [Full School Governor Guide Document](#)
 - [Governor Training and Resources](#)
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Advertising of Teaching and Support roles on the GBA Website

The GBA provides a free advertising service for our member schools. Job vacancies are posted on our website and Twitter page. The Education Authority website also links to the GBA jobs section.

****PLEASE NOTE THAT OUR JOB TEMPLATE HAS BEEN UPDATED FOR THE 2024/25 ACADEMIC YEAR AND IS AVAILABLE TO DOWNLOAD [HERE](#)****

If you would like us to host a vacancy for your school, **please contact us**, **with the completed job template for each post**, and allow at least **TWO WORKING DAYS** for posts to be uploaded.



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