

INTRODUCTION & WELCOME PACK FOR NEW HEADTEACHERS IN ESSEX

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Dear Headteacher

Welcome to headship in Essex: whether this is your first headship, you are a Head of School, an Acting Head, or you are an experienced headteacher but new to the County, we would like to introduce the Essex Primary Headteachers' Association and offer our support as you take up your new post.

In this pack you will find information about EPHA, including details of the Executive Committee who are headteachers who have been nominated to represent their local clusters and the four areas of Essex. As there are currently around 450 primary schools in Essex – both maintained schools and academies - termly meetings are generally held within the quadrants, in the South, Mid, North East and West. You are welcome to attend any of the Area meetings, but will probably find your local meeting the most convenient.

Headteachers and the Professional Officer represent EPHA on various focus groups, and report back to fellow heads via the Executive meetings. Each termly Area meeting takes the opportunity to discuss local issues, as well as discussing matters that are pertinent to all schools. The Local Authority works in close cooperation with EPHA and has a termly input to our meetings. It is intended that communication and information is two-way, to enable effective communication with the LA and to allow primary headteachers to shape and influence policy proactively and positively.

EPHA minutes, agendas, supporting papers and information can be found on the EPHA website www.essexprimaryheads.co.uk More information and updates from ECC can be found on the Essex school's infolink <http://esi.essexcc.gov.uk/> **Alternatively you are always welcome to contact Pam Langmead, EPHA's Professional Officer, who will be pleased to assist you.**

New headteachers can often feel very isolated and overwhelmed in the early days. Please don't feel you are alone! In this pack we have included a Directory of Support for Primary Headteachers in Essex and also information about our Colleague Supporter programme. Early on in the term the Vice-Chair of your Area will make contact with you, to discuss this and any other support you can access from EPHA.

We wish you every success and happiness in your new position and look forward to meeting you soon.

Harriet Phelps-Knights
Chair of EPHA

Pam Langmead
EPHA Professional Officer

EPHA can be contacted in the following ways:

Pam Langmead Professional Officer

By telephone: 01621 786359

By post: 3 Sheerwater Close, Burnham-on-Crouch, Essex, CM0 8EN

By email:

pam@langmead.me.uk

Website:

www.essexprimaryheads.co.uk

Harriet Phelps-Knights EPHA Chair c/o Janet Duke Primary 01268 543744

By contacting your Area/Locality Representative (see attached membership list)

EPHA/ LA TERMLY MEETINGS

Academic year 2026/27

Agendas and minutes: www.essexprimaryheads.co.uk

County EPHA Annual General Meeting

Thursday 1 October 2026 Lion Inn, Boreham

Mid EPHA – Lion Inn, Boreham, CM3 3JU

Thursday 12 November 2026

Thursday 11 March 2027

Thursday 24 June 2027

South EPHA – Lion Inn, Boreham, CM3 3JU

Thursday 5 November 2026

Thursday 4 March 2027

Thursday 17 June 2027

West EPHA –Manor of Groves, Sawbridgeworth

Wednesday 4 November 2026

Wednesday 10 March 2027

Wednesday 23 June 2027

North East EPHA – Colchester Football Stadium, Colchester CO4 5UP

Wednesday 11 November 2026

Wednesday 3 March 2027

Wednesday 16 June 2027

Agendas for the termly meetings will be emailed to schools at least seven days in advance of the meeting, and will be posted on the EPHA website. These meetings are free and you don't need to book a place. You can simply turn up at the Area meeting that you would like to attend (allow some time for parking!) Lunch will be provided at the all-day meetings.

The dates for EPHA events are also on the EPHA website

<https://essexprimaryheads.co.uk/events/>

Conferences

Headteachers' Conference Friday 19 March 2027

Chelmsford City Race Course, CM3 1QP

Deputy/Assistant Headteachers' Conference Friday 9 October 2026

Colchester Football Stadium, Colchester CO4 5UP

Small School Headteachers' conference Wednesday 14 October 2026

The Lion Inn, Boreham, CM3 3JA

Invitations, programmes and the booking form for each conference will be sent to schools 2 – 3 months in advance by post, and can also be found on the EPHA website. The conferences cost around £150 per delegate. EPHA also runs free or subsidised training on topical issues for headteachers, either in person or online, and a termly briefing each term. Contact the EPHA Professional Officer, for more information pam@langmead.me.uk

The EPHA Colleague Supporter programme

for new and acting headteachers in primary-phase schools
and for established headteachers who are new to Essex

Being a new or acting headteacher can be a daunting challenge, particularly if you are new to Essex or have been thrown in at the deep end! Having a fellow headteacher on your side can help you survive and thrive.

A Colleague Supporter is someone who you can rely on and talk to in complete confidence, about the early days of headship, your worries, what you need to know and what you don't know you need to know! They have the experience of being a headteacher in an Essex primary school (and are doing the job now) and fully understand the challenges and responsibilities you are facing, as well as knowing the satisfaction and sense of pride that the role gives every head.

Your Colleague Supporter will be a confidante and sounding board, who you can use to share your concerns and questions about being a new head. They will know the systems in Essex, be able to tell you which meetings are "unmissable" (and which you can avoid!) and make sure that you can access the help that is available. You can even ask them whether you have made the right decision taking on the enormous task of being a headteacher, without feeling judged. Every head will have asked themselves that question at some point in their career!

However, an effective Colleague Supporter knows that their main job is to listen and seek to understand, rather than immediately jumping in with solutions and recommendations. Their role is to support you, not to undermine your own practice and approach or tell you what to do. It is also important to emphasise that the discussions you have will be confidential, although your Colleague Supporter may at times recommend other people that you could (or should) reach out to for additional support.

If this is not your first headship but you are new to Essex, you may still benefit from our support – see the attached document for how we can help you in your new role.

This service is *absolutely free* to new and acting primary, nursery, infant and junior headteachers in Essex. EPHA recognises the importance of supporting new heads in their early days of headship and wants to ensure that every new head feels able to connect with a Colleague Supporter, without having to draw on their school's budget.

At the same time, EPHA remunerates a Colleague Supporter's own school, so that they are able to commit to a professional role knowing that they are contributing financially to their school, as well as benefiting professionally.

The EPHA Chair or Vice-Chair of your quadrant (or the EPHA Professional Officer) will contact you as early as possible in your new headship to welcome you to your new role in an Essex school and to let you know what support EPHA can give you.

During that conversation they will talk to you about organising a Colleague Supporter and will ask you a number of questions about who will be right for you. Once we have identified a "match", your Colleague Supporter will contact you and will set up a programme of support.

What do headteachers get in return for their top-sliced contribution to EPHA?

Once again, in the 2026/27 financial year EPHA will be funded by a top-sliced contribution from schools – therefore, we will not be collecting an annual subscription. The current rate (agreed by headteachers in June 2024 and the Schools Forum) is £400 per school or academy. In return, headteachers will receive the following benefits:

- **A termly meeting for headteachers in each of the four areas of Essex**
A chance for all headteachers to meet with colleagues across their area, network and share good practice, find out about current local and national issues, and feedback their concerns and successes to the LA and other heads. At the meetings headteachers will benefit from school development workshops and training and access to resources and information. All that, and a free lunch!
- **Termly briefings for headteacher clusters and partnerships**
The Professional Officer delivers briefings to groups of headteachers each term, giving up to date information about Ofsted, safeguarding, the DfE, the Local Authority, policies and much more, plus a “do-list” and masses of documents and resources – to save Essex heads time and effort.
- EPHA offers vital support to new and acting headteachers across the county through its **Colleague Supporter programme**. *We are expanding this programme to offer support to any headteacher who would like it.*
- The **Small Schools Support Group** – set up to support those headteachers in small schools, recognising their unique challenges. EPHA also facilitates a network for small school governors, who meet half-termly to discuss themes and issues of interest to their role.
- **The termly Executive meetings**
EPHA headteachers, who are elected to represent every area, district and Local Delivery Group in Essex, meet termly to discuss national, county and local issues, with the aims of ensuring that the primary voice is heard in Essex and driving forward the school improvement agenda.
- **EPHA Professional Officer**
The employment of a Professional Officer, Pam Langmead, who runs the administration of the association, manages the website, writes and runs the briefings, sends regular information and advice to heads, organises annual conferences for headteachers and deputies, attends a range of meetings on behalf of EPHA, and supports the Executive and all headteachers across Essex. The Professional Officer represents Essex Primary headteachers on county-boards and committees, including the Essex Safeguarding Children Board, and the Children’s Partnership Board (and local Partnership Boards in each quadrant). We know that it is essential for headteachers to collaborate and cooperate with their local

schools, but also feel that it is essential for the Essex primary voice to be heard at the strategic level in local and national politics. The Chair of EPHA and the Professional Officer are on the board of the National Network for Chairs of Headteacher Associations, a group that has direct access to NCSL, the DfE and Ofsted.

- **An annual Headteachers' conference and a Deputy Headteachers' conference.**
Two cut-price, high-quality conferences dedicated to developing and celebrating leadership in Essex, featuring national and local presenters in education. (These conferences are offered at a small additional cost for delegates.)
- **Expenses and reimbursement** for primary headteachers who represent colleagues on a wide and varied number of committees and working groups, including as Colleague Supporters.
- **A dedicated website for EPHA**
A website for Essex primary headteachers, with a wealth of information including minutes of key meetings and documents relating to schools and education, model policies, safeguarding resources, information from the Local Authority, Department for Education and good practice in education.
www.essexprimaryheads.co.uk
- **Training courses and resources**
EPHA offers an increasing number of free (or heavily subsidised) training courses and resources to primary headteachers. Courses in the last year have included training on exclusions and Managing Complaints, and a series of free online training sessions for governors, including training on their role in an Ofsted inspection. In addition, EPHA produces a series of "7-minute staff meetings" on safeguarding and data protection issues – all available for free via the website. The Professional Officer has also recording a training video for new governors, to ensure that they undertake safeguarding training when they join the Governing Body.
- **A termly newsletter**
Informing headteachers of news and topical information, resulting from meetings and work carried out by EPHA officers and representatives.
- **Being part of a county wide professional association**
Whether or not a school is maintained, an academy (or a free school), all primary-phase headteachers and principals in Essex are automatically members of EPHA.

As the education and political landscape continues to change and becomes even more demanding, EPHA believes that the need for an over-arching strategic voice and a developed support network in Essex, plus FREE resources for headteachers and their schools, becomes more and more critical. Your contribution ensures that EPHA continues to go from strength to strength in supporting and representing headteachers across Essex. Please don't hesitate to contact Pam Langmead, EPHA Professional Officer, on 01621 786359 or at pam@langmead.me.uk if you need any further information.

EPHA Executive and Local Authority Partnership

Aims

The EPHA-LA partnership arrangements exist in order to provide:

- a consultative forum for headteachers and senior managers in Essex LA to raise issues relating to primary education in the County;
- a forum that will inform decision-making on key issues relating to policy and operational matters affecting primary schools;
- an opportunity for joint problem-solving;
- an essential channel of information between the Director for Education and primary headteachers, linking with local delivery groups, clusters and the Area meetings.
- a forum for feedback for EPHA-LA working groups;
- a regular forum for communication between headteachers across the County.

Ground rules

1. Both the EPHA Executive and LA Managers want the partnership to be open, honest, constructive and transparent.
2. The usual mode of discourse will be discussion, debate and mutual briefing, rather than formal resolution, with issues raised by both sides.
3. There needs to be mutual support and challenge within a context of respect for differing roles and perspectives.
4. EPHA will advise LA Managers on the impact of policies and decisions, and can also support the LA in communicating decisions and policies positively to headteachers.
5. It will be important for both the EPHA executive and the LA for the “partnership in practice” to be visible – i.e. headteachers should know that EPHA plays a role in relation to LA decision-making and that the LA values this partnership and engages in it for the benefit of schools.
6. EPHA Executive and LA Managers will try to anticipate each other’s needs, rather than only react to issues as they arise.
7. During meetings clear action points will be agreed, minuted and followed up.
8. As well as using meetings to communicate, EPHA and LA Managers will make effective use of email, website and paper communications.

ESSEX PRIMARY HEADTEACHERS' ASSOCIATION CONSTITUTION

1. TITLE

- 1.1 The association shall be called the Essex Primary Headteachers' Association.

2. MEMBERSHIP

- 2.1 All headteachers of Essex State-funded Nursery and Primary-phase schools and academies.

3. AIMS

1. To provide a forum for the membership of the association.
2. To promote the advancement of Primary education in Essex and nationally.
3. To meet regularly to consider issues pertinent to Primary education in Essex.
4. To develop further effective communication and liaison between Essex primary Headteachers and those who have an interest in Primary education.
5. To work in partnership with the Local Authority to enhance Primary education.
6. To form a focus for collective knowledge.
7. To provide advice relating to Primary education matters.
8. To provide advice and guidance to the DfE.
9. To act as mutual support for the membership.

4. MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 The **County Executive Committee** shall consist of the following membership:

- Chair
- Vice-Chair
- Executive Treasurer
- Professional Officer

- The Area Chair and Vice-Chair from each of the four Areas: West, East, Mid and South.

- The representatives from Epping Forest Rural, Epping Forest South, Harlow, Uttlesford North, Uttlesford South, Colchester West, Colchester East, Tendring Mid, Tendring North, Tendring South, Harwich and Dovercourt, Braintree, Chelmsford South, Chelmsford North, Chelmsford West, Maldon, Dengie, Witham, South Woodham Ferrers, Halstead, Wickford, Basildon East/Pitsea, Basildon West, Billericay, Castle Point and Benfleet, Rochford, Rayleigh, Canvey Island, and Brentwood.

- The Lead Headteachers representing partnerships in each of the four quadrants: West, East, Mid and South.

- 4.2 All members of the County Executive Committee must be serving primary headteachers in Essex, except for the Professional Officer and the County Treasurer who may be paid non-serving headteachers.

- 4.3 The Chair, Vice-Chair and Executive Treasurer of the County Executive Committee will be elected at the Annual General Meeting. The term of office for each post will be one year (or until the next Annual General Meeting, which should be held within at least 18 months of the previous AGM), but officers may be re-elected to the position. To ensure effective succession planning the Vice-Chair of EPHA will normally be expected to succeed the outgoing Chair.

Members of the EPHA Executive will be invited to nominate themselves for the position of Chair, Vice-Chair or Executive Treasurer of EPHA. Where there is more than one nomination for an office, the result will be determined by secret ballot at the Annual General Meeting.

- 4.4 The quorum for any County Executive Committee meeting and vote must be one half (rounded up to a whole number) of the complete membership of the County Executive Committee; not including any vacancies.
- 4.5 The chair will conduct all meetings of the County Executive Committee except that in his/her absence, the chair will be taken by the vice chair.
- 4.6 If both the chair and vice-chair are absent from a meeting, the County Executive Committee will elect a chair for that meeting.
- 4.7 If the chair resigns, or has to relinquish the office for any reason, the vice-chair will act as chair until a successor is appointed at the next meeting of the County Executive Committee.
- 4.8 If the vice-chair resigns, or has to relinquish the office for any reason, a successor will be appointed at the next meeting of the County Executive Committee.
- 4.9 If both the chair and vice-chair resign, or have to relinquish their offices for any reason, the County Executive Committee will hold a special meeting within 28 days to elect their successors, such meeting to be chaired by the EPHA Professional Officer until the chair is elected.
- 4.10 The County Executive Committee can remove the chair from office. A motion to remove the chair or vice-chair must be an agenda item for a County Executive Committee meeting and the agenda must be circulated to County Executive Committee members seven days in advance of the meeting. The member proposing the removal must state his/her reasons for doing so at the meeting. The chair or vice-chair must be given the opportunity to make a statement in response before he/she withdraws from the meeting and the County Executive Committee votes on the proposal to remove the chair or vice-chair from office.

5. ADDITIONAL MEMBERS AND ADVISERS

- 5.1 Additional members of EPHA and independent advisers may be invited to the meetings of the County Executive Committee with the agreement of committee members.

6. WORKING PARTIES

- 6.1 All members have the right to represent EPHA on appropriate consultative groups or working parties, with the agreement of the County Executive Committee.
- 6.2 Representatives on consultative groups or working parties are required to report back to the County Executive Committee.

7. MEETINGS

- 7.1 Area Associations will hold at least one meeting each term.

- 7.2 The County Executive meeting will be held in advance of the Area Association meetings each term.
- 7.3 Meetings may be held in person at an agreed venue, or held online using virtual meeting platforms such as Zoom or Microsoft Teams.

8. ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS

- 8.1 The Area Association summer term meeting will be the Area Annual General meeting.
- 8.2 The County Executive Committee annual general meeting will be held in the summer term or early in the autumn term in addition to the termly meeting.

9. AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

- 9.1 Changes to the Constitution may only be made at the County Executive Committee Annual General Meeting subject to a majority vote. The quorum shall be equal to one half of the membership of the County Executive Committee (rounded up, and not including vacancies).

10. FINANCES (to be read in conjunction with the Financial Regulations)

- 10.1 If used, the subscription paid by each Primary school in Essex to EPHA will be determined by the County Executive Committee. Alternatively, funding may be provided by top-slicing from the DSG in advance of delegation, with the approval of the Schools Forum.
- 10.2 The County Executive Committee accounts must be audited annually and a statement presented to the County Executive Committee Annual General Meeting.
- 10.3 Headteachers representing EPHA have the right to claim expenses; the criteria and amount for any claim will be determined by the Executive Committee.
- 10.4 The financial year will end on 31 July.

11. PUBLICITY

- 11.1 All press releases issued on behalf of County EPHA should be ratified by the Chair and two additional members of the EPHA Executive Committee.

Adopted at the EPHA Annual General Meeting on **2 October 2025**

Signed Harriet Phelps-Knights, EPHA Chair