



Autumn term briefing 2020

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Covid-19

Key information

Actions for schools during the Corona Virus outbreak

The guidance continues to pour out of the DfE and HM Government. The current guidance is in 5 sections. The first section sets out the actions school leaders should take to minimise the risk of transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) in their school. This is public health advice, endorsed by Public Health England (PHE).

The rest of the guidance is focused on how the Department for Education (DfE) expects schools to operate in this new context. This includes:

- school operations
- curriculum, behaviour and pastoral support
- assessment and accountability
- contingency planning to provide continuity of education in the case of a local outbreak

Schools must comply with health and safety law, which requires them to assess risks and put in place proportionate control measures. Schools should thoroughly review their health and safety risk assessments and draw up plans for the autumn term that address the risks identified using the [system of controls](#).

The main updates at the beginning of September referred to:

- managing confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) amongst the school community – the Local Authority has also produced useful information: *Responding to a suspected or confirmed case of COVID19*
- the framework for supporting transport to and from schools
- pupils who are shielding or self-isolating – current advice is 1 August:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19/guidance-on-shielding-and-protecting-extremely-vulnerable-persons-from-covid-19>
- use of face coverings in schools - *The government is not recommending universal use of face coverings in all schools. Schools that teach children in years 7 and above and which are not under specific local restriction measures will have the discretion to require face coverings for pupils, staff and visitors in areas outside the classroom where social distancing cannot easily be maintained, such as corridors and communal areas and it has been deemed appropriate in those circumstances. Primary school children will not need to wear a face covering.*
- actions for all schools and local authorities with regards to recording attendance and absence
School attendance will be mandatory again from the beginning of the autumn term. This means from that point, the usual rules on school attendance will apply, including:
 - *parents' duty to secure that their child attends regularly at school where the child is a registered pupil at school and they are of compulsory school age*
 - *schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence*
 - *the availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local authorities' codes of conduct*

Where children are not able to attend school as parents and carers are following clinical or public health advice, for example, self-isolation or family isolation, the absence will not be penalised.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance/addendum-recording-attendance-in-relation-to-coronavirus-covid-19-during-the-2020-to-2021-academic-year>

Collection of school attendance data as part of the school census will resume in January 2021, collecting data for the autumn term 2020. Subject to the necessary legislation being made, from January 2021, the census will collect attendance codes in addition to absence codes.

Further information will follow on what, if any, additional attendance data will be required during the 2020 to 2021 academic year to monitor the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) and support the government's planning.

See information below about parents who elect to home educate rather than send their child to school.

- employer health and safety and equalities duties – see below, note about HES spot checks in schools
- support available for schools with regard to supply teachers *Schools can continue to engage supply teachers and other supply staff during this period.*
- performance management and appraisal for teachers – see HR notes

- music, dance and drama in school *There may be an additional risk of infection in environments where singing, chanting, playing wind or brass instruments, dance and drama takes place. The guidance gives advice on how these subjects may be taught.*
- wraparound provision and extra-curricular activity - *Schools should work to resume any breakfast and after-school provision, where possible, from the start of the autumn term. Schools should also work closely with any external wraparound providers which their pupils may use, to ensure as far as possible, children can be kept in a group with other children from the same bubble they are in during the school day.*
- physical activity in schools - *Schools have the flexibility to decide how physical education, sport and physical activity will be provided whilst following the measures in their system of controls. Pupils should be kept in consistent groups, sports equipment thoroughly cleaned between each use by different individual groups.*
Outdoor sports should be prioritised where possible, and large indoor spaces used where it is not, maximising natural ventilation flows (through opening windows and doors or using air conditioning systems wherever possible) distancing between pupils and paying scrupulous attention to cleaning and hygiene.
- new resources available for pupil wellbeing and support – *see information about the Wellbeing for Education Return below*
- behaviour expectations *Schools should consider updating their behaviour policies with any new rules or policies, and consider how to communicate rules/policies clearly and consistently to staff, pupils and parents, setting clear, reasonable and proportionate expectations of pupil behaviour. Further details are available in the guidance on [behaviour and discipline in schools](#).*
- primary assessment – *see DfE section*
- additional resources available for delivering remote education
- changes to SEND legislation - *From 1 May to 31 July, Section 42 of the Children and Families Act 2014 was modified by a notice issued under the Coronavirus Act 2020. Local authorities and health commissioners were required to use their 'reasonable endeavours' to secure or arrange the specified special educational and health care provision within EHC plans. To ensure that children and young people receive the support they need to return to school, we will not be issuing further notices to modify this duty unless the evidence changes. Our focus is now on supporting local authorities, health commissioning bodies and education settings to restore full provision for all children and young people with EHC plans.*
The temporary changes to the law on the timescales for EHC needs assessments and plans, which give local authorities and others who contribute to the relevant processes more flexibility in responding to the demands placed on them by coronavirus (COVID-19), will expire as planned on 25 September 2020.

Reassess your plans in light of the new guidance

Review existing documents

It's a legal requirement for you to revisit and update your risk assessment to:

- Build on the learning to date and practices you've already developed
- Consider the additional risks and control measures that you'll need to return to full capacity in the autumn term
- You should also review any addenda to your behaviour and child protection policies that you've made.

Make a contingency plan in case of a local outbreak

If a local area sees a spike in infection rates, your school may be advised to close temporarily for most pupils like before.

Your school is expected to have a contingency plan in place by the end of September so you can offer immediate remote education for all pupils at home if this happens.

Remote Education Temporary Continuity Direction

The DfE have now released the [explanatory note](#) regarding the Remote Education Temporary Continuity Direction. The direction sets out that schools have a legal duty to provide remote education for state-funded, school-age children unable to attend school due to COVID-19 and comes into force on 22nd October. The Direction requires that where an individual pupil, group of pupils or class needs to self-isolate, or there are local or national restrictions requiring pupils to remain at home, schools are expected to provide immediate

access to remote education.

It applies to:

All maintained and academy mainstream, special schools, alternative provisions and pupil referral units
Pupils who are of compulsory school age and pupils who are below compulsory school age but who would usually be taught in a class with compulsory school aged children.

Updated Process for Reporting a Case and Seeking Advice – Essex schools

Last week schools were informed of two routes to get support and advice following the confirmation of a positive test, and again we are aware you are accessing both routes for support and advice.

ECC would now like to encourage you to use the Essex Contact Test and Trace (ECTT) Team for advice in the first instance, rather than the DfE advice line. This is for a number of reasons:

- Once you have contacted the ECTT team, they will notify public health colleagues and the intelligence about your school will be captured more quickly as well as providing more local and contextual support. Please do also notify the School Communications team as we are holding a central log of all confirmed cases.
- Secondly we are picking up feedback about the quality of advice given by the DfE helpline. I have heard of instances where it has been very helpful, but unfortunately where it has not been correct. The DfE have today requested details where the advice is not correct to enable the service to improve. If you do make contact with the DfE Helpline and you are concerned about the quality of the advice given, they have asked that the following information is fed back to them:
 - Date and approximate time of the call
 - Name of school
 - Name of person calling
 - Number that the call was made from
 - Name of the agent
 - If you send this information through to the School Communications inbox, we will collate these and feed them back to the DfE.

Details of the Essex Contact Test and Trace Team are here: Tel: 0300 303 2698 or

provide.escontacttracing@nhs.net.

DfE process for reporting positive confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) in your setting

DfE's [guidance for education and childcare settings](#) sets out the process for managing confirmed positive cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) when the individual is known to have been in a school, college or early years setting. We recognise that there have been some difficulties getting through to the local public health protection teams for advice on action to take on a positive case in the setting. As a result, from 17 September, there will be a new dedicated advice service available to advise nurseries, schools and colleges who have been informed of a confirmed case(s) of coronavirus (COVID-19) in their setting (i.e. a pupil or staff member testing positive). We are updating our guidance to reflect this change.

This means that instead of calling your local health protection team when there is a confirmed case in your education setting, we will now be asking you to call the DfE's helpline and you will then be directed to the dedicated NHS advice team for nurseries, schools and colleges with confirmed cases.

From Thursday 17th September this new service can be reached by calling DfE's existing helpline on 0800 046 8687 and selecting the option for reporting a positive case. The line will be open Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm, and 10am to 4pm on Saturdays and Sundays.

Please only select this option if you have a confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19) within your nursery, school or college.

You will be put through to a team of advisors who will inform you what action is needed based on the latest public health advice, and work through a risk assessment to identify close contacts.

This new process will free up capacity of the Public Health England's local health protection teams to deal with more complex cases, for example special schools and universities, or outbreaks where there is more than one confirmed case. Advisors will be responsible for escalating these cases as necessary following a triaging of your circumstances during the call.

The new advice service has been set up to advise the following education settings: early years settings including nurseries; schools including primary schools, infant or junior schools, middle schools, secondary schools, boarding schools, special schools; and further education providers.

The DfE helpline also remains available for all other queries about coronavirus (COVID-19) relating to your education and childcare setting on 0800 046 8687. Please listen carefully to the available options and select the one most appropriate to your setting's current situation.

COVID-19 testing

The government will ensure that it is as easy as possible to get a test through a wide range of routes that are locally accessible, fast and convenient. They will release more details on new testing avenues as and when they become available and will work with schools so they understand the quickest and easiest way to get a test. Schools have been provided with a small number of home testing kits that they can give directly to parents/carers collecting a child who has developed symptoms at school, or staff who have developed symptoms at school, where they think providing one will significantly increase the likelihood of them getting tested. You might also want to offer a test kit to the child of a staff member, if this is delaying their return to school.

Making an order for additional coronavirus tests

Schools and FE providers should order additional test kits if they have run out or are running out of test kits. The portal will open for you to apply for more test kits on the 16 September, via this link:

<https://request-testing.test-for-coronavirus.service.gov.uk>.

Kits will be supplied in boxes of 10. The number of boxes available to each school or FE provider will be proportionate to your size. You will be able to make a new order for coronavirus test kits 21 days after you receive a delivery confirmation email telling you we have sent your kits.

Schools and FE providers will need a Unique Organisation Number (UON) to place orders for test kits. You will receive your UON by email to this email address on or before 16 September. After this date, please call the Test and Trace helpdesk on 119 if you have not received your UON.

Access to testing for staff in Mid and South Essex.

Essex testing availability update

Additional testing capacity for Education Staff

The Essex Education Team has been working extremely hard with Public Health colleagues to secure additional testing capacity, which is prioritised for education staff as critical workers. Full details of new arrangements (introduced 21/09/20) below. Please note this additional capacity has been created, following negotiations, specifically for Early Years, School and FE staff and their families, not for the wider general public. It is important that capacity is prioritised to enable education settings to remain open safely. We would ask you to use your judgement about any further prioritisation that may be needed to ensure that the options we have secured are put to best use in the interests of education settings staying open.

For staff in West Essex and North East Essex

Always try the national testing process first by using the [employer portal](#) or booking as an [individual online](#) or ringing 119

If you have them, use the test kits already provided to you – you can restock them [here](#)

Staff members can now order a postal test kit from Commisceo Primary Care Solutions by phoning 01702 742172.

They will be asked to provide personal details including their NHS number. This is needed to link up the processing of results with the national NHS test and trace process. NHS Number can be found on any letter or document received from the NHS, including prescriptions, test results, and hospital referral or appointment letters. If the individual cannot find their NHS Number at home, they can ask their GP practice.

A test will then be sent by courier to the individual's home address.

They must take the test on the day they receive it and send it first class post to Addenbrookes Hospital laboratory in Cambridge – the address will be provided.

It is important that tests are processed within 48 hours.

For staff in Mid and South Essex

Always try the national testing process first by using the [employer portal](#) or booking as an [individual online](#) or phoning 119

If you have them, use the test kits already provided to you – you can restock them [here](#)

Staff members can book a test for themselves or a symptomatic household member only at a drive-through centre in Mid or South Essex online.

Using this link <https://covid.shiftpartner.com> staff will be taken through to the NHS Mid and South Essex priority worker portal for NHS staff, and as a result of our negotiations, now Mid and South Essex education staff and their household.

Staff will need to register their personal details, including NHS number. NHS Number can be found on any letter or document received from the NHS, including prescriptions, test results, and hospital referral or appointment letters. If the individual cannot find their NHS Number at home, they can ask their GP practice.

Following the test, results should be emailed within 48 hours

We have had feedback that some of your staff have successfully accessed this service, however we have

also been informed that not all of the drop down menus on the website were updated for the inclusion of education staff. To get round this, the advice from Mid and South Essex CCG is for school staff to enter their job title as 'Administrator' and their organisation as 'Essex Education Services' in the drop down lists.

For staff in Epping and West schools

Always try the national testing process first by using the [employer portal](#) or booking as an [individual online](#) or phoning 119

If you have them use the test kits already provided to you

Staff members can book a test for themselves at the West Essex CCG offices - Spencer Close zone of St. Margaret's Hospital, The Plain, Epping, Essex CM16 6TN.

Eligible key workers should call 01702 742172 to book an appointment. The line is open between 9am to 4pm Monday to Friday (from 18 September).

Callers will be asked to give their: Name, DOB, NHS number, mobile number and email address

Universal coronavirus catch-up premium

Schools will receive a one-off catch-up premium for the 2020/21 academic year to help pupils catch up for lost learning. The government is providing funding to cover a one-off universal catch-up premium for the 2020 to 2021 academic year. It aims to support pupils to catch up for lost learning so schools can meet the [curriculum expectations](#) for the next academic year.

Schools will be able to spend the funding in the most effective way for pupils, which could include accessing the National Tutoring Programme - another part of the government's £1 billion catch-up package.

Mainstream schools

Will receive a total of **£80 per pupil** (for reception through to year 11), as follows:

- In 3 instalments - in autumn 2020, 'early 2021' and summer 2021
- You'll get a total of £46.67 per pupil across payments 1 and 2
- You'll get £33.33 per pupil for payment 3

Per pupil numbers for each instalment will be based on the latest available data. For the payment in 'early 2021', this'll be the 4-15 pupil headcount from the [October 2020 census](#).

It's up to schools to decide:

Which pupils need to access the support - although you'll receive funding on a per pupil basis, there are no specific requirements for who to spend it on. Identify pupils that will benefit most from the funding.

The activities that schools are likely to provide - the DfE recommends the following:

- Small group or 1-to-1 tuition (particularly through the National Tutoring Programme - see the section below for details)
 - Summer programmes to help re-engage pupils or extra teaching capacity from September
- The Education Endowment Fund (EEF) has [guidance](#) on catch-up approaches you could choose, as well as a [planning guide](#) to help schools implement these catch-up strategies in this 2020/21 academic year.

What's the National Tutoring Programme?

The National Tutoring Programme (NTP) is one of the areas where schools can spend the catch-up premium grant outlined above, if suitable for their pupils and context.

The NTP will be available for pupils that need the most help to catch up, that are either:

- Reception age in **state-funded** schools (places are limited and, if oversubscribed, will be prioritised based on your school's percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals)
- 5-16 year olds in **state-funded** primary and secondary schools
- 16-19 year olds in **any** 16-19 provider (including school sixth forms and colleges)

The providers selected to deliver the National Tutoring Programme have been announced, and are listed [here](#). The [National Tutoring Programme website](#) is due to be updated today with the functionality for schools to search the list of providers and purchase tutoring. Schools will be able to purchase tutoring in blocks of 15 sessions.

DfE Laptop Scheme Update

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/get-laptops-and-tablets-for-children-who-cannot-attend-school-due-to-coronavirus-covid-19>

Laptops, tablets and 4G wireless routers were made available to local authorities and academy trusts to support vulnerable and disadvantaged children (specifically, care leavers, children and young people with a social worker, and disadvantaged year 10 pupils) between May to July 2020. Local authorities and academy trusts will continue to own these devices.

Following pupils returning to school in the autumn term, [laptops and tablets will be distributed directly to schools affected by a local coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak](#). These will be available for disadvantaged pupils in years 3 to 11 and clinically extremely vulnerable children from all year groups unable to attend

school. These devices will be owned by the school.

PHE East of England Health Protection Team

Second Floor Goodman House, Station approach, Harlow, Essex, CM20 2ET

EastofEnglandHPT@phe.gov.uk; phe.EoEHPT@nhs.net

Phone: [0300 303 8537 option 1](tel:03003038537)

Local Authority Outbreak Plan

<https://www.essex.gov.uk/local-outbreak-control-plan>

List of mobile testing sites in Essex- updated weekly

<https://www.essex.gov.uk/news/current-dates-and-locations-for-mobile-testing-units>

Mobile testing units are at various locations across Essex and they are run by the Ministry of Defence.

To get an appointment at a mobile testing unit:

- check if you meet the [criteria for testing](#)
- apply [online for a coronavirus test](#)

Webcast with Mike Gogarty and Clare Kershaw – 10th September 2020

On Thursday 10th September, EPHA hosted an online session with Mike Gogarty, ECC Director of Public Health, and Clare Kershaw, Director for Education. This webcast provided headteachers and colleagues with the opportunity to hear about the current public health position in Essex, and gave a chance to ask questions about how schools should manage this term, operate safely and what to do in the event of an outbreak or a local lockdown. The webcast is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8mumCXeexd8&t=2590s>

We will be hosting another webcast with Mike and Clare on **Thursday 5th November**, starting at 1.30 pm – please put the date in your diary and look out for the Zoom invitation.

Health and Safety Executive Spot Checks for Schools (HSE)

The HSE have advised schools that they will be conducting spot checks on schools from Monday 7th September. The spot checks will take the form of an initial phone call to review the measures taken for reopening to minimise spread of the virus causing COVID-19.

Inspectors will check that the school has carried out a suitable and sufficient risk assessment and put in place measures to make the school COVID-secure in line with the latest government guidance.

You can read the bulletin here: <https://content.govdelivery.com/accounts/UKHSE/bulletins/29c406f>

A headteacher whose Trust had been contacted reported that the sort of questions that have been asked are:

- Is the school fully open?
- Measures in place to ensure that the staff socially distance?
- Measures in place to protect children and staff
- Measures in place for handwashing?
- Sanitiser which is at least 70% alcohol available?
- Measures in place for additional cleaning?
- Procedures in place for anyone showing symptoms - staff and pupils?
- Who wrote the risk assessments? How do we know that our risk assessments are robust?
- Staff/ Union involvement in drawing up risk assessments?
- Is the risk assessment available to staff?
- Risk assessments in place for individuals?

In cases where the initial call raises concerns, HSE will work with schools to advise on next steps, which may include a visit if appropriate. If a visit is necessary, this will be on a suitable date and time arranged in collaboration with the school. *(NB No schools that had been contacted within this Trust had needed a follow up visit)*

Wellbeing for education return

The DfE reports that schools and colleges will benefit from a new multi-million training programme run by mental health experts, to help improve how they respond to the emotional impact of the coronavirus pandemic on their students and staff.

The Wellbeing for Education Return programme starts in September and aims to support staff working in schools and colleges to respond to the additional pressures some children and young people may be feeling as a direct result of the pandemic, as well as to any emotional response they or their teachers may still be experiencing from bereavement, stress, trauma or anxiety over the past months. The Government has committed £8 million to the programme – Essex County Council has received a share of £200k to deliver the programme. Steve Whitfield will lead on the project for ECC.

The training will be offered to every school and college in England to help support pupil and student wellbeing, resilience and recovery in the context of Covid-19 and to prevent longer-term mental health problems developing, as well as helping to manage and support those who have pre-existing difficulties that

may have been exacerbated by coronavirus. Nominated staff will receive the training through interactive webinars, which can then be shared more widely within their school or college. All training materials will also be made available directly to staff to use.

Elective Home Education (September 2020)

The Local Authority has produced the following list of key considerations that parents/carers should be asked to fully consider before deregistering their child from a school roll:

- If a parent/carer is considering home education for a temporary period, as a result of ongoing Covid-19 related concerns, they should be made aware that, when the time comes for their child to return to school, they may be required to send their child to an alternative school – a school which could potentially be some distance from the family home depending on the availability of school places within the locality.
- Many schools have waiting lists for all/most year groups. This means that, as soon as a space becomes available, another child may be waiting to take up the placement. It is important for parents/carers to note that, should they choose to remove their child from a school roll to home educate, a place may not be available at their child's current school if, at a later date, they choose to return their child back to the school system.
- When any parent/carer removes their child from a school roll, in favour of elective home education, they essentially take on the full responsibility to provide an education to their child. This will mean that no resources/equipment/exercise books, etc. will be provided to assist with the home education, by either the school or the local authority. Parents/carers will need to be prepared to absorb all financial costs/responsibilities involved in providing an education to their child/ren. This will mean that 'elective home education' will feel very different for parents/carers who have enjoyed 'home schooling' their child, using resources provided by their child's school, as part of the lockdown measures imposed as a result of Covid-19.
- For children who have an education, health and care plan (EHCP) **AND** are on the roll of a mainstream school, parents/carers need to be aware that any resources that are provided for their child by their current school WILL NOT be made available for their use as part of any home education arrangement. Any special equipment, differentiated resources, etc. will need to be provided/sourced by the parent/carer on behalf of their child. This may have cost implications for parents/carers who require specialist resources to provide a suitable home education to their child.
- For children who have an EHCP **AND** are on roll at a Special School/enhanced provision, please ensure that parents are aware that they will be required to demonstrate how the needs of the pupil and the provision outlined within the EHCP will be met. If the LA is not satisfied that parents can meet their child's needs, as set out within the EHCP, the pupil cannot be deregistered from the Special School/enhanced provision (the LA must grant permission before deregistration from a special school may take place in favour of elective home education) and parents will be required to ensure their child attends their named provision or face potential legal action for non-attendance.

Contact Anita Patel-Lingham if you have any questions Anita.Patel-Lingham@essex.gov.uk

Covid-19 Staying safe in school

A 7-minute staff meeting focused on how staff and pupils can stay safe in school during the pandemic.

Covid-19 Pupil Wellbeing

A 7-minute staff meeting focused on the potential impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and resulting lockdown on pupils' wellbeing, and how staff can support them to cope and thrive.

Both available on the EPHA website: <https://essexprimaryheads.co.uk/info-and-documents/seven-minute-staff-meetings/>

Fake information on social media about detaining children suspected of having coronavirus

There are numerous reports around the country of false information being posted on social media suggesting that children can be taken from the parents without consenting if they are suspected of having coronavirus. The Safer Internet Centre Helpline advise not responding to this online or challenging it publicly on social media. It is suggested that schools deal with fake messaging on a case by case basis, rather than with blanket communication to the parent community to avoid escalating the fake news via searching and traffic to the content.

Can children be detained without their parents' consent if the authorities think they have coronavirus? (Full Fact) <https://fullfact.org/online/children-coronavirus-act/>

Childhood in the time of Covid September 2020

A report written by Anne Longfield, Children's Commissioner for England, about the impact of the pandemic on children and children's services.

Relevant Documents and Guidance

DfE website

<https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak>

DfE coronavirus helpline

Telephone 0800 046 8687

PHE East of England Health Protection Team

Second Floor Goodman House, Station approach, Harlow, Essex, CM20 2ET

EastofEnglandHPT@phe.gov.uk; phe.EoEHPT@nhs.net

Phone: [0300 303 8537 option 1](tel:03003038537)

Essex Schools Infolink

<https://schools.essex.gov.uk/admin/COVID-19/Pages/default.aspx>

NHS website

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

EPHA 7-minute staff meetings

<https://essexprimaryheads.co.uk/info-and-documents/seven-minute-staff-meetings/>

Childhood in the time of Covid

<https://essexprimaryheads.co.uk/files/childhood-in-the-time-of-covid.pdf>

Your “do-list”

- Reassess your plans in light of the new guidance – keep your risk assessment updated and share with staff.
- Make a contingency plan in case of a local outbreak
- Order additional test kits if required
- Access the recording of the Mike Gogarty webcast and put the next date in your diary – 5th November, 1.30 pm.
- Nominate a member of staff to lead on the DfE programme, Wellbeing for Education Return.
- Send any questions, concerns and comments to EPHA – to Pam Langmead
pam@langmead.me.uk and/or to the School Communications team
Schools.Communication@essex.gov.uk
- Stay safe and well!

Ofsted

Key information

No routine Ofsted inspections in the autumn term

Ofsted has suspended routine inspections for the time being. However, during the autumn term, inspectors will visit a sample of schools to discuss how they're managing the return of all their pupils. However, these visits won't result in judgements. The insights that inspectors gather will be aggregated nationally to share learning with the education sector and beyond. Interim visits will take place from 28 September to December 2020, inclusive. Visits will last for a day.

Ofsted says it will not visit all schools, but will instead select a sample of schools to visit. The sample will include around 1,200 schools across all Ofsted grades, but will include all 'inadequate' schools.

It will cover maintained schools, academies and free schools, special schools and centres of alternative provision in cities, coastal towns and rural communities. The inspectorate has promised "as even a spread as possible across different regions and local authorities". No schools are legally exempt from an interim visit, because these are not full inspections.

The lead Her Majesty's Inspector (HMI) will phone the school to announce the visit at around 10am on the school day before. The point of the call is for inspectors to explain the purpose of their visit, discuss the school's context, establish the protective measures it has in place and arrange who to meet. This will include the lead HMI will discuss the start and end times of the day with the headteacher during the notification call. This is so that any staggered start or end to the school day can be avoided. If the headteacher wants to have the conversation later that day, inspectors will try to accommodate.

School leaders may ask for the deferral of a visit during the notification call with the lead HMI, but are warned to make them before 4.30pm on the day of the call. Deferrals will be decided by the relevant Ofsted regional director or a delegate. Inspectors will not usually arrive any earlier than 10am on the day of the visit. They will normally leave no later than 4pm.

NOTE: Ofsted can still inspect a school in response to any significant concerns, such as safeguarding.

Interim visits will NOT:

- result in any evaluation or graded judgement of a school
 - change a school's current Ofsted inspection grade – however If during a visit, inspectors have "significant" concerns about safeguarding arrangements or a breakdown in the school's leadership, they can arrange to treat the visit as a 'no formal designation' inspection. But inspectors would not, unless circumstances were "very exceptional", treat the visit as a routine inspection as these are suspended.
- If the NFD inspection finds serious concerns, Ofsted will prioritise the school for a routine one when those resume in January.
- The lead inspector will make any significant concerns clear to leaders during the visit.
- use the education inspection framework and school inspection handbook
 - judge schools on their response to COVID-19 during the spring and summer terms 2020
 - require any pre-written planning, self-evaluation or other documentation
 - require teachers to prepare any lesson plans or examples of assessment, or to put up any displays for the visit
 - use lesson visits as a method of collecting evidence
 - involve a general review of a school's policies

<https://schoolsweek.co.uk/new-ofsted-visits-the-details-that-schools-need-to-know/>

Letters could take nearly 2 months to be published

Within 18 working days of the visit's end, Ofsted will write to the school a draft letter on what inspectors found, which will have been quality assured and may be shared with other public bodies.

The school will then have five working days to comment on that letter, the process, and its findings. Ofsted will respond to comments in the final letter sent to the school within 30 working days.

Schools have until the fifth working day after receiving that letter to complain.

Ofsted will aim to publish the letter on its reports website within 38 working days of the end of the visit, but may delay publication if a complaint is being investigated.

The government intends for routine inspections to restart from January 2021, though the exact timing is under review.

Standard inspections from the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) also remain suspended, and are intended to start again at the same time.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/ofsteds-autumn-2020-plans>

Ofsted exemption for outstanding removed

It was announced on 1st October that “Outstanding” schools will no longer be exempt from Ofsted inspections. The department for education will remove the exemption from routine inspections that currently applies to schools rated outstanding by Ofsted, subject to parliamentary approval.

Relevant Documents and Guidance

- Guidance for state funded school – autumn 2020 <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/interim-phase-maintained-schools-and-academies>
- School Inspection Handbook –section 5 including evaluation descriptors *September 2019*
- School Inspection handbook - section 8 *September 2019*
- The Education Inspection Framework – education, skills and early years *May 2019*
- Inspecting the Curriculum *September 2019*
- IDSR guidance *May 2019*
- Teacher well-being at work in schools and further education *July 2019*
- Parent View Toolkit for Schools and Poster *July 2019*
- Ofsted checklist following the notification phone call - EPHA *September 2019*
- Ofsted inspection website
- Inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills settings *September 2019*

All guidance can be found on GOV.UK <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/ofsted-inspections-of-maintained-schools>

Information at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/being-inspected-as-a-maintained-school-or-academy>

Or on the EPHA website www.essexprimaryheads.co.uk

Your “do-list”

- Be aware of the possibility of a visit from Ofsted this term – certain if you are “inadequate” and possible for any school. No preparation required, but make sure your safeguarding records are up to date and reflect arrangements during partial closure and into the autumn term.
- Attend the EPHA AGM on 7th October (online) to hear directly from Michelle Winter.
- Check that the school and Governing Body is fully, legally compliant and is meeting statutory responsibilities.
- Check that your website is up to date and fully compliant –see checklists on the EPHA website

Safeguarding

Keeping Children Safe in Education – September 2020

The new version of Keeping Children Safe in Education is now in force. There is a version with changes highlighted on the EPHA website.

The DfE uses the terms “**must**” and “**should**” throughout the guidance. It uses the term “must” when the person in question is legally required to do something and “should” when the advice set out should be followed unless there is good reason not to.

In June, the government published the draft of the statutory guidance, Keeping Children Safe in Education, to come into force in September 2020. A consultation on KCSiE was halted due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Changes have only been made:

- Where legislation requires it
- To add helpful information
- To provide important clarification

There are no core changes or new statutory expectations, though reference to Covid-19 guidance is included within the document.

What’s new?

- definition of safeguarding
- focus on the impact of mental health
- whole school safeguarding culture, including online learning
- children who have a social worker
- safer recruitment (including supply teachers)
- role of the Designated Safeguarding Lead

The new definition of safeguarding

The definition of safeguarding has been expanded to specifically mention ‘mental and physical’ health. Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is defined for the purposes of this guidance as:

- protecting children from maltreatment;
- preventing impairment of children’s mental and physical health or development;
- ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; and
- taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.

Ensure your staff are familiar with the part 1 update, as well as Annex A

As safeguarding training should be regularly updated, it would be good practice to provide training for your staff that’s in line with the latest version of the guidance. I have produced a 7-minute staff meeting about KCSiE 2020. In addition I have updated the KCSiE staff quiz (including a question-only version, questions and answers, and a PowerPoint presentation).

Child Protection policy – October 2020

An updated model child protection policy has been produced for schools. This reflects the latest statutory and local guidance and should be adapted and adopted for use in your school – the latest change is to update Appendix C around safeguarding arrangements in Essex schools.

Schools safeguarding audit

Last year the (Essex Safeguarding Children Board) ESCB agreed that the schools S175 audit will be aligned to the S11 audit timescales and should therefore be submitted every 3 years. However, as a result of Covid and the pressures on schools, the decision has been made that this will not need to be submitted this school year. Jo Barclay is in the process of updating the tool, which can be used by schools as an internal safeguarding audit.

When to call the police – guidance for schools and colleges

This advice covers incidents on school and college premises where students have potentially committed a crime. It provides guidance on what schools and colleges should bear in mind when considering contacting the police. This advice covers the following situations:

- Assault
- Criminal damage
- Cyber crime
- Drugs
- Harassment
- Sexual offences
- Theft
- Weapons

This advice aims to support schools and college to make defensible decisions when considering whether to involve the police.

Multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation (July 2020)

This guidance has three key functions:

- *to provide information on FGM*, including on the law on FGM in England and Wales. This is set out in the main body of the document;
- *to provide strategic guidance on FGM* for chief executives, directors and senior managers of persons and bodies mentioned above, or of third parties exercising public protection functions on behalf of those persons or bodies. This guidance is set out in the main body of the document; and
- *to provide advice and support to front-line professionals* who have responsibilities to safeguard and support women and girls affected by FGM, in particular to assist them in:
 - identifying when a girl or young woman may be at risk of FGM and responding appropriately;
 - identifying when a girl or woman has had FGM and responding appropriately; and
 - implementing measures that can prevent and ultimately help end the practice of FGM.

How safe are our children 2020

NSPCC annual update, this year focusing on the abuse of adolescents and children, including the impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

Childhood in the time of Covid - September 2020

Report from the Children's Commissioner about the impact of Covid-19 on children and young people.

Safeguarding forums for schools – autumn term

Jo Barclay has made a decision that the safeguarding forum meetings will not be run this term. In the spring term, the police will launch Opping Compass, a nationwide system for notifying medium and standard domestic abuse cases. They will give training for all schools to ensure the system is set up effectively.

Child protection records – record of transfer form

It is vital that any setting should have knowledge of previous child protection concerns about a child where they exist. Please ensure that child protection files 'follow the child' to any new educational setting (including from Early Years to primary and from secondary to college). This is a requirement within KCSiE (*Annex B, the role of the Designated Lead*):

Jo Barclay has produced guidance and provided a template for the transfer of child protection files.

Template to record that your staff have received key safeguarding documents

Jo Barclay has written a template for schools to use to record that all staff have been provided with the key documents referred to in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education'. She suggests you keep copies on individual staff files, or in a separate file where you record staff CPD and training (or both!). The template is available on Essex School Infolink safeguarding section or on the EPHA website.

Seven-minute Safeguarding Staff Meetings

EPHA has produced a series of "Seven-minute Safeguarding Staff Meetings" on a range of topics. During the summer these were all updated to ensure they reflect current guidance. The latest topics published include:

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020 changes
- KCSiE quiz
- Covid-19 – Staying safe in school
- Covid-19 – Pupil Wellbeing

<https://essexprimaryheads.co.uk/info-and-documents/seven-minute-staff-meetings/>

The Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB) has a dedicated Covid-19 page

<https://www.escb.co.uk/2265>

ESCB Annual report 2019-20

Available on the ESCB website

<http://www.escb.co.uk/Portals/67/Documents/Reports%20Plans/ESCB%20Annual%20Report%202017-18%20Final%20Web.pdf>

The report gives information about the work of the Essex Safeguarding Children Board during the past year, and includes child protection statistics for Essex.

Relevant Documents and Guidance

- Keeping Children Safe in Education – DfE September 2020
- Working Together to Safeguard Children – February 2019
- Information sharing advice for safeguarding practitioners – DfE 2018
- Guidance for safer working practice in education settings May 2019
- Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment in schools – DfE May 2018
- How safe are our children? - NSPCC report 2020
- ECC model Child Protection Policy - August 2020
- EPHA Seven-minute safeguarding staff meetings <https://essexprimaryheads.co.uk/info-and-documents/seven-minute-staff-meetings>
- ESCB Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex – July 2017
- How to promote positive emotional well-being and reduce the risk of suicide in children and young people – ECC guidance – Spring 2018
- Keeping pupils and staff safe –Autumn 2018
- ESCB Annual report 2019-20
- Children’s Safeguarding Service (Education) 01245 436744
- Essex Schools Infolink safeguarding pages
<https://schools.essex.gov.uk/pupils/Safeguarding/Pages/Safeguarding.aspx>
- Jo Barclay
Head of Education Safeguarding and Wellbeing
mobile: 07775 030021 | **email:** jo.barclay@essex.gov.uk

Your “do-list”

- Download the new version of KCSiE 2020
- Ensure all of your staff have read at least part 1 and Annex A and, later in the term, use the EPHA quiz to check their understanding and knowledge
- Update and approve the latest Child Protection Policy – September 2020
- Adopt the new policy from Education HR: Dealing with safeguarding allegations against adults
- Attend one of the online safeguarding network group meetings in the autumn term
- Use the EPHA “Seven-minute safeguarding staff meetings” to keep your staff up to date with current issues including the latest presentations on Keeping Children Safe in Education and Covid-19, Staying safe in school, and Pupil Wellbeing
- During the year, complete the Schools’ Safeguarding Audit.
- Ensure that you are signed up to Andrew Hall’s brilliant weekly safeguarding briefing
<http://www.safeguardingschools.co.uk/>

DfE updates and publications

Key information

Headteacher standards 2020

The previous headteachers' standards were published in January 2015 and were designed to be used to:

- shape headteachers' own practice and professional development, within and beyond the school
- support the recruitment and appointment of headteachers
- provide a framework for training middle and senior leaders aspiring to headship
- inform the performance management of headteachers

This review was instigated by ministers to determine how the non-statutory standards could better meet these aims and therefore have them more widely adopted in the sector.

The revised standards:

- move away from the aspirational nature of the 2015 standards in order to provide benchmarks that all headteachers should meet
- describe good leadership for the full range of headteacher responsibilities

The standards can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-standards-of-excellence-for-headteachers/headteachers-standards-2020>

New expectations for your curriculum

Your school will likely need to modify its curriculum substantially at the start of the academic year, but with an aim to return to its normal curriculum for all pupils by summer term 2021.

Your school should assess pupils' starting points and address gaps in their knowledge and skills, and use this to inform changes to its curriculum. Your school can make effective use of regular formative assessment, but avoid introducing unnecessary tracking systems.

Your school may think it appropriate to suspend some subjects for some pupils in exceptional circumstances, so long as it is in their best interests. They should discuss this with the pupil's parents during the autumn term.

Primary schools

Year 2: for this academic year only, your school will be required to make year 2 pupils sit a past version of the phonics screening check during the second half of the autumn term. Pupils who meet the expected standard won't need to complete any further statutory assessments in phonics - pupils who don't will be expected to take the statutory check in June 2021. Guidance available at

<https://essexprimaryheads.co.uk/files/administering-the-phonics-screening-check-to-year-2-pupils-in-the-2020-autumn-term.pdf>

For pupils in early years:

For children in nursery: focus on the prime areas of learning, including communication and language; personal, social and emotional development (PSED); and physical development

For children in reception: focus on the above, but also assess and address gaps in language, early reading and maths, particularly ensuring children's acquisition of phonic knowledge and extending their vocabulary

For all children: follow updates to the [disapplication guidance](#) for the Early Years Foundation Stage and consider how all groups of children can be given equal opportunities for outdoor learning

For pupils in Key Stage (KS) 1 and KS2, prioritise:

- Identifying gaps and re-establishing good progress in the 'essentials' (phonics and reading, increasing vocabulary, writing and maths)
- Identifying opportunities across the curriculum so they read widely
- Developing their knowledge and vocabulary

Your school needs to keep the curriculum broad, so that the majority of pupils are taught a full range of subjects over the year (e.g. sciences, humanities, the arts, PE, RE).

The Department for Education is planning on the basis that statutory primary assessments will take place in summer 2021, although it has delayed the introduction of the new [reception baseline assessment](#) until September 2021.

Secondary schools

For pupils in KS3, your school needs to keep the curriculum broad so that the majority of pupils are taught a full range of subjects over the year (e.g. sciences, humanities, the arts, PE, RE).

Your school may need to address gaps in English and maths in year 7 pupils by teaching essential knowledge and skills from the KS2 curriculum.

For pupils in KS4 and KS5, your school should continue to teach their exam subjects. Ofqual has now concluded its consultation on how to run exams next year - find out more in our article on [changes in education in 2020/21](#).

In exceptional circumstances, it may be in the best interests of a year 11 pupil to drop a subject if, for example, they would do significantly better in their remaining subjects as a result.

Additionally, your school should review any plans for early entry among year 10 pupils in summer 2021. It may be in their best interests to take their exams and assessments in year 11, if they can adjust the curriculum.

Some trips can start again

Your school can resume non-overnight domestic educational visits. They should make sure any trips are in line with protective measures, such as keeping pupils in their 'bubble'.

If you think it's safe, your school can open up or hire out its premises.

Music, dance and drama can take place in school

Your school can allow singing, wind and brass instrument playing, drama and performances to take place as long as it follows the [guidance](#) set out by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) as well as the steps below.

The same rules on grouping pupils and distancing apply

Teachers shouldn't physically correct pupils, and pupils shouldn't have any physical contact with one another. Peripatetic teachers can move between schools as long as they stick to the same social distancing and hygiene measures as each school.

Consider resuming breakfast and after school clubs

Your school should think carefully about how it can make this provision work alongside its wider protective measures, like keeping pupils in their 'bubbles' when possible. If they can't maintain those same groups, they should use small, consistent groups.

If your school leaders need more help with this, direct them to the guidance for [out-of-school settings](#) - it's for clubs running during the summer holidays but your school should still find it useful.

Return to your usual school uniform

It's up to you to decide on school uniform. However, if you've relaxed your uniform policy during coronavirus, the government is encouraging your school to return to its usual policy in the autumn. Your school should take a mindful approach to non-compliance in the case of parents who might be facing financial pressures. Uniforms won't need to be cleaned any more than usual, or with methods different from normal.

Reception baseline assessment delayed

The DfE has confirmed that statutory introduction of the reception baseline assessment will be [delayed](#) until September 2021 due to coronavirus.

If you've opted to take part in the [early adopter year](#), you'll be able to carry out the assessment after October half term 2020, but none of the data collected will be used for the progress measure.

'Grace period' for introducing new relationships, sex and health education (RSE) curriculum

The new RSE curriculum will still be compulsory from September 2020, but if you aren't ready:

- You can start to deliver the curriculum from the start of summer term 2021 (but no later)
- You should still try to start teaching it as soon as possible – the DfE suggests taking a phased approach if needed, for example prioritising curriculum content on mental health and wellbeing

DfE guidance available on planning your new curriculum

https://www.gov.uk/guidance/plan-your-relationships-sex-and-health-curriculum?utm_source=f1af0bc9-e7cf-49c9-af96-52b7b4bbfddd&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=daily

Return to normal exclusion timescales from 25 September

In May, [the government set out provisional guidelines](#) that affected:

- All exclusions that occurred before 1 June that hadn't yet been considered by your board
- All exclusions that occur up to 24 September

The guidelines set out:

When and how meetings to consider exclusions can be held remotely

- Extended timescales for considering exclusions
- Extended timescales to apply for independent review

For exclusions occurring between 25 September and 24 March 2021, your school should return to normal timescales as set out in the DfE's [guidance on school exclusion](#). (September 2017)

To do this, your school should:

Consider the [guidance for the full opening of schools](#)

Facilitate remote access meetings where it is not reasonably practicable to meet in person
If your school misses the deadline because of coronavirus, it must hold the meeting as soon as it becomes reasonably practicable, either in person or remotely.

PE and Sports Premium

The existing guidelines regarding the use of the PE and sport premium continue to apply. These guidelines already permit a significant amount of flexibility in how the PE and sport premium can be used.

The [restrictions on using the PE and sport premium remain current](#).

Carried forward unspent PE and sport premium grant funding from the 2019 to 2020 academic year

As a result of the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, the Department for Education took steps to relax the ring-fencing arrangements for the PE and sport premium in the 2019 to 2020 academic year to allow any unspent grant to be carried forward into the 2020 to 2021 academic year.

Any under-spends carried forward will need to be spent in full by 31 March 2021 and schools should factor this into spending plans for their 2020 to 2021 PE and sport premium allocation. The [2020 to 2021 conditions of grant documents](#) reflect this.

You must publish details of how you spend your PE and sport premium funding by the end of the summer term or by 31 July 2021 at the latest. If you have any carried forward funding from academic year 2019 to 2020 you should show separately how this funding has been spent and confirm that it has been spent before 31 March 2021.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pe-and-sport-premium-for-primary-schools>

School census dates for 2020/2021

The School Census will fall on the following dates:

Autumn census

Census date: Thursday 1 October 2020

Return deadline date: Wednesday 28 October 2020

Spring census

Census date: Thursday 21 January 2021

Return deadline date: Wednesday 17 February 2021

Summer census

Census date: Thursday 20 May 2021

Return deadline date: Wednesday 16 June 2021

Technical information and guidance available on the Essex Schools Infolink

<https://schools.essex.gov.uk/data/collections/DataCollections/School%20Census/Pages/SchoolCensus.aspx>

DfE guidance <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complete-the-school-census>

Changes for Autumn 2020 <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complete-the-school-census/changes-from-previous-school-census>

Termly attendance module - Summer term attendance will not be collected however, DfE still requires: pupil no longer on roll records for all pupils with DOB between 2003-09-01 and 2015-08-31 (aged between 4 and 15 as at 2019-08-31), with a leaving date between 2020-01-01 and 2020-07-31 and are not a boarder.

Exclusion collection period

Due to the absence of a summer census collection, DfE has decided to re-collect any exclusion with a start date in the full 2019 to 2020 academic year in the autumn 2020 census.

FSM eligibility period

Due to the absence of a summer census collection, DfE has decided to amend the 'end date' range for autumn 2020 census to collect an FSM eligibility end date that is, on or after 2020-01-17 and up to and including the autumn census day (2020-10-01).

The engagement model – guidance for maintained schools, academies (including free schools) and local authorities – July 2020

This guidance sets out the statutory requirements for using the engagement model to assess pupils who are working below the standard of the national curriculum assessments and not engaged in subject-specific study at key stage 1 (KS1) and key stage 2 (KS2). It describes best practice on how to use the engagement model, to support teachers and staff involved in assessing the progress of these pupils, and can be used by schools from September 2020. Schools will be required to use the engagement model from the 2021/22 academic year.

The engagement model assessment arrangements apply to maintained schools, maintained special schools, academies (including free schools), pupil referral units, hospital schools and Ministry of Defence schools.

They are not mandatory for non-maintained or independent schools.

School complaints procedure update - Handling complaints during the coronavirus (COVID-19)

outbreak

From the start of the autumn term, DfE expects schools to respond to new and existing complaints. However, we do not expect schools to respond if a tier 4 local restriction is in place or school access is restricted due to localised cases of coronavirus (COVID-19). Schools should still, however, engage with parents and pupils where possible. The DfE model policy remains the same, so no need for schools to update their complaints policy, but just be aware of the Covid-19 update

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-complaints-procedures/best-practice-advice-for-school-complaints-procedures-2019>

School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document 2020 See HR information below

Teaching School Hubs

The teaching school hub programme will create a national network of 87 centres of excellence for teacher training and development, replacing the previous network of around 750 teaching schools. They will be funded for 3 years (subject to confirmation) and will be accessible to every school in the country. They will receive an annual grant, subject to conditions, including demonstrating progress against key performance indicators. Each hub will have its own defined area and must serve all schools within it, although this will not prevent hubs from working with schools outside their area.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apply-to-become-a-teaching-school-hub>

Applications close on Friday 30 October at midday.

Faith schools: changes to admission arrangements due to coronavirus

Apply for a variation

If your oversubscription criteria prioritises applicants based on membership or practice of a faith, evidenced through regular attendance at a place of worship and/or at communal worship, your admission arrangements for the September 2021 intake may have been affected by the closure of places of worship due to coronavirus. If this is the case, seek a variation to your arrangements so parents are clear on what they need to do to meet the relevant criteria.

Apply for this variation as soon as possible – ideally the varied arrangements should be in place by 12 September.

Brexit preparation guidance for schools

The updated guidance for schools concerning the transition period was published on 15 October 2020.

The guidance includes:

- Recruiting and managing teachers and school staff
- School places
- Running your school
- School trips and exchanges
- EU Settlement Scheme

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/guidance-for-schools-during-the-transition-period-and-after-1-january-2021>

Relevant Documents and Guidance

- Headteacher standards <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-standards-of-excellence-for-headteachers/headteachers-standards-2020>
- DfE complaints guidance <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-complaints-procedures/best-practice-advice-for-school-complaints-procedures-2019>
- School Resource Management Toolkit <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-excellent-school-resource-management/supporting-excellent-school-resource-management>
- Planning the RSE curriculum https://www.gov.uk/guidance/plan-your-relationships-sex-and-health-curriculum?utm_source=f1af0bc9-e7cf-49c9-af96-52b7b4bbfddd&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=daily
- Schools statutory guidance <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statutory-guidance-schools>

Your "do-list"

- Review and refocus your curriculum for the autumn term, including starting to teach the RHE curriculum.
- Download and start to use the Engagement model guidance for assessing pupils working below NC level.
- Return to normal exclusions guidance from 25 September.
- Submit school census data by Wednesday 28 October 2020.
- Consider applying to become a teaching School Hub – applications close 30 October 2020
- Determine teacher's pay in line with STPCD 2020 before 31 October.

The Local Authority

Key information

Priorities for the year ahead – in addition to Covid-recovery

Clare Kershaw wrote to heads on 1st September stating that she continues to be “absolutely resolute in her commitment to achieve the highest educational outcomes as possible for the children and young people of Essex and to ensure that we have the most inclusive education system across the county.” Clare noted that: *In order to achieve these outcomes the Local Authority continues this year with the following key priorities:*

- *We will continue to work with all schools and MATs to improve the quality of education and also support the catch-up programmes that will be needed.*
- *We are refreshing the School Partnership Strategy and embedding a culture of partnership working across school improvement and outcomes for children and young people.*
- *We will continue to work with the Headteacher Roundtable to develop a suite of tools and expectations to ensure every school can be as inclusive as possible for all pupils.*
- *We will embed the new SEND teams to ensure the highest quality of support to schools and families for pupils with EHCPs and those identified as requiring SEN Support.*
- *We will deliver against the actions required in the Written Statement of Action following the SEND inspection last year, which will include a full review of the EHCP processes, and the High Needs Block spend.*
- *We will accelerate the roll out of Trauma Perceptive Practice across all schools and education establishments.*
- *We will publish a new early year’s strategy during the autumn term.*
- *We will continue to promote the safety and emotional wellbeing of all children and young people across Essex.*
- *We are reviewing all of our processes that are in place for children not in full time education and will publish an action plan in response to this review during the spring term.*
- *Finally, we will launch the Headteacher Wellbeing programme across primary, secondary and special schools.*

Education Team structure

The structure charts for each quadrant have been updated and are available on the Essex Schools Infolink at <https://schools.essex.gov.uk/info/director/Pages/default.aspx>

Each chart includes the names and contact details of key LA personnel in the quadrant team, so make sure you download and print your area team details.

There is a new SEP in West, Susan Brown.

School Comms

From next week (w/c 21 September) Education Essex will resume the weekly Monday morning newsletter, which will focus on non-Covid related information. School Comms will continue the direct emails to headteachers giving regular and up to date information related to Covid-19.

EWMHS helpline

The Emotional Wellbeing Mental Health service (EWMHS) is working with Educational Psychology Service (EPS) to provide any member of staff of Essex schools with the opportunity to discuss concerns they may have regarding the emotional wellbeing of pupils/students with an EP. The service is a confidential consultation, providing an opportunity to discuss areas of concern and develop an understanding of how to respond in these situations to better support pupils. Discussions can be around general themes. How emotional wellbeing (e.g. attachment, trauma, anxiety, bullying, autism, ADHD) may affect behaviours seen within a school environment. How to support a pupil/student via One Planning or other additional interventions. The helpline is running every Thursday morning during term time.

Please use the following email address to book a telephone consultation:

EWMHSSchoolsAdvice@essex.gov.uk

The helpline is not for discussing named pupils and the EWMHS Single Point of Access (SPA) should continue to be used for this purpose 0300 300 1600

Essex School funding consultation

The Authority has worked closely with the Finance Review Group and Schools Forum to develop the proposal to move the Essex local formula towards the National Funding Formula (NFF) over 2 years (2021/22 to 2022/23) with the exception of the primary lump sum which will move to NFF over 3 years (2021/22 to 2023/24).

Moving towards the NFF requires some significant changes to the Essex local formula and it is important for schools to understand that the proposals will create a fairer redistribution of funding between Essex schools which will vary depending on individual circumstances.

Any changes to a schools funding formula will impact positively for some schools and negatively for others. By moving towards the NFF in a phased way and during a period of increased funding, this proposal will mitigate the impact on those schools for whom the move to the 'hard' NFF would result in a decrease in funding. The LA is seeking views on the proposed phased move from the Essex local formula to the National Funding Formula (NFF) over two years (2021/22 to 2022/23), except for the primary lump sum which will move to the NFF over the next three years (2021/22 to 2023/24). This exception is proposed following discussions with the Essex Schools Forum to mitigate the full impact of the reduction in the lump sum for primary schools.

The consultation has now closed. The Schools Forum will meet on 10th November to consider the consultation responses and to make a decision about the funding formula for 2021/22.

Schools Corporate Systems Programme (CSP) Briefing September 2020

Essex County Council's current financial system, TCS, is a collection of software services managed under one contract by Fujitsu. Since the market test for TCS in 2014, the user expectation has moved on considerably, but the functionality has not advanced materially – it is 'of its time' therefore the authority's systems need to modernise. In March 2020, Cabinet agreed to procure the next generation Oracle Business System, Oracle Fusion. The main objective of the Corporate Systems Programme (CSP) is to procure the new system and implement it prior to the need to upgrade our current version of Oracle/TCS in 2021. The programme will implement an evergreen (supplier led quarterly updated) corporate system that will enable the delivery of modern high-quality HR and Finance support service in an excellent control environment.

Impact on Maintained Schools

One of the key principles of CSP is that we will adopt the capabilities of the new system and evolve the ways we work accordingly.

CSP does not have the ability to generate the monthly reconciliation reports for central payment schools in a format that will import and automatically reconcile in their individual financial accounting systems. ECC will therefore be unable to host central payment schools on CSP and all central payment schools will need to open their own external bank account for operation from the 1 April 2021.

ECC will also change its accounting periods to align to the standard calendar month, as opposed to the current month end based on the last Friday of the month. This should have minimal impact on schools; it will only affect the dates of VAT accounting periods.

Next Steps

The guidance for central payment schools opening their own bank account has been updated and is published on the Essex School Infolink. This has contact details for the individual departments within Essex County Council who will be able to answer any queries central payment schools have. Schools must comply with the Scheme for Financing Schools when opening a bank account.

All central payment schools are required to email finance.monitoring@essex.gov.uk by the end of September to confirm that they have seen this message.

ECC will publish the VAT month end dates so that maintained schools have the correct dates to input when they open the new financial year on their financial accounting system.

Juniper Education – training in the autumn term

The Juniper App is available, which is a whole suite of training resources available online that are focused on different parts of the school workforce and their needs, leadership, governance, teaching assistants, compliance and a set of courses for colleagues in pastoral roles. Primary schools can buy the whole suite for £1575 +VAT or in bundles from £200 +VAT. The license gives the school access to the courses for all members of the workforce for a year, and leaders can track progress particularly useful in relation to any courses related to compliance.

There is also free content on the App including a wellbeing course.

Details are available on the juniper website.

<https://junipereducation.org/product-category/juniper-education-app/cpd-library-bundles/>

All of the training in the autumn term will be delivered remotely, including our new NQT programme which will be a fully blended learning programme, with delivery sessions taking place between 4 and 6 in the afternoon, to minimise time out of class.

<https://junipereducation.org/nqt-training-and-support/>

Juniper HT has published a Covid exit strategy for primary schools: Making the impossible possible.

Essex Police, partnership working and the youth justice jigsaw

The Children & Young Person's Police officers (CYPs) are located within the district community policing teams. Their role focuses on reducing the risks associated with the most vulnerable children in the County. They have a lead in managing reported crimes committed in schools.

The Essex Youth Justice Team (YJT) are now established and providing a link to schools who may have policing enquiries or need to contact a CYP officer. They can often quickly resolve minor issues or answer your questions but where an officer is required, they will ensure contact is made for you. The YJT are available to answer your queries Monday to Saturday 8am to 8pm and can be contacted at:

youth.justice.team@essex.police.uk

The attached document (available on the EPHA website <https://essexprimaryheads.co.uk/info-and-documents/local-authority/>) provides details of the CYP officers across the County with their email addresses – please DO NOT email reports of crimes or urgent information as this may not be actioned immediately. As officers are not always on duty, it may be easier to email the YJT who will assist with your enquiry on the day and discuss your needs by a return phone call where necessary. If you wish to report a crime, this should be via Essex Police Website or using 101. In an emergency, 999.

As schools return to opening after lockdown, there may be issues that cause concern – safeguarding, information around criminal exploitation or refusals to return to education.

Relevant Documents and Guidance

- Education Essex – weekly newsletter
- Information about the new School Effectiveness Team structure
<http://schools.essex.gov.uk/info/director/Pages/default.aspx>
-

Your “do-list”

- Keep an eye out for the rollout of the Headteacher Wellbeing programme, including guidance for governors
- Make a note of the new Education Team members in your quadrant and contact them if you need support, advice or guidance – download your quadrant structure chart.
- Use the EWMHS helpline (Thursday mornings) if you need general advice and support.
- Respond to the Essex School Funding consultation – closes 16th October.
- Make a note of your Children & Young Person's Police officer contact details.
- If a central payment school, make arrangements to open your own external bank account for operation from 1 April 2021.
- Consider using the online training from Juniper Education.
- If you are a subscriber to Juniper, download the Covid exit strategy for primary schools.
- Attend the termly headteachers' meeting –online this term- to be kept up to date on LA plans, strategy and information
- Make sure you read/see Education Essex each week and continue to receive Covid-related emails from School Comms

HR Information

Key information

School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document 2020

Timescales

- The draft STPCD was published on 24 July 2020
- The statutory consultation period runs to mid-September.
- The TPCD Order is then laid before Parliament for 21 days before being enacted.
- Final document has been published, though still needs royal assent.

While it is extremely rare for the Document to change during consultation, schools should not apply the pay changes until the final document is published in October.

The main changes to the Document and accompanying guidance since 2018 make provision for the September 2019 pay award and the devolution of teachers' pay arrangements in Wales from September 2018 as referred to above.

What's changing?

From September 2020:

- The minimum of the main pay range will be raised by 5.5%
- The maximum of the main pay range and the minima and maxima of all other pay ranges and allowances will be increased by 2.75%

This is equivalent to a 3.1% increase to the overall pay bill.

Advisory pay points will be introduced to the main and upper pay ranges to help you create a pay progression pathway.

Which teachers does this affect?

All teachers employed under the terms of the [School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document \(STPCD\)](#).

The STPCD applies to all teachers in maintained schools, including:

- Senior leaders, such as headteachers
- SENCOs
- Part-time teachers
- Non-agency supply teachers

For academies, the STPCD applies to any teachers whose employment transferred from a maintained school to an academy at the point of conversion and there's been no further renegotiation of their contract.

For other teachers in academies, check their contracts and your own pay policy to see if they're employed under the terms of the STPCD. This will tell you whether you need to apply these uplifts.

Which teachers will need to have their pay raised?

Any teacher who is currently being paid below the new minimum of their pay or allowance range must have their pay uplifted.

Teachers paid elsewhere on the range, including at the current maximum, don't necessarily need to have their pay uplifted. However, your school must decide how to take account of the pay uplifts in accordance with your pay policy.

What about the advisory pay points?

The government hasn't set official pay points in teacher pay ranges since 2013, so this is a change, although some schools have continued to use pay points as part of their pay policy. However, the government's pay points are only 'advisory' and your school likely won't be required to use them if it doesn't want to.

See the annex to the government's [written statement](#) for their proposed pay points.

What about support staff?

Support staff, including school business managers and teaching assistants, are not affected by these uplifts as they are not covered by the STPCD. Pay for support staff is determined by either your local authority or your own school or trust.

Who is paying for these rises?

There's no separate pay grant this time. The government is expecting your school to cover the costs from its own budget, but it believes that on average it'll be affordable due to increased core funding. A grant for both pay and pensions has been added to the school budget (see Essex financing, below)

What do schools need to do?

The STPCD is mandatory for Maintained schools. Academies are not obliged to follow its provisions and should follow their own Pay Policies. Many academies do however choose to still follow the TPCD.

Schools will need to:

- Ensure the increases are applied to the minima of all Pay Ranges and Allowances
- Decide whether or not to adopt the Advisory Pay Points for the Main and Upper Pay Ranges

- And if not, what increases will be applied above the minima
- If adopting the Advisory Pay Points, consider how assimilation from your current pay structures to the advisory structures will be achieved,
- Do the sums – to work out the real cost of any changes

Staff and Local Union Reps will need to be consulted on your proposals, prior to formal updating of local Pay Policies.

A draft Model Pay Policy will be available from the week commencing 21 September, which schools can use to start considering and consulting on. However, this shouldn't be finally approved until the final STPCD has been published.

Performance management and appraisal

The DfE position is here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-school-closures/guidance-for-schools-about-temporarily-closing#pay>.

Maintained schools must continue to adhere to the School Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD), which includes the requirement to ensure that all pay progression for teachers is linked to performance management. DfE expects schools to use their discretion and take pragmatic steps to adapt performance management and appraisal arrangements to take account of the current circumstances. Schools must ensure that teachers are not penalised during the appraisal process or in respect of any subsequent pay progression decisions as a result of the decision to restrict pupil attendance at schools, such as where this has had an impact on the ability of the teacher to meet fully their objectives.

Appraisals and performance management for support staff should be carried out in accordance with the employee's contract of employment. DfE does not specify pay or terms and conditions of employment for support staff.

Schools should continue to follow their performance management and pay procedures and exercise discretion in taking pragmatic steps to make appropriate adjustments to take account of the current circumstances.

Support Staff Pay

On 25th August we received confirmation that the Local Government (NJC) pay award had been agreed. The award is a 2.75% increase on all pay points and an extra day's leave for those (and only those) currently in receipt of the minimum FTE contractual leave. The increases in pay and leave are backdated to 1 April 2020. For more information including what schools need to do, please read the Juniper guidance.

Covid-19 HR FAQs

Last update was 5 October, for school re-opening in September. Includes information about new regulations: The Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Self-Isolation) (England) Regulations 2020 are complex. They set out mandatory periods for self-isolation, and a duty to notify the Secretary of State of the names of people in the same household as anyone who has tested positive for Covid-19.

The important element for employers is regulation 7. This makes it an offence for an employer to knowingly permit a worker (including an agency worker) to attend any place other than where the individual is self-isolating. This includes individuals who are required to self-isolate because they live with someone who has tested positive. So, if an employer knows a worker has tested positive (or lives with someone who has tested positive), it is now responsible for stopping the worker from working (unless they can work from home). Any employer who fails to do so will face a fine, starting at £1,000.

There is also an obligation on the worker to *tell* their employer that they are self-isolating (reg 8). Any individual who breaches self-isolation will, normally, commit a separate criminal offence (reg 11).

Relevant Documents and Guidance

DfE page on school teachers' pay and conditions

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-teachers-pay-and-conditions>

Juniper HR (subscribing schools)

<https://junipereducation.org/education-hr/>

Your "do-list"

- Make decisions on teachers' inflationary pay award and apply these (following royal assent).
- Apply the support staff pay awards, backdating to 1st April 2020
- Complete performance management for teachers
- Continue to refer to the most recent FAQ advice relating to Covid-19

School policies and the website

Key information

This term you need to review and adopt:

- Child Protection Policy – a new CP policy has been produced, relating to the new version of Keeping Children Safe in Education 2020 (August 2020)
- Dealing with safeguarding allegations against adults – new HR policy September 2020 required by KCSiE
- Pay Policy – HR model September 2020 (*not available until STPCD is published*)
- Performance Management Policy – (current HR model 2016)
- Attendance Policy – updated to reflect changes due to Covid-19
- Behaviour Policy – updated to reflect changes due to Covid-19
- RSE Policy – implementation now delayed until Summer 2021, but you may want to adopt this policy now – all schools must have a policy in place for summer
- Discipline and dismissal – new HR policy September 2020
- Data protection privacy notices – updated versions are available on the DfE website

Current HR policy list for schools, academies and free schools – Juniper Education

Policy or procedure	Mandatory or recommended	Current edition
Agency workers regulations		June 2013
Capability procedure for all staff	Mandatory	August 2020
Code of conduct	Required by KCSiE	June 2019
Cover and PPA	Recommended	April 2019
Dealing with safeguarding allegations against adults	Mandatory	September 2020
Discipline and Dismissal	Mandatory	September 2020
Equality and Diversity in Employment	Recommended	May 2018
Flexible Working	Recommended	May 2018
Grievance	Mandatory	April 2019
Inducting NQTs	Mandatory	February 2020
Leave of Absence (and guidance)	Recommended	April 2020
Mental health and wellbeing	Recommended	January 2020
Pay Policy	Mandatory	September 2020
Performance Management (all staff)	Recommended	May 2018
Pre-employment checks		May 2018
Probation procedure	Recommended	March 2019
Recruitment	Mandatory	April 2020
Redundancy and restructuring	Recommended	October 2018
Redundancy and restructuring – Essex maintained schools	Mandatory	October 2019
Sickness Absence management	Recommended	January 2019
Sabbatical	Recommended	October 2020
Whistleblowing	Mandatory	May 2018

DfE privacy notice explanation guidance, and updated texts

This document explains the importance of using a privacy notice to educational establishments and local authorities. It contains information to explain what a privacy notice is, when it should be issued and what information we would expect it to contain. In addition, the DfE has provided updated suggested text for privacy notices for pupils, the school workforce, and school and trust governance roles. The guidance states: Privacy Notices should be reviewed by your data protection officer on at least an annual basis and should also be reviewed whenever you make a significant change to how you process personal data.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/data-protection-and-privacy-privacy-notices#history>

Website and policy checklists

I have updated the website and policy checklists for both maintained schools and academies – available on the EPHA website. Key change on the website checklist is that, from January 2021, maintained schools will have to publish the number of individuals earning over £100k, in £10k bandings, annually; and also a link to the 'school's financial benchmarking' website.

<https://essexprimaryheads.co.uk/info-and-documents/model-policies/>

Relevant Documents and Guidance

- HR list of policies for schools, academies and free schools available on the secure log in of EES <http://www.eesforschools.org>
- DfE website requirements <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-maintained-schools-must-publish-online>
- EPHA website requirements checklists <https://essexprimaryheads.co.uk/info-and-documents/model-policies/>
- EPHA statutory policy checklists <https://essexprimaryheads.co.uk/info-and-documents/model-policies/>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>

Your “do-list”

- Adopt the new Child Protection Policy (August 2020) personalised with your own school's procedures
- Review and adopt a policy on Dealing with safeguarding allegations against adults
- Adopt Pay and Performance Management Policies for the year ahead (but wait for the 2020 pay policy)
- Update your policies with the most up to date versions of the HR policies (if you buy in to Essex HR), including the new Dismissal and Discipline Policy.
- Read the new Privacy notice guidance and update your privacy notices.
- Check the EPHA statutory policy lists to ensure that your schedule is complete – September 2020
- Update your website in line with most recent guidance, using the checklists provided by EPHA – September 2020

School and Academy Governance

Key information

Governance handbook

The Governance Handbook is where the government sets out what good governance should look like, including the role and functions of governing boards. It applies to maintained schools and academies.

The 2020 update included information on:

- Risk assessments – in light of coronavirus, the handbook outlines that as a board you should make sure that adequate risk assessments are carried out and reviewed, and that appropriate protective measures are in place
- Governing remotely – you're encouraged to review your governance arrangements regularly to be sure your board is flexible enough to deal with future challenges
- Clerking – the handbook highlights how effective boards need clerks who are governance professionals, with the knowledge to give advice, guidance and administrative support
- Board diversity – the importance of boards properly reflecting the diversity of the communities they serve is emphasised, and how this should be considered when recruiting new governors
- Teaching school hubs (TSH) – the DfE will designate TSHs in January 2021, so the decommissioning of teaching schools and commissioning of TSHs may have an impact on your financial planning
- Health and safety – responsibility depends on whether you're the employer, but your board should monitor and review any health and safety policies
- Political bias – your board needs to be aware that staff have a responsibility to act appropriately at all times, including in terms of the views they express (in particular political views) and use of school resources
- Access to the Teachers' Pension Scheme (TPS) – only staff who predominantly carry out teaching duties qualify for the scheme, so your board will need to consider whether executive leaders meet TPS eligibility requirements
- School security – your board needs to make sure that your school has a plan in place to manage not only premises security, but also biometric data and cyber security

Governor role descriptions

The DfE has also published new guidance on structures and roles for governors in maintained school and academies – it doesn't introduce any new requirements, but contains fuller descriptions of a few of the roles on your board.

Autumn term governing body business

Governing bodies should review and adopt the following governance documents/undertake the following tasks annually– usually in the autumn term.

- Governor code of conduct
- Data consent form
- Standing orders for the governing body
- Delegation/decision planner
- Personal and pecuniary interests (business interests)
- Terms of reference for all committees (standing and statutory)
- Governors' handbook and/or induction pack (if used)
- Election of Chair and Vice-Chair of Governors (depending on the length of term of office determined by the Board)
- Governors roles and responsibilities

Contact LAGovernance@essex.gov.uk to let the Local Authority know of any key changes to Governing Body membership.

Governor/trustee visits and meetings

While school visits are possible, the DfE says these should happen outside school hours where possible. Use your risk assessment to determine how you'll organise governor/trustee visits and when in-person school visits can resume. Once you've decided, inform your board of your plans.

Maintained schools – upcoming changes to financial regulations being introduced in 2021

The changes are based on the government response to the 2019 consultation on financial transparency of local authority (LA) maintained schools.

Submit a 3-year budget forecast to your LA

When: Between 30 May and 1 June of each year, **starting in 2021/22**

There'll understandably be a degree of uncertainty when your school provides a 3-year forecast, so the Department for Education (DfE) recommends your school plans for a range of scenarios. When you're presented with the budget to approve each year from 2021/22, it should feature a 3-year forecast.

This is set out in the government response to proposal 3.

Record and declare related party transactions (RPTs)

When: By the end of the financial year 2021/22 (i.e. submitted to LAs by the end of March 2022)

Your school will be required to attach a list of RPTs to their response to the new question in the Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) about their arrangements for managing RPTs.

There'll be additional columns in the chief financial officer (CFO) assurance statement where they'll need to declare the number of RPTs and value of each.

This is set out in the government response to proposal 4a.

What is an RPT? It's where your school awards a contract to a person or body that has close links with your school. For example, if a governor or member of staff has a stake in a company bidding for a contract to be awarded by the school, they must declare the interest and not take part in the procurement procedure. For more information, see question 24 of the SFVS checklist guidance.

Submit a recovery plan to your LA if your deficit rises above 5%

When: When deficits are measured as of 31 March 2021, the 5% trigger will apply

5% is the absolute minimum deficit threshold at which your school will be **required** by the government to submit a recovery plan.

However, your LA can request that your school submit a recovery plan for any level of deficit.

This is set out in the government response to proposal 6.

Publish the number of individuals earning over £100k, in £10k bandings, annually on your school's website

When: From 1 January 2021 (initially planned for September 2020, but delayed due to COVID-19)

Your school can publish contextual information alongside this, but it's not compulsory that they do.

This is set out in the government response to proposal 7.

Publish a link to the 'schools financial benchmarking' website on your school's website

When: From 1 January 2021

Your school will be required to publish **a link** on its website to the schools financial benchmarking website, where its consistent financial reporting (CFR) statement of income, expenditure and balances is already published.

Your school doesn't need to publish its CFR statement itself annually on the school website.

Academies Financial Handbook 2020

The 2020 Academies Financial Handbook came into effect on 1 September 2020.

These are trust level-responsibilities, so if you're:

A trustee, in either a single or multi-academy trust, you will be ultimately accountable for these changes (though the operational issues will fall to the trust leadership team)

A local governor at a school in a trust, the responsibility for these changes depends on which responsibilities are delegated. Different trusts have different schemes of delegation.

Governance

The updated handbook confirms that:

Trusts must appoint a clerk to the board (paragraph 1.40) - in the 2019 AFH this was a 'should'

Members can't be employees of the trust (1.4) - this was also the case previously unless permitted in the trust's articles of association. This previous exception will expire on 1 March 2021, when there will be a complete ban. The updated handbook also confirms that members must not occupy staff establishment roles as a volunteer

Executive team

Your trust is still required to appoint an accounting officer and a chief financial officer (CFO), but the updated handbook confirms:

- Both should be employees of the trust (1.26 and 1.36)
- Your trust must get approval from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) if, in exceptional circumstances, you want to appoint an accounting officer or CFO who isn't a trust employee (1.26 and 1.36)

Executive pay: new publication requirements

Your trust will be required to publish information on the number of employees whose benefits exceed £100,000

'Benefits' include salary, other taxable benefits and termination payments, but not your trust's own pension costs (2.32).

From September, your trust should publish this information:

- On its website in a separate readily accessible form
- In £10,000 bandings
- As an extract of its financial statements for the previous year that ended on 31 August

If the employee is also a trustee, their salary and other benefits will also be disclosed in £5,000 bandings in your trust's financial statements, as set out in the [Academies Accounts Direction](#).

Internal scrutiny: new guidance

The updated handbook states that your trust's **external auditor can no longer also carry out your internal audits**, in line with the Financial Reporting Council's revised [Ethical Standards](#) (3.17). There are transitional arrangements which permit existing audit engagements at 15 March 2020 to conclude.

However, the handbook clarifies that when doing internal scrutiny, your trust can use 'other individuals or organisations' where you require specialist non-financial knowledge' (3.18).

A new committee: audit and risk

From September, your trust is required to appoint an **audit and risk committee** (3.6) - in the 2019 handbook this was the audit committee.

As previously, this committee:

- Must be a standalone committee in trusts that have an annual income of over £50 million
- May be combined with another committee for other trusts (such as the finance committee)

Membership requirements also remain the same as in previous years.

Your audit and risk committee has 2 primary functions:

1. Internal scrutiny

As in previous years, the committee must direct your trust's programme of internal scrutiny and report to the board on the adequacy of your trust's internal control framework. However, the audit and risk committee will now also have to:

Ensure that risks are being addressed appropriately through internal scrutiny (3.8)

There's also a subtle change to committee operations, from 'review the risk register' to 'review the ratings and responses on the risk register' to clarify what information should inform the committee's programme of work (3.12).

2. External audit oversight and findings

The audit and risk committee has extensive oversight powers (4.17) and **must**:

- Review the external auditor's plan each year
- Review the annual report and accounts
- Review the auditor's findings and actions taken by the trust's managers in response to those findings
- Assess the effectiveness and resources of the external auditor. Considerations may include:
 - The auditor's sector expertise
 - Their understanding of the trust and its activities
 - Whether the audit process allows issues to be raised in a timely way
 - The quality of auditor comments and recommendations in key areas
 - The personal authority, knowledge and integrity of the audit partners and their staff to interact effectively with, and robustly challenge, your trust's managers
 - The auditor's use of technology
- Produce an annual report of the committee's conclusions to the trustees and members, including recommendations on:
 - Whether to reappoint or dismiss the external auditor
 - How much to pay the external auditor

Self-assessment: a new requirement

Your trust **must** complete the [School resource management self-assessment tool](#) and submit the completed checklist to the ESFA annually (6.8).

Other, minor changes introduced in the handbook

The other changes from the 2019 to 2020 handbook are relatively minor - they mostly either add additional details or change the wording of certain paragraphs.

The minor changes

- There's new text on the board and committee responsibilities for risk management (2.38), specifically that:
 - Trustees maintain overall responsibility for risk management and maintaining the risk register
 - Trustees must review the register at least annually (in addition to any reviews by individual committees)
 - Risk management covers the full operations of the trust, not only financial risks
 - Clarification that internal scrutiny covers **both** financial and non-financial controls (3.1)
 - Requirement for your trust to publish its whistle-blowing procedure on its website (2.44)
 - Confirmation that trustees must keep members informed about trust business. This includes providing

audited accounts to members - this was already a requirement under the Companies Act and in the 2019 handbook but has been highlighted again in the section called 'Working with the trustees' (1.8)

- Trusts have already been warned against becoming overdrawn, but the handbook now explains that doing so could breach restrictions on borrowing (2.24)
- Confirmation that trustees must keep the register of interests up to date (5.46) (in the 2019 handbook this was a 'should')
- The financial control framework must now include maintaining a fixed asset register (2.7)

The really minor changes

- Larger trusts should seek CFOs with qualified accountancy qualifications from professional bodies (e.g. the ICAEW, ACCA, CIMA or CIPFA), and all trusts should encourage their current CFO to maintain continuing professional development (1.37 to 1.38)
- Trustees should challenge pupil number estimates and review them termly (2.12)
- Trusts are encouraged to use the government's guidance on integrated curriculum and financial planning to create the best curriculum for pupils with available funding (2.13)
- Trust funds must not be used to purchase alcohol, except for use in religious services (2.35)

Get Information About Schools

An updated version of GIAS was released on 2 September. Please make sure you update your school and Governing Body information on the website.

<https://get-information-schools.service.gov.uk/news>

Governing in unprecedented times

This report from the NGA and Ofsted presents findings of a small-scale research project to investigate the challenges for school governance during the COVID-19 (coronavirus) pandemic. The research was carried out with the National Governance Association (NGA) and sought to understand the decisions and actions of governors and trustees in response to the short- and longer-term challenges presented by lockdown measures in England.

Relevant Documents and Guidance

- Academies Financial Handbook 2020 <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/academies-financial-handbook>
- "Get information about schools" <https://www.get-information-schools.service.gov.uk/>
- National Governors Association <http://www.nga.org.uk/Home.aspx>
https://www.eescpdportal.org/essex-qov/cpd/content_detail.asp?contentid=676
- Governing in unprecedented times

Your "do-list"

- Ensure that the annual governance tasks are on the agenda in the autumn term
- If you are a maintained school, plan for the changes to finance accountability coming in 2021
- If you are an academy, ensure that you introduce the changes within the 2020 financial handbook
- Access the information system for schools –and check and update yours if necessary
- Tell the LA about key changes to membership, particularly chair and vice-chair appointments.
- Circulate the NGA/Ofsted report about governance during the pandemic to your governors.

EPHA events and dates

Key information

This term 38 primary schools in Essex have new headteachers – 11 of them in South

Steve Bowsher	Larchwood Primary, (Interim headteacher)
Annie Bristow	Wickford CE Infants, Hearts Academy (Joint acting head)
Sandra Dorrington	Canvey Island Infants
Pippa Edlin	Downham CE Primary (Acting Co-head)
Ben Figg	Northlands Primary and Nursery
Miriam Gould	Buttsbury Infants
Vicky Gray	South Green Infants
Jo Hickey	St Teresa's Catholic Primary
Noreen Hurley	Holy Family Catholic Primary (Acting)
Lynne Kapovic	Rayleigh Primary
Becky Tarplett	Wickford CE Infants, Hearts Academy (Joint acting head)
Val Wisdom	Blackmore Primary (Acting headteacher)

7 of them in North East

Koulla Anslow	Lakeland Primary School
Bill Aylott	Fingringhoe CE Primary (Interim joint head)
Alice Constantine	Kingswode Hoe School
Alex Candler	Gosbecks Primary (interim)
Mark Carter-Tufnell	Mistley Norman Primary
Becky Maguire	St Joseph's Catholic Primary, Dovercourt (was head of school, now substantive headteacher)
Hayley Rollings	Fingringhoe CE Primary (Interim joint head)

11 of them in Mid

Andy Chambers	Kings Road Primary (Acting head of school)
Nick Cockburn	Baddow Hall Juniors
Pippa Edlin	Downham CE Primary (Co-head)
Nick Hancock	St Peter's CE Primary, Sible Hedingham
Hannah McCann	St Peter's CE Primary, West Hanningfield
Lois Osbourne	Larkrise Primary
Melissa Raymond	Finchingfield CE Primary (Acting head of school)
Neil Stotter	Purleigh Primary
Kirsty Stuart	Ridgewell CE Primary
Theresa Walker	St Mary's CE Primary, Woodham Ferrers
Cath Williams	Oaklands Infants

9 of them in West

Dale Bateman	Dr Walker's CE Primary, Fyfield
Claire Kearney	William Martin Schools (Head of School)
James Kenyon	Water Lane Primary Academy
Ann Grisley	White Bridge Primary
Sami Taylor	Limes Farm Infants (Acting head)
Helen Russell	Chipping Ongar Primary
Charmaine Ward	Newhall Primary Academy
Barry Watkins	Water Lane Primary Academy (Acting head)
Nikki Willis	Flitch Green Academy, Dunmow

The EPHA Colleague Supporter programme is for new and acting headteachers in primary-phase schools and for established headteachers who are new to Essex

A Colleague Supporter is someone a new headteacher can rely on and talk to in complete confidence, about the early days of headship, their worries, what they 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 a new head is facing, as well as knowing the satisfaction and sense of pride that the role gives every head.

For more information, or if you know of a new or acting headteacher who recently has started in post, please contact Pam Langmead at pam@langmead.me.uk

The dates for **termly headteacher meetings for the year ahead**, in a spirit of optimism, are:

North East EPHA – Colchester United Football Stadium

Wednesday 11 November 2020 – *this meeting will be held via Zoom*

Wednesday 3 March 2021

Wednesday 16 June 2021

South EPHA – Holiday Inn, Basildon

Thursday 12 November 2020 – *this meeting will be held via Zoom*

Thursday 4 March 2021

Thursday 17 June 2021

West EPHA – Stansted Business Centre, Takeley

Wednesday 18 November 2020 – *this meeting will be held via Zoom*

Wednesday 10 March 2021

Wednesday 23 June 2021

Mid EPHA – Chelmsford City Football Club

Thursday 19 November 2020 – *this meeting will be held via Zoom*

Thursday 11 March 2021

Thursday 24 June 2021

We have taken the decision that the meetings in November 2020 will be held online – given the current guidelines about social gatherings and the pressures on schools, we believe that it would be irresponsible to hold meetings at the venues. However, we do want headteachers to have a chance to receive an update from Clare Kershaw and other LA officers, as well as information from EPHA. I will send out Zoom invitations to the four quadrant meetings just after half term.

County EPHA Annual General Meeting

Wednesday 7 October 2020 Virtual meeting (9.00 am start)

Michelle Winter, Senior Eastern Region HMI, will be attending the AGM to talk to Essex heads.

Conferences

Deputy Headteachers' conference – Friday 2 October 2020 – Colchester Football Stadium

The Deputy and Assistant Heads' conference was held online this year, but we had a great line up of speakers, including Lord Robert Winston, Drew Povey, Jaz Ampaw-Farr, and workshops led by Ben Amponsah (on managing anxiety), Michelle Winter (the future of Ofsted) and Jonathan Lear (the post-Covid curriculum). Around 180 deputies attended the conference.

Headteachers' conference – Friday 19 March 2021 – to be held online (programme will be sent out in January 2020). Sadly, we have made the decision that the conference will have to be held online in March, as the likelihood of returning to normal in respect of large gatherings and social distancing is unlikely. We promise an amazing line up of speakers for you to enjoy.

EPHA Primary Headteachers' Support Directory

The document can be found on the EPHA website at <https://essexprimaryheads.co.uk/info-and-documents/welcome-pack/>

Relevant Documents and Guidance

- EPHA website www.essexprimaryheads.co.uk
- What headteachers get in return for their EPHA contribution 2020/21
- <https://essexprimaryheads.co.uk/about/constitution-and-finance/>
- EPHA Headteachers' Support Directory
- Pam Langmead pam@langmead.me.uk 01621 786359/07791 143277

Your "do-list"

- Be kind to new colleagues (and existing ones!)
- Access the presentation about Ofsted visits from Michelle Winter, recorded at the AGM.
- Use the Zoom invitation to join the termly headteacher meeting in your quadrant.
- Download the updated EPHA Support Directory for primary heads.
- Contact Pam Langmead, EPHA Professional Officer, at pam@langmead.me.uk for any support or information that you need