



Spring term briefing 2021

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Covid-19

Key information

The DfE has re-published its 'guidance on full opening' with some new detail and clarifications, and under a new name: [Restricting attendance during the national lockdown: schools](#).

What's new

Who can attend school

Children with at least one parent or carer who is a [critical worker](#) can go to school if required. This includes children who have another parent working from home.

There's no limit to the number of children of critical workers that can attend.

You can ask for evidence (like an ID badge or payslip) to prove someone is a critical worker.

However, do note the sentence included in the guidance – updated on 8th January (page 25) which now states:

Parents and carers who are critical workers should keep their children at home if they can.

Pupils struggling to engage in remote education may be classed as [vulnerable](#) and able to attend in person.

- Nurseries, maintained nursery schools and nursery classes in school should remain open to all
- You're expected to allow all children to attend full time or their usual hours (but only vulnerable children and children of critical workers should attend on-site reception classes)
- Alternative provision and special schools should encourage pupils to attend

Where you can't provide your usual interventions and provision at adequate staffing ratios, you should resume as close as possible to the pupil's specified provision as soon as possible.

Minimum expectations for remote education have increased

It's now:

- KS1: 3 hours a day on average across the cohort (with less for younger children)
- KS2: 4 hours a day (this used to be 3 hours across all primary phases)
- KS3 and KS4: 5 hours a day (this used to be 4 hours)

You're also expected to:

Use a digital education platform

- Provide both recorded or live direct teaching time and independent tasks (you don't need to record video lessons yourself - you can use [Oak National Academy](#))
- Help pupils overcome barriers to digital access (but you're probably doing this already), for example by distributing laptops and providing printed resources
- Have systems to check daily whether pupils are engaging with their work (this used to be weekly)
- Have a named senior leader who has overarching responsibility for the quality and delivery of remote education

As you know, Gavin Williamson announced that parents should contact Ofsted if they had concerns about a school's remote education offer – much to everyone's fury, and Ofsted's surprise. Read this excellent article in Schools Week about how many parents have responded:

<https://schoolsweek.co.uk/ofsted-deluged-with-5000-emails-as-parents-turn-tables-on-williamson-by-reporting-superb-schools/>

All statutory KS1 and KS2 tests and teacher assessments are cancelled

This includes the KS2 tests in reading and maths that were previously planned to go ahead this summer. But the DfE strongly encourages you to continue to assess children, so you can provide annual reports to parents and support transition to secondary school. See page 55 of the guidance. It notes: *The Standards and Testing Agency will update its guidance as soon as possible.*

In summary, the document clarifies

- You should review your risk assessment and treat it as a 'living document' - which you're probably doing already
- You're best placed to determine what workforce you need in your school - staff not in school

should work from home where possible

- Clinically extremely vulnerable staff should not attend school
- Clinically vulnerable staff can continue to attend where they can't work from home
- Pregnant staff should work from home where possible
- You should review your child protection policy to reflect the move to remote education for most pupils
- GCSEs, AS and A Level exams are cancelled - Ofqual will consult on alternative arrangements
- Free school meals - you'll be provided with extra funding to provide food parcels, and the national voucher scheme will re-start
- Parents will be able to report their concerns about the quality of remote education to Ofsted (if they can't resolve them with the school)
- You can still sign up for and use the [National Tutoring Programme](#) during partial closure
- You should make adjustments to your fire drill to allow for social distancing
- You can decide whether to relax your uniform policy
- You'll continue to receive your core funding allocation

February half-term (DfE announcement on 26 January 2021)

Schools will close as usual over February half-term and are not expected to remain open to vulnerable children and the children of critical workers during that week.

Schools do not need to provide lunch parcels or vouchers during the February half-term. There is wider government support in place to support families and children outside of term-time through the [Covid Winter Grant Scheme](#). The £170 million scheme is being run by local authorities in England, with at least 80% of the funding earmarked to support with food and essential utility costs and will cover the period to the end of March 2021. It will allow local authorities to directly help the hardest-hit families and individuals over the winter period. Local authorities have local ties and knowledge, making them best placed to identify and help those children and families most in need.

Contact tracing over the February half-term

Schools continue to play an important role in contact tracing for those pupils and staff who continue to attend their school. We recognise the challenges of this responsibility during holidays. Given limited numbers on-site, we expect contact tracing activity to be reduced but this remains vitally important in the continued national effort to limit the spread of the virus.

Where pupils or staff still attending their school test positive for coronavirus (COVID-19) during the holidays, having developed symptoms more than 48 hours since being in school, schools are not required to take any action. Staff, parents and carers should follow contact tracing instructions provided by NHS Test and Trace. However, where pupils or staff still attending their school test positive having developed symptoms within 48 hours of being in school, the school is asked to assist in identifying close contacts and advising self-isolation, as the individual may have been infectious whilst in school.

Staff responsible for contact tracing are not asked to be on-call at all times and may designate a limited period in the day to receive notification of positive cases and advise close contacts to self-isolate (this can be done by text or email).

Where schools can do so, staff assuming responsibility for contact tracing during half-term can be offered equivalent time off at an agreed point during term time.

The Department for Education coronavirus (COVID-19) helpline and the PHE Advice Service will remain open over the February half-term to answer any questions you have about coronavirus (COVID-19) relating to education settings and children's social care.

Testing over half-term

Where schools are regularly testing staff, this does not need to take place during the holidays and can resume after the half-term.

Lateral Flow Tests in primary and maintained nursery schools

The government has announced the rollout of Lateral Flow tests (LFT) to all primary-phase schools and maintained nursery schools, in order to test all staff and identify positive, but asymptomatic, cases of Covid-19. The following information was shared at a webinar on 18th January:

From 18/01/21 sets of LFTs will be delivered to schools. Each school will receive enough packs of 7 tests, for each member of staff, which should be sufficient for 3-4 weeks. The plan is that all staff (who are attending the workplace and choose to take part) will be tested twice a week, self-administering the test at home before they come into work.

The process was explained in steps:

- The school should set up a Test Kit log, identify a Covid-coordinator, set up a collection process, update the risk assessment (e.g. testing procedure, non-reporting, poor update)
- School receives the tests, records the batch numbers, and sets up a Test Log.
- Staff member opts in, reads the key information and the privacy notice.
- Individual collects their test kit pack and signs for it.
- Staff member self-administers the test at home, before coming into work.
- After 30 minutes they check the test result:
 - If negative – they can go to work and should inform the school of the test result
 - If positive – they must self-isolate for 10 days, inform Test and Trace, book a PCR test as a follow up and inform the school of the test result.
 - If void – they should take another test
- The school should record the result for each member of staff.
- The member of staff takes the next test 3-4 days later (but not if they are isolating at home).
- About a week before they run out, schools should re-order the next batch of tests for their staff.

How to test, register and report results

The DfE guidance gives detailed and graphic information about how to use the test kits. It is preferable for staff to take the test in the morning, but can be done the night before (*this may well be a much more practical solution*).

Test kit log – needs to include: name of school, name of person issuing the test, date of issue, lot number of test kit, confirm receipt of the new instructions for use, name of person using the test. Individuals must report their results online to NHS Test and Trace using the Covid-19 test results website or phoning 119. **They must do this even if the result is negative or void.**

Individuals must report their result to the school. Schools should manage their own, locally managed and separate register.

Guidance documents include:

- How-to Guide: Rapid testing of Primary and Nursery Workforce
- Your step by step guidance for Covid-19 self-testing
- Instructional video on YouTube for those taking the test.

DfE guidance on Safeguarding and remote education during coronavirus (COVID-19)

Understand how to follow safeguarding procedures when planning remote education strategies and teaching remotely during the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-and-remote-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

Free school meals

Updated guidance published 8th January

Under normal circumstances, schools do not provide free school meals to eligible children who are not in school. But during the national lockdown, DfE expects schools to continue supporting children eligible for benefits-related free school meals who are at home during term time. The DfE strongly encourages schools to work with their school catering team or food provider to provide food parcels to eligible free school meal pupils who are at home. Where school kitchens are open this should be the approach taken by schools.

The steps schools take during this national lockdown period will depend on local circumstances.

This could include:

- providing food parcels through the school catering team or food provider
- providing vouchers for a local shop or supermarket
- using the Department for Education's national voucher scheme, which will reopen shortly

Vouchers will only be available through the national voucher scheme from the point it re-opens, however, any support provided since 4 January 2021 through food parcels or locally arranged vouchers can be claimed back from DfE.

Schools will continue to receive their expected funding for benefits-related free school meals throughout this period. To recognise the additional cost of provision for pupils at home, schools will be able to claim additional funding:

- up to £3.50 per eligible pupil, per week, where food parcels are being provided – we strongly encourage this approach where it is feasible
- up to £15 per eligible pupil, per week, where vouchers for local shops or supermarkets are being provided

Schools should only claim for one of these approaches for each week. Further details on how and when additional costs can be reclaimed will be provided shortly.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-free-school-meals-guidance>

Universal coronavirus catch-up premium

Schools have received 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.

Make sure that you are keeping a record of how the premium is being allocated and spent and, eventually, the impact. You should be reporting regularly to governors – make this a regular agenda item. The Key has a good template that you could use to report the use of the premium.

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.

<https://nationaltutoring.org.uk/ntp-tuition-partners>

DfE Laptop Scheme Update

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

More laptops and tablets available in 2021

DfE is increasing the help available through its [get help with technology](#) programme. This includes:

- providing hundreds of thousands more laptops and tablets – reaching a total of more than 1 million
- supporting disadvantaged 16 to 19 year olds in further education

DfE will contact schools, colleges, trusts and local authorities when they're able to order these devices during the spring term 2021.

Remote learning: alternative methods for providing laptops

Closing the Digital Divide – ECC scheme

Following on from the DfE 'Get Help with Technology' scheme that opened last year, we were aware that this scheme did not cover all groups of children and young people who may need support accessing remote learning. Essex County Council have therefore launched their own scheme 'Closing the Digital Divide'.

The scheme was initially launched in August last year to take old unused devices from the public and businesses across Essex and our ECC supply chain, clean them, make them good and then distribute those devices to children and young people. However, things moved rather quickly at the end of 2020 with cases increasing rapidly and we knew we did not have enough to support immediate demands. Essex have therefore invested in 5000 devices to be provided to children who need them. These devices are at no cost to the family and will not be required to be returned to school or ECC once the children return to school. They are to assist the child, not only with remote offer during lockdown, but to provide them with long term access to IT. We would like them to be distributed to families as if they had bought their own device from a shop and taken it home to keep.

Progress so far

We have so far distributed 2400 devices to colleges and secondary schools across the County with a further 600 being distributed this week to our remaining secondary schools and primary schools in Tendring. A survey was circulated from the School Communications team last week requesting for all primary, infant and junior schools to provide us details of their demands that are not met by the

DfE scheme – this did close on Friday 22nd January but if you did not get a chance to submit please do so now using [this link](https://consultations.essex.gov.uk/workforce-development-1/dc399e67/). <https://consultations.essex.gov.uk/workforce-development-1/dc399e67/>
Once we have this information we will work up a plan to get the 2000 remaining devices to schools as soon as we can.

The future

Our aim is that post lockdown we will make this scheme sustainable in the long term by going back to our original model of taking old devices and making them good and would welcome any devices you can donate to us. Should you wish to gain further information on that part of the scheme please contact tslaptop.donations@essex.gov.uk. Please also email us with any feedback on the devices you have received so far – we'd love to hear from you both on the difference we hope its making and any feedback you would like to give us on changes we could make in the future.

Furlough for staff

Some schools may have received a communication from Essex Payroll about the mechanisms for recording and claiming Furlough payments. This may have given the impression that any staff can be furloughed – this is not the case. It remains the position that schools and academies cannot furlough staff that are funded from their budget. Furlough is only available to schools and academies for staff funded from additional funding sources (e.g parental contribution) i.e. catering, after school clubs etc.

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

Link includes the data on the number of cases in Essex, including by age.

<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](#)

Webcasts with Mike Gogarty and Clare Kershaw

11th September <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8mumCXeexd8>

6th November https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F-lu5oa_XYU

8th December <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PtOo52jsclq>

A fourth webcast with Clare Kershaw and LA Officers has been set up for Thursday 11th February at 9.30 am. The Zoom link is as follows:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85127760509?pwd=MXhBOEozcXRFUEpEOFE2dHZERVJuUT09>

Meeting ID: 851 2776 0509

Passcode: 632991

Link to a recent webcast recorded with Dr Matt Butler on 6th January

Take a look at the whole meeting, or minutes 3-14 and minutes 20-27 in particular, recorded live from a Covid Ward at Addenbrookes hospital with Dr Matt Butler.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=re0Gxjom1ok&feature=youtu.be>

Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Support for Recovery & Return

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

Relevant Documents and Guidance

DfE website

DfE – restricting attendance at schools during the national lockdown – January 2021

<https://essexprimaryheads.co.uk/files/school-national-restrictions-guidance-january-2021.pdf>

<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/>

Your “do-list”

- Reassess your plans in light of the new arrangements – keep your risk assessment updated and share with staff – and publish on your website if you have more than 50 employees.
- Set up a process for managing Lateral Flow Tests including: Test Kit log, update risk assessment, name Covid-Coordinator, organise collection point, train staff, distribute LFTs, record results.
- Name a senior leader who has overarching responsibility for the quality and delivery of remote education.
- Order laptops from the DfE, when available. Consider alternative ways to access laptops.
- Apply for FSM vouchers when the scheme reopens and claim for costs since 4th January.
- Attend the webcast with Clare Kershaw on Thursday 11th February at 9.30 am.
- Make adjustments to your fire drill to allow for social distancing.
- Send any questions, concerns and comments to EPHA pam@langmead.me.uk and/or to the School Communications team Schools.Communication@essex.gov.uk
- Stay safe and well!

Ofsted

Key information

- Ofsted visits to a range of schools (as conducted in the autumn term) have ended.
- Routine inspections, which result in a school being awarded a new grade or being confirmed in its current grade, will resume in the summer term.
- Monitoring inspections of schools judged as requires improvement or inadequate will resume this term.

Inspection

(DfE guidance page 55) For state-funded schools, the intention is that routine, graded Ofsted inspections will not be reintroduced until the summer term. During the spring term, it is intended that inspectors will conduct monitoring inspections in schools most in need of support - inadequate schools and some schools that require improvement. These monitoring inspections will not be graded, and will focus on matters that are particularly relevant at this time such as curriculum and teaching (including remote education), and attendance, particularly of vulnerable pupils. Inspectors will be sensitive to the school's context, and support schools to prioritise the right actions. We are discussing with Ofsted the implementation of these inspections in light of the recent changes set out in this guidance.

As has been the case throughout, Ofsted can inspect schools – of any grade – where it has significant concerns about safeguarding or the quality of education being provided, including remote education. Parents should raise concerns about remote education with their school, and can report those concerns to Ofsted if the matter is not resolved.

Monitoring complaints from parents in respect of remote learning

Our monitoring inspections will look at how well schools are educating pupils in the current circumstances – which for most pupils means being educated remotely. We will also consider complaints made by parents about remote education to help resolve issues and make sure children are being well served. If parents feel their child's school is not providing suitable remote education, they should first raise their concerns with the teacher or headteacher. If issues are not resolved, parents can [report the matter to Ofsted](#)

Ofsted's guide to [What's working well in remote education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-is-working-well-in-remote-education)

The following information was shared with headteachers on Monday 1st February:

Ofsted's established policy for managing complaints about schools remains unchanged. However, due to the nature of these complaints, and the need to consider them swiftly, Ofsted has implemented an early step in our usual processes. So that a decision can be made about whether it is appropriate to consider a complaint, this step enables one of Her Majesty's Inspectors to contact a school directly to flag that we have received concerns about remote education at the school and to seek a response. This step enables us to seek assurances quickly that national guidance is being recognised and implemented. We are describing this step as a 'pre-waiver' call. During the pre-waiver call, HMI should avoid providing any information to the school that could identify the complainant or their child, unless the complainant has provided consent for their details to be shared with the school.

If, as a result of the pre-waiver call, a HMI has reason to believe that a school is not following the DfE remote education guidance, and/or we identify concerns about a school's remote education offer, we may: a) complete a waiver (if local complaint routes should usually have been exhausted) and/or b) progress as a wider concern using the normal Complaints about Schools process.

We will write to all schools who have received a pre-waiver call to inform them of the outcome following our consideration of the complaint. If the outcome is that we will take no further action as we have not identified any wider concerns, then a summary of the concerns and the school's

response will not be shared with the school. A summary will be available to the lead inspector to assist with their inspection planning for the school's next full inspection or monitoring visit. If we have identified possible wider concerns, then we may decide to investigate a complaint (using our powers under section 11A (1) of the Education Act 2005). If so, in line with usual process, we will write to the school informing them of the outcome of qualifying complaint when the investigation is completed.

Published report on remote learning <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/remote-education-research/remote-education-research#future-benefits-to-remote-education>

Ofsted guidance around the resumption of monitoring inspections

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/january-2021-maintained-schools-and-academies>

Building on this work, from January 2021, Ofsted will resume monitoring inspections of schools judged as requires improvement or inadequate. This is to ensure that leaders of these schools have the support they need and are focusing on what will help improve the school most in the current circumstances.

Ofsted will continue to carry out section 8 'no formal designation' (NFD) inspections if they have significant concerns about any school.

How will Ofsted select schools?

Ofsted will select schools for monitoring inspections in the normal way. This means inspecting schools:

- that were judged as requires improvement at (at least) their last 2 consecutive section 5 inspections; those that have converted to an academy or have re-brokered since their last section 5 inspection will not receive a monitoring visit
- judged as inadequate, including those subject to a live directive academy order; new schools whose predecessor was inadequate will not receive a monitoring visit

Ofsted may also carry out some monitoring inspections of other schools judged as requires improvement, at regional directors' discretion and based on their risk assessment.

Section 8 NFD inspections will take place to follow up concerns about schools that are not necessarily in a category of concern but that have been brought to our attention through, for example, a qualifying complaint made to Ofsted about the school under section 11A of the Education Act 2005.

Length and timing of inspections

- Monitoring inspections of schools judged as requires improvement and schools with serious weaknesses will normally last for 1 day.
- Monitoring inspections of schools in special measures will usually last for last 2 days.

The lead inspector will discuss the start and end times of the day with the headteacher during the notification call. This is so that inspectors can avoid any staggered start or end to the school day.

Relevant Documents and Guidance

- Guidance for state funded school – autumn 2020 <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/interim-phase-maintained-schools-and-academies>
- Ofsted guidance around the resumption of monitoring inspections <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/january-2021-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 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 <https://essexprimaryheads.co.uk/info-and-documents/ofsted/>

Your “do-list”

- If you are a school currently judged inadequate or requires improvement, you may have a monitoring inspection this term.
- 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 and Attendance

Key information

KSCIE January 2021 update

An update has been made to Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020) to take account of changes to recruitment after the UK left the EU (see below). The latest version can be downloaded from the EPHA website <https://essexprimaryheads.co.uk/files/keeping-children-safe-in-education-2020-update-january-2021.pdf>

The change is minimal and most staff won't need to have updated copies. However, as the change involves recruitment, I suggest that you inform senior leaders, governors, and office staff who deal with recruitment or the single central register. For this group of people I would record somewhere that you have communicated the change, either individually or via a meeting minute.

There is an updated EPHA checklist of safeguarding responsibilities and statutory requirements, useful as an audit tool for governors. Safeguarding checklist in line with KCSiE – January 2021 <https://essexprimaryheads.co.uk/info-and-documents/safeguarding/>

Working Together to Safeguard Children

In December 2020, changes were made to the statutory guidance Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE). Most of the changes brought the document up to date with changes to legislation or to make it more readable. Note that the front cover is still labelled with the original publication date of July 2018. To identify the new version, look at the copyright date (2020) on the back cover.

Key changes include:

- clarification about information sharing, this is the most important area to take note of, for example, strongly stating 'you [schools] do not need consent to share personal information...provided that there is a lawful basis to process any personal information required' (see page 106);
- updating the definition of safeguarding (first seen in Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020)) to specifically include mental health;
- Clarity about the Homelessness Duty, especially early assessments for 16/17 year olds; and
- strengthening the wording of domestic abuse by including coercive control

<https://essexprimaryheads.co.uk/files/working-together-to-safeguard-children-2020-update.pdf>

The most recent version of the Essex Child Protection model (December) includes this update.

Changes to Safer Recruitment

Important legal changes came into force on the 28th November 2020 to take into account a judgement by the Supreme Court. These changes are:

- Cautions given to under 18s are no longer legally disclosed
- The multiple conviction rule has been removed so that each offence should be considered individually
- Applicants must be told how to get independent, confidential advice on which cautions or convictions they must disclose and be given time to obtain advice

There are a number of changes that are required to ensure that schools are compliant with the Supreme Court's rulings. These include changes to application forms, short listing and interview procedures and data protection related to criminal information. HR have confirmed that they amended their guidance and documents (in November) to reflect these changes.

Online Safety training

It is widely recognised that periods of lockdown have resulted in increased time spent online for children and young people (CYP), and increased opportunities for perpetrators wishing to target CYP.

The DfE is expecting settings to keep children safe online during periods of remote learning. To support settings in delivering key online safety messages to CYP, I have arranged for 'The 2 Johns' to deliver training on online risks, with a specific focus on those presented by COVID-19 and the latest period of lockdown. This offer will consist of:

- a two-hour training session with a focus on mental health, hate crime, radicalisation and

influencers and key messages

- lesson videos to deliver to CYP (4 versions to cover different age groups from KS2 – KS4) and accompanying lesson plans and resources

The course will run twice:

Tuesday 26th January at 10.30 am or Tuesday 2nd February at 3.30 pm.

It is offered to Designated Leads, IT Leads or pastoral staff – there are 450 places available on each course, so please apply for a place by emailing: matthew.lewis@essex.gov.uk .

Keeping Children Safe in Education: proposed changes from September 2021

The government has launched the consultation for the new version of Keeping Children Safe in Education for 2021. As is usual many of the changes are to improve readability and to ensure that this guidance is in line with other statutory documents. Other suggested changes include:

- introducing a new condensed annex that schools may decide to use with staff who do not work 'directly with children', instead of them reading and understanding Part One;
- reminding schools that they should include cyberbullying in the behaviour policy;
- making the section on information sharing much clearer, for example, stating that 'schools and colleges have clear powers to share, hold and use information for [identifying and tackling all forms of abuse and neglect, and in promoting children's welfare, including their educational outcomes]';
- linking safeguarding to the behaviour management section of the Teacher Standards to 'ensure a good and safe educational environment'; and
- including 'child abduction and community safety incidents' in the potential harms section.

The sections that see the greatest potential changes are in safer recruitment, child on child sexual violence and sexual harassment (peer-on-peer abuse) and the role of the designated safeguarding lead.

Sadly, but perhaps not surprisingly:

Proposals from the last consultation that have been dropped:

Reference to DSLs getting "appropriate supervision support"

The consultation is open until 4th March 2021 (11:45pm) and can be found online here:

<https://consult.education.gov.uk/safeguarding-in-schools-team/keeping-children-safe-in-education-schools-and-col/>

Proposed changes - Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment 2021

Changes have also been proposed to the Sexual Violence and Sexual Harassment advice from the Department of Education (DfE); the consultation closes on 4th March 2021.

Many of the suggested changes are to improve readability, update information sources and to clarify meaning.

The consultation is open until 4th March 2021 (11:45pm) and can be found online here:

<https://consult.education.gov.uk/safeguarding-in-schools-team/keeping-children-safe-in-education-schools-and-col/>

Child Protection Policy – addendum for school closure

January 2021 – reflects lockdown and “closure” of schools. This can be adopted under Chair's emergency powers. This policy is an addendum to your existing Child Protection Policy, not a replacement for it.

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

Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB) Safeguarding Audit

There is no requirement this year to complete the audit for the ESCB, although Jo Barclay has updated it for those schools who wish to complete it anyway. There is no need to submit this anywhere – it is for internal use only. The audit tool can be found on the EPHA website at

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

Understanding and Supporting Behaviour - Safe Practice for Schools and Educational Settings

This Essex [guidance](#) provides advice to schools on understanding behaviour, strategies to respond to difficult and harmful behaviour, physical contact and use of non-restrictive / restrictive intervention and use of restraint. It replaces the previous guidance called 'Keeping Pupils and Staff Safe' and has

been renamed to better reflect the purpose of the document. A word copy of the [Appendices](#) are available to amend as necessary.

Effective Support Website

On Monday 7th December, the Essex Effective Support website moved – it can now be found at <https://www.essex.gov.uk/report-a-concern-about-a-child>

This move includes changes to the access of the online Request for Support portal for sharing concerns for a child, young person or family and also where the Essex Directory of Services is hosted. You'll be redirected to the new pages automatically, so there's no need to change anything in your browser.

This should make information easier to find and more accessible. You'll find:

- help finding the right level of support
- the request for support form (RFS)
- resources for practitioners
- the directory of services

Safeguarding forums for schools – spring term dates

Two sessions will be held, both online. Please hold the date – either **22nd March (2.00pm – 4.00pm)** or **25th March (9.00am – 11.00am)**. These sessions are offered to Designated Leads or Deputy Designated Leads only – Further details of how to join will be sent at a later date.

ESCB training courses

Don't forget the training programmes and resources available on the Essex Safeguarding Children Board website <https://www.escb.co.uk/learning-development/>

Level 3 DSL training is delivered by Juniper Education

Relevant Documents and Guidance

- Working Together to Safeguard Children – July 2018
- Keeping Children Safe in Education – DfE January 2021
- DfE guidance on Safeguarding and remote education during coronavirus (COVID-19)
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-and-remote-education-during-coronavirus-covid-19>
- Understanding and Supporting Behaviour - Safe Practice for Schools and Educational Settings
<https://schools.essex.gov.uk/pupils/Safeguarding/Pages/understanding-and-supporting-behaviour.aspx>
- ESCB Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex July 2018
- Self-harm management toolkit
- SET bruising/unexplained injuries protocol
- Multi-agency statutory guidance on female genital mutilation
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/multi-agency-statutory-guidance-on-female-genital-mutilation>
- Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Information Portal for Schools
[https://schools-secure.essex.gov.uk/pupils/Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Information Portal for Schools/Pages/default.aspx](https://schools-secure.essex.gov.uk/pupils/Emotional_Wellbeing_and_Mental_Health_Information_Portal_for_Schools/Pages/default.aspx)
- Gov.uk safeguarding resources
<https://www.gov.uk/topic/schools-colleges-childrens-services/safeguarding-children>
- EPHA Seven-minute safeguarding staff meetings <https://essexprimaryheads.co.uk/info-and-documents/seven-minute-staff-meetings>

Your “do-list”

- Adopt the latest Child Protection Policy appendix (January 2021) and publish it on the school's website.
- Apply for a place on the 2Johns training course on either 26th January or 2nd February.
- Take part in the consultation on proposed changes to Keeping Children Safe in Education.
- Use the EPHA Safeguarding checklist in line with KCSiE – September 2020 as a checklist to evidence compliance
- 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

Covid-19 guidance

See above

Testing and assessment in 2021

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/key-stage-1-and-key-stage-2-test-dates>

The [Reception Baseline test](#) (also known as the Reception Baseline Assessment) is, at the moment, expected to take place in the first six weeks of the autumn term for children starting Reception in September 2021. The introduction of the assessment has been delayed by a year due to COVID-19 disruption.

In 2021 all primary school tests (including the [Y1 Phonics Screening Check](#)) have been cancelled because of ongoing COVID-19 disruption.

In 2020/21 schools were due to administer a past version of the Phonics Screening Check to Year 2 pupils, who missed the test at the end of Year 1 during the second half of the autumn 2020 term. Children who reached the expected standard (the "pass threshold") would not have been required to complete any more assessments; children who didn't reach the expected standard would have been given support to catch up and retake the Screening Check in June 2021 along with current Year 1 pupils.

Details about how the Phonics Screening Check will be administered in 2021-22, or whether a "catch-up" test will be administered to children who didn't take the Check in Year 1 in 2020 or 2021, have not yet been made available by the Department for Education.

[KS1 SATs](#) will not take place in 2021. Teacher assessments in reading, writing and maths have also been cancelled.

[Year 6 KS2 SATs](#) will not take place in 2021. Teacher assessments in science have also been cancelled.

The [Multiplication Tables Check](#) (MTC) for children in Year 4 was intended to be introduced in 2021, but the Department for Education has said that it will not take place in this academic year.

This is a new test, introduced by the DfE as a way to focus on numeracy and a way to determine if children can remember their multiplication tables with ease.

There is a long list of [grammar schools in the UK](#) (around 160!) and as yet, we are unaware of any schools having changed their published 11+ exam dates for 2021. These usually take place early in the autumn term.

2021/22 academic year

Key stage 1

Date	Activity
May 2022	Key stage 1 test period
Week commencing Monday 6 June 2022	Phonics screening check week

Key stage 2

The key stage 2 tests are timetabled from Monday 9 May to Thursday 12 May 2022.

Multiplication tables check

Schools must administer the [multiplication tables check](#) within the 3-week period from Monday 6 June 2022.

Brexit

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

Recruiting a teacher from overseas

The points-based immigration system

The UK introduced a [points-based immigration system](#) on 1 January 2021. This affects how you employ teachers who are not UK or Irish nationals. All overseas nationals arriving in the UK from 1 January 2021, including those from the [European Economic Area \(EEA\)](#) and Switzerland, come under the points-based immigration system.

Irish citizens can continue to enter, work and study in the UK under the Common Travel Area as they could

previously.

Skilled Worker visa

Overseas teachers can apply for a [Skilled Worker visa](#) up to 3 months before they start work in the UK under the following conditions:

you, as the employer, are a licensed Home Office employer sponsor and have offered the overseas teacher a teaching job

the overseas teacher can speak, read, write and understand English

the role pays at least £20,480 or the relevant minimum rate for teachers in England, whichever is higher (minimum rates for teachers are on the [Get into Teaching website](#)) - if the role is part time, pro-rata rates will apply as long as the salary is at least £20,480 a year

Sponsoring a visa

In order for you to employ a staff member on a visa, the employer of your staff will need a licence that allows you to sponsor their visa. Who needs to get this licence will depend on what type of school you are, as this determines the employer.

- For community and voluntary controlled schools, it will be your local authority
- For voluntary aided and foundation schools, it will be your governing board
- For academies, it will be your trust
- For independent schools, it will be your proprietor

[Recruit teachers from overseas - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Overseas teachers can teach in maintained schools and non-maintained special schools in England without qualified teacher status (QTS) for up to 4 years. This is called the '4-year rule'.

Safeguarding checks for teachers from overseas

Candidates from overseas must undergo the same checks as all other staff in schools, including obtaining an enhanced DBS certificate with barred list information. This still applies even if the candidate has never been to the UK.

KSCIE January 2021 update

This guidance replaces Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2020. Changes are strictly limited to those related to the UK leaving the EU on 31 December 2020.

European Economic Area (EEA) regulating authority teacher sanctions or restrictions

149. From 01 January 2021 the TRA Teacher Services system will no longer maintain a list of those teachers who have been sanctioned in EEA member states. Advice about how information about a teacher's past conduct may be obtained can be found at paragraph 172.

172. ...schools and colleges must make any further checks they think appropriate so that any relevant events that occurred outside the UK can be considered. These checks could include, where available:

- criminal records checks for overseas applicants – Home Office guidance can be found on GOV.UK; and for teaching positions
- obtaining a letter of professional standing from the professional regulating authority in the country in which the applicant has worked. Advice about which regulatory or professional body applicants should contact is available from the National Recognition Information Centre for the United Kingdom, UK NARIC.

Data Protection

EU Exit has had no immediate effects on data protection. The Data Protection Act 2018 implements UKGDPR, which is identical to the GDPR issued by the EU. In addition, the Withdrawal Act 2019 places all EU directives and regulations on the UK statute book. What has not yet been sorted out between the UK and the EU is how we stay aligned, but in reality it will be very difficult for the UK to deviate very far from any future updates from the EUGDPR.

The reason is something called 'adequacy.' For personal data to be legally processed in the EU, or in relation to EU citizens, by UK data controllers the EU would need to make an adequacy assessment of the UK's data protection system. Under the new trade agreement, we have an interim adequacy ruling for 6 months pending a full assessment. This will affect schools only if they process personal data in the EU, for example via an IT supplier which hosts its data storage in an EU member state.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/eu-exit-guide-data-protection-for-education-providers#history>

Settled status

The deadline for applying is 30 June 2021.

[Stay in the UK \('settled status'\): step by step - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Visiting Europe from January 2021

[Visit Europe from 1 January 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

You may need to do extra things before you travel to the [EU](#), Switzerland, Norway, Iceland or Liechtenstein, such as:

- check your passport
- get travel insurance that covers your healthcare (see below)
- check you have the right driving documents
- organise pet travel - contact your vet at least 1 month before you go

Your EHIC is valid in the EU until it expires. Once your EHIC has expired, you'll be able to replace it with a GHIC - Global Health Insurance Card. Beware of unofficial websites, which may charge if you apply through them. An EHIC or GHIC is free of charge.

<https://www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/healthcare-abroad/apply-for-a-free-ehic-european-health-insurance-card/>

Pupil Premium rates

The government has announced that pupil premium and service premium rates will remain unchanged for the financial year 2021 to 2022.

From April 2021, pupil premium allocations will be calculated based on the number of eligible pupils recorded by schools in their census in October 2020.

Free school meals

Schools get £1,345 for every primary age pupil, or £955 for every secondary age pupil, who claims free school meals, or who has claimed free school meals in the last 6 years.

Looked-after and previously looked-after children

Schools get £2,345 for every pupil who has left local authority care through adoption, a special guardianship order or child arrangements order.

Local authorities get the same amount for each child they are looking after; they must work with the school to decide how the money is used to support the child's personal education plan.

Service premium

The service premium is not part of the pupil premium as the rules to attract the [service premium](#) are different. Schools get £310 for every pupil with a parent who:

- is serving in HM Forces
- has retired on a pension from the Ministry of Defence

This funding is to help with pastoral support.

Accountability

Schools must show how they're using their pupil premium effectively:

- by publishing an [online statement](#)
- through [inspections by Ofsted](#)
- through published performance tables

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium/pupil-premium>

Exclusion

[Changes to the school exclusion process during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) outbreak - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

All exclusions occurring between 1 June 2020 and 24 March 2021 (inclusive of those dates) are subject to amended arrangements with regards to:

- the use of remote access technology (for example videoconferencing or telephone conferencing software) for meetings of governing boards or independent review panels
- the deadline for applications for an independent review

The Key has a model "addendum" which you could add to your existing policy, to reflect the current approach.

National Professional Qualification (NPQ) reforms

From September 2021, a reformed suite of NPQs will be available for teachers and leaders who want to develop their knowledge and skills in school leadership and specialist areas of teaching practice. These reforms include:

reforming the 3 existing NPQs in senior leadership, headship and executive leadership

replacing the current NPQ in middle leadership with 3 new NPQs for teachers and leaders who want to develop their expertise in specialist areas of teaching practice

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-professional-qualifications-npqs-reforms>

The Headship framework can be found at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/925507/NPQ_Headship.pdf

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.

In autumn 2020, the Department for Education (DfE) invited high performing schools, rated good or outstanding, to apply to become teaching school hubs (TSH). Applications closed on 31 October 2020. The successful TSH will be announced in early 2021.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/teaching-school-hubs>

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile 2021 handbook

Information: early years foundation stage profile

In 2021, the early years foundation stage (EYFS) profile will not be mandatory but STA will require providers to use their best endeavours to complete it and provide the information to year 1 teachers and parents, if this is possible. This will be a judgement for schools and practitioners, depending on their individual circumstances.

We recognise that the EYFS profile is a valued and crucial tool, which supports children's development and their transition from reception into year 1. However, we understand the additional pressures that teachers are facing during this challenging time.

Schools that complete the EYFS profile in the summer term will not be subject to statutory external moderation. There will be no requirement to submit data to the local authority or to confirm whether you have completed it to the Department for Education.

This change applies to schools that are early adopters of the EYFS reforms, as well as schools that are following the current statutory framework.

For further enquiries about EYFS, you can contact the Department for Education on 0370 000 2288 or at www.gov.uk/contact-dfe.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-profile-handbook>

Relevant Documents and Guidance

- Early Years Foundation Stage Profile 2021
- NPQ reforms <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-professional-qualifications-npgs-reforms>
- School improvement support resources
DfE Professional development and support to help schools develop their leadership, staff and curriculum, so they can improve their results and performance.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/school-improvement-support#governance>

Your “do-list”

- Note future testing and assessment dates.
- Note Brexit changes, including investigating whether you need/want to apply for a licence to allow you to sponsor visas for overseas staff.
- Make sure that staff involved with recruitment are aware of the post-Brexit changes to checks.
- Share the EYFS profile guidance with early years' staff.

Review of Equality Information

Key information

Legal requirements

Primary schools have a general duty to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination and harassment; advance equality of opportunity; and foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

This general duty is supported by specific duties and in summary, listed public authorities in England are required to:

- publish information to demonstrate compliance with the general duty, at least annually, and
- to prepare and publish one or more objectives, at least every four years to achieve any of the aims in the general equality duty.
- The information and objectives must be published in a manner that is accessible to the public.

Equality objectives

Since April 2012 all schools have been required by law to publish equality objectives.

The Commission issued guidance 'Equality objectives and the equality duty' to help public authorities to develop effective equality objectives. This can be found at

<http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/advice-and-guidance/public-sector-equality-duty/guidance-on-the-equality-duty>

These should have been published initially by April 2012 and need to be reviewed by annually by Governing Bodies in the spring term.

Under specific duties, governing bodies, local authorities and proprietors are required to draw up equality objectives every four years and **annually publish information** demonstrating how they are meeting the aims of the general public sector equality duty. (see statutory policy list)

Review frequency: Objectives must be drawn up every four years (*not this year!*) but schools must publish information annually (see below).

Approval: Governing body free to delegate to a committee of the governing body, an individual governor or the head teacher.

Legislation: The Equality Act 2010 and The Equality Act 2010 (Specific Duties) Regulations 2011.

Relevant Documents and Guidance

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/public-sector-equality-duty-guidance-schools-england>

Your "do-list"

- Review the equalities information published on the school website and update in line with current provision and impact of the equalities objectives.
- Depending on the level of delegation on your Governing body, ensure that this is on the agenda, approved by governors and that information on the website is updated.
- Equality information and equality objectives can be published as part of another document, such as the school's prospectus, school improvement plan or other document, or can be placed on the school's website.

Policies and school websites

Key information

This term you need to review and adopt:

- Child Protection addendum (see above)
- Equalities Information (see above)
- Grievance Policy (model policy updated December 2020)
- Performance Management Policy (model policy dated December 2020) but no key changes
- Probation procedure (model policy updated November 2020)
- Whistleblowing (model policy updated December 2020) – only change to previous edition are minor wording changes to clarify procedures related to third party Whistle-blowers (i.e. those who are not employees of the school)

Current ECC HR policy list for schools, academies and free schools

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

EPHA has developed lists of statutory and mandatory policies for schools and academies.

The checklists are based on the following guidance for schools:

- DfE statutory policies for schools
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2020)
- SEND Code of Practice
- EYFS Framework
- Data Protection Act 2018
- Academies Financial Handbook
- Governance Handbook

The checklists include information about review frequency, the level of approval and additional notes.

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

Updated version (January 2021) of the website checklists

I have reviewed and updated the website checklists for both maintained schools and academies – available on the EPHA website. There are two added/amended sections on the DfE guidance including: 'Schools that do not have a website' and 'Coronavirus (COVID-19) catch-up premium'. Updated sections include 'Admission arrangements', 'Exams and assessment results', 'Curriculum', 'Pupil premium', 'Year 7 literacy and numeracy catch-up premium', 'PE and sport premium for primary schools', 'Equality objectives', 'Special educational needs and disability (SEND) information', 'Governors' information and duties'.

The requirements include a new expectation to publish information about your remote education provision. The DfE [expects you](#) to have this information for parents and pupils on your school website by **25 January 2021**. You can use the [optional DfE template](#) to do this. It covers:

- Details of the remote curriculum
- Remote teaching and study time each day
- How to access remote education
- Engagement and feedback
- Additional support for pupils with particular needs
- Remote education for self-isolating pupils

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

Relevant Documents and Guidance

- Providing remote education information to parents: template [Providing remote education information to parents: template - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- EPHA website requirements checklists <https://essexprimaryheads.co.uk/info-and-documents/model-policies/>
- EPHA statutory/mandatory policy checklists <https://essexprimaryheads.co.uk/info-and-documents/model-policies/>
- HR list of policies for schools, academies and free schools available on the secure log in of Juniper Education <https://junipereducation.org/education-hr/policy-publication-schedule/>
- DfE website requirements <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-maintained-schools-must-publish-online>
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/what-academies-free-schools-and-colleges-should-publish-online>

Your “do-list”

- Adopt the new Child Protection Policy addendum (January 2021) relating to current Covid restrictions
- Update your school website, using the checklists provided by EPHA (January 2021), including the new expectation to publish information about your remote education provision by 25th January 2021.
- Review and publish Equalities information by 6 April
- Check the HR policy checklist and ensure that you have the most up to date versions
- Download the EPHA statutory/mandatory policy checklist and ensure that you are compliant

School and Academy Governance

Key information

The National Governance Association is arguing that teachers, school and childcare staff should be prioritised for a COVID-19 vaccination. NGA, alongside other education organisations, is calling on the government to prioritise this – you can add your support by signing the petition on the [Parliament Petitions website](#).

Here are the headline issues you're likely to cover in your full governing board meeting this term. Share with governors so that they understand each issue and feel prepared with questions they can ask to interrogate the agenda items effectively. (Article from The Key)

Complete the SFVS (maintained schools)

The 2019-20 SFVS template is still appropriate for 2020-21. The checklist sets out questions for the governing board to discuss with the headteacher and senior staff. It also includes a dashboard to show how your school compares to thresholds identified by the Department for Education (DfE). You might delegate detailed scrutiny of the SFVS to a relevant committee but, if you do, they should provide a detailed report to the full board as the full board needs to agree it. The chair of governors must sign the completed form.

DfE update – 4th February 2021

Due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, the Department for Education (DfE) has decided that the SFVS return should be delayed this year. This is to take account of the current pressures schools and local authorities are facing.

For the financial year 2020 to 2021, schools should submit their SFVS to their local authority no later than 28 May 2021.

Local authorities should submit their assurance statement to the DfE within 6 weeks, no later than 9 July 2021.

The link to the SFVS and announcement is:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/schools-financial-value-standard-sfvs#history>

Finalise next year's budget (maintained schools)

In maintained schools, the budget for the next financial year is usually finalised in the spring term. While your LA's scheme for financing schools might allow a committee to approve the budget, we recommend that the full governing board does this. The final date for submission to the LA is 4 May. Usually, the finance committee will have met to [scrutinise the budget in detail](#) ahead of the full board's spring term meeting, where it'll be presented for approval.

Complete your annual accounts process (academies)

Due to coronavirus, deadlines for submitting financial reports for the year ending 31 August 2020 [have been extended](#) by 1 month. Submit your [audited accounts](#) to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) by 31 January 2021.

You also need to make sure you meet these deadlines:

23 February 2021: deadline to submit your 2019/20 accounts return (this is separate to the accounts – [read more here](#))

28 February 2021 at the latest: publish the accounts on your trust's website as soon as they're signed

31 May 2021 at the latest: file the accounts with [Companies House](#)

Monitor the coronavirus catch-up premium

Make sure that your school continues to:

- Spend the funding in line with its catch-up priorities
- Be transparent with parents on the use of the funding

Review your recruitment processes

Spring term is recruitment season for many schools.

Headteachers must give notice by:

- 31 January if they wish to leave at the end of the spring term
- 30 April if they wish to leave at the end of the summer term

For other teachers it's 29 February and 31 May respectively.

These dates are based on the [Burgundy Book](#), but check contracts as this may vary.

Governors carry out headteacher recruitment and are usually involved in senior leadership recruitment too. Recruitment may be carried out remotely this term.

Staff handing in their notices might prompt your school to review its staffing structure. If so, you can learn about your role in this process [here](#).

Determine admission arrangements for entry in September 2022

If you're a governor of a voluntary aided or foundation school, or a trustee of an academy, your board is responsible for determining your school's admission arrangements. If you sit on a local governing body in a multi academy trust, check your scheme of delegation to see whether you're responsible for this.

Even if the arrangements haven't changed and you didn't need to consult on them, you still need to formally agree them each year.

Key deadlines you need to be aware of:

- 28 February 2021: to determine your admission arrangements for admission in September 2022
- 28 February 2021: to publish your appeals timetable for admissions in September 2021
- 15 March 2021: to send a copy of your admission arrangements for 2022 to your LA

Once you've determined your arrangements you must publish them on your website. You must also notify certain parties – see [this article](#) for who to inform and when.

If you're a governor of a community or voluntary controlled school, your LA will determine your admission arrangements (unless it's delegated the responsibility to your board, in which case follow the deadlines above). If your LA determines your arrangements, make sure your school website includes a statement directing parents to contact the LA to find out about them.

These dates come from the [School Admissions Code](#) (please note that the code doesn't apply to maintained special schools).

Review and publish gender pay gap information

If your school (or the legal entity you're part of) has 250 or more employees, you need to report to the government on your gender pay gap. The government suspended this requirement in 2020 due to coronavirus, but by 30 March 2021, your school will need to publish its gender pay gap information based on data it collected on 31 March 2020.

Monitor your school's contingency plan for remote learning

The school should have had a [contingency plan](#) for remote education in place since September.

- Questions that governors might ask
- How have we adapted our curriculum to help pupils catch up? What about in [subject]?
- How are we providing a broad and balanced curriculum for remote pupils?
- What support are we putting in place for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with SEND?
- How are we ensuring that remote learning aligns with what we're delivering in school?
- How well are pupils engaging with remote learning?
- What are we doing to improve low engagement, or engage reluctant pupils/families?

Get Information about Schools

If you have not checked your school's Unique Property Reference Number (UPRN) value recently we encourage you to do so. If you are unsure how to perform this check, further instructions are provided in the, [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQs\) section](#) on the help menu.

Users should remember to update their Get information about schools record as soon as possible and within specified timescales whenever there is a change to their establishment.

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

Relevant Documents and Guidance

- What governing boards and school leaders should expect from each other
- Governance Handbook March 2019
- SFVS 2020 – 2021 checklist and dashboard

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/schools-financial-value-standard-sfvs>

- “Get information about schools” <https://www.get-information-schools.service.gov.uk/>
- National Governors Association <http://www.nga.org.uk/Home.aspx>

Your “do-list”

- Sign the petition to call on the government to prioritise the vaccination for school staff.
- Make sure that you, your Finance Manager and Governors are aware of the current SFVS requirements and incorporate them within the calendar of financial management and governance – new submission date (for this year) 28th May 2021
- Finalise next year’s budget (maintained schools)
- Determine admission arrangements for entry in September 2022
- Update your school’s information on the Get information about Schools website

The Local Authority

Key information

School funding in 2021/22

Following a consultation in the autumn term, the Schools Forum approved the Finance Review Group's recommendation to move the Essex Formula to the National Funding Formula (NFF) over 2 years, except for the primary lump sum which will move to NFF over 3 years. Schools Forum agreed the Authority's proposals on 10th November 2020.

The School Funding Settlement for 2021/22 was announced on 17 December 2020.

The Schools Block has increased by £79.2 million compared to 2020/21 which is due to:

- The transfer of teachers' pay grant (TPG) and teachers' pension employers contribution grant (TPECG) to the Schools Block £43.3m
- The impact of the NFF due to inflating funding factor unit values and the increase to the minimum per pupil levels £29.8m
- An increase in pupil numbers from 196,095 to 197,477 increases funding by £7.7m
- The growth fund allocation decreases by £1.7m

The Local Authority must inform maintained schools of their 2021/22 Schools Block allocation by 28th February 2021. The ESFA will inform academies of their GAG allocations by 31st March 2021.

Maximising the attainment of disadvantaged pupils in Essex

A strategy for schools and colleges

The Essex vision is for all learners' needs to be understood, that every person working within our schools, colleges and settings is a champion of the disadvantaged and that every pupil receives high quality teaching and learning.

The LA slides showed the overview of the strategy, produced to aid discussions with senior leadership teams and governors, and with resources to support schools further. The slides can be found at <https://schools.essex.gov.uk/info/director/Pages/default.aspx>

In January more information will be sent to schools and heads are being asked to identify a member of the Senior Leadership Team to be the school's Disadvantaged Champion, to work with other champions from the partnership. They will be asked to attend two 2-hour training sessions in the spring and summer term, and a SEP partnership clinic to support the rollout of the strategy.

The LA is holding a Disadvantaged webinar for EPHA Headteachers/Disadvantaged leads with Marc Rowland, Unity School's Partnership Pupil Premium and Vulnerable Learners Advisor, free of charge via teams on 22nd February 3.30 to 5.00 pm. To secure your place please email sally.relfe@essex.gov.uk with your name, email address and school name by Friday 12 February 2021.

More information and support from

Philippa.Holliday@essex.gov.uk

Carole.Farrer@essex.gov.uk

mrowland@unitysp.co.uk

Health and Safety Monitoring (HSIM) 2020

The online health and safety internal monitoring (HSIM) 2020/21 is now live. Links to the monitoring page are on the [Health and Safety](#) homepage. All community and V/C schools must submit the relevant checklists, and the deadline for completion is **Friday 26 February 2021**. Please read the guidance and preparation sheets before completing the checklists. Note: Academy, Foundation, V/A or Independent schools who buy the health and safety service will have the option to submit the forms. Please send any queries to HS@essex.gov.uk

Essex payroll novation

ECC made the decision to end their provision of payroll and Juniper Education has been selected as the new payroll provider. Schools who currently use the Essex County Council payroll services were contacted by Juniper in the autumn term. You should be well on the way to making a decision about a new provider.

Education Structure Charts

Structure charts of each of the quadrant teams are available at <https://schools.essex.gov.uk/info/director/Pages/default.aspx>

Schools Corporate Systems Programme (CSP) – central payment school system ceasing

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

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.

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.

Reporting School Closures

Should schools need to close for any reason, whether this is due to bad weather, site issues, or other, it should be reported via the 'Report School Closure' facility available on the My School Page of [Essex Schools Infolink](#).

BBC Essex are no longer responsible for collating this information from schools so schools should not be ringing them to report closures.

For further information, please contact Tayla Johnson, Education Business Continuity Officer on schools.communication@essex.gov.uk

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”

- Health and Safety monitoring - all Community and V/C schools should submit checklists by Friday 26 February 2021
- Identify a member of the Senior Leadership Team to be the school's Disadvantaged Champion
- Book a place on the Disadvantaged webinar on 22nd February
- Make a final decision about your new payroll provider, if applicable
- Complete the process of setting up an internal bank account (those schools that were central payment)
- Attend the termly headteachers' meeting online to be kept up to date on LA plans, strategy and information
- Make sure you read/see Education Essex each week

EPHA events and dates

Key information

According to my information so far, 20 primary schools in Essex have new headteachers this term – **2 in South.**

Nella Murthen	Long Ridings Primary
Sally Finch	St Margaret's CE Academy, Bowers Gifford

5 in Mid

Gill Marrison	Trinity Road Primary (interim)
Jenny Kemp	Latchingdon CE Primary
Richard McIntosh	Baddow Hall Juniors (substantive headteacher)
Susie Price	St John the Baptist, Pebmarsh
Jakki Sibley	Earls Colne Primary

4 in West

Matt Curzon	St Mary's CE Primary, Stansted (substantive headteacher)
Katie Henson	St Andrew's CE Primary, North Weald
Llewellen Lawson	Dr Walker's CE Primary, Fyfield
Angela Lymbouris	Kingsmoor Academy

9 in North East

Catherine Bickersteth	Rolph CE Primary (Acting headteacher)
Polly Bradford	Gosbecks Primary (Interim head of school)
Adam Squirrel	Stanway Fiveways Primary (Acting headteacher)
Laura Khine	Brightlingsea Primary
Claire Russell	Braiswick Primary
Sarah Crookes	Cann Hall Primary
Julie Ingram	Fordham All Saints Primary (Executive Headteacher)
Ellie Jaggs	Boxted CE Primary
Emily McMillan	Fordham All Saints Primary (Acting headteacher)

The Professional Officer will send a welcome pack to all new primary headteachers at the beginning of term.

The EPHA Colleague Supporter programme 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. This service is *absolutely free* to new and acting primary, nursery, infant and junior headteachers in Essex. EPHA recognises the importance of supporting new heads in their early days of headship and wants to ensure that every new head feels able to connect with a Colleague Supporter, without having to draw on their school's budget. At the same time, EPHA remunerates a Colleague Supporter's own school, so that they are able to commit to a professional role knowing that they are contributing financially to their school, as well as benefiting professionally.

The EPHA Chair or Vice-Chair of your quadrant (or the EPHA Professional Officer) will contact you as early as possible in your new headship to welcome you to your new role in an Essex school and to let you know what support EPHA can give you. During that conversation they will talk to you about organising a Colleague Supporter and will ask you a number of questions about who will be right for you. Once we have identified a "match", your Colleague Supporter will contact you and will set up a programme of support. For more information contact Pam Langmead at pam@langmead.me.uk

There is additional support and information for new headteachers on the Essex Schools Infolink [https://schools.essex.gov.uk/info/Welcome to New Headteachers/Pages/default.aspx](https://schools.essex.gov.uk/info/Welcome%20to%20New%20Headteachers/Pages/default.aspx)

EPHA termly headteacher meetings 2020-21 and 2021-22

North East EPHA – online or Colchester United Football Stadium

Wednesday 3 March 2021

Wednesday 16 June 2021

Wednesday 10 November 2021

Wednesday 2 March 2022

Wednesday 15 June 2022

South EPHA – online or Holiday Inn, Basildon

Thursday 4 March 2021

Thursday 17 June 2021

Thursday 11 November 2021

Thursday 3 March 2022

Thursday 16 June 2022

West EPHA – online or Stansted Business Centre, Takeley

Wednesday 10 March 2021

Wednesday 23 June 2021

Wednesday 17 November 2021

Wednesday 9 March 2022

Wednesday 16 June 2022

Mid EPHA – online or Chelmsford City Football Club (CCFC)

Thursday 11 March 2021

Thursday 24 June 2021

Thursday 18 November 2021

Thursday 10 March 2022

Thursday 23 June 2022

The minutes of these and other meetings can be found on the EPHA website.

County EPHA Annual General Meeting

Thursday 30 September 2021 venue tba (online or CCFC)

EPHA Primary Headteachers' Support Directory

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

Conferences

Headteachers' conference – Friday 19 March 2021 – virtual conference – key note speakers, Michael Portillo, Drew Povey, Mary Myatt and Susie Dent – programme and booking form sent out by post in January – free for Essex headteachers

Deputy Headteachers' conference – Friday 8 October 2021 – Colchester Football Stadium

Governor training

The Professional Officer can deliver training for your governors on various education areas, including safeguarding, the Ofsted framework and Pupil Exclusions. Capacity is limited and training will be offered for groups of governors across a consortium. Please contact Pam to discuss.

The **2021/22 EPHA funding contribution** will be paid directly from the DSG – therefore there will be no need to collect subscriptions from schools in the next financial year – please let your finance officer know.

<https://essexprimaryheads.co.uk/files/what-headteachers-get-in-return-for-their-epha-contribution-2020-21.pdf>

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
- New heads information on Essex Schools infolink https://schools.essex.gov.uk/info/Welcome_to_New_Headteachers/Pages/default.aspx

Your “do-list”

- Be kind to new colleagues (and existing ones!)
- Book your place on the annual headteachers’ conference – programme and booking form are being emailed to schools in January.
- If you are, or know of, a new headteacher, please contact Pam to access the new EPHA Colleague Supporter programme
- Download the updated EPHA Support Directory for primary heads
- Find documents and information on the EPHA website, including the 7-minute staff meetings
- Contact Pam Langmead, EPHA Professional Officer, at pam@langmead.me.uk for any support or information that you need