



Spring term briefing 2022

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Covid-19

Key information

The latest DfE guidance for schools was published in the first week of January 2022, but is updated frequently as government guidelines change. On 6th January the following changes were made:

The government updated guidance for the new school term [after announcing more measures](#) to limit expected disruption caused by surging Omicron Covid cases.

Guidance on vulnerable children, self-isolation, testing and face coverings has been updated, and the government has set out which schools will be eligible to receive free air-cleaning units.

Here's what you need to know.

1. Air cleaning units only for schools with CO2 levels nearly double watchdog guidelines

The government announced today that a further 7,000 air-cleaning units will be provided to schools in England, though unions have warned this number is "inadequate".

Now the DfE has [published a guide](#) on how to apply for the units, which will be given out based on schools' CO2 levels and occupation density.

To qualify for a government-funded air-cleaning unit, a school must have "sustained" CO2 readings of 1,500 particles per million (ppm) or higher for at least one week while the room is occupied.

Less than 800 ppm implies a space is well ventilated. The [Health and Safety Executive \(HSE\) also recommends rooms are kept below 800ppm](#).

More than 300,000 CO2 monitors were sent out to schools last term.

Schools must also be in need of lengthy remedial building works to address poor ventilation that cannot be completed before the end of February this year. Air-cleaning units "may be suitable" while remedial work is undertaken, but "should not be used as a substitute for ventilation".

Units will also be allocated for teaching spaces only, but not non-teaching rooms like staff rooms, halls, corridors and dining rooms.

Applications will open on January 4 and close on January 17. The DfE has said it will start delivering the devices from next month.

2. Teachers at the front of class 'not ordinarily expected' to wear masks

The government is recommending that face coverings be worn in secondary school classrooms from next week. However, in guidance the DfE said it would "not ordinarily expect teachers to wear a face covering in the classroom if they are at the front of the class".

This is to support education delivery, the government said. However, settings should be "sensitive to the needs of individual teachers".

3. Vulnerable children definition expanded

The government has updated its guidance on which children should be prioritised for education should schools have to partially close. In these instances, the children of key workers and pupils considered vulnerable must continue to be offered face-to-face education.

Children were previously considered vulnerable if they had a social worker, an education, health and care plan or if they were considered by schools or councils to be "otherwise vulnerable".

But the definition has now been expanded to include children who have been known to children's social care services in the past, and those whose circumstances might be "particularly challenging" because of "domestic abuse, parental offending, adult mental health issues, and drug and alcohol addiction".

However, the DfE said the list was "not intended to be exhaustive", and that local assessment would be "based on knowledge of family and community risk".

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

4. Isolation reduced to 5 full days by lateral flow testing

The government has [updated its guidance](#) for the general public on isolation requirements for confirmed cases of Covid.

The self-isolation advice for people with coronavirus (COVID-19) has changed. It is now possible to end self-isolation after 5 full days if you have 2 negative LFD tests taken on consecutive days. The

first LFD test should not be taken before the fifth day after your symptoms started (or the day your test was taken if you did not have symptoms). The self-isolation period remains 10 full days for those without negative results from 2 LFD tests taken a day apart.

PCR tests are the best way to diagnose COVID-19 infection in people who have symptoms and who also may require treatment. If you have any of the main symptoms of COVID-19, you should [arrange to have a PCR test](#).

5. DfE 'working' to keep schools stocked with tests

Secondary schools have been asked to test returning pupils on-site during the first week of this term. The DfE invited schools to order test kits in advance of pupils returning.

Rapid tests were unavailable on the [government website several times over the festive period](#). DfE said today it was working "closely" with the UK Health Security Agency to ensure schools receive "adequate supplies" of test kits.

Schools that run out can order more through the [online ordering platform](#), and should call 119 if they need further advice or support. However, schools have been told to "only order the test kits your setting requires", given the "huge demand" for the kits nationally.

6. Keep a 'small' stock of masks

The government announced today that it is reintroducing its recommendation that masks be worn in secondary classrooms.

In its email to leaders, the DfE said all settings should have a "small contingency stock" of face coverings, in case anyone has forgotten or damaged their own.

To support this, the Department of Health and Social Care has begun delivering face coverings to schools, and "most" secondary schools should have received their delivery by the end of last term. Deliveries for the remaining schools will resume from this Friday, January 7.

7. Updated vaccine guidance due 'shortly'

Last week, the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation [recommended that children aged five to 11](#) in a "clinical risk group", or who are household contacts of someone who is immunosuppressed, should be offered two 10 micrograms doses of the Pfizer-BioNTech Covid-19 vaccine.

It comes after the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency [approved a new paediatric formulation](#) of the Pfizer vaccine for children aged 5 to 11 after it was found to have met the required safety, quality and effectiveness standards.

The DfE has told leaders that the NHS was working through updated guidance and would set out how this would be operationalised "shortly".

The JCVI also recommended that a Pfizer booster be offered to vulnerable children aged 12 to 15 and all young people aged 16 to 17.

Again, the NHS will communicate how eligible children and young people will get their boosters "shortly".

COVID-19 workforce fund for staff absences extended to 18 February 2022

The fund is designed to support schools with the costs of staff absences from 22 November 2021 to 18 February 2022 (previously, it was to the end of the autumn term). You'll need to cover the costs from your existing budget, and then claim for reimbursement in spring 2022 (the DfE will publish guidance on how to claim closer to that time)

Eligible settings for the fund include:

- All state-funded mainstream and special schools
- Alternative provision (AP) for pupils of compulsory school age
- Registered independent special schools and independent schools delivering AP

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-workforce-fund-for-schools>

Testing

The requirement for confirmatory PCR tests is to be temporarily suspended for positive lateral flow test results. From Tuesday 11 January 2022, in England, people who receive positive lateral flow results for COVID-19 will be required to self-isolate immediately and won't be required to take a confirmatory PCR test. This is a temporary measure while COVID-19 rates remain high across the

UK. Whilst levels of COVID-19 are high, the vast majority of people with positive LFD results can be confident that they have COVID-19.

Anyone who develops one of the three main COVID-19 symptoms should stay at home and self-isolate and take a PCR test. They must self-isolate if they get a positive test result, even if they have had a recent negative lateral flow test - these rules have not changed.

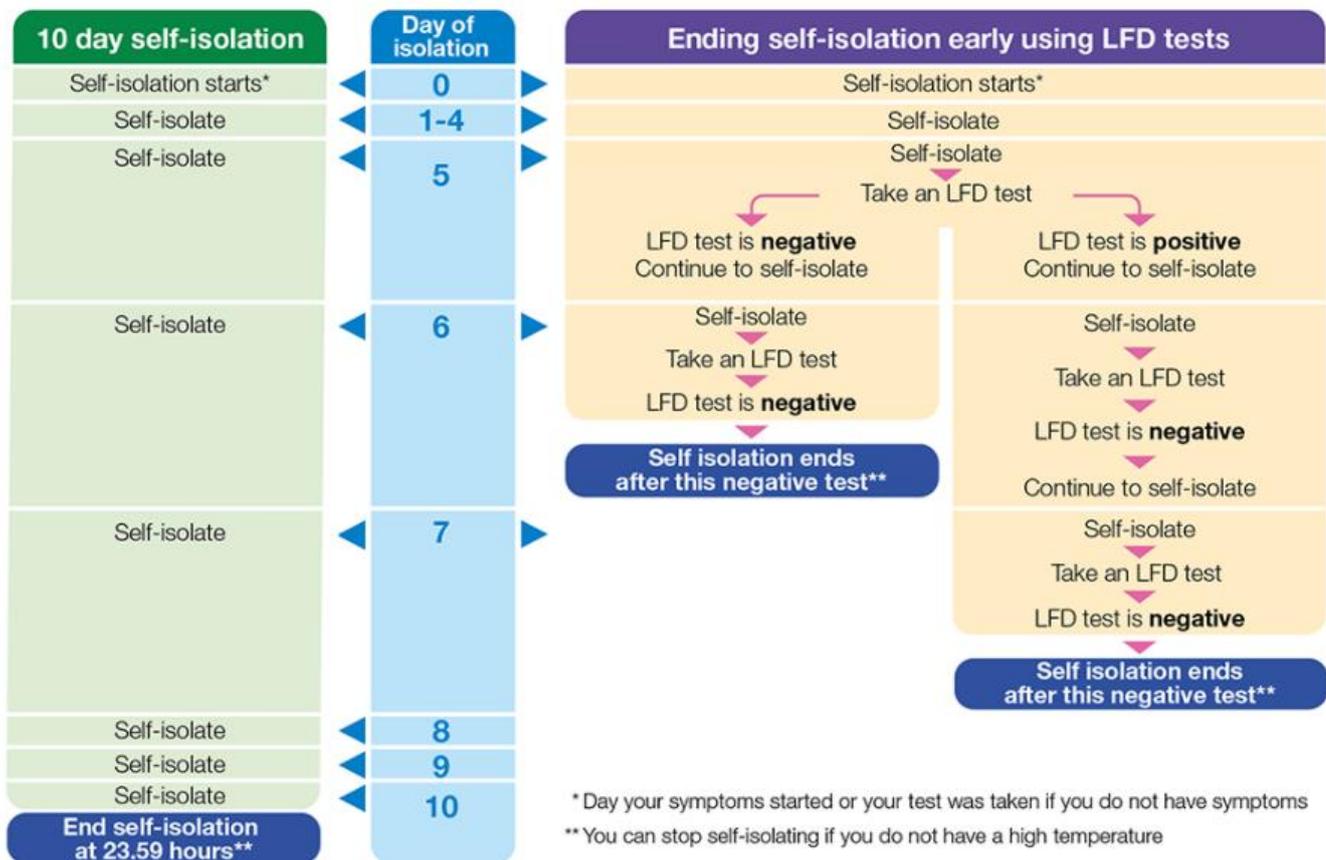
Under this new approach, anyone who receives a positive lateral flow device (LFD) test result should report their result on [Gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) and must self-isolate immediately but will not need to take a follow-up PCR test. After reporting a positive LFD test result, they will be contacted by NHS Test and Trace so that their contacts can be traced and must continue to self-isolate.

In line with the reduced self-isolation approach announced on 22 December, anyone who tests positive will be able to leave self-isolation 7 days after the date of their initial positive test if they receive two negative LFD results, 24 hours apart, on days 6 and 7. The [DfE guidance](#) has also been updated in line with the UKHSA announcement, and clarifies that children can return to school after day 7 if they have had two negative LFD tests.

You should continue to report to School Communications and Essex Test & Trace as before, treating positive LFDs as a confirmed case. Also as a reminder the test date or symptom start date is day 0, with isolation then being carried out for 10 full days, or LFD testing can start on day 6 but no sooner for release on day 7.

Prior to this rule change, most insurance companies will have asked for a PCR test result in order to cover staff absence – make sure that you contact your insurance company to clarify any changed requirements.

Examples of when to end self-isolation if you have had COVID-19 symptoms or have received a positive COVID-19 test result



Attendance coding

Use code Y to record non-attendance due to staffing shortages or unavailability of transport [Use code Y](#) ("unable to attend for exceptional circumstances") when pupils can't attend school in person because of "exceptional staff absences" or unavailability of transport due to COVID-19, so your school needs to ask them to move to remote education. Read more about [recording attendance during coronavirus](#) in our other article (we're currently updating it to reflect this latest update)

Maximising School Attendance Event

This virtual event will take place on Thursday 3 March 2022. The aim of the free event is for school and education leaders, SENCOs, pastoral leads, and attendance teams to have increased awareness of school absence issues and capacity to address these. For more information and to book your place, please visit [Education Essex online booking system](#).

Trialling changes to the collection of attendance data – DfE communication 25/01

Improving the availability of school attendance data across the education sector

We know that we share an understanding of how important attendance is and that you are focusing efforts to prioritise maximising attendance.

Having better data is one thing that will allow us to achieve our shared goal to improve attendance. Access to better data at a national, regional and local level will both help highlight particular challenges and identify solutions that are currently working well and can be shared.

Trialling the automated collection of attendance data

We have been looking at how we establish a timely flow of pupil level attendance data across schools, Local Authorities (LAs), Multi Academy Trusts (MATs) and DfE, through automation, without placing any additional administrative burdens on schools. Details of how DfE intends to use the data can be found in the [Principles of Data Use](#) document.

As we test and develop this new approach, it's important that the usual methods of data collection remain in place given their importance to informing our response to COVID-19, such as the Educational Settings Status collection. Please continue filling out the collection as usual for the moment, given how vital this is to understanding the impact of the pandemic, particularly in the context of Omicron. We recognise the effort that goes into completing and submitting this data and will review the position at Easter. This trial is part of our ambition to introduce more automated data collection in the future, high participation will help us achieve that ambition.

To deliver the trial, we have procured the services of Wonde, a data connector, who will ask for your agreement to share daily pupil level and attendance data with the department in the coming days. Our ambition is for this to help you identify issues and challenges relating to absence and safeguarding in a quicker and simpler way. To develop the reporting we are conducting research with schools, LAs and MATs to better understand how best to share the data and we will seek ongoing feedback to help us improve.

The process is quick and simple, all you need to do is click 'yes' to give your agreement when asked through a secure portal. This is a one-off process, once you agree to share data it will be automatically extracted from the Management Information System and sent to DfE each day. No daily action will be required. The data request will include attendance and demographics. We see this as the first step towards a more efficient approach to data collection that is less burdensome for schools.

This voluntary data will not be used for Ofsted or Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) decision making, for judgements around what constitutes a school causing concern, or for inspection, academisation or decisions to place or remove a school in a Trust.

Need more information?

Further details are outlined in the [Question & Answer](#) document. If you have any questions, please send them to support@wonde.com

Webcasts with Mike Gogarty and LA officers

A webcast with Mike Gogarty took place on Wednesday 12th January. The link to the recording can be found at <https://youtu.be/Lf7oP2XqehE>

Recording of coronacast with Dr Matt Butler

On Friday 7th January I “attended” a Coronacast presented by Dr Matt Butler, consultant at Addenbrooke’s Hospital and specialist in the use of PPE. You may remember that Matt led a webcast for us at the beginning of the pandemic. There were over 240 headteachers in attendance, and he had some really helpful and interesting things to say about the current Covid situation (including the differences between Omicron and Delta), and practice in schools, including masks, ventilators, vaccination and so on. It is well worth a listen.

<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=Jq-zldIVw9U>

Templates and guidance on the Essex Schools Infolink

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://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 any new arrangements – keep your risk assessment updated and share with staff – and publish on your website if you have more than 50 employees.
- Ensure that staff are aware of the new (temporary?) requirements for testing.
- Contact your insurance company to check their new terms to validate staff absence as a result of this change.
- Listen to the webcast with Mike Gogarty on Wednesday 12th January.
- Listen to the coronacast with Dr Matt Butler.
- 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

The most recent handbooks for Ofsted inspection continue to be those published online, last updated 1st October 2022.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspection-handbook-eif/school-inspection-handbook>

Chris Russell, Ofsted's National Director for Education, writes a regular blog about Ofsted updates at <https://educationinspection.blog.gov.uk/author/christopher-russell/>

His last post, on 30th November, describes what impact additional funding, given to Ofsted, will have on your school. He notes: "*The first thing to say is that the changes won't have any effect on inspections **this academic year**, which are already planned. The second is that this is about getting inspection timescales back on track after the COVID disruption. It's not about inspecting individual schools more often than before COVID hit.*"

2021 Inspection Data Summary Report (IDSR) Now Available

The following data have been updated

- contextual information based on the January 2021 census
- exclusions data has been updated to the final release of 2019/20
- autumn 2020 one term absence release with pupil group data
- 2021 key stage 4 subject entries data
- latest key stage 4 destinations data
- latest school workforce census data
- latest MAT/LA data
- latest financial data

Ofsted encourages "significantly impacted" schools to request deferrals

If your school is significantly impacted by COVID-related staff absence, you can ask to defer your inspection. Additionally, if you're a school leader who is also an Ofsted inspector, Ofsted won't ask you to carry out inspections for a temporary period from the start of January.

Ofsted inspection roster drastically reduced

Schools Week article – 7th January 2022

Ofsted told Schools Week that it has around 1,170 contracted school Ofsted inspectors – 800 of whom are serving headteachers and senior leaders. The watchdog also clarified this week that it has temporarily agreed not to ask any OIs to carry out inspections. Instead, it will rely solely on the 185 school inspectors who are directly employed by Ofsted, to continue conducting inspections from next week. HMIs account for just 13.6 per cent of the watchdog's normal roster of school inspectors. The watchdog said it would be providing additional detail about what the reduced capacity means for inspections in the coming days. But it is likely to lead to a large scaling back of visits until normal service is resumed.

Zahawi also announced that the inspectorate would be encouraging schools "significantly impacted by Covid-related staff absence" to request a deferral. Last term around a quarter of requests to defer inspections were turned down by Ofsted. Ofsted said it would continue to consider deferral requests on a case-by-case basis.

Calls to halt inspection activity

The watchdog returned to full routine inspection activity in September, however visits were suspended again in the final week of last term so schools could prepare contingency plans for expected Omicron disruption. Inspections had already been paused for this week so that secondary schools could test pupils on their return to the classroom after Christmas. Paul Whiteman, general secretary of the NAHT school leaders' union, warned that inspections were the "very last thing schools need given the pressure they are under just to stay open and minimise disruption for learners".

In November, it was announced that Ofsted would receive an extra £24 million between 2022 and 2025 to speed up inspections of all schools and colleges to give a quicker assessment of education recovery.

The acceleration is not scheduled to begin until next year, with the extra cash allowing the watchdog to recruit more inspectors and manage the programme of rapid inspections.

<https://schoolsweek.co.uk/ofsted-inspector-ranks-reduced-by-86-as-leaders-told-to-focus-on-school-roles/>

Education recovery in schools: autumn 2021 – Ofsted research report

In December the inspectorate [published](#) a new report detailing how the pandemic has impacted pupils' learning and schools' approaches to overcome these issues during the autumn term. The findings are based on 98 routine inspections of primary and secondary schools in England between October and November. These are the key findings:

1. Covid-absences continue to disrupt learning

Ofsted found low attendance this term was a "stubborn concern". Schools reported much was caused by "direct and indirect" Covid reasons, including positive cases, anxiety among pupils and parents and poor mental health.

2. New pupils struggling

The watchdog found that the newest cohorts in primary and secondary schools have "arrived with lower starting points than previous years" due to Covid disruption.

Reception pupils have had reduced nursery provision and therefore struggle more with "peer interactions, behaviour, school readiness and attitudes to learning", Ofsted said.

At secondary level, Ofsted found year 7 pupils "struggled with the behaviour expectations of their new school and took longer to settle in". Some leaders also described this among year 8 pupils whose first year of secondary education was "greatly affected by the pandemic".

3. Informal assessments used to identify learning gaps ...

Many schools were responding to Covid challenges by using regular, informal assessments to determine any missing knowledge, Ofsted said.

Gaps in literacy and language were frequently noted across primary and secondary school, while "most pupils had some gap" in their maths knowledge.

4. ... and 'recovery curriculum' introduced to fill them in

Ofsted found a "small number" of schools made no adaptations to their curriculum because they were confident in their remote learning provision. Yet the majority had adapted their plans under a new "recovery curriculum".

5. How else are schools aiding catch-up?

While some leaders said they were using funding to provide one-to-one or group interventions, many reported using their own staff for these.

Tutoring and intervention work often targeted specific pupils, such as those from disadvantaged backgrounds or specific exam cohorts.

Leaders reported hosting after-school "catch-up clubs" which usually focussed on core subjects while a small number of schools offered Saturday sessions or used a summer school programme to induct Year 7 cohorts. Others held reading comprehension booster sessions with large groups of pupils.

Elsewhere some secondary schools had extended the school day for all pupils, with the additional time providing opportunities for enrichment activities, homework support, pastoral secession and catch-up tutoring.

<https://schoolsweek.co.uk/attendance-a-stubborn-concern-and-4-more-findings-from-ofsted-recovery-research/>

Relevant Documents and Guidance

- School Inspection Handbook –section 5 including evaluation descriptors *October 2021*
- School Inspection handbook - section 8 *October 2021*
- 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/>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/curriculum-research-reviews>

Your "do-list"

- If you are expecting Ofsted, ensure that you are familiar with the current IDSR report
- 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. In particular, ensure that your curriculum offer (including remote learning) is comprehensive and easily accessible on your website.

Safeguarding

Key information

Keeping Children Safe in Education – current version September 2021. I have updated the EPHA Safeguarding checklist in line with KCSiE to reflect the most recent version of the guidance.

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

Keeping Children Safe in Education Consultation for September 2022 version

The DfE has launched a consultation on KCSiE for September 2022. You are not expected to make any changes to your policies or current practice until KCSiE 2022 has been published.

Although, there are a few new ideas to consider, the biggest proposed change is that the stand-alone non-statutory guidance on sexual violence and sexual harassment is fully merged into KCSiE.

As part of this change, the phrase 'peer-on-peer' abuse is to be altered to 'child-on-child' abuse.

Whilst many governors have had safeguarding and child protection training, it has never been statutory. In the consultation documents, the DfE say, 'We are proposing to strengthen KCSiE and explicitly set out that all governors and trustees should receive safeguarding and child protection training (including online safety) at induction. We will also say the training should be regularly updated.'

Recognising the ubiquity of social media and that people's online behaviour may indicate something of their personality and attitude, the DfE say that schools should consider online searches as part of their due diligence checks on shortlisted candidates. They say that 'this would explore anything that is publicly available online which may be worth testing at interview.'

The proposed revisions and consultation document can be found here:

<https://consult.education.gov.uk/safeguarding-in-schools-team/kcsie-proposed-revisions-2022/>

The consultation questionnaire can be found here: <https://consult.education.gov.uk/safeguarding-in-schools-team/kcsie-proposed-revisions-2022/consultation/intro/>

Deadline for consultation responses is: Tuesday 8th March 2022

Effective Support – ESCB October 2021

The Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB) has just published the updated [Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex \(October 2021\)](#). This updated document has been agreed by the Essex Statutory Partners (Essex Police, NHS Clinical Commissioning Groups and Essex County Council) who are responsible for the [Multi-Agency Safeguarding Arrangements in Essex](#). The document will always be accessible from the homepage of the [ESCB website](#).

As well as making some sections clearer, the [Effective Support for Children and Families in Essex](#) has been updated in line with current practice. It now refers to submitting a request for support online, the Team Around the Family Support Officers (TAFSOs), support for children with disabilities, risk in the community & child exploitation and support for young carers.

Child Protection Policy

No changes so far this term! The current version is therefore September 2021.

Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB) Safeguarding Audit

As you know, the Essex Safeguarding Children Board regularly collects information on safeguarding arrangements within agencies, and it does this via a safeguarding audit. There is a two-yearly reporting cycle and the audit was technically due for completion this academic year (a decision was taken to defer it last year, in view of the pressures of Covid).

It was Jo Barclay's intention to circulate the new version of the audit last term for completion by the end of the spring term. However, given the ongoing pressures in schools she has discussed with the ESCB whether or not to proceed this academic year. Jo will update schools this term whether or not the audit will be a requirement this year. She plans to share the updated version with schools anyway, as many like to complete the audit informally for their own internal check and evaluation.

I will let you know as soon as there is any further information, including a link to the updated audit tool.

Safeguarding forums for schools – spring term dates

The spring term 2022 Safeguarding Forum presented by Jo Barclay, Head of Education

Safeguarding and Wellbeing and team is taking place virtually on Tuesday 22 February 2022 (10.30 am – 1.00 pm) or Wednesday 23 February 2022 (1.30 – 4.00 pm). The forum will provide the opportunity to share safeguarding updates and key information to support settings in safeguarding. To log in, search events and book your place via the Education Essex online booking system, please [click here](#).

Harmful Sexual Behaviour – training for primary phase schools

In person training in the summer term. Online briefing for all phases, 17th March 2022, 2.30 – 4.00 pm.

The NSPCC published a report in December on harmful sexual behaviour, learning from case reviews. <https://www.escb.co.uk/news/harmful-sexual-behaviour-learning-from-case-reviews-nsppcc/>

Safeguarding forums for governors

The first safeguarding forum for governors was held on 23rd November and 300 people accessed the Teams event. Unfortunately, there was an issue with the Teams licence as it capped the numbers at 300 (instead of 500), so some people were unable to access it. However, the session was recorded and can be accessed [here](#).

There is clearly an appetite for these sessions, so the safeguarding team will continue to hold them termly going forward. Dates for the following two terms are 15th March at 6.00 pm and then 28th June, also at 6.00 pm. The governor forums will always be held as online events going forward. Please do ask them to 'hold the dates' and further details will be sent to them next term.

In addition, Jo will run **training for governors on Harmful Sexual Behaviour**, on 30th March from 4.00 – 5.30 pm. Details to follow.

Safeguarding training for Governors Inspection Safeguarding – Tuesday 8 February 2022

The ECC Safeguarding Forum for Governors Inspecting Safeguarding webinar will be held on Tuesday 8 February 2022 from 6pm to 7pm, which colleagues can attend by clicking [here](#) a few minutes prior to 6pm on the day. Any queries, please contact sally.relfe@essex.gov.uk.

Online safety awareness session by The 2 Johns

3 February 2022 10 am-12 noon

Training will take place on Microsoft Teams.

Target audience: anyone working with children and families in Southend, Essex and Thurrock.

Overview - This session will look at:

- The online world and how our young people are using it. It will explore how they are navigating around restrictions and using the internet without parents knowledge.
- Content in regards to favourite apps and games
- Look at the dangers young people face, not only from predatory people, but also how they are being groomed in games which ranges from receiving gifts for the young player (typically Primary age) and being groomed on servers for the older players.
- Bullying across all age ranges
- The use that gangs make of the online world.
- Sexting and how the wrong reaction from a parent can destroy family relationships forever.
- How all young people are being influenced online and forming ideologies and views that might be different to the parents, which can also give them a skewed view of the work.
- How influencers work, which can lead our children to conduct dangerous challenges.

This session will explore solutions that parents and professionals can adopt to help keep children safe which includes how to use settings on apps to ensure safe use of games and how adults should approach the online arena

To request a place visit [Online safety awareness session by The 2 Johns \(escb.co.uk\)](https://www.escb.co.uk)

Safer Internet Day - Tuesday 8th February 2022

Safer Internet Day 2022 will be celebrated on Tuesday 8th February 2022 with the theme 'All fun and games? Exploring respect and relationships online'.

From gaming and chat, to streaming and video, young people are shaping the interactive

entertainment spaces they are a part of. Safer Internet Day 2022 celebrates young people's role in creating a safer internet, whether that is whilst gaming and creating content, or interacting with their friends and peers.

Find out more here: <https://saferinternet.org.uk/safer-internet-day/safer-internet-day-2022>

DfE Education Staff Wellbeing Charter

The education staff wellbeing charter is a declaration of support for, and set of commitments to, the wellbeing and mental health of everyone working in education. All state funded schools and colleges are invited to familiarise themselves with the charter, and to sign up, as a shared commitment to protect, promote and enhance the wellbeing of their staff. It is voluntary and there is no deadline to sign up.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/education-staff-wellbeing-charter#signing-up-to-the-charter>

Mental Health Lead Training

Essex has worked with a consortium called the 'Root of It' to train suitably qualified local trainers in Essex. They now have a pool of trainers so that all courses can be delivered face-to-face. These will commence in the spring term.

The National Network of Mental Health Lead website [National Network of Mental Health Leads – The UK body for Mental Health and Wellbeing Leads](#) is hosting the bookings for the Advanced Designated Mental Health Lead training. We recommend you look at the website for which course is most suitable for your school needs.

There are two options, both 3 day courses

- Senior Leaders (SLT, HT)
- Mental Health Lead

The National Network of Mental Health Leads is also covering all the accreditation process.

NB The DfE has now allocated all available grant funding for the 2021 to 2022 financial year.

Free support for school leaders from Education Support

<https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/get-help/help-for-your-staff/wellbeing-services/school-leaders-support/>

This service is for headteachers, deputy head teachers, MAT CEOs and MAT Deputy CEOs based in state funded primary or secondary schools, who do not have current access to counselling free at the point of use e.g. via an EAP.

You must be able to attend six sessions of either online facilitated peer to peer support or individual telephone support

This service is funded by the Department for Education

Essex Wellbeing Service

In Essex we are fortunate to have many services available to provide support to us, but sometimes it can be difficult to know where and when to access it. The Essex Wellbeing Service is an early intervention offer that supports everyone in Essex to live healthy and socially connected lives.

<https://www.essexwellbeingservice.co.uk/>

Please do make use of this service and promote it with your families.

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-and-development/>

Level 3 DSL training is delivered by Juniper Education

The Education Safeguarding Team consists of:

Jo Barclay, Head of Education Safeguarding and Wellbeing

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Matthew Lewis, Education Safeguarding Adviser

Matthew.Lewis@essex.gov.uk

Hayley Speed, Education Safeguarding Officer / MARAC

hayley.speed@essex.gov.uk

Katie Crouch, Business Support to the team

Team email

educationsafeguarding@essex.gov.uk

For matters other than requests for advice on specific issues/complex cases/Prevent concerns, please email the School Communications Team for a response:

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 October 2021
- 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>
- 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”

- Use the ESCB safeguarding audit as an evaluation tool (once published).
- Sign up for one of the online safeguarding forums in February.
- Let your governors know about the safeguarding briefing on 15th March, and the Harmful Sexual Behaviour training on 30th March (details to follow)
- Consider attending the online safety session by the 2 Johns on 3rd February.
- Acknowledge Safer Internet Day – Tuesday 8th February
- Sign up to the DfE Education Staff Wellbeing Charter, if you want to.
- Use the EPHA Safeguarding checklist in line with KCSiE – September 2021 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 the 2021/2022 academic year

[Primary assessments: future dates - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

Reception baseline assessment

Schools must complete the reception baseline assessment for each child in the first 6 weeks after they enter reception

Key stage 1

The key stage 1 tests should be administered during May 2022.

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.

Date	Activity
Monday 9 May 2022	English grammar, punctuation and spelling papers 1 and 2
Tuesday 10 May 2022	English reading
Wednesday 11 May 2022	Mathematics papers 1 and 2
Thursday 12 May 2022	Mathematics paper 3

Multiplication tables check

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

2022/23 academic year

Schools must complete the reception baseline assessment for each child in the first 6 weeks after they enter reception

The key stage 1 tests should be administered during May 2023.

The key stage 2 tests are timetabled from Monday 8 May to Thursday 11 May 2023.

School funding 2022/23

The school funding settlement for 2022/23 was announced on 16 December 2021. The total increase in funding for 2022/23 is **£4 billion** which includes **£2.3 billion** from Spending Review 2019 and **£1.7 billion** from Spending Review 2021. The **£2.3 billion** from SR2019 is allocated as usual through the DSG (Dedicated Schools Allocation) however the **£1.7 billion** from SR2021 will be paid through a schools supplementary grant outside of the funding formula.

The Schools Block allocation for Essex (total National Funding Formula) and the Supplementary Grant is £1,026,000 – a 6.8% funding increase. The Schools Block has increased by **£37.8 million** (3.8%) due to the following:

- The impact of the uplift in funding for 2022/23 £26.1 million;
- The increase in pupil numbers from 197,477 to 199,370 £10.5 million; and
- An increase in the growth fund allocation £1.2 million

In 2022/23 schools will be allocated **£1.2 billion** as support for the costs of the Health and Social Care Levy and other cost pressures. The funding for 2022/23 will be allocated through a separate Schools Supplementary Grant. The total allocation for primary and secondary schools is **£29.9 million** (3%) and funding will be allocated as follows:

- A basic per-pupil rate of **£97** for primary pupils, **£137** for KS3 pupils and **£155** for KS4 pupils.
- A lump sum of **£3,680**
- FSM6 per-pupil rate of **£85** per eligible primary pupils and **£124** per eligible secondary pupils.
- An area cost adjustment will be applied to the above rates to take into account geographical variation in labour costs.

Local authorities have been allocated **£325 million** additional high needs funding for 2022/23 which has been calculated by uplifting the funding for historic and other proxy factors by 4.12%. Essex receives an additional **£7.5 million**.

For 2022/23 the Essex Formula for Funding Schools has transitioned to the Schools NFF with the exception of the primary lump sum, which will fully transition in 2023/24.

The Authority must inform maintained schools of their 2022/23 Schools Block allocation by 28th February 2022. The ESFA will inform academies of their GAG allocations by 31st March 2022.

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 are calculated based on the number of eligible pupils recorded by schools in their census in October.

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. **This rises to £1,385 for primary schools and £985 for secondary schools in 2022/23.**

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. **This rises to £2,410 in 2022/23.**

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. **This rises to £320 in 2022/23.**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium-allocations-and-conditions-of-grant-2021-to-2022>

Accountability

- Schools must show how they're using their pupil premium funding:
- by publishing an [online statement](#) about how they use their funding and the impact it has on the attainment of disadvantaged pupils
- through [inspections by Ofsted](#)
- through published performance tables

Virtual School Heads demonstrate to Ofsted how they're managing pupil premium for looked-after children in the Virtual School Annual Report.

[Recovery premium funding - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

In February 2021, the government announced a one-off recovery premium as part of its package of funding to support education recovery.

The recovery premium provides additional funding for state-funded schools in the 2021 to 2022 academic year. Building on the [pupil premium](#), this funding will help schools to deliver evidence-based approaches for supporting disadvantaged pupils.

Funding allocations

School allocations will be calculated on a per pupil basis.

Mainstream schools will get:

- £145 for each eligible pupil in mainstream education
- £290 for each eligible pupil in a special unit

Other types of eligible schools will get £290 for each eligible pupil.

We have applied additional weighting to specialist provision recognising the significantly higher per pupil costs they face.

We have included a minimum payment that we refer to as a 'floor' to ensure that:

- an eligible primary school will not receive less than £2,000
- an eligible secondary school will not receive less than £6,000

As with pupil premium, the funding for looked-after children will be paid to the local authority and should be managed by the [virtual school head](#).

See the [coronavirus \(COVID-19\) recovery premium allocations guidance](#) for further information about allocations and the conditions of grant.

School-led Tutoring Grant accountability

You're not required to use it, but there are reporting requirements

You'll need to provide the DfE with data both termly and at the end of the academic year:

- The DfE will include questions about school-led tutoring on the [educational setting status form](#) every 3 to 6 weeks
- This data collection is voluntary - you're only required to submit school-led tutoring data once a term (as part of the census) and at the end of the academic year

Data collection via the School Census

All eligible schools will be required to identify pupils in receipt of School-Led Tutoring in their School Census return. The School Census is a statutory data collection and collects data termly over the course of the academic year. The census dates are as follows:

- autumn census - 07 October 2021
- spring census - 20 January 2022
- summer census - 19 May 2022

Schools must ensure they record the following information:

- each pupil receiving tutoring - from autumn 2021, using FAM Type 'NLM' (national learner monitoring) and FAM code '01' (in receipt of School-Led Tutoring)
 - the cumulative number of hours of tuition delivered to each pupil - from spring 2022, using the FAM Hours field, which will collect the total number of tutoring hours the pupil has received 'as at each census day' to the nearest 0.5
- More information on how to complete the School Census is available [here](#).

[Complete the school census - Guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

School Attendance guidance – updated 7th January 2022

Updated the 'Addendum: recording attendance in relation to coronavirus (COVID-19) during the 2021 to 2022 academic year' in line with the UKHSA announcement about confirmatory PCR tests.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance>

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile

The early years foundation stage (EYFS) profile is statutory for the 2021 to 2022 academic year, except for providers legally exempt under relevant regulations. Local authorities need to return the EYFS profile data by 29 July 2022. This handbook supports EYFS practitioners in making accurate judgements about each child's attainment. It should be used to help complete early years foundation stage profile judgements so that outcomes are accurate and consistent across all early years settings.

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

Behaviour Hubs

[Behaviour hubs - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

The Department for Education (DfE) is funding a 3-year programme to improve pupil behaviour.

The programme pairs schools and MATs with exemplary behaviour practices, called lead schools or MATs, with partner schools or MATs who want and need to improve pupil behaviour.

The programme is flexible with a tailored offer of support depending on partner schools' circumstances but all partner schools can expect to get support with:

- diagnosing specific areas of improvement
- designing and developing new approaches to addressing poor behaviour
- developing clear, sustainable behaviour cultures for all pupils

The programme is based on [creating a culture: how school leaders can optimise behaviour](#). Good behaviour, routines and structures in schools support all pupils' engagement in education, and their mental health and wellbeing. Schools will work together to apply these principles to the individual context of the school.

[Download the behaviour hubs programme brochure](#) for an overview of support available.

Partner school and MAT criteria

The following partner schools can apply:

- primary schools
- secondary schools
- alternative provision schools
- special schools
- MATs

To be a partner school you must be rated 'good', 'requires improvement' or 'inadequate' by Ofsted. Applications are currently being accepted from schools of all provisions across England.

The Partner School Support Offer

There are 5 parts to the support offer that partner schools receive through the behaviour hubs programme.

- One-to-one support
- Training
- Open days
- Networking events
- Resources

Our local Lead Partner school in Essex is Lyons Hall Primary School, Learning Pathways Academy, Essex

Teaching School hubs

The teaching school hub programme will create a network of 87 centres of excellence for teacher training and development, focused on some of the best schools and multi-academy trusts in the country. This programme replaces the previous network of around 750 teaching schools, which will end in August 2021.

The list of Teaching School Hubs was updated in November 2021.

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

Emergency school improvement fund (non-capital)

Funding to support schools facing unexpected or imminent failure to improve in areas such as leadership, governance, safeguarding, human resources and finance.

Updated 30 November 2021 as teaching schools and national support schools no longer exist. Moved existing eligibility criteria on to this guidance. Added information about the application process, funding allocations and reporting and accountability.

[Emergency school improvement fund \(non-capital\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/emergency-school-improvement-fund-non-capital)

DfE School improvement support collection

Professional development and support to help schools develop their leadership, staff and curriculum, so they can improve their results and performance.

[School improvement support - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-improvement-support)

4th November update Get school-to-school support from system leaders

[Get school-to-school support from system leaders - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/get-school-to-school-support-from-system-leaders)

The risk protection arrangement (RPA) for schools

Public sector schools can join the risk protection arrangement (RPA), an alternative to commercial insurance, which may save time and money.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/the-risk-protection-arrangement-rpa-for-schools>

Relevant Documents and Guidance

- Early Years Foundation Stage Profile 2022
- 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>
- Schools statutory guidance
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/statutory-guidance-schools>

Your “do-list”

- Note future testing and assessment dates.
- Ensure that you have published a Pupil Premium Strategy using the DfE template.
- Record the use of the School Led Tutoring Grant in the spring term census (20th January)
- Complete the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile this school year.

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 (*may*) need to review and adopt:

- Equalities Information
- School Uniform Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Complaints Policy

The Cost of School Uniforms – new statutory DfE guidance published November 2021

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cost-of-school-uniforms/cost-of-school-uniforms>

This is new statutory guidance from the Department for Education. This means that schools and their governing boards must have regard to it when developing and implementing their school and trust uniform policies. The purpose of the guidance is to ensure the cost of school uniforms is reasonable and secures the best value for money. It should be read alongside the non-statutory guidance on [School uniforms - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-uniforms)

It is worth noting that schools do not need to have a standalone School Uniform Policy, and a mention in your school prospectus may be more than sufficient. If your school has a uniform policy, you should make sure it's clear and easy to understand and publish it on your website.

What you need to do, and when

You should comply with as much of the guidance as possible by September 2022.

This means that by the end of the summer term 2022, you need to:

- Review your uniform policy or approach, and make changes where necessary (to meet the statutory cost guidance) (unless the exceptions set out below apply)
- Publish your uniform policy on your website
- Make sure second-hand uniforms are available

You have until summer term 2023 to comply with the guidance if:

- Changing your uniform would require you to breach a pre-existing contract or informal agreement with a uniform supplier
- You need to run a competitive tender process to set up a new contract

If you need to run a competitive tender process, you should aim to have your new contract in place no later than December 2022.

If you're tied into a long-term contract with a uniform supplier that won't come up for renewal until after summer 2023, you should comply with the new guidance when your contract comes up for review.

It's up to you/your governors to decide what an affordable uniform looks like for your pupils and although the guidance asks you to keep branded items to a minimum, but it doesn't set a maximum number of branded items you're allowed to ask for.

How to review your uniform policy

Your governing board is responsible for your school's uniform policy, so you'll need to work closely with them to make sure you're compliant with the new guidance.

You should also engage with parents/carers and pupils when you develop or review your uniform policy.

If you don't feel that you need to review (or create) a standalone policy I would advise that at least you include an item on a Governing Body or Committee agenda (before the end of the summer term) so that you are meeting the requirements. For example:

To note the DfE statutory guidance on School Uniforms (published in November 2021)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cost-of-school-uniforms/cost-of-school-uniforms>

and to record the school's compliance with the guidance.

Behaviour Policy

A reminder that Jo Barclay is in the process of developing a Behaviour Policy model that aligns with the ECC approach, set out in *Understanding and Supporting Behaviour - Safe Practice for Schools and Educational Settings* (ECC September 2021) You may want to review your current Behaviour Policy in light of this model (when it is available).

A reminder of some key principles and requirements when reviewing your Behaviour Policy:

In maintained schools, the headteacher must set out measures in the behaviour policy which aim to promote good behaviour, self-discipline and respect; prevent bullying; ensure that pupils complete assigned work; and which regulate the conduct of pupils.

- When deciding what these measures should be, the headteacher must take account of the governing body's statement of behaviour principles.
- The headteacher must publicise the school behaviour policy, in writing, to staff, parents and pupils at least once a year.
- The school's behaviour policy must be published on its website (School Information (England) Regulations 2008). Where they do not have a website the governing body should make arrangements for the behaviour policy to be put on a website and to make the address and details (of the website) known to parents.

In academies the proprietor is required to ensure that a written policy to promote good behaviour among pupils is drawn up and effectively implemented.

- The policy must set out the disciplinary sanctions to be adopted if a pupil misbehaves. The proprietor is also required to ensure that an effective anti-bullying strategy is drawn up and implemented.
- Information about the school's behaviour policy must be made available to parents on request.
- While Academies are not required by law to publish their behaviour policy on their website, it is good practice to do so.

Complaints Policy

The EPHA model Complaints Policy, developed in line with the DfE guidance published in 2019, has been reviewed and refreshed. There are separate models for maintained schools and academies, along with a leaflet you can reproduce for use in your school. The models include reference to managing serial and unreasonable complaints.

The model policies have been checked and endorsed by Natasha Taylor, Essex Legal Services.

Managing complaints – training delivered by Natasha Taylor and James Hutchon

Two options available:

In person at the Lion Inn, Boreham, Thursday 10th February from 1.30 pm – 3.30 pm (sandwich lunch from 1.00 pm). There are still places available if you (and a governor) would like to come along – but please don't rebook if you have already done so (I will have sent you a confirmation email).

Online on Monday 28th February from 1.00 pm – 3.00 pm. If you have not yet booked and wish to attend please email me and I will send confirmation and the Zoom link.

EPHA provides 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 2021)
- 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 (April 2021) of the website checklists

I have reviewed and updated the website checklists for both maintained schools and academies – available on the EPHA website. The last update by DfE was in February 2021.

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

Current Juniper 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	September 2021
Cover and PPA	Recommended	December 2020
Dealing with safeguarding allegations against adults	Statutory	September 2021
Discipline and Dismissal	Statutory	September 2020
Early Career Teachers Statutory Induction	Statutory	June 2021
Equality and Diversity in Employment	Recommended	June 2021
Flexible Working	Recommended	December 2020
Grievance	Statutory	December 2020
Leave of Absence (and guidance)	Recommended	April 2020
Menopause	Recommended	October 2021
Mental health and wellbeing	Recommended	January 2020
Pay Policy	Statutory (M) Recommended (A)	September 2021
Performance Management (all staff)	Statutory (M) Recommended (A)	December 2020
Probation procedure	Recommended	November 2020
Recruitment	Statutory	September 2021
Redundancy and restructuring -academies	Recommended	December 2020
Redundancy and restructuring – Essex maintained schools	Statutory	December 2020
Sickness Absence management	Recommended	September 2021
Sabbatical	Recommended	October 2020
Whistleblowing	Statutory	December 2020

Relevant Documents and Guidance

- Cost of school uniforms statutory guidance <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cost-of-school-uniforms/cost-of-school-uniforms>
- School uniform guidance <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-uniform>
- 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”

- Review and publish Equalities information by 6 April
- Review your school uniform arrangements to ensure they are compliant with DfE statutory guidance on cost; review or develop a policy, or record compliance in a governors’ meeting. Publish (any) revision on your school website, perhaps within the school prospectus.
- Review your Behaviour Policy (possibly in line with ECC model) – publish on your school website
- Review and readopt your Complaints Policy – publish on your school website

- Attend one of the free EPHA training sessions on managing complaints.
- Update your school website, using the checklists provided by EPHA (April 2021) – no new requirements from the DfE.
- 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

Director of Education Termly Conference for Governors -Tuesday 22 February 2022

The termly chairs' conference led by Clare Kershaw, Director of Education, is an excellent opportunity for networking, sharing ideas and learning from each other. As well as the termly Safeguarding update, the Director's conferences provide updates on Financial, HR and Curriculum matters as well as updates on the progress of Essex LA strategic priorities. You can attend by clicking [here](#) a few minutes prior to 6pm on the day. Any queries, please contact sally.relfe@essex.gov.uk.

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)

Understand your school's plans for 2022 exams

The Department for Education (DfE) says that exams will go ahead this school year. KS2 SATs are scheduled for Monday 9 to Thursday 12 May 2022.

However, performance tables won't be published at the end of the year, and there'll be no science sampling this year.

The DfE will share results securely with primary schools, academy trusts, local authorities (LAs) and Ofsted for school improvement purposes.

Complete the SFVS (maintained schools)

Many maintained schools must submit the Schools Financial Value Standard (SFVS) to their local authority (LA) by 31 March, so your school is likely to be completing it this term.

Check with your LA as your deadline might be earlier.

There's an [updated template for 2021-22](#). The checklist sets out questions for the governing board to discuss with the headteacher and senior staff.

One notable change this year is that schools are now required to report on related party transactions (RPTs). You can read more about RPTs and other new financial transparency measures for maintained schools in [this article](#).

You should also note that the self-assessment dashboard has been moved to the DfE's [benchmarking website](#). A question on the checklist will ask whether governors have considered the results of this dashboard or other DfE benchmarking tools.

You might delegate detailed scrutiny of the SFVS to a relevant committee but, if you do, it 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.

Finalise next year's budget (maintained schools)

In maintained schools, the budget for the next financial year is usually finalised in the spring term. 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.

The chair of the finance committee will summarise the budget and make a recommendation to the board. The board should then ask questions to make sure the budget's been properly scrutinised. The final date for submission to the LA is 4 May.

Manage your accounts (academies)

The deadline to submit your [audited accounts](#) to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) is 31 December 2021.

You also need to make sure you meet these deadlines:

25 January 2022: deadline to submit your 2020/21 accounts return (this is separate to the accounts – [read more here](#))

31 January 2022 at the latest: publish the accounts on your trust's website as soon as they're signed

31 May 2022 at the latest: file the accounts with [Companies House](#)

Monitor any continued spending from the coronavirus catch-up premium

This funding was a one-off, but you should continue to monitor it where your school has carried forward any unspent funding from the 2020/21 academic year.

Monitor recovery premium funding

This is an additional amount of money that builds on your schools' usual pupil premium funding. You can read the full details in our article about [additional funding for your schools due to the coronavirus](#), but the main points to know are:

- If your school is eligible for pupil premium, it'll also be eligible for the recovery premium
- The same pupils who receive pupil premium funding will attract the recovery premium funding
- Your school should use the funding the same way it uses the [pupil premium](#)
- Your school will receive 4 payments during the 2021/22 school year

Get school food on the agenda

Natasha's Law came into effect on 1 October, which requires all food prepackaged for direct sale to be labelled with all of the ingredients. Together with the school food standards, there's a renewed emphasis on school food safety.

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 28 February and 31 May respectively.

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

Determine admission arrangements for entry in September 2023

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 2022: to determine your admission arrangements for admission in September 2023

28 February 2022: to publish your appeals timetable for admissions in September 2022

15 March 2022: to publish the arrangements on your school 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).

A reminder that, from April 2022, Essex Local Authority will no longer manage mid-year admissions for schools that are their own admissions authority (i.e. academies, free schools, foundation and voluntary-aided).

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 next reporting date is 30 March 2022 for a snapshot date of 31 March 2021.

The government suspended this requirement in 2020 due to coronavirus and extended the reporting date to 5 October 2021 to report their gender pay gap information for the 2020/21 reporting year (which uses a snapshot date of 31 March 2020). Timeframes have now reverted to normal for the 2021/22 reporting year.

Continue to monitor your school's contingency plan for remote learning

Your school still needs a [contingency plan](#) for remote education for any pupils unable to attend due

to self-isolation or restrictions on attendance. Expectations for remote learning are the same as for learning in person, so you'll monitor it in the same way you'd normally monitor the [quality of education](#). You'll also want to dive deeper into the effectiveness of your remote offer.

External reviews of governance

In December the DfE Updated and consolidated the DfE's guidance on external reviews of governance into one detailed guide.

[External reviews of governance: guide for schools and academy trusts - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Get Information about Schools

Please continue to update the Get Information about Schools website. There was a system update in December and a reminder that schools should check and update their current contact details, particularly if you have had leadership and/or governance changes.

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

Relevant Documents and Guidance

- Governance Handbook and Competency Framework October 2020
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/governance-handbook>
- SFVS 2020 – 2021 checklist and dashboard [Schools financial value standard \(SFVS\) and assurance statement - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- “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”

- Forward the information to governors about the termly briefing with Clare Kershaw
- 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.
- Finalise next year's budget (maintained schools).
- Determine admission arrangements for entry in September 2023.
- Update your school's information on the Get information about Schools website.

The Local Authority

Key information

Essex Education Strategic Aims for 2021/22

- ✓ **Drive collaboration**, partnership working and collective improvement across the Education, Health and Care system.
- ✓ **Encourage place-based working**, understanding the needs, challenges and opportunities of different localities of Essex.
- ✓ **Align our workforce, strategies, communication** and information across our directorate, behind one clear vision and overarching strategy
- ✓ Support, drive and enable whole school/setting **inclusive practice**, underpinned by our **early intervention** and **non-labelling** approach
- ✓ Deliver **sufficient, high quality, sustainable education places** for all Essex children and young people, underpinned by a network of school partnerships accelerating school improvement.
- ✓ Enable Essex to have a **thriving education workforce** with access to informal and formal professional learning opportunities and **wellbeing** support initiatives.

The core work for this year will include:

- Working with all **settings, schools and MATs to ensure the highest quality of education** is provided to all children and young people **and inclusion** is at the heart of all of our work. CK noted that the DfE appear to be rolling back slightly on academisation, with other higher priorities, although a White Paper is expected in the new year. However, the development of a sustainable system is critical, particularly to sustain small, rural schools.
- Working with Roy Blatchford and the Essex Education Taskforce on the **delivery of the activities the Taskforce has put together including the '2022 Year of Reading'**.
- A continued focus on our SEND improvement journey in response to the **Local Area SEND inspection and subsequent Joint Written Statement of Action**
- Work continues on the development of an **Ordinarily Available Framework** (due to be published in November) **and joint commissioning of services as well as improvements to the Local Offer, Preparing for Adulthood resources, Early Years support and resources to support accurate identification of need.**
- Linked to and as part of this work, we will continue to roll out across schools, settings and colleges **Trauma Perceptive Practice, the Disadvantaged Strategy and continue to pilot the Inclusion Framework.**
- We will also 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 and students.
- We will continue to promote the **safety and emotional wellbeing of all children** and young people across Essex.
- We will respond to the new requirements placed on the **Virtual School to promote high educational outcomes for both children in care but also children in need.**
- Provide support to Cllr Ball and the cross-party working group that has been established to review **the Elective Home Education / Children Missing Education system in Essex.**
- And finally, we will continue to prioritise the **Headteacher Wellbeing programme** across primary, secondary and special schools.

The Board of the **Education Taskforce**, chaired by Roy Blatchford, is independent of the LA, working on behalf of the system in Essex. They have met 3 times and have agreed what they aim to achieve.

The summary of activity focuses on the following actions:

- Colleges – support young people to transition into colleges well – Transition coaches identified and in place (*EETF lead: Dan Pearson*)
- Transition coaches from year 6 to Year 7 – to have specific transition coaches to support young

people transition into secondary school in order to prevent permanent exclusion. (EETF leads: Harriet Phelps-Knights and Carole Herman)

- Early Years – pre-school language – Building on the work being done as part of the Early Years Strategy training to be provided to settings on early language development, and to invest in the development of Communication Champions ensuring sustainability of above (EETF lead: Jo Nice)
- Year of reading – Every Essex child a confident reader. EETF will focus on reading programmes for years 6/7. (EETF lead: Project group)
- Outdoor education – Martin Solder to send nomination forms to schools via Task Force (EETF lead: Martin Solder)
- Research EPI – Impact of Taskforce on education in Essex. Wellbeing survey. (EETF lead: Roy Blatchford)
- Young people wellbeing – Mental Health support to secondary schools, investment in training additional mental health leads. TPP principles to drive this work. Survey developed to track individual children over a 3 year period. (EETF lead: Carole Herman)
- Leaders' wellbeing – Headteacher wellbeing; a designated wellbeing governor in each school; toolkit to be created and distributed. (EETF lead: Linda Robinson)

The Task Force has made a £1 million investment in reading, with a focus on the primary/secondary transition years: Years 6/7. Links to Essex Year of Reading 2022.

Mid-year admission arrangements for Essex primary schools from April 2022

Following a consultation in the autumn term, the decision has now been taken so that with effect from 1 April 2022, parents will need to apply directly to own admission authority infant, junior and primary schools (i.e. academy, foundation and voluntary aided schools) for a place in-year (mid-year). Such schools will need to handle these applications directly. Template letters and forms to support the administration of admissions have been provided by the Local Authority.

This does not in any way affect the normal admission round applications for admission into Reception in the following September, or likewise admission into Year 3 of a junior school in the following September – the Council will still handle all of these applications as it does now.

EPHA has organized two online webcasts to give headteachers and school staff the opportunity to hear from Shamsun Noor and to ask questions about the changes to the mid-year admissions process.

Wednesday 19th January – 2.00 pm

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81802929949?pwd=U21QdkFBSjRObHp5dTIFZ0hBTjFsdz09>

Meeting ID: 818 0292 9949

Passcode: 271324

or Monday 7th March 2022 – 2.00 pm

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85058912920?pwd=bHR2Ky95WGFoeGp4bDhmd3E3M0lQUt09>

Meeting ID: 850 5891 2920

Passcode: 305379

Health and Safety Monitoring (HSIM) 2022

The online health and safety internal monitoring (HSIM) 2021/22 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 25 February 2022**. 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

Renewal of Health & Safety Service and Contract opt out Reminder

Community/VC schools' free access automatically renews on Friday 1 April 2022, therefore no action is required. Schools who bought into the 2021/22 H&S service will automatically renew for a further period of 12 months unless the Headteacher terminates the contract by giving less than 2 months' written notice, by Monday 31 January 2022. Please note 2022/23 SLA will incur a small 1% increase in our charges.

Essex School Meals Service – Agreement Renewal 2021/22

A reminder to all LA schools that use the service; your agreement is due to automatically renew on Friday 1 April 2022. This applies to LA schools only, as academies will renew on Thursday 1 September 2022. As per section 12.1 of the Agreement, written notice must be provided to school.meals@essex.gov.uk 3 months in advance of Friday 1 April 2022, if you wish to end our support to you, by Friday 31 December 2021.

Education Structure Charts

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

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

Walk & Talk Mental Wellbeing Day

In support of National Walk & Talk Day on February 6th 2022, Active Essex are encouraging schools to Go outside, Get Active and Talk. Between the **7th- 13th February**, they are asking schools to complete a 1 Mile Walk whilst talking to fellow students.

All schools who join will be sent an Active Essex Toolkit including a Step by Step Guide to host your Walk, 10 conversation topic cards and information of how to enter our prize draw.

To take part in the Walk & Talk Wellbeing Day and to receive an Active Essex Toolkit, please confirm by emailing Tom Weller at Tom.Weller@activeessex.org no later than the 31st January 2022.

Early Help Drop In Sessions

A reminder that these sessions are held in each quadrant and are designed to give partners across Essex who work with children, young people and families the chance to discuss anonymised cases, gain peer support, be signposted to advice and help to answer general questions. The sessions are facilitated by the quadrant Partnership Delivery Lead, supported by a panel of subject experts.

North East - Tuesday 15.00-16.00 – contact Lee Bailey for details lee.bailey@essex.gov.uk

Mid Essex – Wednesday 12.00-13.00 - contact Paul Mitchell for details paul.mitchell@essex.gov.uk

South Essex – Wednesday 12.30-13.30 Contact Harriet Pickering for details

harriet.pickering@essex.gov.uk

West Essex – Thursday 12.00-13.00 Contact Fiona Bailey for details Fiona.bailey@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 25 February 2022.
- If you don't wish to renew your Health and Safety contract, notify the service by 31st January.
- Attend one of the online briefings with Shamsun Noor to understand the implications of managing mid-year admissions.
- Sign up to the Walk and Talk Mental Wellbeing challenge.
- Attend the termly headteachers' meeting online to be kept up to date on LA plans, strategy and information – this term the update from the LA will be online on Tuesday 1st March at 10.00 am – 12 noon
- Make sure you read/see Education Essex each week (as well as the School Communications emails)

EPHA events and dates

Key information

According to my information so far, just 6 primary schools in Essex have new headteachers this term
2 in South.

Gareth Allen	Vange Primary (Executive head)
Sarah Carswell	Vange Primary (Head of School)
Liam Daley	St Helen's Catholic Juniors, Brentwood (Acting Headteacher)

0 in Mid

1 in West

Shaun Kelliher	Holy Cross Catholic Primary (Acting since October)
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3 in North East

Hannah Coyle	Fingringhoe CE Primary (Acting Headteacher)
Nathan Kempster	Ardleigh St Mary's Primary (Acting Headteacher)
Rebecca Loader	Stanway Primary

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 2021-22 and 2022-23

Spring term 2022 – LA update online

The Local Authority update from Clare Kershaw and her team will be held online on **Tuesday 1st**

March at 10.00 am – 12 noon. The Zoom link (which I will resend nearer the time) is

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86360913058?pwd=Z1lsODR3Zys4QVI0Z3AwSnozdmE4dz09>

Meeting ID: 863 6091 3058

Passcode: 675405

North East EPHA –Colchester United Football Stadium

Wednesday 2 March 2022 – key note speaker, Professor Mick Waters

Wednesday 15 June 2022

Wednesday 16 November 2022

Wednesday 8 March 2023

Wednesday 21 June 2023

South EPHA – Greenwoods Hotel and Spa, Stock

Thursday 3 March 2022 – key note speaker, Jonathan Bond

Thursday 23 June 2022

Thursday 17 November 2022

Thursday 2 March 2023

Thursday 15 June 2023

West EPHA – Manor Suite, Manor of Groves, Sawbridgeworth

Wednesday 9 March 2022– key note speaker, Professor Mick Waters

Wednesday 22 June 2022

Wednesday 9 November 2022

Wednesday 1 March 2023

Wednesday 14 June 2023

Mid EPHA – The Lion Inn, Boreham

Thursday 10 March 2022 – key note speaker, Dame Alison Peacock

Thursday 16 June 2022

Thursday 10 November 2022

Thursday 9 March 2023

Thursday 22 June 2023

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

County EPHA Annual General Meeting

Thursday 29 September 2022 The Lion Inn, Boreham

Conferences

Headteachers' conference – Friday 25 March 2022 – Chelmsford City Race Course – key note speakers, Lady Marie Stubbs, Gillian Bridge and Ben McBean. – programme and booking form sent out by post in January – £100 per delegate (or free if you paid for a place in 2020!)

Deputy Headteachers' conference – Friday 7 October 2022 – Colchester Football Stadium

Teachers' Pension changes – webcast

From 1st April 2022 there are a number of changes to the teachers' pension scheme, depending on when your contributions started. The team at Wesleyan are running two online sessions, hosted by EPHA, to explain the changes, on Monday 14th March at 6.00 pm or Wednesday 16th March at 1.30 pm. I will send out information and Zoom links to headteachers soon.

EPHA Primary Headteachers' Support Directory

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

Support from EPHA for headteacher wellbeing

The EPHA wellbeing survey run in November 2021 highlighted the challenges faced by headteachers, which have been exacerbated by the demands and pressures of the Covid pandemic. We plan to facilitate a range of support in addition to the current EPHA offer, which will include signposting or brokering practical help for heads in crisis, such as:

- Coaching or counselling – individually or in a group
- Colleague Support for any headteacher in need (not just new heads)
- Capacity help in a school – headteachers or deputies seconded to help add leadership capacity for a limited time
- Governance advice and support, including recommending clerks who can manage “statutory” meetings
- Legal support for complaints
- Bespoke training, including joint training on complaints for headteachers and governors

The **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/1641466897-what-headteachers-get-in-return-for-their-epha-contribution-2021-22.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.
- Attend or book on to the various information webcasts and meetings.
- If you are, or know of, a new headteacher, please contact Pam to access the new EPHA Colleague Supporter programme. Access other support as needed.
- 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.