



Spring term briefing 2024

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Safeguarding

Key information

Keeping Children Safe in Education – current version September 2023. 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/>

Child Protection Policy

No changes so far this term. The current version is therefore September 2023.

Working Together to Safeguard Children – December 2023

This revision to the guidance focuses on strengthening multi-agency working across the whole system of help, support and protection for children and their families, keeping a child-centred approach while bringing a whole-family focus, and embedding strong, effective and consistent multi-agency child protection practice.

The update includes:

- principles for working with parents and carers that centre the importance of building positive, trusting and co-operative relationships to deliver tailored support to families
- expectations for multi-agency working that apply to all individuals, agencies and organisations working with children and their families, across a range of roles and activities
- new national multi-agency child protection standards that set out actions, considerations and behaviours for improved child protection practice and better outcomes for children

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

The changes have some implications for local authorities, but nothing specifically for schools. No statutory roles or functions have been removed from the guidance.

Improving practice with children, young people and families provides advice for local areas on embedding working together to safeguard children and the children's social care national framework.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-practice-with-children-young-people-and-families>

Guidance for Schools and Colleges: Gender Questioning Children

The draft guidance was published on 19th December, and a consultation runs until 12th March 2024. <https://consult.education.gov.uk/equalities-political-impartiality-anti-bullying-team/gender-questioning-children-proposed-guidance/>

Here's what the draft guidance states. It won't come into effect until after the consultation, and may be changed at that point.

1. Five 'overarching' principles

The guidance focuses on how schools should handle requests for "social transitioning".

The DfE defines this as "actions such as changing names, uniforms, or using different facilities to help a child appear more like the opposite sex, with the expectation that they will be treated as if they are".

The guidance sets out five "overarching principles" for schools to frame responses to requests for social transitioning. These are as follows...

- Schools and colleges have statutory duties to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children
- Schools and colleges should be respectful and tolerant places where bullying is never tolerated
- Parents should not be excluded from decisions taken by a school or college relating to requests for a child to 'socially transition'
- Schools and colleges have specific legal duties that are framed by a child's biological sex
- There is no general duty to allow a child to 'social transition'

2. When should schools involve parents?

The guidance states that where a child requests action from a school in relation to "any degree" of social transition, schools should speak to parents "as a matter of priority" and encourage the child to speak to their parents.

The DfE would "expect parental consent to be required in the vast majority of cases".

But in "exceptionally rare circumstances", where a school believes involving parents could put a child

at “significant risk” of harm, schools do not have to inform them.

If no change is being requested, the DfE says teachers can “listen respectfully” to a child’s feelings without automatically telling their parents. But for safeguarding reasons, they cannot “promise confidentiality”.

3. What to do about pronouns

The draft guidance states that primary children “should not have different pronouns to their sex-based pronouns used about them”.

For older children, schools should only agree “if they are confident that the benefit to the individual child outweighs the impact on the school community”.

As a result, the government says it expects “there will be very few occasions in which a school or college will be able to agree to a change of pronouns”.

4. Don’t ‘compel’ others to use pronouns

In those instances where a change of pronouns is agreed, “no teacher or pupil should be compelled to use these pronouns”.

5. Take a ‘cautious approach’

The guidance warns “a cautious approach” should be taken that complies with legal duties, because there isn’t “definitive evidence” of the long and short-term impact of changes on children.

Requests from younger children in primary schools should be treated with “greater caution” because they are “more vulnerable” and “less able to articulate their feelings”.

The guidance states that schools have a legal duty to record a child’s sex accurately, as well as their legal name in registers.

Government also expects schools to make “all relevant staff” aware of the biological sex of a child questioning their gender.

6. Wait before considering a request

Schools are also told to allow for “watchful waiting” before considering a request, “to ensure it is a sustained and properly thought-through decision”.

7. Factoring in other pupils and staff

When considering requests for social transitioning, schools are told to consider the impact on other pupils, including safeguarding concerns.

8. What happens with single-sex spaces?

Responding to a request to support any degree of social transition “must not” include allowing access to single-sex spaces, the guidance states.

“All children” should use the toilets, showers and changing facilities designated for their biological sex “unless it will cause them distress to do so”, the DfE said.

If a school wishes to offer a pupil access to an alternative toilet facility, they should be secured from the inside and for use by one child at a time, including for hand washing.

Alternative changing rooms could include a facility to be used by one child at a time and lockable from the inside.

9. Clear rules needed for PE

The government says a “more relaxed approach” for mixed-sex participation in sports can be taken for early primary age children.

But schools should adopt “clear rules which mandate separate-sex participation” for all sports “where physical differences” between sexes “threatens the safety of children”.

And even in sports where “safety is not risked”, such as competitive sports, schools should be aware that without separate sex participation, “it is unlikely that they will be offering equal opportunities”.

10. Single-sex schools

Single-sex schools can refuse to admit pupils of the other biological sex, regardless of whether the child is questioning their gender, the guidance states.

But a school also cannot refuse to admit a child of the same biological sex on the basis that they are questioning their gender.

However, guidance states the equality act does not prevent single-sex schools from admitting pupils of the opposite biological sex if their admission is “exceptional” or their numbers are comparatively small and limited to particular classes or courses.

Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB) Safeguarding Audit

Last year schools were required to complete the ESCB safeguarding audit and it was sent to 600 settings. Around 96% of schools did so last year; technical problems meant that some didn't submit, and in other settings there was a change of leadership that meant there was a delay in submissions. In a few cases a MAT submitted one document for all schools, but the ESCB requires all individual schools to complete an audit specific to their setting. The audit is based on the requirements set out in Keeping Children Safe in Education, with some additional sections including Hate Incidents, and SEMH issues.

Schools and academies generally scored highly in the following areas:

- Safer recruitment and the completion of DBS and other checks;
- The DSL role;
- Child Protection Policy compliance;
- An improvement in record keeping.

Schools scored less well in relation to some issues:

- the use of physical intervention and related staff training. The LA has now developed and finalised a partnership with Price, to deliver this training. School may also access other options such as Essex Steps.
- Pupil voice – this came as something of a surprise as Jo Barclay feels that a lot of work has been done on this, particularly around harmful sexual behaviour. However, there may be a lack of confidence here, which is also reflected in some concerns around risk assessments in relation to HSB.
- SEMH – one question in the audit asks a direct question around whether the school/academy has participated in the Trauma Perceptive Practice programme, endorsed by the Local Authority. Some schools are part-way through, others have not taken part.
- Governance – one question asked if governors attend the online termly safeguarding briefing for governors. About 200 governors do attend this, but it is not a statutory requirement.
- Hate incident – not enough is known about how school record hate incidents, and this will be a focus for the Education Safeguarding Team this year. They plan to produce a guidance document for schools around hate incidents.

Understanding Difference – Supporting all Schools to Recognise and Respond to Hate Incidents, Thursday 14 March 2024

The Education Safeguarding Team will be delivering this free online event, to support settings to identify, report, record and respond to hate incidents. There will be input from Essex Police to inform settings of the Police approach to hate incidents and crime. There will also be information and signposting to resources to support settings with their work in this area. For more information and to book, please visit the [Education Essex Online Booking System](#).

It will not be a requirement to submit the audit again this school year, but if schools want to use it as an internal evaluation tool it can be accessed on the Essex Schools Infolink at https://schools.essex.gov.uk/pupils/Safeguarding/Safeguarding_Audit_for_Schools/Pages/Section-11-Audits.aspx

Safeguarding forums for schools – spring term dates

The spring term 2024 Safeguarding Forums presented by Jo Barclay, Head of Education Safeguarding and Wellbeing and team will be in the afternoon following the termly headteacher meetings. Dates and venues are:

West	Wednesday 28 February 2024	Manor of Groves
South	Thursday 29 February 2024	Greenwoods Hotel, Stock
North East	Wednesday 6 March 2024	Colchester Football Stadium
Mid	Thursday 7 March 2024	The Lion Inn, Boreham

There is no longer a requirement to book the forum.

Safeguarding online forum for governors

This term the governor safeguarding briefing will be held on Tuesday 26th March at 6.00 – 7.00 pm. <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83798614334?pwd=VDJBR1NXd1hmQ3NFRnMxSG9MQytYdz09#success>

Prevent Duty – 7-minute safeguarding staff meeting

The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 is an important piece of legislation to support the Government's approach to reducing the risk of terrorism in the UK, and to reduce the number of "home-grown" terrorists. The aim of Prevent is to stop people from becoming terrorists or supporting terrorism.

The Prevent duty is designed to help ensure that people who are susceptible to radicalisation are as supported as they would be under other safeguarding processes. It means that all schools and childcare providers have a duty to help stop people being radicalised into terrorism. The Home Office has updated the [Prevent duty guidance](#). It has been simplified into one document for all education settings - this helps to create greater consistency in the core expectations, whilst still acknowledging differences between education phases. These changes will come into effect on 31 December 2023 at the earliest.

There are no new legal or additional responsibilities for schools. However, the following updates have been made:

- The school should designate a staff member to oversee Prevent (although it's likely that your designated safeguarding lead (DSL) already does this)
- The guidance includes clarification that you don't need consent to share information about a pupil who might be susceptible to radicalisation

An updated 7-minute staff meeting is available at

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

Understanding and Supporting Behaviour - Safe Practice for Schools and Educational Settings – Autumn 2023

Updated guidance from Essex LA, including the use of restrictive / non-restrictive physical intervention, use of reasonable force

<https://schools.essex.gov.uk/pupils/Safeguarding/Pages/understanding-and-supporting-behaviour.aspx>

Safeguarding and Remote Education

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/safeguarding-and-remote-education#full-publication-update-history>

DfE guidance updated in November to align with guidance on keeping children safe in education.

Safer Internet Day - Tuesday 6th February 2024

Safer Internet Day 2024 will take place on the 6th of February 2024, with celebrations and learning based around the theme 'Inspiring change? Making a difference, managing influence and navigating change online'.

Find out more here: [Safer Internet Day 2024 - UK Safer Internet Centre](#)

Mental Health Lead Training

The Department for Education (DfE) is offering a grant of £1,200 for eligible state-funded schools and colleges in England to train a senior mental health lead to develop and implement a whole school or college approach to mental health and wellbeing. This training is not compulsory, but it is part of the government's commitment to offer this training to all eligible schools and colleges by 2025. Eligible settings can apply for a senior mental health lead training grant to commence training by 31 March 2024.

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

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.

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. *Please note that there is currently a waiting time of approximately 6-8 weeks.*

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
- Matthew Lewis, Education Safeguarding Adviser
- Hayley McLaren, Education Safeguarding Adviser
- Gemma Harris, Education Safeguarding Officer (MARAC)
- Katie Crouch, Business Support Assistant

To contact the team, please 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: schoolscommunication@essex.gov.uk

Maximising Attendance Bulletin for all Schools - Welcome Back

A brief update to welcome schools back with some key reminders in terms of attendance. In this issue, you will find key updates on:

- the DfE data pilot
- AST ways of working
- Half term 3 attendance focus and best practice
- The Attendance Specialist Teams (AST) targeted support meetings (TSMs)
- Reduced timetables
- Statutory updates
- AST training offer.

You can view the bulletin on [Essex Schools Infolink](#).

Referrals to the Attendance Compliance Team

As from Tuesday 9th January 2024, the referral form that schools use to make referrals into the Attendance Compliance Team has been updated to require **all referrers to share a copy of the latest school report/progress report for the pupil concerned**. The inclusion of this information, as part of your referral paperwork, should help to provide evidence about how the reported attendance/absence levels are believed to be impacting on the pupil's attainment.

The rationale behind why this change has been made is due to the fact that my team have found that magistrates have been taking a keen interest in understanding the impact that attendance may be having on attainment, in the cases which we have asked them to consider. Furthermore, where we have been able to share this information, the magistrates have taken this information into consideration and applied sanctions/fine levels which are more likely to serve to act as a deterrent for the families concerned.

N.B. This additional requirement will not apply to referrals for penalty notices in cases where a

holiday has been taken during term time.

The link for the form is the same as previously and may be accessed via this link:

[Referral to Attendance Compliance Team - Essex County Council \(achieveservice.com\)](https://achieveservice.com)

Relevant Documents and Guidance

- Child Protection Policy September 2023
- Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2023
- Inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills – Ofsted September 2023
- Essex Safeguarding briefings and guidance
- LADO Duty Line 03330 139 797 LADO@essex.gov.uk

Your “do-list”

- Respond to the consultation on the Gender Questioning Children guidance, by 12 March 2024.
- Use the ESCB safeguarding audit as an internal evaluation tool.
- Attend one of the safeguarding forums in February/March (no need to book!) and encourage your safeguarding governor to attend the governor forum on 26th March.
- Use the 7-minute staff meeting on the Prevent Duty to refresh staff awareness and understanding.
- Refer to the updated guidance from Essex: Understanding and Supporting Behaviour
- Acknowledge Safer Internet Day – Tuesday 6th February
- Use the EPHA Safeguarding checklist in line with KCSiE – September 2023 as a checklist to evidence compliance
- Ensure that you are signed up to Andrew Hall’s weekly safeguarding briefing
<http://www.safeguardingschools.co.uk/>

DfE updates and publications

Key information

Workload Reduction Taskforce recommendations

The government's teacher workload taskforce has published early recommendations from its work to help ministers meet their pledge to cut five hours from the working week of school staff.

Headline proposals include ditching performance-related pay and introducing a workload-focused INSET day, although the government has snubbed the latter. You can read more about these in the Schools Week [news story here](#).

The taskforce also recommends reintroducing the list of administrative tasks that should not be undertaken by teachers.

The group will now look at themes including the impact and unintended consequences of accountability on workload, which will include school inspection.

Also under the microscope will be contractual provisions in the STPCD, technological solutions, the impact of pressures on wider public services on schools, parental expectations and complaints, and culture across the education system.

They will also continue exploring "as a matter of urgency" further options to strengthen the implantation of the 2016 workload review group recommendations.

Final recommendations will be put to government, Ofsted, and school and trust leaders by the end of March.

Testing and assessment in the 2023/24 academic year

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

To add a full list of all important dates to your calendar, you can download the:

- [Key stage 1 assessments calendar 2024](#) (205 KB)
- [Key stage 2 assessments calendar 2024](#) (1.17 MB)

Assessments at the end of KS1 are non-statutory as of this year. The reception baseline assessment (RBA) will replace the end of KS1 assessments as the baseline for cohort-level primary progress measures.

Optional tests will still be available for:

- English reading
- English grammar, punctuation and spelling
- Mathematics

You should have declined paper tests if your school has decided not to use them, or ordered any modified versions of tests you need, by Friday 17 November.

If your school will be administering the tests, the papers will be delivered between Monday 22 April and Friday 26 April. The DfE recommends that schools administer the tests throughout May.

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

It is recommended that the [optional key stage 1 tests](#) are administered during May 2024.

Phonics screening check week

Week commencing Monday 10 June 2024

Key stage 2

The key stage 2 tests are timetabled from Monday 13 May to Thursday 16 May 2024.

Multiplication tables check

Schools must administer the multiplication tables check within the 2-week period from Monday 3 June 2024.

2024/25 academic year

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

It is recommended that key stage 1 tests (**optional**) are administered during May 2025.

Phonics screening check week

Week commencing Monday 9 June 2025

Key stage 2

The key stage 2 tests are timetabled from Monday 12 May to Thursday 15 May 2025.

Multiplication tables check

Schools must administer the multiplication tables check within the 2-week period from Monday 2 June 2025.

2025/26 academic year

Reception baseline assessment

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

Optional key stage 1 tests

It is recommended that the optional key stage 1 tests are administered during May 2026.

Key stage 2 tests

The statutory key stage 2 tests are timetabled from Monday 11 May to Thursday 14 May 2026.

Multiplication tables check

Schools must administer the multiplication tables check within the 2-week period from Monday 1 June 2026.

Phonics screening check

Schools must administer the phonics screening check within the 1-week period from Monday 8 June 2026.

Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs

Updated DfE publication December 2023 (*replacing previous version, published January 2013*)

This guidance outlines how local authorities and schools can best support children who cannot attend school because of physical or mental health needs.

See Policy section of this briefing.

Teachers' Pay 2023

The School teachers' pay and conditions document 2023 was published on 13th October 2023 confirming a 6.5% increase on all Ranges and Allowances (except M1 which is higher to get to £30,000 outside London and Fringe areas).

Schools and Academies can now proceed with deciding on how they will apply the award and implementing increases backdated to 1 September. Maintained Schools are obliged to comply with the minimum and maximum values of each Pay Range set out in the Teachers' Pay and Conditions Document and may choose to follow the Advisory Pay points.

Academies are free to set their own pay policies and may choose to follow the Teachers' Pay & Conditions Document.

Our model Pay Policy for 2023 is available for schools to insert their chosen pay values

Teachers' pay additional grant 2023 to 2024: methodology

In July 2023 the DfE announced £525 million to support schools with the September 2023 teachers' pay award, with a further £900 million in 2024 to 2025. This funding is being split between mainstream schools, special schools and alternative provision (AP), early years, and 16 to 19 provision. The split reflects relative pupil numbers, and core funding amounts, across these different types of provision.

This guide explains how they will allocate the funding for mainstream schools (for the 5 to 16-year-old age range), and special and AP schools in 2023 to 2024. This funding will be allocated through the teachers' pay additional grant (TPAG).

In 2023 to 2024, funding through TPAG covers the 7 month period from September 2023 to March 2024. TPAG will continue for the whole of the financial year 2024 to 2025. Allocations for 2024 to 2025 will therefore be calculated using twelve sevenths of the funding rates in 2023 to 2024.

They will pay mainstream academies an additional allocation to cover April to August 2025 because their funding cycle follows the academic year – this will represent five-twelfths of academies' 2024 to 2025 allocations.

DfE will continue to pay this additional funding as a separate grant for mainstream schools in 2024 to 2025. We aim to incorporate the grant into core budget allocations for 2025 to 2026 as part of the schools national funding formula.

Support Staff Pay Award April 2024

Agreement has now been reached on the 2023 pay award for local government services ('Green Book') employees. The Agreement covers the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

The award is £1,925 on all scale points on the national NJC Pay Spine up to point 43 and 3.88% on points above 43 and on all allowances.

The Essex Schools' Pay Spine has been updated accordingly. The 2024 lettings rates have also been added. For those schools that subscribe to Juniper Payroll, this will be actioned in December's payroll and further communications will be sent out from them in due course.

For all other schools and academies:

Maintained Schools should refer to their home Local Authority for details of the application of the Pay Award on

Local Pay Scales and apply increases backdated to 1 April 2023.

Academies have discretion over support staff pay and should consider the award in line with the Pay Policy and any local conditions.

National Living/Minimum Wage

	23 and over	21-22	18-20	Under 18	Apprentice
April 2023 (Current rate)	£10.42	£10.18	£7.49	£5.28	£5.28

	21 and over		18-20	Under 18	Apprentice
April 2024	£11.44		£8.60	£6.40	£6.40

Pupil Premium rates

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium/pupil-premium#funding-rates-for-financial-year-2024-25>

The per pupil allocations for the 2024/25 Financial year have been announced. Rates have increased for all eligibility factors.

From April 2024/25 the per pupil rates are:

- Primary R-Y6 Ever 6 FSM pupils £1,480 (currently £1,455)
- Secondary Y7-Y11 Ever 6 FSM pupils £1,050 (currently £1,035)
- Looked After Children (LAC) £2,570 (currently £2,530)
- Post Looked After Children (Post LAC) £2,570 (currently £2,530)
- Service Children £340 (currently £335)

Accountability Schools must show how they are using their pupil premium effectively:

- by publishing a statement on their website which presents an overview of their pupil premium strategy, and demonstrates that their use of the funding meets the requirements of the [conditions of grant](#)
- through [inspections by Ofsted](#) - inspectors may discuss plans schools have to spend their pupil premium
- through scrutiny of pupil premium plans by governors and trustees
- Virtual school heads demonstrate to Ofsted how they are managing pupil premium for looked-after children in their virtual school annual report.

Schools are also held to account for the outcomes achieved by their disadvantaged pupils through published [performance tables](#).

Recovery premium

It is a time-limited grant providing over £300 million of additional funding for state-funded schools in the 2021/22 academic year and £1 billion across the 2022/23 and 2023/24 academic years. Therefore, you will receive the funding for the remainder of this academic year, but not beyond.

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

National Tutoring Programme

[National Tutoring Programme: guidance for schools, academic year 2023/24 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

It's a grant to address low attainment and educational inequality

The National Tutoring Programme (NTP) was established to help pupils catch up on learning lost during the pandemic, but the focus is now on the attainment gap more generally.

You're expected to prioritise disadvantaged and vulnerable pupils to receive the tutoring – but you have the flexibility to decide which pupils need the most support.

This document provides information for school leaders on how National Tutoring Programme (NTP) funding can be used to subsidise tuition for pupils in the academic year 2023/24.

For the academic year 2023/24, DfE will provide the following funding for NTP:

- mainstream schools: a minimum of £67.50 per PP-eligible pupil
- special schools: a minimum of £176.25 per PP-eligible pupil

How you can spend it

The funding for 2023/24 will cover 50% of your school's tutoring costs. This is provided your spending doesn't exceed what the DfE has calculated your school will need, based on spend per PP-eligible pupil at a maximum hourly rate (see below for details).

Your school must cover the remaining 50% of costs using other funding sources, including the pupil premium and the school's budget.

The DfE's subsidy is capped at a maximum hourly rate per pupil. Rates over this will not be subsidised:

- Mainstream schools: £18, of which the DfE subsidy will be £9.00 (50%)
- Non-mainstream schools: £47, of which the DfE subsidy will be £23.50 (50%)

Any unspent funding cannot be carried over into the next school year and must be returned to the Education

and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).

You must report your costs, even if you don't use the grant

For the academic year 2023/24, you will be asked to provide data to the DfE at the following times:

- Termly school census (October 2023, January 2024 and May 2024)
- Year-end statement (summer 2024)

To help you provide this data, you should keep accurate records of:

- How many PP-eligible pupils have received tutoring
- How many other pupils have received tutoring
- How many hours of tutoring you have provided to PP-eligible pupils
- How many hours of tutoring you have provided to other pupils
- What kind of tutoring you have provided

You must return the form, even if you have chosen not to use the NTP grant.

National Professional Qualifications (NPQs)

Prior to the end of term, ECC received a letter from the Schools Minister, Damian Hinds regarding the level of take up of National Professional Qualifications across the area. The 2021 Education Recovery Package enabled the Department to fully fund NPQs for three years, up until February 2024. Please could I encourage you to consider who from your senior and middle leadership teams would benefit from accessing the final funded set of courses. There is also some support for cover costs.

The course are delivered by the three Teaching School Hubs which serve Essex and details can be found below. Please do contact the Hub Directors directly with any queries or questions you may have:

- Mark Beyer-Woodgate, m.beyer-woodgate@hfed.net, [Chafford Hundred Teaching School Hub](#): Basildon, Brentwood, Castle Point, Maldon, Rochford.
- Doug Brechin, dbrechin@swchs.net, [Saffron Teaching School Hub](#): Braintree, Chelmsford, Epping Forest, Harlow and Uttlesford
- Sam Torr, storr@alphatsh.org, [Alpha Teaching School Hub](#): Colchester and Tendring

Early Years Foundation Stage Profile 2024

[Early years foundation stage \(EYFS\) statutory framework - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

This publication has been produced by the Department for Education (DfE) to help teachers and early years practitioners make accurate judgements about each child's level of development at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and to detail the statutory requirements for the EYFS profile assessment in the 2023/24 academic year.

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 \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

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 \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

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

[Get school-to-school support from system leaders - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

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 2024
- NPQ reforms <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-professional-qualifications-npqs-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>

- Juniper <https://junipereducation.org/>
Direct dial number for HR 01245 698378
Essex Schools Infolink <https://schools.essex.gov.uk/admin/COVID-19/Pages/default.aspx>

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 National Tutoring Programme grant in the spring term census (18th January)
- Consider signing up senior and middle leaders to the fully funded NPQs.
- Complete the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile this school year.
- Check your own pension!

Ofsted

Key information

Ofsted handbook to be used from 1 September 2023.

[School inspection handbook](#)

Inspecting schools: guide for maintained and academy schools

This guide gives a summary of what schools should expect and what they need to do as part of an Ofsted inspection. [Inspecting schools: guide for maintained and academy schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

The leaflet for schools has been updated to clarify the monitoring process for schools judged as requires improvement and inadequate. They've also updated the information on inspection intervals in the guide and the leaflet.

New Ofsted lead – Sir Martyn Oliver

<https://schoolsweek.co.uk/interview-how-sir-martyn-oliver-plans-to-turnaround-ofsted/>

Ofsted inspections will not restart next week, new chief inspector Sir Martyn Oliver has said, as he launches an internal inquiry into how the embattled watchdog responded to the death of headteacher Ruth Perry.

In a [wide-ranging interview with Schools Week](#), the former Outwood Grange Academy Trust boss has promised the sector a "fresh start", with more "empathetic" inspections and a "less defensive" inspectorate that is more "of the system".

The watchdog has faced fierce criticism after Perry's suicide. A coroner [ruled an Ofsted inspection contributed to her death](#), adding there is a "[risk of future deaths if there is only lip service paid to learning from tragedies like this](#)".

Inspections were paused before Christmas. Ofsted and the Department for Education [have until February 7](#) to tell the coroner what actions they will take over her concerns about school inspections.

<https://schoolsweek.co.uk/inspections-wont-restart-next-week-as-new-ofsted-boss-launches-inquiry/>

The later start will allow Ofsted time to give all inspectors initial training on mental health awareness. For more details, read the [press release](#) from Ofsted.

Recently announced changes to school inspections include:

- scheduling inspectors to return more quickly to schools graded inadequate because of ineffective safeguarding but which are otherwise performing well
- changes to Ofsted's complaints process following a consultation held last year
- the introduction of a duty helpline to take calls directly from providers during and after an inspection
- changes to school handbooks, to make clear that school leaders can be joined by colleagues in meetings with inspectors, and can share inspection outcomes with colleagues, family, medical advisers and their wider support group, before sharing with parents
- delivering seminars across all Ofsted's regions to support leaders of previously exempt outstanding schools ahead of their next inspection

Further changes will be announced soon – as Ofsted continues to respond to the coroner's findings and her regulation 28 report.

Curriculum research and reviews

Ofsted has published a series of research reviews looking at the delivery of the curriculum in schools. Subject reviews published so far include English, computing, PE, science, history, music, geography, languages, mathematics, religious education.

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

Relevant Documents and Guidance

- [School inspection handbook](#)
- [Inspecting schools: guide for maintained and academy schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- Inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills – Ofsted September 2022
[Inspecting safeguarding in early years, education and skills - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- EPHA audit of Ofsted safeguarding requirements
- Positive environments where children can flourish – a guide for inspectors about physical intervention and restrictions of liberty.
- Ofsted online presentations [Ofsted's slideshows on SlideShare](#)
- The Education Inspection Framework – education, skills and early years
- Ofsted inspection website <https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/>

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

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

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

Your "do-list"

- Download the September 2023 handbooks for all inspections, along with the guidance on inspecting safeguarding.
- Share the information about curriculum reviews with subject leaders.
- Consider tasking someone to focus on your school website, making sure that it is kept up to date, as far as possible.

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

<https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/publication-download/objectives-and-equality-duty-guide-public-authorities> (or on the EPHA website)

These should have been published initially in 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 – this year you should be reviewing these objectives - and 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

- Objectives and the Equality Act – a guide for public authorities
<https://essexprimaryheads.co.uk/files/objectives-and-the-equality-duty-a-guide-for-public-authorities.pdf>
- DfE advice: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/equality-act-2010-advice-for-schools>
- Public Sector Equality Guidance for Schools in England
<https://essexprimaryheads.co.uk/files/public-sector-equality-guidance-for-schools-in-england.pdf>
- Technical guidance for schools in England
<https://essexprimaryheads.co.uk/files/technical-guidance-for-schools-england-equality-act.pdf>
- <https://www.equalityhumanrights.com/en/advice-and-guidance/public-sector-equality-duty>

Your “do-list”

- Review the equalities information and objectives published on the school website and update in line with current provision and impact of the equalities objectives.
- Ensure that this is on the Governing Body agenda, and 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
- Children with medical health needs who can't attend school
- Staff Code of Conduct (updated September 2023)
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in Employment (updated January 2024)
- Grievance Policy (updated October 2023)
- Probation procedure (updated October 2023)
- Complaints Policy and leaflet

Children with medical health needs who cannot attend school

The DfE guidance for local authorities and schools *Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs* was updated in December 2023. You may want to review and update your policy accordingly.

Staff Code of Conduct

Although you probably shared your Code of Conduct with staff at the beginning of the autumn term, there were a couple of changes to the Juniper model policy in September to bring it in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023.

If you update and approve a new Code of Conduct it must be shared with all staff members once again.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in Employment

Updated to take into account the requirements of the [Equality Act 2010 \(Amendment\) Regulations 2023](#) in force on 1 January 2024.

Grievance Policy

Juniper has updated the model Grievance Policy with a number of changes.

Note: The Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act has passed through Parliament and is awaiting Royal Assent. The original proposal to introduce a requirement for employer to prevent third party harassment was removed and the provision on preventing sexual harassment of employees now read "An employer (A) must take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of employees of A in the course of their employment.", the word "all" having been removed before "reasonable steps".

Probation procedure

Minor changes to the model policy, including revised timescales for review meetings, and including the requirement for relevant paperwork related to unsatisfactory probation to be shared with employee.

Emergency Contingency Plans

As we are in the winter months, plans should be reviewed and include robust contingency plans for a wide range of winter scenarios, such as disruption caused by severe weather (including where this may impact transport or food) power outages or high levels of seasonal illness. In May 2023 the guidance was updated with information on emergency alerts, building local partnerships and recording attendance for remote education. Also added links to additional resources, templates, and checklists.

[Emergency planning and response for education, childcare, and children's social care settings - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Complaints Policy

The EPHA model Complaints Policy, developed in line with the DfE, has been reviewed and refreshed. I have updated the policy to clarify/simplify the three stages of complaints (Stage 1: informal; Stage 2 formal investigation; Stage 3 consideration by governors panel) and to align the model policy, EPHA complaints toolkit and leaflet.

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. Remember: the Complaints Policy must be published on your school's website and I would recommend informing parents if the policy is refreshed/readopted.

Exclusions Policy

It is not statutory to have an Exclusions Policy but, if you do, make sure that it is updated in line with the DfE Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions guidance, published in September 2023.

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

Policy or procedure	Statutory or recommended	Current edition
Agency workers regulations		October 2023
Capability procedure for all staff	Statutory	March 2023
Code of conduct	Required by KCSiE	September 2023
Cover and PPA	Recommended	May 2023
Dealing with safeguarding allegations against adults	Statutory	September 2023
Discipline and Dismissal	Statutory	December 2023
Early Career Teachers Statutory Induction	Statutory	September 2023
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in Employment	Recommended	January 2024
Flexible Working	Recommended	December 2022
Grievance	Statutory	October 2023
Leave of Absence (and guidance)	Recommended	January 2024
Mental health and wellbeing	Recommended	March 2023
Menopause Policy	Recommended	December 2023
Pay Policy	Statutory	September 2023
Performance Management (all staff)	Statutory (M) Recommended (A)	March 2023
Probation procedure	Recommended	October 2023
Recruitment	Statutory	September 2022
Redundancy and restructuring -academies	Recommended	December 2022
Redundancy and restructuring – Essex maintained schools	Statutory	December 2022
Sickness Absence management	Recommended	September 2022
Sabbatical	Recommended	October 2022
Whistleblowing	Statutory	March 2023

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 2023)
- 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. Most recent version is January 2024

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

Updated version (January 2024) 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 April 2023.

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

Relevant Documents and Guidance

- 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”

This term you (*may*) need to review and adopt:

- Review and publish Equalities information by 6 April
- Children with medical health needs who can't attend school
- Staff Code of Conduct (updated September 2023)
- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in Employment (updated January 2024)
- Grievance Policy (updated October 2023)
- Probation procedure (updated October 2023)
- Review emergency contingency plans for the winter months.
- Review and readopt your Complaints Policy (and leaflet) – publish on your school website
- Update your school website, using the checklists provided by EPHA (January 2024)
- 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 6 February 2023, 6.00 pm

The termly chairs' conference led by Clare Kershaw, Director of Education, is an excellent opportunity for networking, sharing ideas and learning from each other. [Launch Meeting - Zoom](#)
As well as the termly Safeguarding update (*Tuesday 26th March, online 6.00 – 7.00 pm*), the Director's conferences provide updates on Financial, HR and Curriculum matters as well as updates on the progress of Essex LA strategic priorities.

SPRING TERM	EVENT	ACCESS
Tuesday 6 th February 6-8 pm	Director's termly conference	Virtual via ZOOM
Tuesday 26 th March 6-7 pm	Safeguarding Forum	Virtual via ZOOM
SUMMER TERM	EVENT	ACCESS
Tuesday 21 st May 6-8 pm	Director's termly conference	Virtual via ZOOM
Tuesday 25 th June 6-7 pm	Safeguarding forum	Virtual via ZOOM
Thursday 4 th July 6-8 pm	Director's deep dive	Face-to-face, venue to be confirmed

Up to Date School Governor Records

In order to ensure your Governor / Trustees receive all the latest Local Authority (LA) information and event invitations, please can colleagues ensure their Chair of Governors, as well as Safeguarding Governor and Clerk, contact records are up to date by emailing LAGovernance@essex.gov.uk

Complete the SFVS (maintained schools)

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 checklist for 2023/24 [Checklist guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#) The checklist sets out questions for the governing board to discuss with the headteacher and senior staff.

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 3rd May.

Manage your accounts (academies)

The deadline to submit your [audited accounts](#) to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) was 31 December 2023.

You also need to make sure you meet these deadlines:

31 January 2024 at the latest: publish the accounts on your trust's website as soon as they're signed

31 May 2024 at the latest: file the accounts with [Companies House](#)

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

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 2025

If you're a governor of a voluntary aided or foundation school, your board is responsible for determining your school's admission arrangements.

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 2024: to determine your admission arrangements for admission in September 2025
- 28 February 2024: to publish your appeals timetable for admissions in September 2024
- 15 March 2024: to send a copy of your admission arrangements for 2025 to your LA
- 15 March 2024: to publish the arrangements for September 2025 on your school website

You must also notify certain parties – see section 3 under 'how to consult' in [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 the arrangements.

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 next reporting date is 30 March 2024 for a snapshot date of 31 March 2023.

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 2023 – 2024 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 briefings with Clare Kershaw – update the contact list for the LA.
- 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 2025.
- Update your school’s information on the Get information about Schools website.

The Local Authority

Key information

Education Structure Charts

Structure charts of each of the quadrant teams are available at <https://schools.essex.gov.uk/info/director/Pages/default.aspx>
These include the contact details for LA officers in each quadrant.

SEND Sufficiency Plan

The draft SEND Sufficiency Plan is now being shared for your input and feedback. Please review the document and provide feedback on the intentions outlined within by completing the [online survey](#). ECC will also hold virtual engagement sessions, where you can discuss the plan and provide feedback. The dates for these are:

- Thursday 18 January 2024 – Parent Support Groups and Essex Family Forum via regular support group meeting
- Wednesday 7 February 2024, 10 am to 11 am – schools and post 16 settings
- Wednesday 7 February 2024, 6 pm to 7 pm – schools and post 16 settings
- Thursday 15 February 2024, 10 am to 11 am – schools and post 16 settings

To join one of these sessions, or express an interest in a future session. Please complete the [online form](#).

ESSET Outreach proposal

We will keep you informed about the progress of the ESSET proposal to provide outreach and in-reach support to mainstream schools. Emily is due to attend the termly headteacher meetings in March to explain the rollout of support.

For more information or to discuss further, contact Emily Welton, ESSET Professional Officer at emily.welton@esset.org.uk

Wraparound childcare

The Government has announced that wraparound childcare will be rolled out from September. The expectation is that parents will be able to access local childcare from 7 – 8 am, and from 3 – 6 pm. The Local Authority has undertaken a full analysis of the count to map existing provision, and will be prioritising areas where there is currently no or limited childcare. There will be start-up funding available to create new places. The LA has recognised concerns about SEND provision and the lack of funding to support children with additional needs, and is lobbying government. Carolyn Terry (EY Manager) will attend the termly headteacher meetings to give more information.

Reporting part-time attendance

The start of the 2023-24 academic year saw the launch of a new reporting system for schools to notify the LA half-termly of their pupils accessing education on a part-time basis. Schools have between Thursday 4 January 2024 and Friday 26 January 2024 to submit their data. For more information, please visit the Education Access page on Essex Schools InfoLink https://schools.essex.gov.uk/pupils/Education_Access/Pages/Provision.aspx

Year 6 transition to Year 7 - visits to secondary schools and information required

All the secondary schools in ASHE are aiming to hold their Year 6 into 7 transition/induction days during the week 24th – 28th June 2024. They hope this decision will be welcomed by primary colleagues as a way of trying to minimise the disruption to Year 6 classes in the Summer Term. It will also, of course, be important that Year 6 residential visits are not programmed during this week. Most secondary schools used the common template agreed by EPHA and ASHE, though this will be reviewed at the EPHA Executive meeting on 18th January 2024.

Essex Sustainable Schools Dashboard and Self-Evaluation Tool for 2023/24 Academic Year

The latest dashboard, including the self-evaluation sections entered via the survey before end of December 2023 can be found on Perspective Lite - new information has been added. Log in and go to the LA Documents folder, select Sustainable Schools Dashboard. To access the survey, complete

the revised dashboard for your school before **Monday 12 February 2024**. Please share the completed self-evaluation and your dashboard with governors as an opportunity to review 2022 to 2023 outcomes alongside your strategic plan and priorities for 2024.

Health and Safety Monitoring (HSIM) 2024

The annual online Health and Safety (H&S) Internal Monitoring is now live on MySafety. All community and V/C schools are required to submit the necessary checklists by **Friday 28 March 2024**. It is also available to other schools who buy in to the H&S service.

Renewal of Health & Safety Service and Contract opt out Reminder

Community/VC schools' free access automatically renews on Friday 1 April 2024, therefore no action is required. Schools who bought into the 2023/24 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 2024.

Essex School Meals Advisory Service

The Schools Meal Advisory Service is a complete food safety service that also offers guidance on sourcing quality produce, seasonal menus and recipes for children to enjoy.

It offers a number on face-to-face advisor visits to the school site. The number varies with school size with Band 1 receiving three visits and bands 2 and 3 receiving four visits. School Meals Advisors provide the following services:

- Advice and expertise regarding dietary requirements Training (for catering staff) on food safety; health and safety; safe systems of work; legislation; documentation for due diligence.
- Monitoring of training of catering staff.
- Support to working with: suppliers (due diligence questionnaires to suppliers to check on their HACCP and traceability); sourcing staff.
- Provision of menus (twice a year) that are school food standard compliant (and feedback on menus following any tweaks from schools), and accredited with ProVeg (ensuring healthy and sustainable food)
- Discounted price lists for food costs and suppliers.

The service was previously funded by de-delegation from maintained schools until 1st September 2018 when it became a traded service at the request of maintained school members on the Schools Forum. Since the service began trading in 2019 schools have been paying a yearly flat rate for the service. This yearly cost has remained the same since the service launched. During this time no inflation has been added nor has the cost changed in line with market increases. This has led to the service now operating at a loss. To ensure that the service can continue, we have had to review our fees to ensure viability for the future.

Band	Existing cost per year	Proposed new cost per year from 2024 renewal
Servery	300	721
1	450	721
2	800	1,321
3	1,250	1,921
Out of Essex	1,750	2,481

Please note, to ensure the continuing sustainability of the service, future years will increase in line with inflation.

What do you need to do next?

Local Authority schools, whose existing arrangement with the service ends at the end of March, will receive a letter shortly and will need to respond to confirm that they wish to continue with the

service at the new rates by emailing School.Meals@essex.gov.uk. A prompt response will help us gauge the level of interest and allow us to take the appropriate next steps.

Academies that buy in, will also receive a letter asking them to indicate their commitment to continuing with the service when their arrangement ends in July. Again, a prompt response will help us gauge the level of interest and allow us to take the appropriate next steps.

Please note: Should you decide not to buy into the service going forward you should consider alternative options as you may be vulnerable to food safety issues, health and safety issues and non-compliant menus.

Schools that do not currently use the service but would like to find out more should email: School.Meals@essex.gov.uk

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

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. The feedback that we get from headteachers who have attended is very positive – these are useful meetings that we recommend.

North East - Tuesday 15.00-16.00 – contact Rita Jenner for details rita.jenner@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 Sarah Pattison for details

sarah.pattison@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”

- Read and comment on the SEND Sufficiency Plan, and attend one of the meetings.
- Note the Year 6 transition week date: w/c 24th June 2024.
- Access the survey on the Essex Sustainable Schools Dashboard.
- Health and Safety monitoring - all Community and V/C schools should submit checklists by Friday 16 February 2024.
- If you don't wish to renew your Health and Safety contract, notify the service by 31st January.
- Attend the early help drop in meeting in your area for advice and guidance from a panel of children's services practitioners.
- Attend the EPHA termly headteachers' meetings to be kept up to date on LA plans, strategy and information.
- Make sure you read/see Education Essex each week – now an attachment to the School Communications emails

EPHA events and dates

Key information

According to my information so far, 17 primary schools in Essex have new headteachers this term:

8 in South

Lorna Hebden	Hadleigh Juniors (Head of School)
Katie Herbert	Winter Gardens Academy
Caroline Hunt	Felmore Primary (Head of School)
Nina Kemp	Felmore Primary (Executive Head)
Gill Marrion	St Joseph the Worker Catholic Primary
Victoria Townsend	Kelvedon Hatch Primary
Janine Travi	Hilltop Infants
Lyndsey Woods	Down Hall Primary

4 in Mid

Teresa Gage	St John the Baptist, Pebmarsh (Interim Headteacher)
Tracy North	St Joseph's and St Francis Catholic Primaries
Emma Speller	Heybridge Primary
Ruth Wright	St Cedd's CE Primary

2 in West

Amy Rawlinson	Water Lane Primary
Joanne Willcox	Lambourne Primary (Interim)

3 in North East

Samantha Golding	St Joseph's Catholic Primary, Harwich
Lucie Levett	Montgomery Infant and Nursery
Becky Maguire	St Teresa's Catholic Primary, Colchester

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

Small Schools Support Group meeting

The next meeting is being held online at 3.30 pm on Monday 22nd January. The agenda will include a Q and A with Yannick Stupples-Whyley, ECC Senior Finance Manager. Please put the date/time in your diary, and I will send a Zoom link and agenda to the group very soon.

In addition, we are holding the first meeting of the Small Schools Governor group, on Monday 8th January, at 5.30 pm, and I look forward to meeting many of your governors online.

EPHA termly headteacher meetings 2023-24 and 2024-25

North East EPHA –Colchester United Football Stadium

Wednesday 6 March 2024

Wednesday 19 June 2024

Wednesday 13 November 2024

Wednesday 12 March 2025

Wednesday 11 June 2025

South EPHA – Greenwoods Hotel and Spa, Stock

Thursday 29 February 2024

Thursday 13 June 2024

Thursday 14 November 2024

Thursday 6 March 2025

Thursday 12 June 2025

West EPHA – Manor Suite, Manor of Groves, Sawbridgeworth

Wednesday 28 February 2024

Wednesday 12 June 2024

Wednesday 6 November 2024

Wednesday 5 March 2025

Wednesday 18 June 2025

Mid EPHA – The Lion Inn, Boreham

Thursday 7 March 2024

Thursday 20 June 2024

Thursday 7 November 2024

Thursday 13 March 2025

Thursday 19 June 2025

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

County EPHA Annual General Meeting

Thursday 3 October 2024 The Lion Inn, Boreham

Conferences

Headteachers' conference – Friday 22 March 2024 – Chelmsford City Race Course – key note speakers, Andrew Hall and Humphrey Walters and a range of workshops – programme and booking form sent out by post in January – £100 per delegate.

Deputy Headteachers' conference – Friday 11 October 2024 – Colchester Football Stadium

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

EPHA is well aware of the challenges faced by headteachers, which have been exacerbated by the demands and pressures of the Covid pandemic, and now the financial pressures facing schools and society. We 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, or a chance to release key staff from teaching to support leadership tasks
- Governance advice and support, including recommending clerks who can manage “statutory” meetings
 - Legal support for complaints
 - Bespoke training, including joint training on complaints and exclusions 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/1704373159-what-headteachers-get-in-return-for-their-epha-contribution-2023-24.pdf>

Relevant Documents and Guidance

- EPHA website www.essexprimaryheads.co.uk
- What headteachers get in return for their EPHA contribution 2023/24 <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 late January.
- Attend or book on to the various training events, conferences and meetings.
- If you are a small school headteacher, attend the next SSSG meeting on 22nd January
- 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.