



Summer term briefing 2025

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Safeguarding

Key information

Keeping Children Safe in Education

No information yet about the September 2025 version of KCSiE – last year it was suggested that there would be “major revisions”, but so far there is no indication of what this might look like. I will keep you informed!

Safeguarding forums for schools – summer term dates

The summer term 2025 Safeguarding Forums presented by Jo Barclay, Head of Education Safeguarding and Wellbeing and team, will be in the afternoon following the termly EPHA meetings in the morning. Dates and venues are:

North East	Wednesday 11 June 2025	Colchester Football Stadium
South	Thursday 12 June 2025	Greenwoods Hotel, Stock
West	Wednesday 18 June 2025	Manor of Groves
Mid	Thursday 19 June 2025	The Lion Inn, Boreham

There is no longer a requirement to book the in-person forum.

Online Safeguarding Forum for All Schools and Settings

There will be an alternative online Safeguarding Forum for schools and settings on Monday 23 June 2025, from 3.30 pm- 5.00 pm. It will be a shortened version of the in-person forums for schools and will include all relevant safeguarding updates, although minimal input from other agencies. To find out more and to book your place, please visit [Education Essex online booking system](#).

Safeguarding online forum for governors

This term the governor safeguarding briefing will be held on Tuesday 24th June at 6.00 – 7.00 pm.

Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB) Safeguarding Audit

The safeguarding audit has now been published on the Infolink, and it is a requirement that all schools complete this audit. The deadline for completion was the end of the spring term, but **a significant number of schools have still not submitted their audit**. Each individual Education setting must complete the audit (it is not appropriate to return one audit for multiple schools), and it should be returned to the Essex Safeguarding Children Board by email: escb@essex.gov.uk <https://schools.essex.gov.uk/safeguarding/safeguarding-audit-guidance-and-tool>

DfE Use of Reasonable Force – consultation

The DfE is seeking views on whether the revised 'Use of reasonable force and other restrictive interventions in schools' guidance supports schools to:

- Meet the new statutory requirement to record every significant incident of use of force and report these incidents to the parents of the pupils involved, effective from September 2025.
- Proactively minimise the need to use reasonable force and other restrictive interventions through prevention, de-escalation and analysing data to support improvement planning.
- Support staff to understand when and how to use force or other restrictive interventions safely and lawfully.
- Support staff who work with pupils with special educational needs or disabilities (SEND).
- Meet their safeguarding duties towards staff and pupils.

The current guidance is February 2025 - available on the EPHA website

<https://essexprimaryheads.co.uk/files/use-of-reasonable-force-and-other-restrictive-interventions-guidance-february-2025.pdf>

is dated February 2025.

This consultation closes at 11:59 pm on 29 April 2025

Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025 (Martyn's Law) receives Royal Assent

The Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025, known as Martyn's Law, received Royal Assent on Thursday 3 April 2025. This Act delivers the Government's manifesto commitment to strengthen the security of public premises and events, including education settings. The Government intends for there to be an implementation period of at least 24 months before the Act comes into force.

UPDATED Protective security and preparedness for education settings (April 2025) (DfE)

Updated non-statutory guidance has been released to help schools and other education settings strengthen their preparedness for terrorism and major incidents. It sets out simple, cost-effective steps to safeguard learners, staff, and volunteers through practical planning and a strong security culture.

Drawing on advice from the National Counter-Terrorism Security Office (NaCTSO), the guidance includes editable templates, real-life examples, and interactive resources. It is suitable for early years settings, schools, colleges, alternative provision, and out-of-school settings.

Key Actions for Schools:

- **Appoint a Security Lead** to oversee emergency planning and act as incident lead if needed.
- **Review and test plans** for lockdown, invacuation, evacuation, and bomb threats, ensuring they meet the needs of all learners, including those with SEND.
- **Train all staff** to recognise suspicious behaviour (SCaN), assess suspicious items (HOT protocol), and respond to incidents (RUN HIDE TELL).
- **Use the self-assessment tool** (Annex D) to review current plans and identify gaps.
- **Prepare a 'grab kit'** with essential items to support response efforts, especially for those with additional needs.

All staff are encouraged to read the guidance and familiarise themselves with their role in keeping the school community safe. To read the guidance and download the audit documents, go to:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/protective-security-and-preparedness-for-education-settings>

Changes to the EYFS safeguarding requirements from September 2025

From September 2025 the EYFS safeguarding requirements will be strengthened. Below are some of the changes you need to be aware of for your settings:

- Amendments to promote safer recruitment, including: new expectations to provide references, requirements to obtain references and a requirement for safeguarding policies to include procedures to help ensure that only suitable individuals are recruited.
- New requirements for providers to follow up if a child is absent for a prolonged period of time and amendments to ensure providers hold additional emergency contact details.
- New requirements to ensure safer eating, including a requirement that a member of staff with PFA is present.
- Creation of a safeguarding training criteria annex and a requirement for safeguarding policies to include details of how safeguarding training is delivered, including how practitioners are supported to put it into place.
- Amendments to ensure that early years students and trainees are required to have paediatric first aid (PFA) training in order for them to be included in ratios at the level below their level of study.
- New requirements to support whistleblowing.
- Amendments to ensure that children's privacy during nappy changing and toileting is considered and balanced with safeguarding considerations.
- A small number of other minor changes to the structure and wording of the safeguarding requirements to improve clarity.

To find out more visit:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/early-years-foundation-stage-eyfs-safeguarding>

It is likely that the changes won't impact EY in schools significantly, as most of these safeguarding requirements will already be in place.

Children and Families Digital Directory of Services

The [digital Children and Families Directory of Services](#) is now on the Essex County Council website, making it easier for professionals to signpost families to local and national services.

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.essexwellbeingsservice.co.uk/>

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/>

The Education Safeguarding Team consists of:

The Education Safeguarding Team covers all early years and education settings and is made up of the following team members:

- Jo Barclay - Head of Education Safeguarding and Wellbeing
- Alex Darvill - Education Safeguarding Adviser (Training Lead)
- Matthew Lewis - Education Safeguarding Adviser (Strategic Support)
- Michelle Garnham - Education Safeguarding Adviser (South Essex)
- Deraí Lewis-Jones - Education Safeguarding Adviser (North East Essex)
- Emma Roles - Education Safeguarding Adviser (West Essex)
- Samantha Stevens - Education Safeguarding Adviser (Mid Essex)
- Gemma Harris - Education Safeguarding Officer (MARAC)
- Clare Wallis - Business Support Assistant

The team has a shared email address. The inbox is monitored throughout the day to help them organise and prioritise work. Emails are allocated to the correct team member.

To contact anyone on the team email educationsafeguarding@essex.gov.uk

White Court DSL Training

Extra dates have been added for the Level 3 training for DSLs and Deputy DSLs.

[Click here for the website.](#)

The training is being delivered by Dida Burrell, the Headteacher at White Court School, who has completed the NSPCC 'Train the Trainer' course. Dida has over 20 years' experience in primary and secondary education and extensive safeguarding experience. The course will cover all elements of the role of the designated lead and provide top tips for enhancing safeguarding in your school.

Attendance Q&A with Anita Patel-Lingam

We have agreed a date for another attendance Q&A in the summer term, on **Tuesday 17th June 2025, at 3.30 pm- 5.00 pm**. The Zoom link for that session is

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/81744732655?pwd=sTLZQI7b0xMTQS1icRe74u6SnqIBZ7.1>

Meeting ID: 817 4473 2655

Passcode: 706340

I will send a reminder nearer the date.

Attendance: Legal Intervention - Referral deadline Friday 4 July 2025 for All Schools

The Attendance Compliance Team will not accept any new referrals for penalty notices/prosecution, for irregular school attendance patterns, after **Friday 4 July 2025**. This will ensure that all referrals are reviewed and decisions around whether referrals have been accepted/declined or whether further information is required, are communicated with referrers before schools close for the summer.

For term time holiday absence, a business-as-usual approach will continue to operate until the end of the academic year.

Attendance Specialist Team Maximising School Attendance Bulletin April for All Schools

A [bulletin](#) containing key information and updates including the latest DfE data release, a summary of the DfE 'Breaking down the barriers to opportunity' conference and the most recent DfE sector comms webinars. The bulletin also covers other key service updates and reminders in relation to the statutory working together to improve school attendance guidance.

Relevant Documents and Guidance

- Child Protection Policy November 2024
- Keeping Children Safe in Education September 2024
- Essex Safeguarding briefings and guidance
- LADO Duty Line 03330 139 797 LADO@essex.gov.uk

Your “do-list”

- Ensure that you are using the most up to date Child Protection Policy (November 2024).
- Complete and submit the ESCB safeguarding audit as a matter of urgency.
- Attend one of the safeguarding forums in June and encourage your safeguarding governor to attend the governor forum on 24th June.
- Respond to the DfE Use of Reasonable Force consultation, closing 29th April.
- Note the changes to the EYFS safeguarding requirements, from September 2025.
- Attend Early Help drop-ins as needed, to consult with a range of LA partners.
- Use the EPHA Safeguarding checklist in line with KCSiE – September 2024 as a checklist to evidence compliance.
- Attend the Attendance Q&A on Tuesday 17th June.
- Ensure that you are signed up to Andrew Hall’s weekly safeguarding briefing
<http://www.safeguardingschools.co.uk/>

DfE updates and publications

Key information

Free breakfast club roll out

What is the new free breakfast club scheme?

The DfE is introducing free breakfast clubs - 30 minute sessions before school where children get a free breakfast so they “start every day ready to learn”. 180,000 pupils in the most disadvantaged communities will be able to access free breakfast clubs.

We have just named the first 750 schools who are taking part in the programme, who will start offering these sessions at the beginning of the summer term.

These schools are based across nine regions in England and will be funded to provide this service – available to all children in each setting.

This is the first phase of a national roll out which will see free breakfast clubs in every primary school in England ***in due course***.

Free breakfast clubs will help ensure pupils start every day ready to learn, and in turn will improve behaviour, attendance and attainment.

What will my child get for breakfast?

Schools will provide healthy, nutritious and varied breakfasts that follow the School Food Standards.

What are the benefits of free breakfast clubs?

Free breakfast clubs mean no child starts school hungry and will help set children up for the day by providing a nutritious breakfast as well as time with friends to enjoy activities such as reading and crafts.

Breakfast clubs, such as those already run by the [Magic Breakfast programme](#) have been shown to boost children’s reading, writing, and maths by an average of two months.

For parents, free breakfast clubs mean help with childcare at the start of the school day – at no extra costs.

It means those parents can drop their children off half an hour earlier – helping parents get into work and saving working families up to £450 a year.

We know many families are feeling the impact of the cost-of-living crisis. Out of the 180,000 children who will benefit in the first 750 schools, around 67,000 attend schools in deprived areas.

This is one of the measures we are taking to cut the cost of living for families. We are also legislating to significantly [cut uniform costs](#) through a cap on branded items, alongside our [government-funded childcare rollout](#).

Which schools are part of the first phase of free breakfast clubs?

Schools selected for the early adopter scheme will contact families directly about how to sign up for the breakfast club. The chosen schools represent different types, sizes and geographical areas across England.

What if my school isn't part of the scheme yet?

This is the first phase of a planned national rollout. The government is using this early adopter phase to learn from different types of schools before expanding the programme. Schools are currently testing various approaches to ensure the programme works effectively for all communities.

If you have specific questions about how the new breakfast club scheme will work in your child's school, we recommend speaking directly with the school once they confirm their participation.

How much funding will schools get?

Schools will receive a lump sum for set up, and then a further recurring lump sum of over £1000 to help with costs.

To put this in perspective, an average school with 50% take up on the early adopter scheme would receive around £23 k for a full year.

That money will cover the cost of food, delivery and staffing costs. This is much more than the existing school breakfast programme - on average, a school switching to the early adopter scheme would receive an additional £21,400 of funding.

DfE proposals for accountability reform – ongoing consultation

On 3rd February, the DfE launched a consultation on [school accountability reform](#), to run alongside Ofsted's proposal to [overhaul inspection with report cards](#). The proposal set out in the consultation are as follows:

1. Automatic academisation still for 'special measures' schools ...

New regional improvement for standards and excellence (RISE) teams will also engage with those "in a category of concern to ensure that improvement starts immediately".

2. ... but those 'requiring significant improvement' to get mandatory RISE support

Schools rated 'requires significant improvement' will continue to academise, with RISE teams supporting "through the transition".

3. 'Stuck' schools are back! (and will get £20m for support)

From this month, RISE teams will deliver "targeted intervention" to the more than 600 'stuck' schools, educating more than 300,000 pupils.

A £20 million pot has been set aside for support, with up to £100,000 in help available initially for each school. It suggests support will be varied, as the funding averages £33,000 per 'stuck' school. This compares to the £6,000 provided through the previous trust and school improvement offer, government said.

When Ofsted report cards are introduced, the definition of a 'stuck' school will be updated to:

Those that receive "an 'attention needed' rating against 'leadership and governance'", having been given a grade of "below 'good' – or equivalent – at their previous" inspection

If the school hasn't "achieved new secure ratings... in all areas within two years, the default will be to move to structural intervention", which means they will either be academised or rebrokered.

4. RISE teams will also 'engage' schools with 'concerning pupil attainment'

5. Your governors might be sacked if you don't follow RISE orders

6. 20 RISE advisers announced (and more to come)

7. National Leaders of Education system axed

8. School profiles expected in 2025-26 academic year

Under the plans, the DfE will [launch so-called school profiles](#). The new "digital service" will act as a "one-stop shop" for parents and professionals to view a "broad range of information" about a school.

It will feature information from inspection report cards, along with performance data, like exam results.

Officials will also "explore if it is helpful to allow easy comparisons, including between schools with similar characteristics, or in similar areas". This could include school census figures.

The consultation states: "School profiles are an exciting opportunity. There are a range of options and possibilities for developing them, and there will be different views about what they should include."

One option is whether to include information "from schools themselves such as its ethos or the breadth of, and pupil engagement in, curriculum enrichment activities".

A "first version" of the profiles are expected to launch in the 2025-26 academic year, with further development expected based on "continuous user research".

The consultation runs until 11.59 pm on 28th April 2025.

Data Protection in Schools – data retention schedule – update March 2025

On Thursday 20 March 2025, the [Data Protection in Schools Manual](#) was updated. New information for schools on [how to keep personal data safe when using AI](#) has been added with accompanying resources in the new [resources section](#).

The DfE has updated data protection information, including publishing guidance about statutory data retention.

[Updates - Data protection in schools - Guidance - GOV.UK](#)

Requirements for Schools from September 2025: Climate Action and Sustainability Lead

From September 2025, all schools in England—including early years settings, multi-academy trusts, colleges, and universities—are required to meet two key obligations as part of the Department for Education's (DfE) Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy:

1. Climate Action Plan

Every school must have a **comprehensive Climate Action Plan** in place by September 2025. The plan should detail how the school intends to decarbonise and improve energy efficiency, supporting the UK's net zero targets. Key components of a Climate Action Plan may include:

- Upgrading heating and cooling systems.
- Improving building infrastructure and insulation.
- Educating staff and students about the climate emergency.
- Engaging the whole school community in sustainability efforts.

The plan should take a “whole setting” approach, involving buildings, curriculum, staff knowledge, pupil voice, and decarbonisation efforts.

Schools are encouraged to use available DfE support, such as the Sustainability Support for Education, Climate Ambassador Programme, and National Education Nature Park, to develop and implement their plans.

2. Appointment of a Sustainability Lead

Each school must **appoint a Sustainability Lead** by September 2025.

The Sustainability Lead's responsibilities typically include:

- Developing and overseeing the Climate Action Plan.
- Monitoring and reporting on progress.
- Building community engagement around sustainability.
- Integrating sustainability into the curriculum and daily school life.
- Ensuring compliance with environmental and regulatory standards.

The Sustainability Lead acts as a champion for climate action, empowering staff and students to participate in sustainability initiatives and fostering a culture of environmental responsibility. *There is no specific requirement about who (or at what level of seniority) the Lead must be.*

Who Must Comply?

The requirements apply to all education settings in England:

- Early years providers
- Primary and secondary schools
- Multi-academy trusts
- Colleges and universities

Support and Guidance

The DfE provides non-statutory guidance and resources to help schools get started or advance their sustainability journey.

Schools already implementing sustainability initiatives are not required to create a new plan if their existing efforts meet the outlined requirements.

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/sustainability-leadership-and-climate-action-plans-in-education>

PE and Sports Premium funding and accountability

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

Schools are accountable for how they use the PE and sport premium funding allocated to them.

The school's senior leadership team should make sure that the funding is spent for the purpose it has been provided: to make additional and sustainable improvements to the PE, sport and physical activity offered.

From July 2025, all schools must complete the digital reporting form. The digital form outlines how the school has used its PE and sport premium and the impact it has had on achieving the aims and objectives of the funding.

The digital form contains a series of questions and free text boxes. Schools can enter details on how the PE and sport premium has been used to make improvements in the 5 key areas highlighted in this guidance. It can also be used to generate the necessary online report. The information gathered includes:

- figures on the overall spend
- what the funding has been spent on
- whether there is any unspent funding
- swimming and water safety attainment

The digital form will go live during May or June 2025, and will remain open until 31 July 2025. DfE will provide separate guidance to support schools with the completion of the digital form. The link to the form and supporting guidance will be shared with schools by late June 2025. To allow for comparisons to be made, when publishing the digital form download, schools should retain the previous year's written report on the school's website.

There are currently no plans to replace the PE and Sport Premium funding with another funding stream for the 2025/26 academic year.

Pupil Premium rates

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium/pupil-premium#funding-rates-for-the-2025-to-2026-financial-year>

The per pupil allocations for the 2025/26 financial year have been announced. Rates have increased for all eligibility factors.

From April 2025 the per pupil rates are:

- | | |
|---|--------|
| • Primary R-Y6 Ever 6 FSM pupils | £1,515 |
| • Secondary Y7-Y11 Ever 6 FSM pupils | £1,075 |
| • Looked After Children (LAC) | £2,630 |
| • Post Looked After Children (Post LAC) | £2,630 |
| • Service Children | £350 |

Closure of the ESFA

The ESFA closed on 31st March 2025. For academies, the closure of the ESFA means a move toward a more centralised, DfE-led model of financial oversight and support. While this promises streamlined processes and a single regulatory voice, it also raises concerns about the potential loss of independent scrutiny and transparency in financial matters. The full impact will depend on how these changes are implemented and whether the new structures can maintain robust, impartial oversight for academies.

Summary Table: Key Changes for Academies

Area	Before (ESFA)	After (DfE Integration)
Financial Oversight	Independent agency (ESFA)	DfE Regions Group/regional directors
Regulatory Model	Separate ESFA and DfE regional functions	Single regulator model
Support for Academies	ESFA as main contact	DfE as single point of contact
Transparency & Independence	Seen as higher with ESFA	Concerns about reduced independence
Staff	ESFA employees	Most retained within DfE

The DfE recommended consolidating complaints handling for maintained schools and academies into a unified system, though current guidance still distinguishes between academies and maintained schools. Academies must continue adhering to their funding agreements and the Independent School Standards Regulations 2014 for parental complaints.

Academies should monitor DfE announcements for further centralisation of complaints systems, as recommended in the ESFA closure review.

Arranging Alternative Provision – February 2025

This guidance replaces 'Alternative Provision: Statutory guidance for local Authorities', published in March 2016. The guidance has been updated to reflect changes in policy and / or legislation on:

- Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs
- Attendance regulations;
- Exclusions and suspensions;
- Remote education;
- Free school meals
- Looked after children

This guidance will be kept under review and updated versions will be published if necessary.

Into Film+ streaming service for schools

Into Film+ is the free* and rights-compliant film streaming service for UK schools. Stream a wide range of classic and new release films directly into your classroom or extra-curricular setting. With additional teaching resources, film guides and exclusive bonus content, Into Film+ brings learning to life.

Into Film+ Premium is available to all state schools in England that receive funding from the Department for Education, who provide a Public Video Screening (PVS) Licence to all of their schools.

[Into Film | Film in Education | Film Clubs - Into Film](#)

National Professional Qualification guidance

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/professional-development-for-school-leaders>

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

- 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”

- ☐ Respond to the DfE accountability reform consultation, closing 28th April.
- ☐ Download the updated Data Protection in Schools Manual.
- ☐ Use the DfE data retention schedule, setting out the retention framework for statutory documents.
- ☐ Consider the development of a Climate Action Plan, and decide a Sustainability Lead.
- ☐ Complete the digital form reporting on your school's use of the PE and Sports Premium. Accountability when it is released in May/June.
- ☐ If you are an academy, update your Complaints Policy to reflect the closure of the ESFA.
- ☐ Use the free Into Film+ service to access films.

Ofsted

Key information

Inspecting schools: guide for maintained and academy schools

This current guide gives a summary of what schools should expect and what they need to do as part of an Ofsted inspection. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/inspecting-schools-guide-for-maintained-and-academy-schools>

Ofsted consultation on a new inspection framework

Ofsted launched their consultation designed to improve the way they inspect education on 3 February 2025. **The consultation runs until 28 April 2025** and we encourage governors to have their say, alongside them encouraging other stakeholders, such as parents, to also join the consultation process.

The consultation has five proposals, summarised below:

Report Cards

- New five point grading scale – ‘causing concern’, ‘attention needed’, ‘secure’, ‘strong’ and ‘exemplary’.
- Up to eleven areas will be evaluated – leadership and governance, curriculum, developing teaching, achievement, behaviour and attitudes, attendance, personal development and wellbeing, inclusion, safeguarding, early years in schools (where appropriate), sixth form in schools (where appropriate).
- Safeguarding will have a separate judgement of ‘met’ or ‘not met’.
- Contextual information about the school to be considered by inspectors and included on report cards.

Education Inspection Toolkits

- Inspection framework to be replaced by education inspection toolkit.
- Inspection process tailored to the education provider phase and type.

Inspection Methodology

- Pre-inspection conversations with school leaders to continue.
- ‘Deep dives’ to be removed.
- Inspection activities to be agreed to allow leaders to show the impact of their work.
- Professional dialogue between inspectors and leaders to be a priority. School to nominate a senior leader to work with the inspectors throughout the process.

Full inspections and monitoring inspections

- All inspections to be full inspections (no ungraded inspections).
- Monitoring visits for schools in the ‘causing concern’ category and any evaluation area identified as ‘attention needed’, also any school inspected before November 2025 with a ‘requires improvement’ overall judgement, or any school without an overall effectiveness judgement but with one or more key areas graded ‘requires improvement’.

Schools causing concern

Two categories of concern set out in law:

- Schools with widespread issues will continue to be categorised as ‘special measures’
- Schools with more specific (but still serious) issues will be categorised as ‘requires significant improvement’ rather than ‘serious weaknesses’.
- Schools will be placed into a category of concern if any evaluation area, other than leadership is causing concern and/or if the leadership is judged not to have capacity to improve.

[Ofsted’s own official consultation](#) runs until April 28, and has already had more than 5,000 responses. A full report is due to be published in the summer.

Preliminary results from the “Alternative Big Consultation” suggest that teachers and parents reject the colour-coded report cards, and the changes to inspection should be delayed.

Nearly two thirds of respondents to a consultation set up to rival Ofsted’s own on inspection reforms said the changes were actually worse than the current framework.

The ‘Alternative Big Consultation’ (ABC) was carried out by former senior HMIs Colin Richards and Frank Norris to gather responses to the inspectorate’s plans.

More than 700 people responded, with questions largely mirroring Ofsted’s own.

Just one in 10 (11%) felt Ofsted’s proposals would be an improvement on the current inspection framework, while 90% felt its proposed five-point grading system was either “largely unfit” or “unfit” for purpose.

“This is a damning judgement on the current set of proposals,” said the report.

The former HMIs behind the consultation have now called for Ofsted to take a “substantial pause”, rather than pushing ahead with plan to roll out its reforms in autumn.

They say there is “a strong case for a total re-evaluation of inspection policy and practice”.

Ofsted’s approach to its new ‘exemplary’ grade was particularly criticised, with 92 per cent of respondents branding it either “unfit for purpose” or “largely unfit for purpose”. This marked the highest level of dissatisfaction in any part of the consultation.

<https://schoolsweek.co.uk/nearly-two-thirds-think-ofsted-reforms-are-worse-alternative-consultation-finds/>

A Schools Week article published on 9th May said that they understand that “Ofsted is now considering pushing back the introduction of routine school report card inspections until January. This would give more breathing space for the inspectorate to consider feedback, fine tune its plans and for the sector to get to grips with reforms.

Ofsted did not want to comment.”

Curriculum research and reviews

Ofsted has published a series of research reviews looking at the delivery of the curriculum in schools. Most recent report is into English, published on 5th March 2024.

<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 \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- 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>

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

Your “do-list”

- Respond to the Ofsted consultation about the new framework.
- Consider using the Ofsted toolkits when planning for an inspection.
- 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.

HR, Policies and school websites

Key information

Teachers' Pay 2025

The STRB recommended a pay award of 4% and this has been accepted in full by the Education Secretary, reflecting the crucial role teachers play in breaking the link between background and success for pupils.

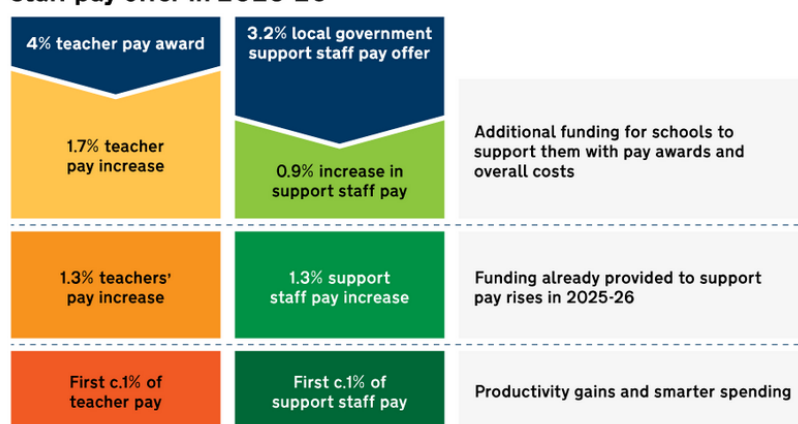
The 4% pay award would see pay packets increase by over £1,900 for the average classroom teacher, which would take the median salary for 2025/26 to over £51,000 a year.

You can calculate how your salary could change following the 2025 pay award [here](#).

Will teachers at all schools receive the pay award?

The pay award applies to maintained schools currently, but most academies also choose to follow the statutory pay arrangements in practice.

Funding the teacher pay award and local government support staff pay offer in 2025-26



*Chart is for illustrative purposes only

This diagram shows how teacher and support staff pay is funded this year: the first 1% is covered by productivity gains and smarter spending, The next portion comes from the existing 2025–26 school budget, and the remainder is funded by new money announced with the teacher pay award.

The pay award now goes through a period of consultation with unions and employers' organisations. The school teachers' pay conditions (STPCD) which sets out teachers pay and conditions, will be updated ahead of the new academic year. This should remove the need for schools to backdate the pay award, meaning teachers can expect their updated salaries from September.

Support Staff Pay

Union claim received on 31 January

- £3,000 across all NJC spinal column points, plan to reach a minimum pay rate of £15ph
- One extra day of annual leave for all staff
- Ability for school staff to take [at least] one day of their annual leave during term time, with no loss of pay
- A reduction in the working week by two hours, with no loss of pay

Employers Full and Final Offer made on 23 April 2025

- 3.2% on all scps and allowances for April 2025
- Subject to agreement - Do not implement until agreement in place
- Rejected other claims
- Removal of scp 2 and possible multi year offer April 2026

The teacher pay award only applies to school teachers, but the additional funding schools will receive also takes into account the current 2025-26 pay offer for support staff, which is currently under negotiation.

Industrial action

The National Education Union ([NEU](#)) recently balloted its teachers and school leaders over the proposed teachers' pay award for 2025/26. A preliminary online ballot closed on Friday 11 April. The leader of the [NASUWT](#) teaching union has said it could ballot members for industrial action within weeks if government fails to provide a "fully-funded" pay rise for next year.

If a strike is lawfully called by a union, members of that union can take industrial action.

Even though this is a breach of contract, you can't dismiss these staff members, and should instead deduct their pay for days they didn't work.

If a staff member isn't part of a union, they're also protected from dismissal under the same rights as union members. This means that, in the same way as union members, they can breach their contract and strike [without dismissal](#).

Staff represented by a union that isn't striking can't participate in strikes.

This also includes staff represented by a union that has voted for a strike for 1 group of workers, but not others. For example, school support staff couldn't participate in a teachers' strike, even if they belong to the same union that's striking.

National Insurance Increase

The DfE has published [National Insurance contributions \(NICs\) grant methodology : April 2025 to March 2026 - GOV.UK](#), which is additional funding to support the additional costs as a result of changes in employer NI contributions.

Reminder: Paternity Bereavement Leave

New legislation came into effect on 6 April 2025 which provides a day 1 right to take paternity leave in circumstances where the mother of a new born child has died. Bereaved parents of adopted children and children born through a surrogacy arrangement will also be covered. Normally, 26 week's service is required to qualify for Paternity Leave. (See Policy & Resource Updates below).

Understanding the Supreme Court's Definition of "Sex"

On 16 April 2025, the UK Supreme Court handed down a major ruling in *For Women Scotland Ltd v Scottish Ministers*. The Court confirmed that "sex" in the Equality Act 2010 refers to biological sex, not the identified sex or sex stated on a Gender Recognition Certificate (GRC).

The Court concluded that using legal or self-identified sex would make core parts of the Equality Act unworkable. For example, provisions around maternity rights, communal accommodation, and competitive sport are rooted in biological difference. So going forward:

- A trans woman (born male, with or without a GRC) is not legally classed as a woman for the purposes of sex-based rights or exceptions and a trans man (born female) is not legally classed as a man in these same contexts.

Trans Rights Remain Protected

This ruling does not remove legal protections for trans people. The gender reassignment characteristic remains fully intact under the Equality Act, covering:

- Unfair treatment
- Harassment, bullying or victimisation
- Exclusion or dismissal

Schools must continue to foster a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for trans pupils and staff, and ensure all concerns are managed fairly and lawfully.

What this means in practice?

The "headline" result is that toilets, changing rooms etc may be separated by biological sex, even if a pupil or staff member holds a GRC. These separations must be justified as proportionate and for a legitimate aim (e.g., privacy or safeguarding). However, the full ramifications of the ruling are being considered across the country from employment to education and other public services and we need to see what further guidance comes forward.

Reminder: Neonatal Care Leave

New legislation came into effect on 6 April 2025 which allows parents to take up to 12 weeks neonatal leave if their baby is admitted to neonatal care within the first 28 days of birth and remains

in such care for at least 7 consecutive days. Entitlement to leave is a day 1 right, but to be eligible for statutory pay, service and earnings criteria must be met.

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

- Leave of Absence Policy - updated to include new Paternity Bereavement Leave and Neonatal Care Leave
- PPA and Cover Policy – due this term, but no changes anticipated
- Mental health and wellbeing – updated in the spring term
- Whistleblowing – updated in the spring term

The DfE has removed the statutory policy list; a slimmed down list of statutory policies now appears as the final section of both Governance Guides.

“Live” documents have all been removed from the policies list, including the pupil register, single central record, register of governor interests and school information published on a website. However, every school still needs to keep and update all these documents or web pages.

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 within the governance guides
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2024)
- 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 2025 and includes the links set up by the DfE

<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		October 2023
Capability procedure for all staff	Statutory	September 2024
Code of conduct	Required by KCSiE	September 2024
Cover and PPA	Recommended	May 2023
Dealing with safeguarding allegations against adults	Statutory	September 2024
Discipline and Dismissal	Statutory	December 2024
Early Career Teachers Statutory Induction	Statutory	September 2024
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in Employment	Recommended	January 2024
Flexible Working	Recommended	April 2024
Grievance	Statutory	October 2024
Leave of Absence (and guidance)	Recommended	April 2025
Lone Working	Recommended	November 2024
Mental health and wellbeing	Recommended	March 2024
Menopause Policy	Recommended	December 2023
Pay Policy	Statutory	September 2024
Performance Management (all staff)	Statutory (M) Recommended (A)	September 2024
Probation procedure	Recommended	October 2023
Recruitment	Statutory	September 2024
Redundancy and restructuring -academies	Recommended	April 2024
Redundancy and restructuring – Essex maintained schools	Statutory	April 2024
Remote and Hybrid Working Policy	Recommended	December 2024

Sickness Absence management	Recommended	September 2024
Sabbatical	Recommended	January 2025
Teachers' Severance Policy	Recommended	February 2024
Whistleblowing	Statutory	March 2024

Updated version (January 2025) 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 October 2024.

<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:

- Leave of Absence Policy - updated to include new Paternity Bereavement Leave and Neonatal Care Leave
- PPA and Cover Policy – due this term, but no changes anticipated
- Mental health and wellbeing – updated in the spring term
- Whistleblowing – updated in the spring term
- Make sure that you are clear about any actions you need to take in the event of industrial action.
- Update your school website, using the checklists provided by EPHA (January 2025)
- Check the HR policy checklist and ensure that you have the most up to date versions
- Download the EPHA statutory/mandatory policy checklist (January 2025) and ensure that you are compliant.

School and Academy Governance

Key information

Director of Education Termly Conference for Governors -Tuesday 20th May 2025, 6.00 pm

Summer term	
Tuesday 20 th May 6-8pm	Director's termly conference
Tuesday 24 th June 6-7pm	Safeguarding Briefing for Governors
Thursday 3 rd July 6-8pm	Director's deep dive – Governing school's finances [A sign-up event, details to follow]

Link for the Director's termly conference in the summer term on Tuesday 20th May 6-8pm Click [here](#) to join on the night.

EPHA Governor training online courses – see EPHA section

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

Maintained schools governance guide and Academy Trust Governance guide

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/governance-in-maintained-schools>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/-governance-in-academy-trusts>

This non-statutory guidance replaced the governance handbook 2019 and there are now separate guides for maintained schools and academy trusts.

The maintained school guide is a reference document for those involved in local-authority-maintained school governance. It brings together essential information from a range of sources on the governing body's roles and legal responsibilities.

The Academy Trust Governance guide is a reference document for those involved in trust governance. It provides essential information from a range of sources on the trust board's roles and legal responsibilities. The [Academy Trust Handbook \(ATH\)](#) and your funding agreement have more information on contractual requirements.

A big change is that the DfE [Statutory Policies list](#) has been withdrawn. A slimmed down list of statutory policies now appears as the final section of both Governance Guides.

"Live" documents have all been removed from the policies list, including the pupil register, single central record, register of governor interests and school information published on a website. However, every school still needs to keep and update all these documents or web pages.

Get Information about Schools

Schools and trusts can now add their governance professional details to the Get Information About Schools (GIAS) platform. This is not a mandatory requirement, but the DfE is strongly encouraging institutions to add their governance professional's details. This will allow the DfE to communicate directly with governance professionals and share key information, rather than relying on schools or chairs to pass news along.

<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 \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/schools-financial-value-standard)
- “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.
- Share the governance guides with your governors/trustees.
- Update your school’s information on the Get information about Schools website – add your clerk to the GIAS information.

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.

Notification of payments of Mainstream SEN Top-up Funding 25/26 Budget share/Monthly instalments

The LA is making changes to the way that mainstream SEN top-up funding is paid to schools. From April 2025 all schools (maintained and academies) will receive EHCP top-up funding in monthly instalments based on information pulled from ECC's Capita database in mid-February. These payments have been set up in advance and will not change throughout the year, other than when a maintained school converts to an academy.

During the year we will be processing additional payments at approximately 6-weekly intervals which will include IPRA funding and any new EHCP funding. These payments will also reflect any clawbacks relating to allocations included in the monthly instalments, and academy clawbacks carried forward from the 24/25 financial year and notified in the final March funding email. These will be offset against any new funding due.

A breakdown of the pupils included in the monthly instalments should be available through the secure area of the [Essex Schools InfoLink](#) from Thursday 17th April. Please note that the funding start and end dates on these reports will now just reflect the period funded in the current ECC financial year as this is how the funding is now recorded on the database.

This report does not yet include the pupils receiving IPRA funding, and we are also aware that some of the information has changed in the 2 months since the data was downloaded. We have already run the report for the first in-year payment which will be processed over the next 2-3 weeks, at which point the ESI breakdowns will be updated, so you might want to consider waiting until that point before querying errors or missing pupils.

The funding information is added to Capita by the SEND Operations Team and acts as an instruction to the SEN Provision Team to make the top-up payments. SEN Provision are therefore unable to assist with queries regarding individual pupil allocations, such as incorrect bands, schools or dates.

If the information on the InfoLink does not correspond with what you think you should be receiving for a pupil you need to contact the relevant SEND Operations Team to check that the funding has been added to Capita correctly. If it is on there correctly, and has not yet been paid, it will be included on the next in-year payment run.

Contact details for Quadrant SEND Operations Teams:

Mid - sendoperations.mid@essex.gov.uk

North East - sendoperations.ne@essex.gov.uk

South - sendoperations.south@essex.gov.uk

West - sendoperations.west@essex.gov.uk

Tel: 0345 603 7638 (all areas)

Reporting pupils on reduced timetables

A reminder that you are required to report any pupils on reduced timetables, and the "window" to inform ECC about your spring term 2 pupils, is Tuesday 22nd April 2025 to Friday 9th May 2025.

Remember that if you have no pupils on reduced or part-time timetables, you are still expected to submit a nil return. More information and the link to the data form can be found at

<https://schools.essex.gov.uk/admissions-and-attendance/education-access/provision-and-reduced-timetables>

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 23rd – 27th June 2025. 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 – the Word version can be found on the EPHA website, but please wait for your local secondary schools to send this out to you (either in paper form or electronically).

New Asbestos Database

Essex County Councils Facilities Management department has recently onboarded a company called MICAD to populate an Asbestos Database, which will include all ECC maintained schools. You will soon be contacted by MICAD, who will request your Asbestos Survey and management plan. Please cooperate with their requests, as this will help them get the database up and running as quickly as possible.

The system will provide significant Health & Safety compliance benefits to you going forward, allowing contractors attending site to simply scan a QR code that MICAD will provide. This will hold all the information in a central system to show the whereabouts of any known asbestos.

If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact Lisa Freshwater, ECC Facilities Manager, who will be happy to help at: lisa.freshwater@essex.gov.uk

Essex Lettings Rates - April 2025

The rates have increased from 1 April 2025 as follows:

Mon-Fri £12.21 Saturday £12.52 Sunday £12.79

The rates can be found on the April 2024 Essex Schools Pay Scales

Juniper Payroll have been advised of the new rates. If you use another Payroll provider, please advise them accordingly.

Reminder: Essex Caretaker Rent

Essex County Council has agreed the rates wef 1 April 2025 as below. Relevant Essex Maintained schools will have received a letter for their caretaker notifying them of the new rates on 19th February.

·Accommodation without a garage £149.82 pcm

·Accommodation with a garage £169.54 pcm

For those using Juniper Payroll we have asked them to increase the deductions wef April 2025. If you use another Payroll provider, please advise them accordingly.

Designated Mental Health Leaders Conference for all Schools

Date: Monday 23 June 2025, 9 am to 4:30 pm (£50 pp)

This conference will provide an opportunity to hear from inspirational keynote speakers, local service providers and access to practical resources and tools. We will champion the voice of young people and acknowledge the challenges of the DMHL role whilst seeking collaborative solutions. Specifically targeted at those with the role of Designated Mental Health Lead, but may be useful for those working in a pastoral role. Book a place via [Education Essex Online](#).

Support for Climate Action Planning for all Schools

As part of the [DfE's Sustainability and Climate Change Strategy for Education](#), all education settings are expected to nominate a Sustainability Lead and develop a climate action plan by **September 2025**. ECC is keen to support school leaders to develop their plans that will enable you to meet the DfE's requirements, improve your sites, save money and help students to become more resilient, healthy and better prepared for the future. We have a new page on [Essex Schools Infolink](#) which is being developed with new resources and links. You can also register your school's Sustainability Lead via [Education Essex Online](#). Doing this will enable them to receive updates on resources, training and events tailored to support their role.

Healthy Schools Grant Funding

Essex County Council in partnership with the Essex Healthy Schools programme (part of the Essex

Child and family wellbeing Service), is introducing new grant funding exclusively for Essex schools. These grants will support projects focused on two key areas: food and nutrition (open to both Primary and Secondary schools) and emotional wellbeing (for Secondary schools only).

Funded schools will be expected to work with the Essex Healthy Schools team to deliver a project that contributes to outcomes in one or both of these focus areas. This could include initiatives such as developing curriculum resources around healthy eating, improving the school food environment, or implementing a whole school approach to emotional health and wellbeing. Schools will also be asked to support the evaluation process by reporting on the impact of their work.

Schools that complete a project will also be eligible to receive a Healthy Schools Project Award. In addition, they may be nominated for a Best Practice Award, with recognition taking place at the Essex Healthy Schools Festival and Awards.

The scheme will be formally launched in the coming weeks. Full details, including eligibility criteria, funding amounts, and the application process, will be shared at that time.

Essex Let's Talk resources – a reminder

[Essex Let's Talk resources](#) | [Essex Schools Infolink](#)

The SEMH team at the Local Authority, led by Lianne Canning, have produced and updated a number of “Let's Talk documents. Recently updated Let's talk...A common language and understanding of emotional wellbeing and mental health - A joined-up approach

Grow Your Childcare Offer with Wraparound Funding for Early Years and Primary Schools

Are you looking to expand your out-of-school childcare offer? Whether you're planning to increase the number of available places or extend your operating hours, [wraparound revenue funding](#) is available to support both new and expanding provisions. This funding can help to enhance your services and meet the growing needs of working families in your community. The next date for wraparound applications to be submitted for panel review is **Monday 12 May 2025**.

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”

- Access the ESSET Outreach support service via your quadrant Outreach Manager.
- Use the Let's Talk resources to support children with SEMH.
- Note the Year 6 transition week date: w/c 23rd June 2025.
- Report children on part-time timetables to the Education Access team, by Friday 9th May.
- Maintained schools – respond to asbestos survey being sent out by MICAD.
- Sign up for the Designated Mental Health Leaders conference on Monday 23rd June.
- Look out for the Healthy Schools grants opportunities as they become available.
- 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 the School Communications email each Monday morning.

EPHA events and dates

Key information

According to my information so far, 7 primary schools in Essex have new headteachers this term:

2 in Mid

Chris Eynon	St Peter's CE Primary, Sible Hedingham (Acting Head)
Nick Hancock	Templars Academy (Headteacher)

1 in South

Sarah Amran	Montgomerie Primary (Head of School)
Nicky Brogan	Henham and Ugley Primary (Headteacher)

2 in West

Sian Watson	Roseacres Primary (Acting Headteacher)
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2 in North East

Alison Clark	Tendring Primary (Headteacher)
Mark Sawtell	Hazelmere Juniors (Headteacher)

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

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

A Colleague Supporter is someone a new headteacher can rely on and talk to in complete confidence, about the early days of headship, their worries, what they need to know (and what you don't know you need to know!) They have the experience of being a headteacher in an Essex primary school (and are doing the job now) and fully understand the challenges and responsibilities a new head is facing, as well as knowing the satisfaction and sense of pride that the role gives every head. This service is *absolutely free* to new and acting primary, nursery, infant and junior headteachers in Essex. EPHA recognises the importance of supporting new heads in their early days of headship and wants to ensure that every new head feels able to connect with a Colleague Supporter, without having to draw on their school's budget. At the same time, EPHA remunerates a Colleague Supporter's own school, so that they are able to commit to a professional role knowing that they are contributing financially to their school, as well as benefiting professionally.

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

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

Small Schools Support Group meeting

The next meeting is being held online at 3.30 pm on Tuesday 8th July. Please put the date/time in your diary, and I will send a Zoom link and agenda in advance of the meeting.

The next two meetings of the Small Schools Governor group are on Thursday 24th April at 4.00 pm and Wednesday 25th June, at 8.00 am.

Governor education briefing

I will be running an online version of the briefing specifically for governors, on **Wednesday 14th May, at 6.00 pm- 8.00 pm**. This is an adapted presentation of the termly briefing (with the do-list removed!) to inform governors of the education landscape, and the scope of your responsibilities. I ran this for a smaller group of governors last term, and it was well received. Please circulate this information to your governing body and ask anyone who wants to attend to email me at

pam@langmead.me.uk and I will add them to the email group and send the Zoom link.

Governor (and staff) training – suspensions and permanent exclusions

I will be running another free online session later in the term focused on managing suspensions and permanent exclusions. The session will be on Wednesday 21st May at 4.00 pm. Please ask governors/staff to email me at pam@langmead.me.uk and I will add them to the email group and send the Zoom link.

Governor (and staff) training – managing complaints

I will be running another free online session later in the term focused on managing complaints. The session will be on Tuesday 1st July at 4.00 pm. Please ask governors/staff to email me at pam@langmead.me.uk and I will add them to the email group and send the Zoom link.

National Headteachers' Association Network

EPHA has joined the newly established network of headteacher associations across England. So far associations from 17 local authorities have joined the group, but we are hoping that this will expand. At the last meeting, on 31st March, we discussed some of the issues that were common to all counties, and decided what we should focus on immediately. I suggested two (very different) issues that I know are a particular concern for headteachers: school funding, and managing complaints. It has been agreed that a working party will develop a survey to send out to schools across the country asking about the funding challenges that they are facing: headteachers will be asked to share school-specific information, such as whether they are facing a deficit budget (or may in the near future), whether they have had to make staff redundant to balance their budget, and other cut backs that they might have had to make.

I will share information about the survey later in the term; hopefully school-specific data from across the country can be used to highlight the perilous state of school funding.

7-minute staff meetings

I have written a new 7-minute safeguarding meeting for you to share with staff, focused on Prejudice-related Incidents and Hate Crime. This can also be found on the EPHA website, on the 7-minute Staff meetings page:

Hate Crime handout

<https://essexprimaryheads.co.uk/files/hate-crime-7-minute-staff-meeting-handout.pdf>

Hate Crime Powerpoint presentation

<https://essexprimaryheads.co.uk/files/hate-crime-7-minute-staff-meeting-pp.ppt>

And, in production – a 7-minute staff meeting: *Misogyny – explaining and managing it in school*

EPHA termly headteacher meetings 2024-25 and 2025-26

Mid EPHA – Lion Inn, Boreham, CM3 3JU

Thursday 19 June 2025

Thursday 13 November 2025

Thursday 12 March 2026

Thursday 25 June 2026

South EPHA – Greenwoods Hotel and Spa, Stock

Thursday 12 June 2025

Thursday 6 November 2025

Thursday 5 March 2026

Thursday 18 June 2026

West EPHA –Manor of Groves, Sawbridgeworth

Wednesday 18 June 2025

Wednesday 5 November 2025

Wednesday 4 March 2026

Wednesday 24 June 2026

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

Wednesday 11 June 2025

Wednesday 12 November 2025

Wednesday 11 March 2026

Wednesday 17 June 2026

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

The dates for EPHA events are also on the EPHA website <https://essexprimaryheads.co.uk/events/>

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

County EPHA Annual General Meeting

Thursday 2 October 2025 Lion Inn, Boreham

Conferences

Deputy Headteachers' conference – Friday 10 October 2025 – Colchester Football Stadium

Small School Headteachers' conference- Wednesday 15 October 2025 – The Lion Inn, Boreham

Headteachers' conference – Friday 20 March 2026 – Chelmsford City Race Course

Coping with the Challenges of Primary Headship -

Ideas and Support from the Essex Primary Headteachers' Association (EPHA)

This new document was launched at the annual headteacher conference in March 2025. The role of the headteacher has never been more demanding and EPHA's first priority is to support the primary headteachers in Essex, including those who are new to the role and acting headteachers, alongside the most experienced heads. **There is no "one size fits all" solution to the challenge of headship: every school is different and every headteacher has their own unique personality and approach to the role.**

We recognise the challenges, pressures and stresses of the job and this paper aims to acknowledge those, but also offer support and ideas to cope with the role. We look at this in four sections:

- Stressors
- Coping strategies
- How to gain confidence in the role
- Support mechanisms

The document can be found on the EPHA website

<https://essexprimaryheads.co.uk/files/1745328168-coping-with-the-challenges-of-primary-headship-epha.pdf>

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** (£400 per school/academy) 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/1736087288-what-headteachers-get-in-return-for-their-epha-contribution-2024-25.pdf>

Relevant Documents and Guidance

- EPHA website www.essexprimaryheads.co.uk
- What headteachers get in return for their EPHA contribution 2024/25 <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!)
- Attend or book on to the various training events, conferences and meetings; encourage your clerk or governors to attend the free training on offer.
- Book your deputy onto the annual conference (Friday 9th October) when the programme is circulated.
- If you are a small school headteacher, attend the next SSSG meeting on 8th July.
- 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, including the new document Coping with the Challenges of Primary Headship.
- If you or another headteacher colleague are leaving your school at the end of term, please let the Professional Officer know.
- Download the updated EPHA Support Directory for primary heads
- Find documents and information on the EPHA website, including the 7-minute staff meetings. www.essexprimaryheads.co.uk
- Contact Pam Langmead, EPHA Professional Officer, at pam@langmead.me.uk for any support or information that you need.