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Education Bulletin

Dear Colleagues,

I hope you've had a good week. With half term already in sight at the end of next week, the first part of the spring term seems to have passed very quickly!

Thank you to everyone who has signed the Early Years Education System (EYES) Data Sharing Agreement. Around 50% of schools have now completed the agreement. Signing the agreement allows us to set up and test system connections now, ensuring everything is ready for the transfer of school data from September 2026. This new system will bring education data into the same platform used for Social Care, Early Help and SEND, creating a more connected and efficient approach to managing information across services. If you have not yet signed the agreement, I encourage you to do so. Further information on the upcoming changes and the actions required can be found on page X of this bulletin.

I was delighted to be able to join the Voice 21 Let's Talk Transition celebration event last week and listen to the remarkable and effective work that secondary schools have been undertaking to develop the role of oracy across their schools and with a particular focus on supporting transitions. Read our [Voice-21-Lets-Talk-at-Transition-Report](#) to find out more about the learning from this project.

You may have read in the news about growing concerns over school funding and support for children with SEND. The f40 campaign is calling on government to take action, pressing for fairer funding, stronger SEND support in mainstream schools, and greater investment in early intervention and specialist provision. A short [briefing note](#) is available with more information about the campaign and the key changes being sought.

The Council for Disabled Children has recently uploaded [a webinar onto YouTube for schools on their disability duties](#). This complements three sets of guidance on disability duties from July. [See guides and training packages for schools on the disability duties in the Equality Act for more information](#).

The Department for Education commissioned the materials to support inclusive practice and to help disabled pupils achieve the best possible educational and other outcomes.

Wishing you all the best.

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Important Updates for Information and Action

Consultation on proposals for local government reorganisation in Worcestershire

PLEASE COMPLETE AND SHARE WITH STAFF IN YOUR SCHOOLS

Yesterday (5 February), government launched a public consultation to gather views from partners and residents on how local government is organised and structured. The seven-week consultation follows the government's previous announcement we communicated early last year that it intends to end all remaining two-tier local government arrangements across the country. This is part of wider plans for devolution and giving more powers to local areas.

As you will already be aware, last year, Worcestershire County Council, along with the county's six district, borough and city councils were invited to submit proposals for a new structure of local government.

Worcestershire County Council, working with Wyre Forest District Council, put forward a proposal for One Worcestershire - a single unitary authority for the whole county. This would bring all local government services under one council, replacing all seven of the existing county and district councils. This would provide clearer accountability, stronger financial sustainability and simpler services for residents. The proposal is backed by a range of local partners, including organisations from health, emergency services, business and the voluntary sector, most of which already operate on a county-wide level.

An alternative proposal is also being consulted on by the government. This has been submitted jointly by Bromsgrove District, Redditch Borough, Malvern Hills District, Worcester City and Wychavon councils and would create two new unitary authorities: one covering the north of the county and one covering the south.

Completing the questionnaire as part of the government consultation is a good opportunity for you to have your say on how the essential services you help to provide are delivered in the future. As you know, the County Council supports the One Worcestershire proposal, as we believe a single unitary council offers less disruption for residents, provides greater financial sustainability, better value for money and easier access to services.

I encourage you to share your views as part of the government's consultation, which will run until Thursday 26 March. For more details, including links to the two proposals and the consultation questions, please visit: [Local government reorganisation in Worcestershire - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/local-government-reorganisation-in-worcestershire)

A final decision is expected in early summer 2026, with elections for a new 'shadow' authority or authorities to run alongside existing councils planned for May 2027. The new council/s are due to go live on 1 April 2028.

Edenred Portal Access for February Half Term 2026

FOR INFORMATION AND ACTION BY ALL SCHOOLS

Edenred Portal access will be available from **Monday 2nd February 2026 and close on Friday 27^h February 2026**. Schools will have access to issue a **£15** voucher per child to cover the holiday period. They will expire one-month after they have been issued.

After the portal access closes on **Friday 27th February 2026**, schools and parents will have until **Friday 6th March 2026** for any outstanding voucher queries to be resolved, by emailing FSMHolidayVouchers@worcestershire.gov.uk.

Key points:

- **Accessing the portal:** You must use the WCC ordering site with your existing **WCC Account No. 22463**, the login page can be accessed here: [Edenred Online Ordering](#)
- **Eligibility:** Vouchers are for FSM eligible children aged 4 – 16 and in years Reception to Year 11 (**not including nursery or 6th form students**).
- **Voucher expiry:** Advise parents to redeem vouchers promptly to avoid expiry. All vouchers issued during this period will expire after **one-month** from the date of issue. Once redeemed, the supermarket eGift card will have a longer expiry date in accordance with their chosen supermarket T&Cs, see page 6 of [Parent Carer FAQs](#)
- Make sure you have the correct recipient email address and that parent/carers are notified they will be in receipt of a voucher.
- **Ensure there are no spaces before the email address:** Even a small space at the beginning can prevent vouchers from being delivered properly.
 - If copying and pasting, double-check that no space was added.
 - If typing manually, start directly with the first letter of the email.
 - Use the “Sort A to Z” filter to check for formatting issues. In spreadsheet tools like Excel, sorting the email column A to Z will bring any entries with special characters, including leading spaces, to the top. This is a quick way to spot and correct errors before uploading.
 - If you would like advice on how to use a formula (in Excel) to quickly remove any email addresses with a space contact: FSMHolidayVouchers@worcestershire.gov.uk
- **Invoicing for overspend:** Schools will be invoiced for any overspend above the expected amount per school.
- Historic expired vouchers will not be paid due to budget monitoring and programme claiming requirements. Exceptions **may** be considered if there are extenuating family circumstances which the school will need to verify.
- Eligibility for vouchers is linked to FSM status. There may be families who have FSM status, but their circumstances have changed during the Universal Credit switch over protection of status. Please consider that vouchers are issued to those children and families who require the support.
- To help monitor the vouchers issued under this scheme, please can you ensure you include the URN or UKPRN for the school when placing the order.

For further help, see these useful links:

- Edenred User Guide - for ordering and supermarket details: [user guide](#)
- Parent/Carer FAQs - [Parent Carer FAQs](#)
- Forgotten Password – [Password reset](#)
- Redeem eCodes - [Redeem eCodes](#)
- For any queries, refer to the guides first, then contact FSMHolidayVouchers@worcestershire.gov.uk

Please continue to signpost families to local support and information:

- [Holiday Activities and Food \(HAF\) Programme](#)
- [Household Support Fund Worcestershire webpage](#)
- [Cost of living support](#) information is available on the council's website

Exploitation and Online Safety Session for Parents and Carers

PLEASE SHARE WITH PARENTS AND CARERS

West Mercia Police are offering a free online session for parents and carers to help them better understand the risks of exploitation and online safety for children of all ages. Please help us promote this important opportunity to the families you work with.

This accessible and informative session will help parents and carers build confidence in recognising risks and supporting their children to stay safe. It will cover:

- **Spotting the signs of exploitation** and knowing when something isn't right
- **How to keep children safe online**, including practical steps families can take
- **The influence of online personalities and influencers** on children's thinking, behaviour, and self-image
- **Useful, easy-to-follow safety tips** that parents and carers can use straight away

Book your place via: [Online safety \(Child exploitation\) session for parents and guardians Tickets, Fri 6 Mar 2026 at 10:00 | Eventbrite](#)

The session is suitable for those caring for children of any age and will provide reassurance as well as practical guidance.

Employee Assistance Programme for local authority maintained schools

IMPORTANT REMINDER FOR ALL LOCAL AUTHORITY MAINTAINED SCHOOLS

The health and wellbeing of staff is paramount, and it is important that everyone can thrive at work and have a safe space to talk about their professional and personal life. We would therefore like to remind schools of our offer to access to an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), delivered by Health Assured – the UK and Ireland’s leading wellbeing provider.

Please share the following information, which includes details on what is available and how to access this service, with all of your school staff.

To support this message there is also a range of [posters, leaflets and guides](#) for sharing with staff and which are great for both intranet use and staff rooms.

What is an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)?

An EAP is a confidential employee benefit designed to help you deal with personal and professional problems that could be affecting your home or work life, health and general wellbeing. Our EAP service provides a complete support network that offers expert advice and compassionate guidance 24/7, covering a wide range of issues. We strongly believe in providing an EAP service that offers not only reactive support when someone needs it but also proactive and preventative support to deliver the best possible outcomes.

With Health Assured there really is a better way

Balancing everyday life with the requirements of work and home can create pressures for all of us. Work is a large part of people’s lives. With increasing working hours as well as technological developments to support remote working, it is vital to ensure that there is a productive, healthy environment that is conducive to a healthy lifestyle.

Services available

- **Life support:** Access to free counselling for emotional problems and a pathway to structured therapy sessions at your convenience.
- **Legal information:** For issues that cause anxiety or distress including debt management, consumer, property or neighbour disputes (employees only).
- **Bereavement support:** Health Assured offers qualified and experienced counsellors who can help with grief plus legal advisors to help with related legal matters.
- **Medical information:** Qualified nurses are on hand to offer support on a range of medical or health-related issues offering practical information and advice.
- **Online CBT:** We recognise the value of self-help tools in dealing with a range of issues, which is why we have a range of CBT self-help modules, informative fact sheets and invaluable advice videos from leading qualified counsellors.

To access support, call the free 24-Hour Confidential Help Line

Health Assured also offers support for you and your immediate family members, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year by calling **0800 028 0199**. *Please note Health Assured define immediate family members as spouse/partners and children aged 16 to 24 in full-time education, living in the same household.*

Reminder about upcoming changes to the Education Data System

FOR INFORMATION AND ACTION BY ALL SCHOOLS

A reminder about important upcoming changes to the way Worcestershire County Council records and manages children's education data. We are moving to a new system which will bring education data into the same platform used for Social Care, Early Help and SEND.

The new module is called the **Early Years Education System (EYES)**. This change will create a more connected and efficient way to manage information across services, helping to provide a holistic view of each child and their family while maintaining a single, shared database across education and social care. This will improve accuracy, strengthen collaboration and enhance data security.

Set-up for school-age and post-16 education is already underway, with the system scheduled to go live in July 2026. Work for Early Years settings will begin in Summer 2026, ready to go live in July 2027. To support this transition, we are asking schools to complete a few key actions.

- [Sign the EYES Data Sharing Agreement](#) - this allows us to set up and test connections now, ensuring everything is ready for the transfer of school data from September 2026.

To download a copy of the agreement for signing, use the link above and select **File > Download > Microsoft Word (.docx)**.

Once signed, please return the document to chs.system.support@worcestershire.gov.uk

- [Check and update your school's details in GIAS \(Get Information About Schools\)](#) – please make sure your information is accurate, so our admissions list reflects the correct details.

In addition, during Summer Term 2026, we will ask you to confirm your up-to-date school contacts in preparation for September. These will include your SENCO, Designated Safeguarding Lead, Designated Teacher for Looked After Children, Admissions Officer, Free School Meals Officer, Attendance Data Officer, and the staff member responsible for education notifications such as elective home education, part-time timetables, absences and permanent exclusions.

We will continue to keep you updated as work progresses and will provide further guidance to support you through this transition. Your cooperation is essential to ensuring that the system is fully set up and tested ahead of the go-live date.

If you have any questions, please contact chs.system.support@worcestershire.gov.uk

Thank you for your continued support and collaboration.

Latest Attendance News and Updates

DfE's Monitor your School Attendance Webinar Recording - January 2026

The recording of the DfE's latest attendance webinar held on 28/01/26 is now available for all school attendance leads and attendance staff to view: [Monitor your school attendance webinar - transition](#)

This session has a specific focus on the importance of utilising attendance data to support transition and shares the practices utilised by Fulwood Academy 'Turning Attendance Insights into Action'.

School Transition Resources

Many schools are utilising pupil voice to gather feedback and learn what worked well for recent pupil transitions. In doing so they are well placed to begin transition planning for future end of term/year transitions.

Recent attendance conferences also saw RISE advisors sharing snapshots of pupil voice, relative to attendance and transition experiences: [Attendance-Vimeo - Pupil voice - 4 minutes](#)

Further transition information, resources and good practice webinars for schools can be found here: [Information and resources for schools | Worcestershire County Council](#)

Rise School Attendance Conference for Primary Leaders - 4th and 5th March 2026

Following the successes of the attendance conferences held for Secondary Leaders last year, the DfE have further announced virtual attendance conference dates for Primary Leaders.

This two-part primary conference is to be held on successive afternoon sessions on 4th and 5th March 2026.

Primary leaders can find more information and book a place using the link below: [Eventbrite.co.uk/e/rise-school-attendance-conference-primary-leaders-BOOK a place](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/rise-school-attendance-conference-primary-leaders-BOOK-a-place)

Latest Education News and Updates

Best Start in Life - Project Update

All Local Authorities have been given a target by the DFE to work with schools and settings to raise standards in Good Levels of Development (GLD) for all children and a specific target to raise outcomes for GLD for those children from disadvantaged backgrounds. As a community it is vital that we work together to achieve this by 2028. This will give the children of Worcestershire the best start in life.

Working with our colleagues in Public Health, Family hubs and the Early Years team, we have developed a range of programmes of CPD, support and guidance available to all schools and settings and will be rolling this out, shortly. Schools and settings will be able to access support in a number of ways:

- Universal support through CPD, Power Hours, increased moderation opportunities, and a summer term summit with national speakers. (Vast majority of these will be free to support all schools and settings to access materials)
- Targeted support – this will be a range of fully funded opportunities to support outcomes where schools and settings may face specific challenges or where a group of schools share a common theme of need.
- Bespoke support – this is fully funded, targeted, individual support where schools and settings have significant challenges or gaps in their data. This work will enable those schools and settings to gain access to specialist support which is personalised to their context

Those schools and settings who have been identified for targeted and bespoke support will be contacted in the next 2 weeks and the universal support will be published shortly. Should you have any queries, please contact Jane Howard jhoward@worcestershire.gov.uk

Transition Support

A young person's educational journey has a number of key transitions including phase transfer and transitions as a result of in-year school/setting move. Each transition marks a new chapter, bringing excitement and opportunity, but also uncertainty and change. Change, by its very nature, can be unsettling. It asks us to let go of familiar faces and places, to step beyond the comfort of what we know and embrace the unknown.

While this shift can be challenging for anyone, it can be particularly overwhelming and stressful for our young people who are supported through the care system, or who have previously been in care, as these moments of transition may trigger deep-rooted feelings of instability, insecurity, and loss.

The Virtual School have produced the following guidance and resources to support you to support our young people successfully through these transitions. The guidance can be found under the heading *Transition Guidance for Children Looked After and Previously Looked After* accessible via the following link: [Virtual School useful links to guidance and resources | Worcestershire County Council](#).

In addition, as part of the Delivering Better Value programme, a [Transition Overview](#) poster has been produced summarising valuable activities schools can undertake to support positive and effective transitions. The poster also links to webpages offering a wide range of resources for school leaders, teachers, pupils, and parent carers.

Learning Together Mental Health (LTMH)

We are pleased to share information about a new project from **Place2Be** for secondary schools in England, funded by the **Education Endowment Foundation (EEF)**. This offers schools the opportunity to take part in an EEF-funded programme, which is recognised for its strong evidence base and relevance to Ofsted priorities.

Learning Together Mental Health (LTMH) is a whole-school programme designed to support students' mental health and wellbeing, strengthen relationships, and create a more positive school environment. It helps schools understand pupils' needs and supports staff and students to work together on practical actions that can make a real difference to school life.

The programme includes:

- training for school staff
- a wellbeing survey for Year 7 students
- small groups of staff and students who meet regularly to plan and implement improvements based on pupils' views

LTMH is currently being offered to secondary schools across England as part of a national evaluation. Attached is a flyer about the project.

If you would like to find out more or register your interest in taking part, please visit: <https://www.place2be.org.uk/ltmh>

You can also contact the project team at ltmh@place2be.org.uk or book a one-to-one meeting to discuss the project in more detail.

[Book a time to learn more about Learning Together for Mental Health Project](#)

EEF Trail Opportunity: Peer Assisted Learning Strategies

Nottingham Trent University and the University of Birmingham are working together to trial a reading comprehension and fluency approach entitled Peer Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS-UK) in the academic year of 2026/2027. The trial is funded by the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) and will be independently evaluated by Manchester Metropolitan University (ManMet).

A previously funded EEF trial reported that the children who received PALS-UK made on average two months additional progress with their reading ([PALS-UK - second trial | EEF](#)). PALS-UK is now on the [EEF promising programme](#) list; this list is for programmes that show promise to improve children's education outcomes.

Primary schools in our area are eligible to be part of this exciting opportunity to be part of an EEF trial to evaluate PALS-UK at scale. As part of the evaluation study, half of the schools who sign up will be chosen at random to receive the PALS-UK programme starting in the Autumn term of 2026. The other half will be in the control group and continue with teaching as usual. In those schools allocated to the intervention group, PALS-UK will be delivered to Year 5 classes for 20 weeks (3 x 35-minute sessions each week) beginning Autumn 2026. All the resources and training will be provided to schools in the intervention group at a subsidised cost – intervention schools pay £75 per teacher for training, have the option to pay £50 for a set of books to support delivery, and receive £100 on completion of endline assessments. On completion of endline assessments control schools will receive a payment of £500.

To find out more and express an interest in taking part in the trial, please contact Emma Vardy via email at: emma.vardy@ntu.ac.uk

Schools can also access this intervention and other writing interventions via the 'Rtl: Overcoming Obstacles to Writing Progress' programme' provided by CUREE and WCC School Improvement Team – if interested please contact Jess Blakeman: JBlakeman@worcestershire.gov.uk

Teaching Assistant Apprenticeships

Aspiration Training continue to deliver a range of apprenticeship programmes available to schools in Worcestershire. Aspiration Training deliver the Teaching Assistant Level 3 apprenticeship, which has been successfully delivered for several years under an Ofsted Good rating. The programme is available to both new recruits and existing staff. They also deliver the Teaching Assistant Level 5 apprenticeship, including a SEND pathway, which is particularly beneficial for schools supporting pupils with additional and complex needs, and for staff progressing into more specialist or senior roles. They also continue to deliver Early Years and Adult Care apprenticeships from Level 2 through to Level 5.

Aspiration Training offer a free recruitment service, including DBS checks and robust candidate screening, to support schools looking to recruit apprentices and ensure the right candidate is matched to the role. For more information on the full apprenticeship offer, please contact Tina Booth at tbooth@aspirationtraining.com or visit <https://www.aspirationtraining.com/>

The National Year of Reading 2026

The National Year of Reading 2026 is a transformative national initiative designed to reignite a culture of reading for pleasure across the UK. Stewarded by the National Literacy Trust and sponsored by the Department for Education, its goal is to reverse long-term declines in reading for pleasure by making reading relevant, engaging new audiences and building the systems and partnerships to embed lasting, meaningful change.

Reading for pleasure is in crisis, with fewer than 1 in 3 children and young people saying they enjoy reading. Yet the OECD (2021) affirmed that engagement in reading, framed by a desire to read for pleasure can mediate socio-economic status and may help young people to overcome structural inequalities in their lives. Research also demonstrates that reading makes people less lonely, more engaged in their communities, happier, and more employable.

The National Year of Reading celebrates all personally meaningful reading - everything from gaming narratives to novels, song lyrics to poetry, recipes to newspapers, encyclopaedias to football programmes - in digital, audio, print and graphic formats. Reading is a powerful complement to your passions, not their competition – why not '[Go All In](#)' with the things you love through reading.

Through the National Year of Reading, there is activity happening in [schools](#), the criminal justice system, and in communities. Organisations of any size can [pledge their support](#) for the project in a variety of ways, from sharing our messaging, to organising events, to encouraging staff to volunteer in their communities and more.

In Redditch and Bromsgrove, the National Literacy Trust are actively seeking individuals who are already working or volunteering with pre-school children, families on lower incomes and/or teenagers, who are willing to add some activity to promote reading through 2026 with our support. There are a huge range of easy actions you can take, from very small scale to more significant, and they have a small budget to help support targeted activities and resources which reach their priority groups. If you are interested in finding out more about how you can get involved in this way, please contact Emma Ritson, West Midlands Project Officer: emma.ritson@literacytrust.org.uk

They have boxes of WBD books available to gift aimed at EY to lower KS3 readers. This can't happen within the immediate vicinity of a bookshop and ideally would be hooked around an event to celebrate WBD that day or week. Let them know if you would like a box of 200, the delivery address, who you would target and what this might look like roughly (you can flesh it out later). Here's the list of books: [World Book Day 2026 announcements - World Book Day](#) for your info.

Latest SEND News and Updates

SENDIASS Free Transitions Training for parent carers

[The SEND Information, Advice and Support Service \(SENDIASS\)](#) have developed a new Transitions Workshop. The FREE Workshop, [Supporting your child to cope with change \(Transitions\)](#), is aimed at parents and carers of children and young people with SEND who will be transitioning into another phase of education within the next few years.

SENDIASS are looking for schools that would be interested in hosting this workshop for their families and would be happy for families of other schools to attend.

If you are interested in this opportunity for your setting, please complete the [SENDIASS Training Request Form](#) and the SENDIASS Training and Development Officer will be in contact to confirm details.

Latest Public Health News and Updates

INTENT smoking and vaping prevention teaching resource

FAO: PSHE Leads

Public Health are now able to extend access to this [evidence based teaching resource](#) which can reduce smoking and vaping initiation. If your school wishes to use the teaching resource with Y7 to Y10s, please email ccharlton@worcestershire.gov.uk to be registered as an INTENT licence user.

This short video provides an understanding of the health psychology behind the resource: [The Power of Implementation Intentions - See Things Through and Protect your Willpower on Vimeo](#)

The teaching programme includes vaping prevention lesson plans for Y7 to Y10.

New to the resource is information about illegal and adulterated vapes. Lesson plans for Year 6s are in development.

To receive a Trading Standards poster on recognising and reporting illegal vapes, please complete this short form <https://forms.office.com/e/d1c9Lc12km>

Schools that have had their access confirmed for the next 4 years do not need to take any action.

Free Spring Term Togetherness parenting resources for schools and families

Please share this free NHS resource with all your parents and carers this week by adding it to your school newsletter, social media, and parent communication platforms.

Please find download the [Spring Term Togetherness newsletter](#) — a set of free, NHS-developed resources to support children's emotional wellbeing and strengthen parent-child relationships. These resources are fully funded in Worcestershire and can be accessed by families at any time through the [Worcestershire | Togetherness - Togetherness](#) – using free access code **PARENTSROCK**.

This term's pack focuses on **big emotions, healthy sleep, anxiety, kindness and teenage brain** development. Schools and organisations working with children and families are encouraged to share these high-quality materials with parents as part of our wider ambition to improve children's emotional health and their readiness to learn.

Many thanks for your support in promoting these valuable tools.

Latest News from Teaching School Hubs

Prince Henry's Teaching School Hub

School Centred Initial Teacher Training

Applications for the 26-27 SCITT cohort are now open!

ECF Update

For colleagues enrolled on the Prince Henry's ECF programme with Ambition Institute, please note the following upcoming dates for this academic year. Please use the link below to book onto these - www.ticketsource.co.uk/phtsh. For clinics, you will be sent the details to join via email.

Year 1 ECT Events:

Clinic 2 – 5th March 2025

Clinic 3 – 11th June 2026

Year 2 ECT Events:

Clinic 5 – 19th March 2026

Clinic 6 – 18th June 2026

ECT Mentor Events:

Conference 2 for Year 1 Mentors – March 2026

AB Update

DfE registrations for the 2025-26 cohort remain open. Please follow the link for guidance on how to register your ECTs with Prince Henry's TSH: <https://www.princehenryshub.co.uk/registering-your-ect/>.

You should have now received an email regarding our Service Level Agreement. If you have not yet received this, please email cemms@princehenrys.worcs.sch.uk

NPQ Update

New NPQ Apprenticeships now open for an April start

Best Practice Network are pleased to launch 3 new leadership apprenticeships that combine an NPQ with funded apprenticeship training: NPQLT, NPQLTD and NPQLBC. These NPQs are mapped to the Level 3 Team Leader apprenticeship, with the NPQ providing the knowledge, and the apprenticeship supporting the skills and behaviours in practice.

These routes allow schools that are not eligible for DfE scholarship funding to access NPQs funded through their levy. As there is not a scholarship funded Spring intake, this is a unique opportunity to start an NPQ ahead of the Autumn term.

Leader Apprenticeship with [NPQH](#)
Leader Apprenticeship with [NPQSL](#)
Leader Apprenticeship with [NPQLT](#)
Leader Apprenticeship with [NPQLTD](#)
Leader Apprenticeship with [NPQLBC](#)

If you would like to find out about the range of Apprenticeships available to support professional development in schools, you can visit the [Worcestershire Hills Trust apprenticeships webpage](#).

To find out more about how to make the most of Apprenticeships for your staff, please take a look at the range of webinars available to support National Apprenticeship Week (9th-15th February) at the following link: [National Apprenticeship Week | Best Practice Network](#)

Latest Government News and Updates

Consultation on children's social media use and phone bans in schools

On 19 January, the government announced [a consultation on children's social media use and phone bans in schools to protect young people's wellbeing and ensure safer online experiences](#).

The consultation on children's use of technology will seek views from parents, young people and civil society – with the first events in a nationwide tour to be held in the days ahead. The government will respond to the consultation in the summer.

Updated guidance for schools on mobile phones will make it clear that schools need to be phone-free environments and that pupils should not have access to their devices during lessons, break times, lunch times, or between lessons.

The social media consultation will seek views on a range of measures, including:

- determining the right minimum age for children to access social media, including exploring a ban for children under a certain age
- exploring ways to improve the accuracy of age assurance for children to support the enforcement of minimum age limits so children have age-appropriate experiences and see age-appropriate content
- assessing whether the current digital age of consent is too low
- removing or limiting functionalities which drive addictive or compulsive use of social media, such as 'infinite scrolling'
- exploring further interventions to support parents in helping their children navigate the digital landscape, for example further guidance or simpler parental controls

Details of the consultation will be published shortly.

[Download guidance on mobile phones in schools](#)

[Read Secretary of State statement to the House of Commons on the government's next steps on online safety](#)

Latest Training and Conference News

Out of School Providers Update Meeting

For the attention of all Wraparound and Holiday club providers and practitioners

Don't forget to book your place at the Out of School Providers Update Meeting, taking place on Tuesday 10th February 2026, 7:00-8:30pm (virtual delivery).

The main topic for the evening will take an Inclusion focus, where we will be considering how we get provision right for all children within our out of school settings. We will look at the key principles of inclusive practice as well as welcoming our guest speaker Dr Louise Orland Principal Educational Psychologist and Head of Inclusion Support Services, who will be delivering some insights into the importance of play and how this supports inclusive provision.

We will also have lots of general updates relevant to the out of school sector such as the School Age Childcare Agenda, Breakfast Clubs and Ofsted updates.

Don't miss out! Book your place now via CPD online: [Courses Search](#)

Out of School Provider Update Meeting

Session code: 92119

Course code: 10274

Free

7pm-8:30pm

Virtual delivery

Trauma Informed Parents Journey

This session is for practitioners who have attended the Trauma Informed Parents' Journey half day course that took place on 23 September 2025 / 19 January 2026 or are due to attend our forthcoming course 23 March 2026.

The aim of this 45-minute session is to share experiences, discuss possible amendments to the course and celebrate success. It is also an opportunity to gain support and ask questions; this will be an open facilitated session led by the attendees.

Cost: Free

16 June, 4pm to 4.45pm, virtual delivery, course code: 10690 / 92990

17 June, 4pm to 4.45pm, virtual delivery, course code: 10690 / 92991

Assessing Maths at the End of KS1: non-statutory teacher assessment framework

This workshop will support teachers to use the non-statutory teacher assessment framework to assess mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1. Whilst statutory assessment at the end of KS1 is no longer required, you may wish to use this framework to quality assure assessment and the impact of your maths curriculum.

This workshop will revisit the non-statutory assessment framework and support schools to consider how we evidence progress and attainment in maths and will support internal assessment at the end of KS1. Colleagues will be expected to bring along a sample of pupils' books/planning to support professional discussion and reflection.

We will share with you a toolkit of activities that can be used to provide further evidence to support non-statutory teacher assessment in maths at the end of Year 2

Cost: £58 + VAT per delegate

6 March 2026, 9.15am to 12.15pm, Worcester, course code: 10390 / 91879

Book your place on our training and conferences via [CPD](#) using your school CPD leader login details. Confirmations are issued at the point of booking and go to the delegate email provided. If your school requires support when booking, please contact the training team on **01905 844 420** or email workforcesupport@worcestershire.gov.uk

Education CPD and Community Engagement Event

The University of Worcester is delighted to invite you to join them for an afternoon of collaboration and professional learning. Discover how the University of Worcester can contribute to the professional development of your staff and support your school or organisation's growth.

25 February 2026, 2:30pm – 5:30pm at St John's Campus, Worcester

The event is free and open to Headteachers, Senior Leaders, CPD Coordinators, and Education Partners.

For more information and to book your place, please visit:

<https://www.worcester.ac.uk/events/education-cpd-and-community-engagement-event>

Delivering the 6-week Trauma Informed Parents Journey course

Following a highly successful 6-week pilot at a trauma-informed first school in Worcestershire, we are excited to introduce this transformative course. Designed to support parents in adopting a trauma-informed approach with their children, this initiative is now being expanded to more schools, fully funded by Public Health.

This opportunity is available to Worcestershire First, Primary and Middle schools/settings that have engaged with the TIS UK diploma, funded by Worcestershire Virtual School.

Schools/settings with a trauma-informed practitioner are invited to express interest in joining the Parents' Journey project using the following link [Expression of Interest to deliver the 6 week Trauma Informed Parents' Journey course – Fill in form](#)

Our next course is running on 23 March 2026, 9.15am to 12.15pm, in Worcester and will equip TI Practitioners to deliver the parents' course and provide details on:

- The parents' course content
- The resources available to support delivery in schools

Don't miss this opportunity to bring a trauma-informed approach to your whole school community!

How does my school / setting become involved?

1. Complete the expression of interest form [Expression of Interest to deliver the 6-week Trauma Informed Parents' Journey course – Fill in form](#)
2. Your application will then be confirmed to the Training Team for your booking on the 23rd March course to be actioned in CPD and confirmation issued.

The Power of Libraries Conference 2026 - book your place today!

Join Worcestershire Libraries on 19 March 2026 at The Hive Library

This conference is for everyone working in early years education who wants to inspire a love of reading. Nursery and reception practitioners, early years leads, and childminders are invited to explore creative ways of reading together and discover how Worcestershire Libraries can support you and your setting.

Attending will support strong Ofsted outcomes by helping your setting develop a strong reading culture, strengthen reading for pleasure, equip staff with practical, research-based strategies for impactful storytime, demonstrate clear intent, implementation and impact in reading practice, boost staff confidence, and provide free books and resources to enhance your environment and curriculum.

This year's programme features an inspiring speaker lineup, including Lauren Child, award-winning creator of Charlie and Lola; Sam Wass, expert in early years brain development; West Midlands author and English coach Donna David; Samantha Jayne Hulston, ESRC Postdoctoral Fellow at The Open University and former early years teacher; and BookTrust — alongside practical workshops from Sal Tonge and Thomas Docherty.

New speaker announcement: Dr Samantha Jayne Hulston

The latest speaker announced is Dr Samantha Jayne Hulston, ESRC Postdoctoral Fellow at the Open University and former Early Years teacher. Her research focuses on how young children engage with stories during play and how adults can use movement, creativity and playful interactions to create rich reading experiences for every child. Samantha will be leading the session on *Playing with stories to support reading engagement and enjoyment: research, practice, and the role of adults*. This session alone offers valuable evidence-informed practice you can apply straight away - and which Ofsted will expect to see during inspection.

Book your place today at the special Early Bird rate of **£50 per person**. Lunch and refreshments are included.

For more information and to book, visit: <https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/power-libraries-conference-2026>

School Finance Team Conference

5 March 2026, 9am – 12:30pm

Headteachers, Business Managers, and Finance Staff from maintained schools are warmly invited to join us for another focused and informative half-day conference dedicated to strengthening financial understanding across our schools.

Our team is currently finalising an exciting lineup of speakers who will cover a broad range of finance-related themes, including key updates for maintained schools and emerging priorities for the year ahead.

Throughout the morning, you'll also have the chance to connect with the different team members who work collaboratively to support schools in delivering the best possible outcomes for children.

You'll be able to:

- Engage with representatives from a variety of specialist teams
- Access tailored advice and professional guidance

Book Now: [School Finance Conference](#)

Empowering Mathematical Thinking: Oracy and Daily Reasoning in Action Conference

18 March 2026, 9am – 2:30pm

Join us for a unique face to face conference on the 18 March that will transform the way you teach maths. This Conference examines how purposeful talk and simple, everyday reasoning routines can strengthen pupils' mathematical understanding.

During the session we will:

- Explore how embedding oracy across primary classrooms can strengthen reasoning and a deep understanding of key mathematical ideas.
- Discover practical strategies to create daily opportunities for problem solving that include every child.
- Leave with actionable ideas to make maths talk purposeful and inclusive for all learners.

Book Now: [Empowering Mathematical Thinking](#)

Handwriting Matters: Building Strong Foundations for All

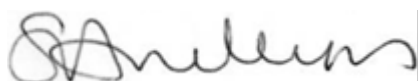
21 April 2026, 9am – 12:30pm

Unlock the power of handwriting with an expert-led masterclass that transforms teaching and boosts pupil success.

Want to raise standards and make handwriting a whole-school strength? This high-impact session gives teachers and leaders the proven strategies and confidence to deliver outstanding results.

During the morning you will hear from Sue Smits a handwriting specialist and the founder of Morrells Handwriting. Sue is a trusted name in handwriting, education and resources who is recognised as a key contributor to the 2025 Writing Framework. Sue has worked alongside educational experts and policymakers to shape national standards for handwriting instruction.

Book Now: [Handwriting Matters](#)



Sarah Wilkins

Assistant Director for Education, Early Years, Inclusion and Pupil Place Planning

