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Education Bulletin

Dear Colleagues,

Happy New Year. I hope you had a restful festive break, and the new term has started well for you all.

Just prior to Christmas, the Government signalled the end of two-tier governance in the [English Devolution White Paper](#) and therefore our district and county councils will be abolished. It is essential to emphasise this is not optional, the Government could not be clearer that whether we like it or not this is happening, and we are to face the largest change that we have seen to local government in over 50 years. We will be required to move to a unitary structure in a relatively short timescale, alongside developing devolution proposals for a Strategic Authority to ensure our residents benefit from devolution. [Read the Council's response to the English Devolution White Paper in full.](#)

The Council's budget for the current financial year (2024/25) continues to face relentless demand and cost pressures in three key areas of statutory service provision: Children's Social Care, Home to School Travel and Adult Social Care which have been reported in regular financial monitoring reports to Cabinet and through to Scrutiny. These pressures are being experienced by the majority of County Councils and upper tier authorities across the country. A statement on our budget from Councillor Simon Geraghty, Leader of Worcestershire County Council is included on page 3.

On 20th December 2024, [I wrote out to all schools to emphasise the importance of full participation in the health needs screening questionnaire facilitated through SchoolScreener™](#), alongside other vital public health services that may take place within schools such as vaccinations and the National Child Measurement Programme (NCMP). This initiative is critical in identifying and addressing the health and wellbeing needs of children and young people in our schools. Just as schools collaborate effectively to support vaccination campaigns and NCMP assessments, participation in the health needs screener questionnaire ensures that all students benefit from comprehensive, targeted support, creating healthier learning environments.

Wishing you all the best for the spring term.

Contents

Latest council news and updates.....	3
Statement on budget from Leader of Worcestershire County Council	3
Ofsted praise Worcestershire children’s services.....	3
Latest education news and updates	4
Deferred and Delayed Entry Guide 2025	4
Significant changes are coming to some schools in the Pershore area	4
Holocaust Memorial Day	5
Higher-Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) status	5
Latest news from schools.....	5
Ridgeway Secondary School recognised as most improved	5
Latest attendance news and updates	6
DfE attendance data	6
Worcestershire Attendance Helpline and Resources	6
Latest SEND news and updates	7
Herefordshire & Worcestershire SENDIASS.....	7
Latest health and wellbeing news and updates	9
Update on cases of norovirus and flu	9
Pharmacy First Service.....	11
Support available in Worcestershire while waiting for your appointment.....	12
Emotional health and wellbeing for parents	12
Feel Good in the Forest Activity Bags	13
Latest news from Government.....	14
AI teacher tools set to break down barriers to opportunity	14
Children’s Bill to keep children safe from exploitation	14
Latest training news and conferences	15
Latest news from School Teaching Hubs.....	20
Tudor Grange Teaching School Hub	20
Haybridge Teaching School Hub	21
Rivers Teaching Alliance.....	23
Other local news and events	25
Could you be Worcestershire’s next Young Poet Laureate?.....	25
The Power of Libraries Conference - for Primary School Educators	25
Schools’ Gardening Competition - open to all schools in Worcester City.....	26

Latest council news and updates

Statement on budget from Leader of Worcestershire County Council

We, along with most other County Councils and upper tier authorities, continue to face relentless demand on services with more people than ever needing to use the services we provide. The areas driving most of this demand and cost are those we have to provide: Children's and Adult's Social Care, Home to School Travel and Special Education Needs & Disabilities (SEND) provision. In addition, the cost of providing these vital services also continues to increase.

These financial pressures are being made even worse by the rise in National Living Wage, the changes to Employers National Insurance Contributions which are being faced by all of our suppliers, partners and contractors and a very low level of support from Government via the local Government settlement.

At this draft budget stage, our total net budget requirement for 2025/26 is just over £495 million and after taking into account proposed savings, the slight increases in government grants and use of £15 million of reserves, this leaves a remaining budget gap of £33.6 million. Taking all of this into account, the proposed increase in Council Tax for Worcestershire is 4.99% which will mean an average increase of around £1.48 per week for average property. This means we will still have one of the lowest levels of council tax of any County Council.

As we have had such little support from Government in the settlement, we are in the position that we will need additional support in order for the Council to 'balance its books'. We have therefore submitted a request to Government for Exceptional Finance Support (EFS). This would give us permission to borrow to cover our gap in revenue expenditure. This borrowing will need to be repaid, along with interest, and is only a short-term measure whilst the council implements permanent solutions. This support does not solve the budget gap on an on-going basis so the Council will be developing sustainable solutions.

In the meantime, we will continue to support the most vulnerable people in our communities, provide good services for our residents and businesses, whilst delivering our plan for Worcestershire.

Councillor Simon Geraghty, Leader of Worcestershire County Council

Ofsted praise Worcestershire children's services

[Children's Social Care Services in Worcestershire have been praised for their positive progress following a recent inspection.](#) Ofsted inspectors visited Worcestershire County Council in December 2024 to look at the council's arrangements for children in care. The inspection report published on Monday (13 January 2025) highlighted that significant strides have been made since the full children's services inspection in May 2023 where an overall judgement of Good was achieved, showcasing the council's commitment to delivering high-quality care and support to children and families in the county. [Read the inspection report in full.](#)

Latest education news and updates

Deferred and Delayed Entry Guide 2025

Parents and carers in Worcestershire now have access to a comprehensive new guide to help them make informed decisions about deferred and delayed entry to schools.

The Deferred and Delayed Entry Guide 2025 provides clear and practical information about the processes, criteria, and support available for parents who may be exploring whether deferred or delayed school entry is the right choice for their child. It aims to clarify complex procedures and offer reassurance to families during this important decision-making process.

Children are not of compulsory school age until the term following their fifth birthday. Parents can defer the date their child is admitted to school until later in the same school year following their fourth birthday, providing they do not defer beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age, or beyond the start of the final term of that school year.

Parents must apply for a school place in the normal way at the usual time. At the point that a parent has been offered a school place, they should liaise directly with the school to notify the school that their child's entry to a reception class will be deferred until later in the same reception academic year group, when they reach statutory school age. This cannot be beyond the point at which they reach compulsory school age, or beyond the start of the final term of that school year.

The guide is part of Worcestershire County Council's offer to support families and enhance educational opportunities for children across the county. Parents and carers can download the guide by visiting: [Deferred and Delayed Entry Guide 2025](#).

Significant changes are coming to some schools in the Pershore area

The Pershore education planning area will fully become a two-tier system (primary and secondary) from September 2027.

Agreement has been reached by the appropriate decision makers to extend the age ranges of all the first schools to become primary schools starting with retaining year 5 in September 2025 and then year 6 in September 2026. The middle schools in Pershore will no longer have a point of entry (admission) into Year 5 for September 2025, and Pershore High Schools intake will be expanded to accommodate all Year 7 pupils in the area from September 2027.

More information including details on the individual school changes can be found on the County Council website at: www.worcestershire.gov.uk/pershoreview.

Holocaust Memorial Day

This year's Holocaust Memorial Day on Monday 27 January 2025 marks the 80th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau. Each year the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust sets a [theme](#) for the day, which this year is 'For a Better Future'.

The Holocaust Memorial Day Trust (HMDT) has developed a number of [resources](#) to help schools host local events to mark this significant anniversary.

HMDT also has a broad range of [social media assets](#) and educational materials that can be shared through your local channels and is asking for individuals to light a candle and put them safely in their windows to remember those lost to mark this important day. These images can be shared on social media with the hashtags #HolocaustMemorialDay and #LightTheDarkness.

There will also be a national Holocaust Memorial Day ceremony on 27 January which will be televised on BBC at 7pm, and will end with the call to join the [Light the Darkness](#) campaign at 8pm.

Higher-Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) status

Strictly Education, as part of the HLTA national assessment partnership (www.hlta.org.uk) are the regional provider of Higher-Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) status in Worcestershire. They would like to take this opportunity to offer your teaching assistants the chance to gain HLTA status during the spring term 2024/25.

They have a suite of online HLTA preparation courses available in the spring term. All courses are delivered online, with the option of AM / PM or Twilight cohorts. Leading to a half day (3 hour) remote assessment. The total cost per candidate is £780.

An application pack and course dates can be found on their website: [HLTA Status | Strictly Education](#) or please contact the HLTA department at Strictly Education for further details: HLTA@strictlyeducation.co.uk.

Latest news from schools

Ridgeway Secondary School recognised as most improved

[Congratulations to Ridgeway Secondary School in Redditch who have been recognised as the most improved state-funded mainstream secondary school in England](#). In one year, the school's overall Progress 8 improved by 1.05 points and moved 2,266 places in the Department for Education school performance tables. In 2023, the school, part of the Shires Multi Academy Trust, held a Progress 8 score of -0.62, ranking 2,877th out of 3,372 secondary schools in the country – placing it in the bottom 15 per cent of schools nationally. The new score is +0.43 placing it 611th in the country within the top 18 per cent of schools nationwide.

Latest attendance news and updates

DfE attendance data

In response to feedback from local authorities, schools and academy trusts, the DfE have updated the attendance data that is available to download and view. They provide the following information for schools:

To access your attendance data download:

1. Log into [View your education data \(VYED\)](#) using your DfE Sign-in credentials.
2. Select 'Monitor your school attendance data'.
3. Select 'Attendance data downloads'.

If you do not see the 'Monitor your school attendance data' option when you log into VYED, you will need to [request access to it](#).

We encourage you to use this data for the early identification of pupils in need of support and intervention.

Further information

- [Register for our next webinar on Tuesday 21 January 2025](#)
- [Watch a previous webinar](#)

Get help

The [Monitor your school attendance: user guide](#) has information on the terms we use in the tool and how we calculate your results. You can [raise an enquiry](#) through the Customer Help Portal if you are struggling to access the Monitor your school attendance tool.

Take part in research

We are looking for people to take part in user research. We would like to hear how you are using the tools, what is working well and what we could do to improve them. If you are interested, you can [sign up to take part in user research](#).

Worcestershire Attendance Helpline and Resources

Our attendance helpline is now open every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday between 9am - 12.30pm and 1pm - 4.30pm to assist with any school attendance related enquiries. You can call the attendance helpline on 01905 844 440.

Our [inclusion website](#) is regularly updated to provide attendance information and resources for parents/carers, schools and professionals.

Latest SEND news and updates

Herefordshire & Worcestershire SENDIASS

[HW SENDIASS](#) is the Special Educational Needs/Disabilities (SEND) Information, Advice and Support Service covering Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

HW SENDIASS have a dedicated team of trained advisors offering legally based and accessible information, advice and support on all matters relating to children and young people (**0-25**) who have or may have SEND. The service is **FREE, impartial, and confidential**.

If you identify children in your setting with SEND, you can signpost them and their families to SENDIASS for free information and support. A poster is attached for use in your newsletters.

SENDIASS can also provide general information, advice and support to professionals working with families of children/young people with SEND. You can contact them using the details below.

SEND Training

HW SENDIASS also provide **FREE SEND Training Workshops and Webinars** for parent carers and professionals. They have released **new dates for the Spring Term**.

Workshops currently available for **Parent Carers**:

- [Autism and Me \(developed by autistic young people\)- HW SENDIASS](#)
- [What does a good Education Health & Care Plan \(EHCP\) look like? – HW SENDIASS](#)
- [How to check a draft Education Health and Care Plan \(EHCP\)-HW SENDIASS ONLINE WORKSHOP](#)
- [What you need to know if your child has an additional need/ disability- HW SENDIASS ONLINE WORKSHOP](#)
- [Who are SENDIASS and how can they support me? - HW SENDIASS Online Information Session](#)

Workshops currently available for **Professionals**:

- [Autism & Me \(Developed by Autistic Young People\) Workshop for Professionals- HW SENDIASS](#)
- [Herefordshire and Worcestershire SENDIASS Online Information Session for Professionals](#)
- [Special Educational Needs \(SEN\) Support and The Graduated Response in Schools Workshop for Professionals- HW SENDIASS](#)
- [What Does a Good Education Health and Care Plan \(EHCP\) look like? Workshop for Professionals- HW SENDIASS](#)

All sessions are interactive, enabling participants to ask questions.

SENDIASS would appreciate your help in informing the families that you support about these opportunities. [Download flyers for use in your parent/carers communications.](#)

If you have any questions about the workshops or would like to host a FREE session at your setting, please complete the [SENDIASS Training Request Form](#) or contact SENDIASSTraining@worcestershire.gov.uk for more information.

Contact SENDIASS

Call: 01905 768153 Monday-Friday 8.30am-4pm (24hr answerphone service)

Email: sendiass@worcestershire.gov.uk

For regular Special Educational Needs/Disabilities (SEND) updates, sign up to the SENDIASS mailing list by clicking the sign-up link on their [SENDIASS Contact page](#).

Follow them on social media: [Facebook-HWSENDIASS](#)

HW SENDIASS also have lots of useful information on their website at: www.hwsendiass.co.uk

Latest health and wellbeing news and updates

Update on cases of norovirus and flu

The Public Health Team at Worcestershire County Council are asking schools to be vigilant around norovirus and flu following a rise in cases over the winter period. It only takes small measures to reduce the spread of infections. By following advice on good hygiene habits, knowing when to keep children off school and taking up the opportunity to get vaccinated for flu when offered, schools and parents can protect children and the wider school community.

Norovirus

Norovirus causes [diarrhoea](#) and [vomiting](#) and is one of the most common stomach bugs in the UK. It's also called the 'winter vomiting bug' because it's more common in winter, but you can catch it at any time of the year. Norovirus can be very unpleasant but usually clears up by itself in a few days. Individuals who show symptoms whilst at school should wait in a location, away from communal/busy areas where they can be observed until a parent or approved emergency contact can collect them. Ideally, there should have a dedicated bathroom used only by those who are symptomatic. The isolation area including bathroom should be thoroughly cleaned after use (see link to cleaning guidance [here](#)).

It is important to ensure that children and staff do not return to school until they have been completely clear of symptoms for 48 hours.

Norovirus can spread very easily, especially in close contact settings such as schools and nurseries where outbreaks can occur. While children are encouraged to stay in education or childcare with symptoms such as a runny nose, sore throat, or slight cough (if otherwise well and do not have a high temperature), children should stay home from school or nursery if they're displaying the following symptoms:

- a fever and unwell, children and Staff should stay home from school or nursery until the fever has passed and they are well enough to attend.
- diarrhoea and/or vomiting. Children and Staff should stay off school or nursery for at least 48 hours after their symptoms have cleared up – this will help stop the spread of norovirus.

Good hand hygiene is important to stop norovirus spreading. To avoid catching norovirus or passing it on to others, children should wash their hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and warm water and dry them thoroughly. Hand gels do not kill norovirus.

Norovirus is easily transmitted through contact with people with the infection and any surfaces or objects which have been contaminated with the virus. In the event of an outbreak of infection at your setting, your UKHSA health protection team (HPT) may recommend enhanced or more frequent cleaning, to help reduce transmission. Read guidance on [managing outbreaks and incidents](#).

Advice may also be given to increase cleaning of areas with particular attention to hand touch surfaces that can be easily contaminated such as door handles, toilet flushes, taps and communal touch areas.

Influenza (Flu)

Flu is a viral infection affecting the nose, throat, and lungs, mostly during the winter months. It is far worse than an ordinary cold, which usually causes a runny nose, sneezing, watery eyes and throat irritation. Symptoms of a cold usually occur gradually without causing a fever or body aches, which usually occur with flu.

Flu can lead to serious illness, especially in children, with more than 8,000 hospitalisations last winter. Older people, those with a weakened immune system, and people with long-term health conditions are at higher risk. Over the past 2 winters, at least 18,000 deaths were associated with flu.

Children and staff with symptoms of flu such as a high temperature, cough and feeling tired and achy, should try to limit their contact with others, especially those who are vulnerable. Washing hands regularly and using and disposing of tissues in bins can help to reduce the spread of flu.

Further information, resources, and guidance:

- Public Health recently developed local information pack and advice about winter infections in children which you should have received by email. The pack includes general advice as well as links to further guidance about winter infections in children. The pack contains information such as:
 - Common winter illnesses
 - How infections are spread
 - What measures schools can take to stop the spread of winter infections
 - How long staff and children should remain at school, if required, for different infectious diseases
 - Vaccinations to prevent infectious diseases
 - Worcestershire school immunisation service – Vaccination UK
 - How and who to report infectious diseases to
- The UKHSA blog '[What winter bug do I have? Know the signs and symptoms](#)' provides an explainer of important information about common winter infections, their signs and symptoms, and information on who is eligible for vaccination.
- The UKHSA blog '[Norovirus](#)' contains useful information for parents and schools on signs, symptoms, and preventing the spread of Norovirus.
- The UKHSA blog, '[5 things to do to help manage winter illness](#)', sets out some of the simple actions that parents of school age children can take to help protect their families and those around them.
- The [Health protection in children and young people settings, including education](#) -- A practical guide produced by UKHSA for staff on managing cases of infectious diseases in education and childcare settings also provides useful information including:
 - What infections are, how they are transmitted and those at higher risk of infection
 - Preventing and controlling infections
 - Supporting immunisation programmes
 - Managing outbreaks and incidents
 - Managing specific infectious diseases: A to Z
 - Specific educational settings and populations: additional health protection considerations
 - Children and young people settings: tools and resources

- The [Children and young people settings: tools and resources](#) indicates the time period an individual should not attend a setting to reduce the risk of transmission during the infectious stage.
- The [e-bug](#) resources includes information/ games/ lesson plans to teach children about infections.
- [‘Clean Hands Safe Hands’](#) resources and toolkits. The toolkits include ideas, activities, and messages to encourage children to regularly wash their hands as part of their everyday routine.

The key message is washing your hands with soap and water is still the best way to make sure your hands are germ-free as hand sanitisers are not effective against some germs like the winter sickness bug, Norovirus.

Pharmacy First Service

FAO: Headteachers, Staff members, Comms Teams

Action: Please share widely with your parents, families and staff via your websites, newsletters, social media and parent messaging services. Promotional materials are available to download.

Parents can now access healthcare advice from local pharmacies as a walk in service and in some cases via a video consultation. This avoids the delay of waiting for a GP appointment and could reduce absence from school. In person consultations are available in private rooms.

The service can be used for:

- Earache (from 12 months to 17 years old)
- Impetigo (from 12 months old)
- Infected insect bites (from 12 months old)
- Sore throats (from aged 5 years)
- Sinusitis (from aged 12 years)
- Urinary Tract Infections (UTIs) for women aged from 16 to 64 years
- Shingles (from aged 18 years)

The pharmacist can provide advice and if necessary NHS medicine (meeting normal prescription charges).

There is a suite of resources for you to promote this service to your families and staff available here: [NHS Herefordshire and Worcestershire Community Pharmacy – Pharmacy First Resources](#)

In addition, please download the letter to Headteachers from the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and letters for sending to your parents available on [Google Drive](#).

Support available in Worcestershire while waiting for your appointment

A new website has been created to support children and young people, as well as their families, who find themselves experiencing long waits for appointments with health services in Worcestershire. These include appointments for Community Paediatrics, Umbrella Pathway, Occupational Therapy, Physiotherapy and CAMHS.

The website, created by Herefordshire and Worcestershire Integrate Care System (ICB), contains details of resources and support available locally and nationally. This includes links to web resources, telephone advice and some in-person groups.

Worcestershire's Children's Community Health services are continuing to experience a high volume of referrals and unfortunately that means children and young people are waiting longer than usual for their first appointment. This can be worrying and frustrating and the ICB are working as a system to improve waiting times for children, young people and their families.

We would encourage anyone working with families who are waiting appointments for these services to make them aware of the website and the support available while they wait: [Support for children and young people while waiting for health appointments](#).

Emotional health and wellbeing for parents

[Inourplace](#) is an online learning environment developed by psychologists and health practitioners providing accessible learning about emotional health and wellbeing, proven to positively impact mental health, behaviour and relationships. As part of our sponsorship of inourplace, all the courses and content are free to local parents.

The latest [update on wellbeing for school parents \(January 2025\)](#) is now available to share.

These updates will be available twice per term and if there is anything additional, you'd like to see or if you're interested in teacher training or resources, please email solihull.approach@uhb.nhs.uk

A PDF version of January 2025 update is also available to download from [SharePoint](#) and we welcome your support to raise awareness with parents and carers.

Feel Good in the Forest Activity Bags

FAO: First, Primary & Middle school PSHE Leads, Pastoral Leads, Class teachers, Comms Leads

Action: For sharing with parents including before holidays.

Forestry England has launched a NEW Feel Good in the Forest activity bag aimed at children aged 4-13 years and their adults. The activity bag can be used to help children and their parents/carers to explore the forest, have fun and feel good! The bag contains all the equipment and instructions needed for a fun and stress-free visit to the forest. Families can hire a [Feel good in the forest activity bag](#) for £5 at their nearest participating Forestry England Forest.

Forests closest to Worcestershire are:

- [Feel good activity bag at Cannock Chase Forest | Forestry England](#)
- [Feel good activity bag at Hicks Lodge | Forestry England](#)
- [Feel good activity bag at Sence Valley | Forestry England](#)

For pastoral leads: There is also a voucher system available for children/family support organisations and schools to offer to families needing extra support to hire a bag for FREE.

To download posters/leaflets and vouchers please visit our [Google Drive](#).

For more information, visit www.forestryengland.uk/feel-good-activity-bag or email active.forests@forestryengland.uk

Latest news from Government

AI teacher tools set to break down barriers to opportunity

On Monday 13 January 2025, the Prime Minister set out his plan to harness the potential of AI to usher in a decade of national renewal – using AI to drive growth and revolutionise our public services.

£1 million has been set aside for 16 developers to create AI tools to help with marking and generating detailed, tailored feedback for individual students in a fraction of the time, so teachers can focus on delivering brilliant lessons.

Evidence shows that high quality feedback drives pupil performance, but marking is a huge drain on teacher time. Each of the tools will be targeted at a specific age and subject, helping teachers with everything from marking handwritten English and modern language work to providing feedback on maps and diagrams drawn by geography students.

[Read press release on AI teacher tools in full](#)

Children’s Bill to keep children safe from exploitation

On 8 January 2025, major reforms to protect thousands of vulnerable children hidden from sight took another crucial step forward as the Children’s Wellbeing and Schools Bill was debated in Parliament.

Children not in school registers, stronger powers for councils to make sure children are getting the right education, and a unique identifying number for every child are part of major reforms to help tackle the tragedy of children vanishing from education and protect young people from exploitation, grooming and abuse.

[Read information on the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill](#)

Latest training news and conferences

Early Years Trauma and Attachment Training Offer 2025: KCA & WVS

Worcestershire Virtual School are extremely excited to be launching our 2025 **Early Years Training offer**. This offer is **fully funded** and available to all Early year's practitioners, including nursery settings, childminders, and reception year teaching staff

We are continuing our partnership with KCA (Knowledge, Change, Action) **KCA** is an expert provider of training and consultancy to organisations working with vulnerable children and young people.

The training will enable practitioners to:

- Discover your role in supporting healthy brain development
- Understand how you can support trauma recovery
- Use emotion coaching to promote resilience in your setting

For more details on training available and how to book, please download the [Early Years Training flyer](#).

For staff **new to the knowledge base** there are 2 online core models to attend:

- Core module: Five to Thrive and the Importance of Connected Relationships - 12 Feb 2025 (4pm to 6pm)
- Core module: Understanding Toxic Stress and Trauma and Promoting Recovery during a time of Collective Adversity - 12 Mar 2025 (4pm to 6pm)

For staff **who have attended the above training OR have recently received KCA delivered Attachment Trauma & Resilience training within the past 2 years** then there are 3 further online optional modules available as follows:

- Optional module: **Emotion Coaching and Promoting Resilience** - 9 Apr 2025 (4pm to 6pm)
- Optional module: **Transitions and Vulnerability** - 21 May 2025 (4pm to 6pm)
- Optional module: **Choose your words with Care: Narrative, Shame and Identity** - 25 Jun 2025 (4pm to 6pm)

*Note - anyone who signs up to the core modules but then is unable to attend on the day will then subsequently be sent the link to the FTT and UT mop-up sessions. Similarly, anyone who attempts to book on to the core offer once the sessions are full (max 40 people) will be added to a wait list and then also subsequently be sent the link to the FTT and UT mop-up sessions via our system.

We look forward to welcoming our early years settings to these wonderful training opportunities.

To take part in this fully funded professional development opportunity please register by following this link: <https://connected.kca.training/register.cfm?form=WorcsVSSprSum25>

Trauma Informed and Attachment Aware Settings (TIAAS)

Worcestershire Virtual School is dedicated to ensuring that all education settings within Worcestershire are Trauma Informed and Attachment Aware Settings (TIAAS). TIAAS improves academic outcomes, attendance, and wellbeing.

We recognise that the TIAAS path takes time, is rightly tailored to each setting and that different settings are at different stages in their journey. In recognition of this, Worcestershire Virtual School have expanded our TIAAS training menu to offer something suitable for everyone.

This menu consists not only of TIAAS training but also support with implementation and support for accreditation through the Attachment Research Community. You will also be supported as part of a growing TIAAS network in Worcestershire and beyond.

Introduction to the TIAAS Pathway: If you are interested in understanding more about the TiAAS (Trauma Informed Attachment Aware settings) within Worcestershire, then watch our [Introduction to TIAAS Pathway available on Worcestershire Children First \(youtube.com\)](#)

TiAAS Network Meeting: An opportunity to come together, share what's working well and co-construct the Worcestershire TIAAS (Trauma Informed Attachment Aware settings) Pathway. Cost: Free *and a maximum of two delegates per school / setting*

- 04 March 2025, 3.45pm to 5.15pm, virtual delivery, course code: 10444 / 90366

Level 1 TiAAS training

- [How do we engage families through trauma informed practices? *NEW \(opens CPD\)](#)
- [Language Matters and Words have power - from a trauma perspective \(loads CPD\)](#)
- [Adverse Childhood Experiences: Early Trauma Online Learning \(opens in new window\)](#)
- [Emotion Coaching and Pace: webcast \(opens CPD\)](#)
- [The Neuroscience that underpins Adverse Childhood Experiences \(ACE's\): webcast \(opens CPD\)](#)

Level 2 training

- [Whole School Implementation of Trauma and Mental Health Informed Schools & Communities \(opens CPD\)](#)

Managing School Attendance - Supporting Senior Leaders and Attendance Leads

This course is designed to support attendance leaders to embed the requirements of the DfE 'Working together to Improve School Attendance' practices and drive the requirement of attendance becoming everyone's business as part of school culture.

The course will be delivered as two virtual sessions, via teams and will:

- Consider DfE guidance expectations and the requirements upon attendance managers.
- Explore how Ofsted consider attendance.
- Explore how data can be strategically used to assist attendance management.
- Explore self-assessment and measuring Impact.
- Provide good practice examples.
- Consider DfE guidance expectations within the Worcestershire context.

Audience: School based Attendance Leads/Senior leaders with attendance responsibility

Cost: £60 + VAT per delegate

28 January and 4 February 2025, 10am to 11.30am, virtual delivery, course code: SCH 10434 / 90611

New to Attendance/Attendance Refresher - for School Attendance Officers/staff

This course is designed to support attendance officers new to the role, or experienced officers seeking a refresher to ensure good practice and compliance with the updated DfE 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' expectations.

The course will be delivered as 2 virtual sessions, via teams and will:

- Outline current guidance, responsibilities, and legislation relative to school attendance.
- Enable delegates to understand the role and responsibilities of an attendance officer.
- Explore the importance of accurate pupil register coding and record keeping.
- Support officers to be able to identify and action attendance patterns of concern.
- Explore good practice models of addressing persistent and severe absence.
- Enable delegates to explore the important links between attendance and safeguarding.

Audience: School attendance officers/school-based attendance staff

Cost: £60 + VAT per delegate

30 January and 6 February 2025, 10am to 11.30am, virtual delivery, course code: SCH 10435 / 90612

Annual reviews and preparing for adulthood

SENCOs from all settings will understand how to start planning for adulthood from the earliest years for those CYP with EHC Plans, and how to use person-centred approaches for their Annual Reviews. The co-constructed toolkit for annual reviews, which includes a focus on how to support Year 9 reviews onwards, will be shared and explored. There will be time for networking and sharing of good practice to enable settings to start planning person centred annual reviews for their children and young people with EHC Plans. The session will be interactive, and refreshments will be provided

Cost: Free – funded via the DBV grant

- 27 February 2025, 9.30am to 12.30pm, Worcester, course code: 10526 / 90738
- 24 March 2025, 9.30am to 12.30pm, Worcester, course code: 10526 / 90739

Conference Programme 2025

We've got an exciting programme of conferences coming up for the remainder of this academic year including:

- Leaders of Learning - 28th January
- Worcestershire Autism Mentor Conference - 30th January
- Headteacher Briefing - 11th February
- School Finance Team Conference - 6th March
- RE Syllabus Launch - 9th April
- Inclusion Conference - June (date to be confirmed)
- Headteacher Briefing – 25th June

Book your place on the above training or 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

Learn Through Play 10GLH

This 5-week course is based on the 8 principles of playwork, and would benefit current childcare staff in education, private, voluntary and independent settings working with children within Early Years through to Key Stage 2. During this course you will have the opportunity to:

- Explore what is unique about playwork.
- Understand how to facilitate positive development through play.
- Ensure that high quality play opportunities are given to children.
- Establish the professional and ethical frameworks for playwork including risk assessments and safeguarding.
- Understand how to adapt play to ensure inclusivity.
- Become an advocate for children's self-directed play.

This course is free to attend.

The Learn Through Play course is comprised of weekly 2-hour sessions online via Microsoft Teams. We currently have places available on either:

- Course 1 - Wednesday 5th March – Wednesday 2nd April 1-3pm
- Course 2 - Wednesday 5th March – Wednesday 2nd April 7-9pm

If you are interested in attending one of these courses or would like some further information, please contact the Learning Services Team directly by Friday 7th February via email to:

adultlearning@worcestershire.gov.uk with:

- Your full name
- Your education, private, voluntary or independent setting
- Your contact phone number
- The course you wish to book on

Latest news from School Teaching Hubs

Tudor Grange Teaching School Hub

Appropriate Body

Assessments and Progress Reviews

Thank you to everyone who has submitted any progress reviews and assessments. If you have any outstanding, please submit them as soon as possible.

Induction Tutor Training Sessions

Are you new to the role of Induction Tutor? If so, please attend one of the following training sessions:

- Monday 20 January 15:30-16:30
- Tuesday 21 January 14:00-15:00
- Thursday 8 May 15:30-16:30
- Monday 12 May 14:00-15:00

Sign up via our [Eventbrite](#) page.

NPQs

The Spring 2025 Cohort will be the last cohort of NPQs **until April 2026**. Applications will close on **30 March 2025** so apply now to secure your place. For more information please download the [NPQs Spring 2025 flyer](#).

Haybridge Teaching School Hub

As the DfE designated Teaching School Hub for Sandwell and Dudley, Haybridge Teaching School Hub aims to be the focal point of an outstanding educational community and the single point of contact for support, for all schools in the area and surrounding regions.

They have a number of programmes on offer this term, please find further details below. For more information you can visit their website at: www.haybridgeteachingschoolhub.co.uk

NPQ Programmes 2025

Haybridge Teaching School Hub will be facilitating the following NPQ programmes from April 2025:

- NPQ for Headship
- NPQ for Senior Leadership
- NPQ for Leading Behaviour
- Culture and NPQ for SENCOs.

Registrations for these programmes opened on Monday 13th January 2025. To find out more, please visit the website: www.haybridgeteachingschoolhub.co.uk or for those interested in completing one of the above programmes, please complete their [NPQ April 2025 nomination form](#).

CPD Programmes 2025

The Haybridge Teaching School Hub works with a number of specialist provisions to bring a wide range of CPD sessions to our colleagues. All of the sessions below are free to attend.

SEND online events: 4pm - 5pm

Tuesday 21st January – Exploring Challenging Behaviour

Thursday 30th January – Supporting Students with Dyslexia

Wednesday 5th February – Approaches to De-Escalation

Tuesday 11th February – Understanding Masking Behaviours

Monday 3rd March – Exploring the SENCo Role in Different Settings

Tuesday 18th March – Exploring ADHD

Wednesday 2nd April – Adaptive Practise in the Mainstream Classroom

SEND other events

Thursday 27th February – Exploring an Alternative Provision, Experience Day at Rosewood School

Thursday 27th February – Managing Transition, 4.00pm-5.00pm, Online Workshop

Tuesday 18th March – Exploring an Alternative Provision, Experience Day at Rosewood School

Thursday 20th March – Successes of a Relational Policy, 4.00pm -5.30pm at Crocketts School

TBC – Supporting international new arrivals, Online

[View and sign up to their collection of SEND events](#)

Subject Network Events – Secondary Maths Network

The Secondary Maths Subject Network community events this year will all be based around the theme of Problem Solving and gives maths leads the chance to come together to explore and exchange new ideas.

Thursday 23rd January, 3.30-5pm – Problem Solving with guest speaker

Online Teams event with a guest speaker from Education Endowment Foundation (EEF).

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/1023731958847?aff=oddtcreator>

Wednesday 12th March, 3.30-5pm – Problem Solving with guest speaker

Online Teams event with a guest speaker from the Exam Board.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/1023781045667?aff=oddtcreator>

Inclusive Attendance – Follow-up session with Wayne Harris

Since September 2023, Wayne Harris has spearheaded a ground-breaking Professional Development programme designed to empower schools to foster a culture of shared responsibility for attendance. The Inclusive Attendance programme is the only accredited attendance initiative in the United Kingdom, with over 800 schools and thousands of staff benefiting from its innovative approach.

Wednesday 26th February – Half-day follow-up session

Following the success of Wayne's previous conference at Haybridge Teaching School Hub, they have asked Wayne to present a follow-up session to give participants the chance to update their knowledge, find out what's working for other schools and discuss new ideas.

This half-day event is FREE to attend and open to all staff who support with leading whole school attendance, alongside SLTs in both Primary and Secondary schools who have previously been to one of Wayne's Inclusive Attendance full-day events.

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/1028784541257?aff=oddtcreator>

Rivers Teaching Alliance

ECT updates

Please do get in touch if you have any new ECTs this term and would like to register them to work with Rivers and the National Institute of Teaching for their ECT programme. They specialise in primary ECTs and would be happy to have a chat about what they can offer.

NPQ updates

NPQ applications for April 2025 cohort are now open and DfE registration will open later this term. There are limited scholarship places for some of the NPQs - please do get in touch to discuss.

Specialist NPQs

- NPQ Leading Primary Maths- [NPQ in Leading Primary Maths – The National Institute of Teaching \(niot.org.uk\)](#)
- NPQ Leading Literacy- [NPQ in Leading Literacy – The National Institute of Teaching \(niot.org.uk\)](#)
- NPQ Leading Teaching- [NPQ in Leading Teaching | NPQLT – The National Institute of Teaching](#)
- NPQ Leading Teacher Development- [NPQ in Leading Teacher Development | NPQLTD – The National Institute of Teaching](#)
- NPQ Leading Behaviour and Culture- [NPQ in Leading Behaviour and Culture | NPQLBC – The National Institute of Teaching](#)

Leadership NPQs

- NPQ for SENCOs [NPQ For SENCOs | Train With The National Institute Of Teaching – The National Institute of Teaching](#)
- NPQ for Early Years Leadership- [NPQ in Early Years Leadership | NPQEYL – The National Institute of Teaching](#)
- NPQ for Senior Leadership- [NPQ in Senior Leadership – The National Institute of Teaching \(niot.org.uk\)](#)
- NPQ for Headship- [NPQ in Headship – The National Institute of Teaching \(niot.org.uk\)](#)

Here are a few reasons why they think studying an NPQ with Rivers is an excellent choice:

- They have a strong track record of designing and delivering high quality professional development with a focus on primary specifically
- They have received excellent feedback from our NPQs- 100% of participants feel supported and appreciate the balance between in-person and online parts of the course.
- They are supporting, or have previously supported, more than 100 participants on our NPQs.
- They are excellent communicators and will support teachers throughout their NPQs.
- They are based in schools and understand the day-to-day pressures of school environments
- They have a purpose-built adult learning space with ample parking.
- Our partnership with the NIoT means that the programmes are informed by research and designed in schools.

Teacher Training updates

They are proud to be a Regional Training Hub for the University of Worcester which means trainees are able to access up to date training from current practitioners as well as be placed close to home. They are offering the following 4 full time courses for October 2025 start. Please get in touch to find out more: [Train to Teach | The Rivers CofE Multi Academy Trust](#)

- PGCE Early Years (3-7 years)
- PGCE Later Years (5-11 years)
- PGCE SENDi specialism (5-11 years)
- PGCE PE specialism (5-11 years)

CPD updates

Upcoming CPD includes: [Professional Development Opportunities | The Rivers CofE Multi Academy Trust](#).

- EYFS- The Early Writing Journey- How to model, support, encourage and inspire- Tuesday 4.2.25 3:30-5:30pm
- NATRE- RE subject leaders -Thursday 23.1.25 4-5pm
- Safer Recruitment 18.3.25 £70 per delegate
- First Aid at Work 19.3.25 and 2.4.25 £140 per delegate
- Paediatric First Aid 3.6.25 and 10.6.25 £100 per delegate

Please get in touch via teachingschool@riverscofe.co.uk or ahaynes@riverscofe.co.uk

Other local news and events

Could you be Worcestershire's next Young Poet Laureate?

We are excited to announce, in partnership with Severn Arts, that the Young Poet Laureate competition is back for another year!

The theme for 2025 is **Courage**. Whether it's facing fears, standing up for what you believe in, or embracing your unique voice, we want to hear your powerful words.

The competition is open to young people aged 10-18 and is judged across 3 age categories:

- School years 6-8
- School years 9-11
- School years 12-13

How to apply

To enter the competition, submit one poem on the theme of **Courage**. Individuals can apply directly, or schoolteachers can submit poems created by students during a classroom session.

Submissions will open on **Wednesday 15 January 2025**, and the application deadline is **5pm on Friday 28 March 2025**.

To find out more information and apply, visit <https://www.severnarts.org.uk/ypl25>

The Power of Libraries Conference - for Primary School Educators

Thursday 6 February 2025 at The Hive Library, Worcester, WR1 3PD

****Please note: Revised date****

Worcestershire County Council's Library Service are proud to be hosting their inaugural Power of Libraries conference which will demonstrate the valuable role libraries play in supporting literacy in primary schools. Exploring both public and school libraries, the conference is open to all school staff with an interest in developing a culture of reading for pleasure. It is also an ideal opportunity for school librarians, English leads and leaders looking to invest in their school library and make connections with Worcestershire Libraries.

There are a limited number of places at the Early Bird rate so book your space now:

<https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/power-libraries-conference-2025>

Lunch and refreshments will be provided to all delegates.

For any booking queries please email: librariesHQ@worcestershire.gov.uk

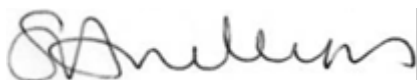
Schools' Gardening Competition - open to all schools in Worcester City

Pershore College is proud to sponsor the Schools' Gardening Competition at this year's The Worcester Show.

Open to all schools in Worcester with a school allotment / garden, entries will be judged by a qualified RHS judge. Schools will also need to produce for exhibition for the Worcester Show including a display and a scrapbook diary of your gardening year covering your activities in cultivation, environmental and educational aspects of the garden.

The deadline for applications is **Wednesday 30th April 2025**.

For more information, please visit [The Worcester Show website](#).



Sarah Wilkins

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

