

Sarah Wilkins

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

Email: swilkins@worcestershire.gov.uk

Tel: 01905 846082

Our Ref: CV194

Date: 4th February 2025

Education Bulletin

Dear Colleagues,

I hope that your week has started well.

On Monday 3rd February, the Secretary of State for Education, Bridget Phillipson sets out [plans for a new era of school standards](#) building on the reforms of successive governments and delivering on the Prime Minister's [Plan for Change](#) - breaking the link between background and success. This includes an excellent teacher for every classroom, a high-quality curriculum for every school and a core offer of excellence for every parent so that every child can achieve and thrive. New plans were also announced to tackle forgotten schools as part of [proposals for a significantly strengthened school accountability system](#) that works for parents.

The Education Secretary will be holding a live event on Tuesday 4th February at 4:15pm to discuss the government's vision for high and rising standards in our schools and answer your questions. [Reserve a spot for the live event via Eventbrite](#).

National Apprenticeship Week 2025 (NAW) takes place from Monday 10th February 2025 to Sunday 16th February 2025. NAW is a week-long celebration that brings together employers and apprentices across the country to shine a light on the positive impact that apprenticeships make to individuals, businesses and the wider economy. The Department for Education have developed a suite of free [toolkits and resources](#) for you to use to get involved.

The Department for Education is reminding schools to register their defibrillators. Defibrillators were rolled out to state-funded schools throughout 2022-2023. With over eight million pupils and staff in schools nationwide, and one-third of cardiac arrests occurring within 300 metres of a school, defibrillators in schools could save many lives. If you haven't done so already, please support your local community and spend [five minutes registering your defibrillator](#), to help ensure emergency services can locate it quickly.

And finally, our colleagues in Public Health have made funding available for schools and colleges in Worcestershire to get the trauma kits, so that in the event of an emergency or terrorist incident (in line with the new proposed Protect legislation) action can be taken quickly! Find out how to get a free trauma kit for your setting on page 11.

Wishing you all the best

Contents

Latest education news and updates	3
Edenred Portal access will be available for February half term.....	3
Invoice Update for Academies only	5
Health & safety webinar for schools	5
Have you considered a School Business Professional (SBP) Mentor	6
DfE Early Years Qualification Announcement	7
Latest news from schools and trusts	8
Academy Trust announced for new Foxlydiat First School.....	8
Latest SEND news and updates	9
‘Deep dive’ feedback – update about our SEND improvement journey	9
New Independent Chair of the SEND and Alternative Provision Executive Board	9
Free autism and ADHD workshops for parent carers	10
Latest health and wellbeing news and updates	11
Free trauma kits for educational settings	11
Healthy eating: Cooking	12
Public Health grants boost young people’s wellbeing	12
KOOTH	13
Swimming teacher training	13
Lumi Nova - Free Workshop: 'Talking about Worries'	14
Stop smoking service for parents/carers living with a child under 19 (Smokefree Homes).....	15
Latest training news and conferences	16
Raising Attainment in Writing Webinars.....	16
Latest news from School Teaching Hubs.....	17
Prince Henry’s Teaching School Hub.....	17
Rivers Teaching Alliance	19
Tudor Grange Teaching School Hub.....	20
Other local news and events.....	21
SATCoL creates school recycling scheme for textiles.....	21
Social Value Fund Success	22
How To Love Your Job - new four-part early years series with Channel 4	23
Kings Birthday 2026 honours round - now open	23

Latest education news and updates

Edenred Portal access will be available for February half term

During the February half term, eligible students will receive free school meals through the voucher system provided by Edenred. Edenred is the council's contracted provider to issue free school meal vouchers for the school holidays, and no other platforms are authorised to issue them.

All vouchers issued during this period will have a validity period of one month from the date of delivery. Please advise parents/carers to redeem vouchers as soon as possible, 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](#).

Schools are instructed to issue vouchers only for the corresponding holiday period.

Schools will have access to the Edenred portal from **Monday 3rd February 2025** until **Friday 28th February 2025**. This will allow a window for placing orders for the holiday.

Vouchers cannot exceed **£15** per eligible FSM pupil for the whole period (£15 per week, schools will be invoiced if this amount is exceeded).

Vouchers are not available for nursery age children or 6th form students (vouchers to be issued to years reception to year 11, providing the child is aged 4 and above after 31st Aug 24), and vouchers must not be ordered to replace term time meals.

You must use the WCC ordering site with your existing **WCC account (22463)**, the login page can be accessed here: [Edenred Online Ordering](#).

Please ensure you have the correct recipient email address and that parent/carers are notified they will be in receipt of a voucher to ensure they are expecting it and do not leave vouchers to expire.

The council is seeing an increasing number of requests to reissue for vouchers that haven't been redeemed over a number of months after the original issue date. There has also been an increase in the number of fraudulent attempts to get vouchers reissued which is unfortunately why a more robust process needs to be followed.

School accounts to place February half term holiday orders will close on **Friday 28th February 2025** and the council will allow up until **Friday 7th March 2025** for any outstanding expired voucher queries to be resolved. Therefore, those requests received after this date will not be reissued. Exceptions to this **may** be considered if there are any extenuating family circumstances during the original voucher redemption window that may be taken into account for the delay in reporting any issues with vouchers, which the school will be asked to verify.

If a voucher has expired, the voucher cannot be re-issued by the school, for any queries regarding the re-issuing of vouchers please contact FSMHolidayVouchers@worcestershire.gov.uk

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.

It is important to remind schools that as eligibility is linked to FSM status, there may be families who although have FSM status, their circumstances have changed. This is a finite pot of government funding and with the government protection on FSM status, regardless of circumstance change, there are families that may no longer require the vouchers. Please ensure that vouchers are issued to those children and families who require the support and who are receiving FSM.

Below are lots of helpful links and guides to answer common questions and issues:

- Forgotten password – please reset your password using [password reset](#)
- Forgotten email address – contact FSMHolidayVouchers@worcestershire.gov.uk and we will advise of the email address your account is set up with.
- Edenred [user guide](#) – including supermarket details and how to order.
- Parent/carer FAQ's can be found here: [Parent Carer FAQs](#)
- Order “pending” – you will need to agree to the terms and conditions and confirm your order for it to be processed.
- Order “held” – we will ensure any held orders are released.
- “Ordering window is closed” – please check you are logged into the correct portal. The DfE portal is closed, but the WCC portal is open.
- Redeem eCodes – Visit the Edenred [redeem eCodes webpage](#). Please note, we are unable to control which supermarkets you can redeem vouchers at.
- eGift card queries – have not received ordered egift card. Please advise parent/carer to seek assistance in parent/carer guide [Parent Carer FAQs](#) on page 6.

The [user guide](#) will answer many of your common questions and should be your first point of call for any queries. If after reading the user guide and links, you still need assistance then please contact FSMHolidayVouchers@worcestershire.gov.uk where we will be happy to help you. Please be aware however that you will not receive an instant response as this inbox is one of many that are manned by our team. The fastest way therefore to resolve your issues will always be to read the guides and links in the majority of cases.

[Holiday Activities and Food \(HAF\) Programme](#) at the County Council is available to signpost families to other local sources of support.

For support around the cost of living please signpost parents/carers to our [Cost of living support](#) webpage.

Invoice Update for Academies only

Financial Services are now moving to roll out invoices via email as well as using the Schools Finance Portal as is current practise.

Please could you kindly provide an email address which can be used by Worcestershire County Council to send invoices to, this should be a generic rather than personal email address and maybe a central finance office for MAT's or individual schools.

Please respond to WBU@worcestershire.gov.uk with the email you wish your invoices to be directed to. These will then be added to the system.

If you require copy invoices, please contact your **Headteacher** for a copy as they will have access to these via the Schools Finance Portal.

Health & safety webinar for schools

We would like to invite all Heads/SLTs, Site Managers/Caretakers and Health and Safety School Governors to our Health and Safety Webinar on Tuesday 18th March 2025, 10.00am to 12.00pm where the following will be covered:

- Updates and changes to H&S Law
- Slips/trips and falls - We have the UK expert on slip safety attending the webinar
- Lessons learnt from insurance claims
- Utilising psychology to positively influence health and safety that can help to provide the highest standards of education - we have the U.K.'s expert on Behavioural Science and Performance Psychology attending
- Institution of Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) - National IOSH lead for schools, will be doing a presentation on school safety
- SLA and other services the H&S team provide
- Outstanding Practice and areas for improvement

Please register via the following link: [Microsoft Virtual Events Powered by Teams](#)

Have you considered a School Business Professional (SBP) Mentor

The SBP Mentoring programme details are as follows:

A SBP mentor is an accredited SRMA who is able to take on mentoring deployments for three months (the timeframe can be extended). The time allotted will be dependent on the mentee schedule.

Deployments are specifically aimed at raising the professional capability of an individual school business professional (SBP). Any SBP who has the sole or senior responsibility for finance within the school is potentially eligible for mentoring. The offer is primarily available to professionals/mentees who would benefit most, such as those that are new to the profession or recently promoted and/or those working with schools facing:

- Financial compliance concerns;
- An actual or projected deficit without a clear plan to recover;
- Significant growth plans; or
- A previous history of poor-quality budgeting.

The SBP mentor will work solely with the mentee for three months.

The time allotted could be equivalent to one hour a week and the mentee may wish to meet for an hour a week, two hours a fortnight or half a day per month depending on their schedule.

The School Business Professional mentoring programme is funded by the Department, Local Authorities and maintained schools do not have to pay for this support. The local authority would expect that the mentee to share the knowledge they gain with the rest of leadership within the school/trust to upskill all team members. If you are interested in this please email la.efficiency@education.gov.uk, with your school name, establishment number (885xxxx), and the person you would be looking to receive the mentoring.

DfE Early Years Qualification Announcement

On 28 January, the Department for Education announced a package of early years qualification initiatives that will both support entry and progression within the workforce and ensure that the staff working with young children have the right skills and knowledge to deliver high-quality provision.

To support early years settings to recruit and retain staff and meet this increased demand, from 3 March 2025 eligible educators will be able to access an [experience-based route](#) to working in the Staff:Child ratios at level 3. This new route recognises the significant contribution that skilled and experienced staff can make to the education and care of young children. This is an opportunity for educators without currently approved qualifications, to develop their careers, and for providers to maximise the potential of their talented staff in a way that works best for the children in their care. The full consultation response can be found [here](#).

Alongside this the Department for Education have announced the publication of the [Early Years Teacher Degree Apprenticeship standard](#). This new, graduate-level qualification will give everyone from school leavers and junior staff to senior leaders the opportunity to easily move into a specialist career in the early years sector.

They are also pleased to announce the Check an Early Years Qualification digital service which will be available later this Spring to early years managers. This service will guide managers through the process of checking the approval status of qualifications held by existing staff members and prospective employees, increasing their confidence that they have appropriately qualified staff ahead of the September expansion.

These initiatives will support Secretary of State's vision for a childcare system that supports the sector, creates the best possible experience for parents and gives all children access to the opportunities they deserve.

Latest news from schools and trusts

Academy Trust announced for new Foxlydiate First School

The Department for Education has approved The Rivers CofE Multi Academy Trust to run the new Foxlydiate First School in Redditch.

This new 450-place first school and 52-place nursery is due to open in 2027 and will address the growing need for school places in the area, driven by significant new housing developments.

Worcestershire County Council approved proposals for a new school in November 2023 and invited interest parties to submit a bid to run the new school from April to June 2024. Following a thorough evaluation of proposals, a recommendation was submitted to the Regional Director for the Department for Education, who made the final decision on behalf of the Secretary of State.

Latest SEND news and updates

'Deep dive' feedback – update about our SEND improvement journey

The Department for Education and NHS England held a 'Deep Dive' meeting with the SEND local area partnership in December. This is part of standard process to monitor the progress we've been making on our Priority Action Plan.

The key areas of progress they recognised are:

- Additional support offers have been put in place to effectively manage waiting lists for the Umbrella Pathway. This includes recruiting three nurses for triage and support, to improve patient flow and reduce waiting times.
- 250 young people aged 16 and over have been given the option to transfer from the Umbrella Pathway to private providers for their autism assessment.
- The recruitment of a Co-production Co-ordinator, alongside an Emotional Mental Health role will strengthen the work of co-production across the partnership.
- The Youth Cabinet has demonstrated high levels of engagement, and their manifesto prioritised mental health and SEND. They aim to build a strong relationship with the SEND Co-production Co-ordinator and continue linking with the SEND and AP partnership committee.

Read the full Deep Dive feedback letter, alongside other updates about SEND improvements on the SEND Local Offer website. [What we're doing to improve our local area partnership SEND services | Worcestershire County Council](#)

New Independent Chair of the SEND and Alternative Provision Executive Board

We are delighted to announce the appointment to the role of Independent Chair of the SEND and Alternative Provision Executive Board, Jane Friswell. Jane has worked across England with Local Authorities, Area Partnerships, Multi Academy Trusts, NHSE, Local Health Care Trusts and Social Care bodies. Jane describes herself as a SEND agent of change, delivering tangible and sustainable difference to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families. Jane has an excellent understanding and application of effective, strategy, policy and practice in special educational needs and disabilities and whole school improvement. As a parent of a young man with autism and additional learning needs, Jane provides a blended perspective as a leader for SEND with strong purpose and support for parent carer advocacy. Jane will be in post once the HR processes are complete.

Free autism and ADHD workshops for parent carers

Herefordshire & Worcestershire Integrated Care Board have funded a series of free workshops available to parents and carers delivered by Autism West Midlands and ADHD Foundation Trust. These are running through until April with multiple dates and times available. From Autism West Midlands, these are live online webinars that are between 1.5 to 2 hours long, with access to recordings for up to 2 weeks after the session so you can rewatch it in your own time. Sessions include:

- [Autism & Anxiety](#)
- [Autism & Communication](#)
- [Autism & Sensory difficulties](#)
- [Autism & Behaviour](#)
- [Navigating the System](#)
- [Autism & the Teenage Brain](#)
- [Supporting your Autistic Teen.](#)

From ADHD Foundation Trust, these are a series of live online webinars that are 1 hour and 15 minutes long. There are two workshop series available: Set 1 for parents/carers whose child is waiting for an ADHD assessment, or for those wanting to learn more about ADHD and Set 2 for parents/carers whose child has an ADHD diagnosis and needs support. To find out more and to book the dates/times you want, [download the PDF documents available half-way down this page.](#)

Free course about autism for teens

[Teen Autism Confident](#) is a free online 6-week course about autism for autistic teens aged 13-19. It is delivered by Autism West Midlands and is an opportunity for diagnosed and non-diagnosed autistic teens to learn more about autism in small, supportive group sessions and a one-to-one meeting with an autism advisor. The course will explore topics ranging from understanding autism to self-esteem and self-image. The sessions are every Monday from 9.30am – 11am starting 24th February.

Free training from SENDIASS

The SEND Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) delivers a range of free training workshops for parent carers. These include Autism & Me; What Does a Good EHCP Look Like; How to Check a Draft EHCP; SEND – What You Need to Know; Understanding Dyslexia. Professionals' training workshops are also available including Autism & Me; What Does a Good EHCP Look Like; SEN Support and the Graduated Response. [Find out more on the SENDIASS website.](#)

Latest health and wellbeing news and updates

Free trauma kits for educational settings

A trauma kit is a first aid pack that anyone can use without training. It comes with instructions to help stabilise someone with serious injuries, like heavy bleeding, until professional help arrives. **These kits are important in emergencies and can save lives.**

Worcestershire County Council, Public Health, has made available funding for schools and colleges in Worcestershire to get these trauma kits, so that in the event of an emergency or terrorist incident (in line with the new proposed Protect legislation) action can be taken quickly!

Primary, Secondary, and Further Education institutions can apply online: [Protect - Protection of Premises \(Terrorism\) Bill | Worcestershire County Council](#).

Here's what to do to get a FREE trauma kit in your setting:

- ✓ Find a supplier and identify the price of your chosen trauma kit (keep the cost under £100)
- ✓ Ensure the kit has a location in your setting where it is available during opening hours and is easily accessible
- ✓ Complete the application form letting us know what you wish to purchase: [WCC Trauma Kit Application Form](#)
- ✓ We'll send you the grant money, then you buy the kit!
- ✓ You must share the details with the West Midlands Ambulance Service



An image of a trauma kit placed near a defibrillator at County Hall. The kit is in a red case.

Healthy eating: Cooking

Many partners report that a barrier for families to access healthier food is the need for more skills and knowledge around cooking.

Schools who want to support their families with developing their cooking skills maybe interested in the British Dietetics Association “[Let’s Get Cooking](#)” programme which includes a variety of recipes, cooking techniques, how to include children in cooking and cooking on a budget.

The BDA also deliver training packages for starting a Let’s Get Cooking project and running practical cooking clubs [Training - British Dietetic Association \(BDA\)](#)

Public Health grants boost young people’s wellbeing

Public Health Innovation Grants for schools have made a real difference to the health and wellbeing of young people since the launch of the programme in Summer 2023. Supported by Worcestershire Public Health and the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner, these grants help schools, colleges, and youth groups with projects focused on mental health and crime prevention.

With over 200 awards to date, the grants have funded outdoor play areas, gardening, cycling, first aid training, yoga, and arts participation, engaging young people in positive activities outside the classroom.

Applicants must show how their projects will benefit young people's health and wellbeing and ensure lasting impact. Feedback from staff and parents has been positive, appreciating the support for local ideas and the simple application process. Settings can apply for two wellbeing grants for separate, sustainable wellbeing projects that take place outside of the school curriculum.

For more information and inspiration, visit the [Worcestershire Wellbeing Insights webpage](#) or [Public Health Innovation Grant for Educational Settings](#).



KOOTH

FAO: DSLs, Pastoral Teams, PSHE Leads

Action: Please share details of KOOTH widely with your young people and their families plus on your website, through social media and newsletters/parent communications.

Kooth is free anonymous mental health support available to young people aged 11 - 18 across Worcestershire. This support includes:

- Community support through moderated forums and articles
- Self-help resources and goal setting
- Live chat and message based emotional wellbeing and counselling support
- Signposting and ongoing support if required

This support is anonymous and does not require a referral. To access please just go to: <https://www.kooth.com/>.

If your school would like some hard copy resources, or would like the KOOTH Engagement Team to deliver a presentation to your young people or staff, please email msmith@kooth.com

You can download the electronic KOOTH leaflet, for sharing, from the [Google Drive](#).

Swimming teacher training

FAO: PE Leads, Employment Leads

Action: Please share with young people aged 16+ with an interest in swimming

Swim England are working with [Freedom Leisure](#), to offer a [Worcestershire Swimming Teacher Recruitment Academy](#) which offers trainees **funded qualifications** to become a **qualified Swimming Teacher** and **gain employment** at one of the Freedom Leisure based leisure centres in Worcester and Malvern, upon successful completion of the programme. The programme offers the opportunity to gain the necessary qualifications and first years' membership for a significantly reduced fee of £85, alongside completing a volunteer placement at one of Freedom Leisure centres to gain practical experience on a learn to swim programme.

The programme is open to those 16yrs+, for more information on the programme and how to apply, please follow the [link here](#).

Please note the academy applications will close on 16th February 2025.

Please also download a [poster](#) and [social media handle information](#).

Lumi Nova - Free Workshop: 'Talking about Worries'



Please share with SENCOs, DSLs, Pastoral Leads and Classroom Teachers.

What have you got planned in your school for Children's Mental Health Week?

This year's theme, "Know Yourself, Grow Yourself" is all about how we can build and grow our resilience by understanding ourselves and recognising our emotions.

To support your school in promoting a growth mindset, the Lumi Nova team are sharing their free 'Talking about Worries' workshop, which can be used as part of your wellbeing scheme and supports young people to:

- 🚀 Normalise worries and recognise what they might feel like
- 🚀 Suggest some actions you might do if you are worried
- 🚀 Learn how to break worries down into manageable steps

Instantly download your **FREE** workshop kit [HERE](#)

Lumi Nova: Tales of Courage is a digital therapeutic mobile game supporting children with fears, worries and anxiety. Designed for children aged 7-12 years, Lumi Nova helps children to reflect on their feelings, build resilience, and learn lifelong skills to self-manage their worries in a fun intergalactic adventure.

- **Signpost:** Lumi Nova is instantly accessible to families by signing up at luminova.app/handw
- **Spread the Word:** Check out the [Lumi Nova Resource Kit](#) for resources to support you to share Lumi Nova with other professionals and families
- **Stay connected:** Subscribe to the [Lumi Nova Newsletter](#) and follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) for new resources and updates
- **Learn More:** Join a [Lumi Nova Discovery](#) for professionals to learn more about the offer or watch our [Lumi Nova Introduction Video](#)

If you would like to order posters/leaflets or have any questions, please reach out to the Lumi Nova team at luminova@bfb-labs.com

Stop smoking service for parents/carers living with a child under 19 (Smokefree Homes)

[The Smokefree Homes Stop Smoking Service](#) has expanded and is now offering support to adults living with a child under 19 years of age in Worcestershire. It's open to mums, dads, carers, in fact any adult who lives with a child.

The service is available to help people quit smoking and will support for 12 weeks with:

- Setting a quit date
- Access to Free Nicotine Replacement Therapy (NRT)
- Access to Free Rechargeable vapes
- 1:1 or joint family support sessions with a trained advisor to help you quit and stay on track

[Sign up to the service by emailing: whcnhs.smokefreehomes@nhs.net](mailto:whcnhs.smokefreehomes@nhs.net)

[Download Smokefree Homes digital flyer](#)

[Download Smokefree Homes print flyer](#)

Latest training news and conferences

Raising Attainment in Writing Webinars

A series of 'Power Hour' introductory webinars designed to raise the attainment in writing, offering research led strategies to support children across both KS1 and KS2 classrooms.

A school can choose to send a delegate on a specific webinar from those listed below at an individual per person cost of £28 + VAT or alternatively, the school could consider having the webinar delivered specifically to them on a date / time to suit. Enquires about bespoke delivery please initially contact the training team by emailing workforcesupport@Worcestershire.gov.uk

- **Dictation and Transcription in the Primary Classroom: 04 March, 3.30pm to 4.30pm, virtual delivery, CPD code: 10556**
A range of strategies and approaches will be introduced, based on proven classroom practice and current research. Discussion will be led by subject specialists, equipping you with the necessary knowledge to build upon within your setting.
- **Strategies to support handwriting, 13 March, 3.30pm to 4.30pm, virtual delivery, CPD code: 10557**
A range of strategies and approaches will be introduced, based on proven classroom practice and current research. Discussion will be led by subject specialists, equipping you with the necessary knowledge to build upon within your setting.
- **Editing and Revising Writing: 20 March, 3.30pm to 4.30pm, virtual delivery, CPD code: 10559**
A range of strategies and approaches will be introduced, based on proven classroom practice and current research. Discussion will be led by subject specialists, equipping you with the necessary knowledge to build upon within your setting.
- **Strategies to support spelling: 01 April, 3.30pm to 4.30pm, virtual delivery, CPD code: 10555**
A range of strategies and approaches will be introduced, based on proven classroom practice and current research. Discussion will be led by subject specialists, equipping you with the necessary knowledge to build upon within your setting.
- **Book and Brew for Primary Teachers: 01 May, 3.30pm to 4.30pm, virtual delivery, CPD code: 10558**
As part of a series of 'Power Hour' webinars designed to raise the attainment in English, this informal session offers a chance to explore a range of texts (new and old) to support English in the primary classroom. Discussion will explore what makes a quality text, and subject specialists will share the opportunities texts can generate - be it writing, reading or oracy. We bring the books; you bring the brew!

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

Latest news from School Teaching Hubs

Prince Henry's Teaching School Hub

Initial Teacher Training

Please note that the 20 hours of training for all ITT mentors has now been removed from every provider with immediate effect. However, we will still be offering the tier one training due to positive feedback. Dates for this training are available on the websites of the University of Worcester, Stourport SCITT, Tudor Grange SCITT and Prince Henry's and South Worcestershire ITT.

Applications for the 25-26 cohort have now opened.

An update from Suzanne Lawson (Head of Strategic Partnerships (Secondary) University of Worcester): Will you be looking for a Science, Modern Language or PE ECT in September? Could you grow your own? We are desperately looking for ITT placements in these three subjects for the spring/summer term. If you have any capacity, please contact c.rowlands@worc.ac.uk. Happy to talk about other subjects as well!

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 – 6th March 2025

Clinic 3 – 12th June 2025

Year 2 ECT Events:

Clinic 5 – 20th March 2025

Clinic 6 – 19th June 2025

ECT Mentor Events:

Conference 2 for Year 1 Mentors – June / July 2025

Clinic 1 for Year 1 Mentors – 6th February 2025

AB Update

DfE registrations for the 2024-25 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/> If you have already registered your ECT/s with us, please be sure to complete the Service Level Agreement. If you have not received this via email, please contact cemms@princehenrys.worcs.sch.uk.

NPQ Update

Applications for Spring 2025 NPQ programme are now open. Limited scholarship funded places are available for eligible schools. You can check your school's eligibility using the following link: <https://www.bestpracticenet.co.uk/npq-scholarship-checker>. Full scholarship funding remains available for all school staff undertaking and NPQH, NPQLPM (Primary Maths) or NPQ for SENCO. Please note that limited places are available so early application is recommended.

To find out more please visit their website, or to apply for an NPQ, please use the links provided below:

NPQLT (Leading Teaching)	NPQLL (Leading Literacy)
NPQLBC (Leading Behaviour and Culture)	NPQSL (Senior Leadership)
NPQLTD (Leading Teacher Development)	NPQH (Headship)
NPQ for SENCO	Early Headship Coaching Offer
NPQ EYL (Early Years Leadership)	

****NEW** Leader Apprenticeship (NPQSL, NPQH, NPQEL)**

For those wishing to undertake NPQSL or NPQH and are not eligible for funding, they are pleased to be supporting recruitment to [Leader Apprenticeships](#) with NPQ. These courses are 18 months in length and offer a dual qualification. Schools can access the Apprenticeship Levy funding to cover the cost of the programme.

The initial deadline for applications to Leader Apprenticeship with NPQSL, NPQH or NPQEL is 16th February. If you would like to find out more, Best Practice Network are holding an information webinar on 12th February at 4pm. You can register to attend this webinar [here](#).

If you have any questions about NPQs or you would like more information, please contact Andrea Taylor on art@princehenrys.worcs.sch.uk

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 them 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 at 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 their 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 their 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.
- Their 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](#)

- EYFS - The Wonder of Learning - Inspiring Lifelong Learners - Wednesday 2nd April 2025, 3:30pm - 5:30pm
- EYFS - Let's Explore the Outdoors - Realising the Potential of Outdoor Learning - Monday 10th March 2025, 3:30pm - 5:30pm
- Safer Recruitment 18th March 2025 - £70 per delegate
- First Aid at Work 19th March 2025 and 2nd April 2025 - £140 per delegate
- Paediatric First Aid 3rd June 2025 and 10th June 2025 - £100 per delegate

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

Tudor Grange Teaching School Hub

NPQs

The Spring 2025 Cohort will be the last cohort of NPQs until April 2026. Applications will close on 30th March 2025 so apply now to secure your place.

For more information, please download their [NPQ flyer](#).

Other local news and events

SATCoL creates school recycling scheme for textiles

The Salvation Army Trading Company (SATCoL), the trading arm of The Salvation Army, has launched the “Recycle with Michael” scheme to encourage young people to donate clothing, handbags and shoes. The scheme will be available to schools and youth organisations looking to organise collection drives.

Those who take part will have the option of either splitting the proceeds with the Salvation Army or using their half to plant trees via a collaboration with the National Forest. The scheme is designed to educate the youth on the importance of reducing waste.



In a statement SATCoL said: “Not only will students be actively working to combat climate change by taking part, but also the resale of these goods will help to raise vital funds for charity. The Salvation Army provide specialist support for survivors and potential victims of modern slavery, shelter for those experiencing homelessness and so much more.”

How does the scheme work?

Schools and youth organisations can sign up to the website at www.satcol.org/recycle-with-michael. It up to them how often and how much they donate after organising collections.

Once a donation day has been organised, SATCoL will send collection bags for pupils to fill with their unwanted clothing and shoes and bring back to school.

The organisation will also provide downloadable support materials, including posters, to help promote the scheme. Following the donation day, an authorised collector will be sent to the school to collect the donations. A report will then be sent confirming the donation amount with a certificate to be displayed within the institution.

If schools choose to use their half of the money raised to plant trees, they can choose between native broadleaf species at a National Forest site in either Leicestershire, Derbyshire or Staffordshire. Tree types include Oak, Silver Birch, Wild Cherry, Hornbeam, Lime, Hazel and more.

The woodland sites are accessible to the public and students will be able to visit the new trees.

**RECYCLE WITH
MICHAEL**

Social Value Fund Success

Last year, we launched the Social Value Fund, offering schools up to £1,000 in grants for environmental projects. Funded by nPower Business Solutions, TotalEnergies, and West Mercia Energy (WME), the response was incredible, with nearly 100 applications received!

We're thrilled to announce that several schools in your area were awarded funding for their innovative green projects:

- **Vale of Evesham School:** Energy-efficient LED lighting and eco-awareness campaign.
- **Rivers CofE Academy Trust:** Garden revitalization project led by the "Sustainability Squad."
- **EMMAUS MAC:** Launch of a school gardening club.
- **St John's Bromsgrove:** Sensory garden upgrades for SEND students.
- **Lickey End First School:** School gardening area to promote eco-awareness.
- **Cleeve Prior Primary School:** Wormery and insect-friendly wildlife area.
- **Blessed Edward Oldcorne Catholic College:** Vegetable and flower patch for student well-being.
- **Holy Redeemer Primary:** Solar control film to reduce carbon emissions.
- **Clifton Upon Teme Primary School:** Wildlife garden transformation for sensory learning.

Thanks to WME, £8,500 in grants were awarded, benefiting over 2,000 students across Worcestershire!

Power to Drive STEM Workshops

We're also excited to announce that Holy Redeemer Catholic Primary and St Joseph's Catholic Primary Malvern will receive free "Power to Drive" STEM workshops, introducing students to sustainable energy!

We look forward to seeing the positive impact these initiatives will have in creating a greener future for Worcestershire's young minds!

Stay tuned for this year's Social Value Fund - your chance to get involved!

How To Love Your Job - new four-part early years series with Channel 4

The Do Something Big campaign team is delighted to share the first episode of their new four-part series with Channel 4, hosted by Anna Williamson. #HowToLoveYourJob follows four individuals searching for a more meaningful career, spending a day discovering the joy of working in early years.

In Episode 1, Carla, a former prison officer, visits a forest school nursery and embarks on a journey to rediscover herself and embrace the great outdoors! You can watch the episode in full on [Channel 4's YouTube channel](#).

Kings Birthday 2026 honours round - now open


As the Kings Birthday New Year 2026 honours round approaches, the DfE Early Years Entitlement Team are keen to raise the profile of the Early Years, Families and Childcare sector and nominate colleagues who have made a difference. The honours system recognises people who have:

- Made achievements in public life
- Committed themselves to serving and helping Britain
- And more specifically, through their hard work, are helping to raise standards in our sector

Nominating somebody is much simpler than you imagine, tell them who you think deserves an honour and why, and they will do the rest!

Please complete the [honours nomination form](#) with a few bits of information and return to jane.flaherty@education.gov.uk. Feel free to send back more than one form and please do forward onto other colleagues who you think would be able to suggest deserving people.

The deadline for nominations is COP Monday 17th February 2025.



Sarah Wilkins

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

