

Healthy Schools Team Newsletter – Issue 26



Autumn term 25



Welcome and Introduction

Here we are in the Autumn term of 2025!

Your ECFWS Healthy Schools Team are working together to deliver a termly newsletter to support schools in Essex. This is intended to serve as a practical resource to aid schools on their Healthy Schools journeys. We urge you to share this Newsletter with your whole school community. If you would like to be added to our distribution list, please [contact us](#).

Please share this newsletter with your teams
Thank you

Latest News

The Healthy Schools team continues to support schools in achieving needs-led health and wellbeing outcomes. In recent months, the team has been working with schools to develop grant proposals focused on emotional wellbeing as well as food and nutrition. If you'd like to find out more about the grant funding opportunities, please get in touch with your Healthy Schools Engagement Worker.

Training updates

As part of our staff wellbeing work this term, we will be delivering a workshop for education professionals that will explore the impact of food on mood and overall wellbeing. A flyer with booking details will be shared with all schools shortly, but in the meantime please save the date – Wednesday 4th November 15:45pm-16:45pm.

Health and wellbeing campaigns

This month The British Nutrition Foundation is transforming its usual Healthy Eating Week into a month-long event. Snack-tember will be taking place in September 2025!

The aim of Snack-tember is to help children and young people have healthier, more sustainable snacks. To mark this event, the Healthy Schools team have developed a resource to be used as part of PSHE lessons and school assemblies which includes useful links to a variety of resources. You will find this attached to the same email as this newsletter

Healthy schools grant funding – open for applications!

Essex County Council, in partnership with the Essex Healthy Schools Programme (part of Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Services), is offering grant funding exclusively for Essex schools. Applications are still open for schools who want to develop Food and Nutrition projects.

Both primary and secondary schools are eligible to apply. Funded schools will work with the Essex Healthy Schools team to deliver a project that supports outcomes in one or both focus areas. Examples include: Creating curriculum resources on healthy eating and Enhancing the school food environment.

Schools will also be asked to contribute to the evaluation process by reporting on the impact of their project. On completion, schools will be eligible for a Healthy Schools Project Award and may also be nominated for a Best Practice Award, with recognition at the Essex Healthy Schools Festival and Awards. For more information, please contact your Healthy Schools Engagement Worker.

Healthy Schools updates



Health and Wellbeing Peer Educators Programme for Secondary schools

One of the main benefits of having Health and Wellbeing Peer Educators in your school is that it ensures the school's PSHE/RSHE programme is pupil/needs led. This enhances pupil knowledge, skills and attributes in PSHE/RSHE as well as Health and Wellbeing Peers Educators being approachable role models for pupils. This in turn, promotes pupil voice, a key expectation of the Healthy Schools Programme.

If your school would like to find out more about this free training opportunity, please contact:

healthyschools@barnardos.org.uk

The main aims of the Peer Educators Programme are:

- To address the concerns and questions that young people have around health and wellbeing
- To enhance the learning that takes place in Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) education including Health, Relationships and Sex Education (HRSE) lessons
- To provide young people with training, workshops, resources, information, advice and support
- To provide the young people with details of support services that are available to them both locally and nationally



Essex
Working Well

Healthy Schools Workplace Wellbeing Award

We are delighted to be working in partnership with Essex Wellbeing Service to deliver a staff health and wellbeing award that will provide evidence for the Healthy Schools award. The award evidences and recognises the development of a wellbeing strategy and robust health and wellbeing plan to support staff. We understand that healthy, connected and engaged staff are an essential part of achieving good academic attainment as well as positive Ofsted results.

The programme is free for any school (primary or secondary) in Essex. It's quick and easy to sign up and the programme includes:

- Anonymous staff health and wellbeing survey
- Workplace Health Champion eLearning (optional)
- Weekly Newsletter with links to Guest Speaker sessions, online training, eLearning and curated podcasts and webinars
- Setting up robust health and wellbeing communications and information for staff
- Developing a Wellbeing Strategy and annual plan of events and activities
- Evidencing at least one staff event or activity that demonstrates a positive impact on health and wellbeing

We'll be there every step of the way to support the development of your programme. It typically takes 5-6 months to achieve the Healthy Schools Workplace Wellbeing Award, and you can then access 2 free Mental Health First Aid England training places.

There is also the option to obtain more training at a highly discounted rate.

For more information and to get involved click [here](#)

care·think·do

WE CHANGE LIVES BY TRANSFORMING HEALTH AND CARE



Healthy Schools Plaques for Essex Schools

We are delighted to announce that we will be presenting schools with a Healthy Schools plaque over the coming months, in recognition of the Essex County Council's driven statement that all Essex schools are Healthy.

Through our work supporting schools across Essex in improving health and wellbeing outcomes for children and young people, we are continually impressed by the hard work and dedication of schools in creating health promoting environments and supporting the wellbeing of the whole school community.

Family Hub School aged drop ins

Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Services and Healthy Family Teams are running school aged drop-in sessions, where parents can drop in for advice and support about their school aged child's health and development. These are running out of the Family Hubs and delivery sites across Essex.

For more information about your local school aged drop-in sessions please click the links below and select your local family hub or delivery site to download the timetable:

[Berechurch Family Hub – Essex Child & Family Wellbeing Service \(essexfamilywellbeing.co.uk\)](https://essexfamilywellbeing.co.uk)

[Brambles Family Hub – Essex Child & Family Wellbeing Service \(essexfamilywellbeing.co.uk\)](https://essexfamilywellbeing.co.uk)

[Carousel Family Hub – Essex Child & Family Wellbeing Service \(essexfamilywellbeing.co.uk\)](https://essexfamilywellbeing.co.uk)

[Chelmsford Central Family Hub – Essex Child & Family Wellbeing Service \(essexfamilywellbeing.co.uk\)](https://essexfamilywellbeing.co.uk)

[Larchwood Gardens Family Hub – Essex Child & Family Wellbeing Service \(essexfamilywellbeing.co.uk\)](https://essexfamilywellbeing.co.uk)

[Little Lions Family Hub – Essex Child & Family Wellbeing Service \(essexfamilywellbeing.co.uk\)](https://essexfamilywellbeing.co.uk)

[Maldon Family Hub – Essex Child & Family Wellbeing Service \(essexfamilywellbeing.co.uk\)](https://essexfamilywellbeing.co.uk)

[Northlands Park Family Hub – Essex Child & Family Wellbeing Service \(essexfamilywellbeing.co.uk\)](https://essexfamilywellbeing.co.uk)

[Oak Tree Family Hub – Essex Child & Family Wellbeing Service \(essexfamilywellbeing.co.uk\)](https://essexfamilywellbeing.co.uk)

[Spangles Family Hub – Essex Child & Family Wellbeing Service \(essexfamilywellbeing.co.uk\)](https://essexfamilywellbeing.co.uk)

[Sydney House Family Hub – Essex Child & Family Wellbeing Service \(essexfamilywellbeing.co.uk\)](https://essexfamilywellbeing.co.uk)

[Treehouse Family Hub – Essex Child & Family Wellbeing Service \(essexfamilywellbeing.co.uk\)](https://essexfamilywellbeing.co.uk)

Other updates



Children's Active Lives Survey 2025 – Your School Could Be Selected!

We're excited to share that the Children's Active Lives Survey 2025 is now underway – and your school might be invited to take part! This national survey, run by Sport England, helps us understand how children and young people across the country engage with physical activity, sport, and wellbeing. It's a vital tool for shaping future policies, funding, and support for schools and communities. If your school is selected, we strongly encourage you to take part. It's a simple but powerful way to make a difference for your pupils and for children across England



New resources for supporting SEND learners

A dedicated SEND hub has been created by SWGfL for educators, Designated Safeguarding Leads and Child Protection Leads to help embed inclusive, effective online safety practices across school settings. [SEND \(Special Educational Needs and Disabilities\) | SWGfL](#)



The Internet Watch Foundation (IWF) and the National Crime Agency (NCA) have created guidance for professionals working with children and young people on understanding and responding to artificial intelligence (AI) generated child sexual abuse material. The guide aims to enable practitioners to: stay informed about the ways AI can be misused to create child sexual abuse imagery; understand the law and legal implications of AI-child sexual abuse material; provide an effective response through step-by-step guidance on how to respond to incidents; and provide support for victims. [AI CSAM Guides for Professionals | IWF & NCA](#)

Other updates



Essex County Council

Designated Mental Health Lead Newsletter

The SEMH Team have a half-termly newsletter for Designated Mental Health Leads in your Schools and settings. For access to these click the link below:

[Social, Emotional and Mental Health Portal for Schools, Colleges and Settings - Designated Mental Health Lead Newsletter \(essex.gov.uk\)](#)



Trauma Perceptive Practice

The Essex approach to understanding behaviour and supporting emotional wellbeing.

To find out more about TPP and how you can get involved, please see our information pages: [Social, Emotional and Mental Health Portal for Schools, Colleges and Settings - Social, Emotional and Mental Health Portal for Schools, Colleges and Settings \(essex.gov.uk\)](#) - SEMH Training (essex.gov.uk) or contact us at tpp@essex.gov.uk



Essex County Council



Help and support to quit vaping

The Essex Vaping service is offering support to young people who would like help quitting vaping or nicotine-based products.

Young people between the ages of 13 - 18 and living within Essex can access this support with one of our Vaping Practitioners. Support can be engaged with face to face in the community, virtually or over the phone.

Support includes 4 to 6 sessions looking at:

- Individual quitting plans
- Nicotine awareness
- Vaping knowledge
- Nicotine reduction support
- Wellbeing and diversionary activity support whilst quitting

To access this support, young people can self-refer through the referral form on our website by scanning this QR Code.



For more information parents and professionals can email

[**lauren.watkinson@childrenssociety.org.uk**](mailto:lauren.watkinson@childrenssociety.org.uk)

Alternatively, to speak to a Vaping Practitioner, call the service on **01245 493311**.

Other updates



Essex Sexual Health Service (ESHS) have released their first quarterly newsletter, which contains free resources, training opportunities, and updates around all things relationships and sexual health. To read the newsletter and subscribe to future newsletters please follow this link <https://essexsexualhealthservice.org.uk/blog-news/>

The service has also launched a new video focused on sexual pleasure. This resource is available to support conversations and education on healthy relationships and sexual health, and it can be used where appropriate for the audience's age and developmental stage. The video is now live on the ESHS YouTube channel and can be found here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KsD69ldrTz0>



New webpage and resource for grieving children

Designed in partnership with our Junior Youth Team, our brand-new webpage speaks directly to bereaved children aged 12 and under and gives them the resources to help them find their feet when their world is turned upside down by grief.

Packed with real voices content, activity videos, new Grief Galaxy activity sheets, and ideas to help you support bereaved children when they need you the most.

Please share our new Kids Grief webpage and Grief Galaxy resources to help us reach grieving children who need our support.

[Grief Support for Kids | Winston's Wish](#)



Free Lessons for schools

Oak National Academy has released 80 free lessons to support teaching on online safety and misogyny for pupils aged 5 to 16.

Oak will also develop additional lesson materials, to be available this autumn, to help schools deliver other areas covered by the new RSHE guidance.

[Search for Free Teaching Resources | Page 1 of 2 | Oak National Academy](#)

[Love Your Period Campaign](#)

This campaign shines a light on reusable period products, which aren't always well known, easy to find in shops, or supported with the right education to help people use them confidently. There's plenty of information available on these [webpages](#) to help you guide children and young people in learning about them.

NSPCC **Learning**

NSPCC learning has released a podcast episode, featuring the NSPCC's Childline Team Manager Danielle Harris, and Marie Smith from the National Crime Agency, who discuss financially motivated online sexual extortion of boys. Listen to find out what online financial sexual extortion is, how to support boys and how to report real and AI generated images.

[Here](#)



The Department for Education has released updated statutory RSHE (relationships, sex and health education) guidance, replacing the 2019 version. Schools are required to implement the changes by September 2026 but may do so earlier if prepared.

Key updates include:

- Stronger focus on misogyny, violence against women and girls, and the harmful impact of pornography.
- New content on personal safety, including road, rail, water and public space safety.
- Recognition of safeguarding risks linked to technological developments such as AI deepfakes, toxic online influencers and subcultures.
- Greater emphasis on mental health, including grief, loss and loneliness.
- Acknowledgement of diverse family structures, including single-parent, same-sex, kinship, adoptive and foster families.
- Reinforcement of teacher expertise and professional judgement in curriculum delivery.
- Continued emphasis on clear communication with parents and carers.
- Guidance on managing difficult questions and establishing safe learning environments.
- Inclusion of financial exploitation as a safeguarding issue, supporting the delivery of financial education.
- Endorsement of best practice approaches such as distancing techniques and avoiding shock tactics in classroom delivery.

The PSHE Association have produced some guidance and advice you need on implementing the new statutory guidance — what to do, when to do it, and how.

[We've got your back this year! \[Statutory RSHE 2025 roadmap\]](#)

Free resources



Online misogyny and the manosphere

The PSHE association and a team of researchers from the University of York have developed a free teacher guide that will support teachers and other school staff to manage conversations in schools related to misogyny, gender expectations, and the manosphere. It also provides advice on how schools can support children and young people to address these and related issues through the PSHE education/RSHE curriculum.

Teacher guide: Online misogyny and the manosphere



Online Financial Harms

Free materials and on-demand CPD for teachers – developed by the PSHE Association and the Child Financial Harms Consortium. Protect pupils from a range of harms that pose safeguarding as well as financial risks. New lesson plans start at key stage 2 then build in complexity as students progress to secondary school and post-16/key stage 5. There are also **dedicated materials for pupils with SEND**, and an **accompanying on-demand CPD course** for PSHE leads and teachers, which includes practical steps for embedding learning on financial harms within your PSHE curriculum.

Online financial harms



Communication Matters

From the University of Essex - aimed at year 9-11 students, Communication Matters will help students explore how communication strategies can either increase or decrease the risk of conflict, especially among families. The lessons feature real life video examples of family communication, which will support students to recognise the impact that body language, tone of voice and choice of words can have on the escalation or de-escalation of arguments.

Help students explore how small changes to the ways we communicate can create better outcomes, reducing the likelihood of conflict and promoting emotional wellbeing.

University of Essex: Communication matters

The PSHE Association – Updates

New resources for member schools



Activity ideas for pupils with sensory sensitivities

This pack is designed to support teachers to plan engaging and meaningful PSHE education activities for pupils with SEND, especially those with complex and multiple needs, including sensory sensitivities. The suggested activities engage the senses in a range of different ways and encourage experimentation with the different senses. [Enhancing PSHE for pupils with SEND](#)



Revealing Reality: Under the influence

This new set of KS3-4 lessons, informed by Revealing Reality, will help students explore how social media can influence behaviour, who stands to benefit from this influence and how it can shape someone's wellbeing, interests and world view – including strategies to manage and critically evaluate what they see. [Revealing Reality: Under the influence](#)



Dental Health Key stage 1-3

Developed in partnership with Professor Zoe Marshman (School of Clinical Dentistry, University of Sheffield) and Professor Nicola Innes (School of Dentistry, Cardiff University), these lessons focus on strategies and behaviours that pupils can implement independently in their own lives to promote good dental health. They will also help you to meet relevant areas from the statutory RSHE guidance around 'healthy eating' and 'health and prevention'. [Dental health](#)

The Healthy Schools Team



Vanessa Gardner
Healthy Schools Programme Coordinator
Vanessa.gardner@barnardos.org.uk



Katie Polhill
Deputy Head of Service, Lead for Healthy Schools
Katie.polhill@hrgcaregroup.com

Mid Essex Team – Healthy Schools Engagement Workers



Gillian Sharman
gillian.sharman@barnardos.org.uk

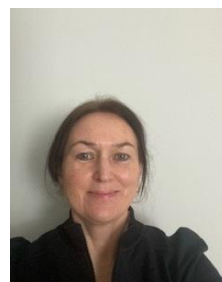


Catherine Ryan
catherine.ryan@barnardos.org.uk

South Essex Team – Healthy Schools Engagement Workers



Nicola Sparks
nicola.sparks@barnardos.org.uk



Catherine Ryan
catherine.ryan@barnardos.org.uk

West Essex – Healthy Schools Engagement Worker



Lianna Goodbun
lianna.goodbun@barnardos.org.uk

North Essex – Healthy Schools Engagement Worker



Deb Cook
deb.cook@barnardos.org.uk

Checkout our website for more information

[Healthy schools – Essex Child & Family Wellbeing Service \(essexfamilywellbeing.co.uk\)](http://Healthy schools – Essex Child & Family Wellbeing Service (essexfamilywellbeing.co.uk))

Support Websites - Directories of support

Directory name	Provides	Link
Essex Child & Family Wellbeing Service	Provide a range of child and family services throughout Essex that are free at the point of delivery.	https://essexfamilywellbeing.co.uk/
Essex Effective Support	The Effective Support Windscreen illustrates how Universal, Early Help (Additional and Intensive) and Specialist services in Essex are provided. Website includes Children & Families Hub Request for Support Portal.	Resources for practitioners: Effective support resources Essex County Council
Essex Local Offer	Online directory of Services and support for special educational needs and disability.	Essex County Council: Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Essex Local Offer
Essex Map	Online resource to help find the groups, services, and activities who are working to better the community, rather than focusing on profit.	https://www.essexmap.co.uk/
Essex Schools Info Link	Mental Health Information Portal is designed to support schools in finding online material and content in supporting children and young people in educational settings.	Essex Schools InfoLink
SNAP	Special Needs and Parents includes directory of support for families.	http://www.snapcharity.org/index.php/information
Southend Essex Thurrock Domestic Abuse Board (SETDAB)	Southend, Essex and Thurrock domestic abuse partnership website, providing advice and information on services for those affected by domestic abuse	https://setdab.org/

PSHE Education Support

PSHE Association [PSHE Association | Charity and membership body for PSHE education \(pshe-association.org.uk\)](https://pshe-association.org.uk)

Brook [Sexual Health & Wellbeing - Brook – Healthy lives for young people](https://www.brook.org.uk)

Sex Education Forum [Home | sexeducationforum.org.uk](https://sexeducationforum.org.uk)

Terrence Higgins Trust [Sexual health information and advice | Terrence Higgins Trust \(ttht.org.uk\)](https://ttht.org.uk)

Emotional Regulation Support

Affinity Programme - a targeted early intervention project working across all of Essex, including the unitary authorities of Southend and Thurrock, for children and young people who are at risk of exclusion from education due to emotional dysregulation. [Affinity Programme – Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service \(essexfamilywellbeing.co.uk\)](https://essexfamilywellbeing.co.uk)

Support children (and adults) to self-regulate and build their understanding of their own behaviour and emotions <https://keepyourcooltoolbox.com/>

Mindful Magic <https://www.mindfulmagic.info/schools>

Emotional Wellbeing Support

Anna Freud – Mentally Healthy Schools
<https://www.annafreud.org/insights/news/2020/09/framework-launched-to-support-schools-to-develop-whole-school-approach-to-mental-health/>

Young Minds <https://youngminds.org.uk/>

SEND

PSHE Association – SEND Hub <https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/content/send-hub>

MENCAP <https://www.mencap.org.uk/advice-and-support/children-and-young-people/sen-support>

Multi-schools Council <https://www.multischoolscouncil.org.uk/>

Your School Nurse is available to support you with the Health and Wellbeing needs of any child, young person or family you may have concerns about. Please contact your local team for further information:

Mid Essex	Tel: 0300 247 0014
North Essex	Tel: 0300 247 0015
South Essex	Tel: 0300 247 0013
West Essex	Tel: 0300 247 0122