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**333 Academy and School News and Resources Update, Aug 31 Sept 5 2025**

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**Early years and primary**

* DfE has again updated “**Early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework**.” See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>
* DfE has issued “**How early years providers can implement the experience-based route for staff who do not hold full and relevant qualifications**.” See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/experience-based-route-for-early-years-staff>
* DfE has updated yet again “**The qualifications that staff must hold to be included in the specified staff/child ratios at levels 2, 3 and 6 of the early years foundation stage (EYFS).”** See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-qualification-requirements-and-standards>
* DfE has issued “**How primary schools can complete a return to show how they have spent their PE and sport premium funding allocation**.” See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complete-the-pe-and-sport-premium-expenditure-reporting-return>
* STA has issued:
	+ **Reception baseline assessment: administration guidance**, <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reception-baseline-assessment-administration-guidance>
	+ **Information for local authorities on training and standardisation for moderators of key stages 2 (KS2) English writing**, <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/teacher-assessment-moderation-standardisation-and-training-process>
	+ **Latest information and deadlines relating to primary school assessments,** <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/sta-assessment-updates>
* In polling of **school governors** by early years charity Kindred Squared, shared exclusively with Tes, **39 per cent of respondents were either unsure or did not know how many pupils were on track to reach a good level of development** (GLD). 70 per cent of the governors surveyed reported that GLD is included in progress updates that they receive. There is a need for the official government measurement of school readiness to be more widely discussed by school governors, who provide vital oversight of primary schools. See <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/primary/school-governors-lack-knowledge-school-ready-pupils>
* **The early years workforce continues to face substantial recruitment and retention challenges despite recent growth in the number of staff**, a report has found, <https://www.nfer.ac.uk/media/gotei2kn/early_years_workforce_in_england_2025_embargo.pdf> Poor pay and career progression for those working in early years settings remain stubborn issues. The report also warns that these could hamper expansion of the free childcare entitlement. See also <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/early-years/early-years-recruitment-hinder-free-childcare-expansion>
* FFT Education DataLab has issued “**DfE will need to take account of age when comparing schools’ rates of pupils achieving a good level of development**.” See <https://ffteducationdatalab.org.uk/2025/09/dfe-will-need-to-take-account-of-age-when-comparing-schools-rates-of-pupils-achieving-a-good-level-of-development/> There is much useful detail here. Comparing a school’s performance to similar schools is a way of implicitly recognizing the effects of context without “reinforcing the soft bigotry of low expectations” for some groups, a criticism levelled at explicit methods such as contextual value added. It takes account of the fact that schools that serve disadvantaged communities will tend to achieve lower results. At EYFS it is critical that any analysis that government provides to schools takes account of the age of pupils in each cohort. Over 40% of primary schools had fewer than 30 pupils in Reception in 2024. This means that results can be variable from one year to the next, particularly if the age profile of the intake changes from predominantly Autumn born to Summer born (or vice versa).
* **MPs have launched an inquiry into the early years sector**, which will scrutinise the government’s school-readiness targets and staff recruitment and retention. The Commons Education Select Committee will also look at issues around the sustainability of its workforce, families’ access to services and the quality of outcomes for young children. The government’s Giving Every Child the Best Start in Life Strategy <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/giving-every-child-the-best-start-in-life#full-publication-update-history> will also be examined. The committee welcomes written evidence submissions from academics and experts in the early years sector**. Submissions can be made via the committee’s website by 11.59pm on 10 October 2025**, <https://committees.parliament.uk/call-for-evidence/3742>
* For **the Prime Minister's letter to parents and carers on Best Start in Life**, see <https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2025/09/prime-ministers-letter-to-parents-and-carers-on-best-start-in-life/>

**Nurseries**

* **Whitehall will after Sept 1 be paying for 80% of all pre-school childcare hours in England, which essentially means the government is in control of setting the price of childcare**. Providers say that’s the problem. The rate the government pays – £6.12 an hour for three- and four-year-olds, £8.53 for two-year-olds and £11.54 for babies – **does not cover the full cost of a nursery place,** particularly after this year’s rises in employers’ NI contributions and the national living wage. Now, with the final stage of the reforms, nurseries will lose extra income from younger children, who previously had to be paid for privately. Some nurseries say they will face closing or cutting back’ . DfE figures show that 1,700 childcare providers, 3% of the total, shut their doors between 2023 and 2024. And a survey by the Early Education and Childcare Coalition shows almost 20% operating at a loss, and one in 10 saying they are likely to close altogether within two years**. Parents are already struggling to access ‘free childcare’ places** through the new government offer as providers warn of limited capacity See <https://observer.co.uk/news/business/article/dismay-in-nursery-sector-as-free-hours-plan-expands> <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cly4m3nzy51o>
* **The government is opening 300 new or expanded nurseries on school grounds. 189 of the 300 government-funded new or expanded nurseries are set to be up and running this month**. Schools report over 4,000 extra school-based nursery places will be available across England this September. The government vows to boost childcare access in disadvantaged communities in the next phase of the rollout. **It will invite more schools to bid for up to £150,000 funding from a £45 million pot to create a further 300 new or expanded best start school-based nurseries - offering up to 7,000 more places - from September 2026**. Bidding to close on 11 December having started on Sept 22. The government has also revealed that for phase three of the programme, local authorities “will be invited to develop multi-year funding proposals” covering the years from 2027 to 2030. “The DfE will publish separate guidance to support this process in early 2026 and will engage with local authorities and schools in autumn 2025 to provide further details. “The government says at present 9 in 10 parents are getting one of their three top choice nursery places. Three have been warnings that the first round of school-based nursery funding “displaced a number of established nurseries that were already running on, or next to, school sites See <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-delivers-thousands-more-school-based-nursery-places>
* DfE has issued:
* **Non-statutory guidance for schools, responsible bodies and childcare providers looking to open or expand school-based nursery provision**.”<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/establishing-school-based-nursery-provision>
* **School-based Nursery Capital Grant 2025 to 2026**, <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/school-based-nursery-capital-grant-2025-to-2026>
* Case study, , **Early years provision: expanding through a governor-led model**, <https://www.gov.uk/government/case-studies/early-years-provision-expanding-through-a-governor-led-model>
* **How a primary academy and an infant school each worked with a private, voluntary and independent (PVI) provider to reap the benefits of their mutual expertise**, <https://www.gov.uk/government/case-studies/early-years-provision-expanding-through-a-school-pvi-partnership>
* **How the School-based Nursery Capital Grant accelerated one infant school’s plan to expand its provision to support local demand and improve transitions into reception**, <https://www.gov.uk/government/case-studies/early-years-provision-expanding-through-a-school-led-model>
* DfE has issued **“Phase 2 of the school-based nursery programme: Everything you need to know**.” See <https://educationhub.blog.gov.uk/2025/09/nurseries-in-schools-everything-you-need-to-know/>

**Attendance**

* A report, “**Listening to, and learning from, young people in the attendance crisis”, has been published by Impetus and Public First**, <https://www.impetus.org.uk/news-and-views/listening-learning-attendance-report> **This is well worth reading. Findings**:
* Not attending school every day has become the new normal for many pupils; many pupils make an active decision each morning about whether to attend school,
* Pupils cite exhaustion as a key reason for missing school; as the online world has changed around them, the emotional load of being present for late-night gaming and group chats leaves many pupils too tired to attend or engage with school the next day.
* School is increasingly seen as just a means to an end, not a formative experience itself
* More structured school days reduce pupils’ sense of agency and enjoyment of school; pupils feel a lack of agency in school.
* Simply getting pupils through the school gate does not mean pupils feel engaged.
* Pupils weigh up the value of school against other priorities – and school doesn’t always win.
* Pupils are monitoring their own emotional wellbeing and trading it off against school attendance
* The online world presents pupils with alternative definitions of success beyond school.
* Presenteeism online outside the school day is driving absenteeism in schools.
* There is no one-size-fits-all solution, but interventions can be actively harmful Sanctions compel attendance but damage engagement.

**It recommends:**

* Schools must…
	+ Value and structure social time to support friendships and belonging.
	+ Promote enrichment activities beyond the classroom.
	+ Separate support from sanctions, so pupils trust the adults who help them.
	+ Listen to their specific communities’ challenges and act on what they hear.
* Government must…
	+ Support schools and parents to develop clear social norms around technology use in and out of school.
	+ Undertake evaluation to understand whether fines are helping or harming.
	+ Enable and incentivise innovation on attendance in schools, with robust evaluation.
* Schools and Government must…
	+ Take pupils’ emotional wellbeing seriously, and invest in the support they need.
* DfE has issued “**Monitor your school attendance: user guide**.” See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/monitor-your-school-attendance-user-guide>
* FFT Education DataLab Has issued a very useful “**Usage of new attendance codes: An update.**” <https://ffteducationdatalab.org.uk/2025/09/usage-of-new-attendance-codes-an-update/> A very useful check for attendance officers
* For an article, “**Could ‘school bonding’ be the key to fixing attendance**?” See <https://www.tes.com/magazine/teaching-learning/general/could-school-bonding-be-key-fixing-attendance>

**Behaviour**

* **DfE has issued its national behaviour survey report: 2023 to 2024 academic year**. Survey findings on behaviour in schools, including school behaviour culture and policies, pupil experience, frequency and impact of misbehaviour and response. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-behaviour-survey-report-2023-to-2024-academic-year> **For national behaviour survey reports: 2021 and 2022 academic years**, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-behaviour-survey-reports>

**Headlines from the 2023-2024 report:**

* Schools less calm and orderly
* Fewer teachers ‘very confident’ tackling behaviour
* Parents less supportive of behaviour rules
* Bullying over race and appearance increases
* Pupils feel less safe, but more motivated. Just a third (32 per cent) of all pupils said that they had felt safe at school “every day” in the past week
* Leaders more visible, and pupils report more incentives
* Leaders still have rosier picture of behaviour. The majority of school leaders (81 per cent) reported that their school had been calm and orderly “every day” or “most days” in the past week, versus just half of teachers (53 per cent).
* Teachers were “significantly” more likely (33 per cent) than school leaders (11 per cent) to report that pupil behaviour was “poor” or “very poor”

For useful summaries, see <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/schools-more-disorderly-and-parents-less-supportive-of-behaviour-rules/> <https://www.sec-ed.co.uk/content/news/seven-minutes-misbehaviour-in-lessons>

* **The Education Secretary has told parents to join a united effort to get children at their desks and ready to learn by prioritising school attendance for their children**. She is starting the new school year by calling time on bad behaviour as shocking new data shows seven out of every 30 classroom minutes are lost to kids “kicking off”. The latest behaviour survey, covering the 2023/24 academic year shows a majority (78%) of teachers reported that poor behaviour had a negative impact on their health and wellbeing.

Further action to tackle this will begin from the start of the new term, as **800 schools – responsible for around 600,000 pupils – will benefit from new RISE Attendance and Behaviour Hubs**. Across the whole programme, 5,000 schools are set to benefit, with 500 of those in most need receiving intensive, targeted help. The programme will share proven strategies from school leaders that have successfully turned attendance and behaviour around. This work will be supported by **Tom Bennett and Jayne Lowe, announced as new Attendance and Behaviour Ambassadors**. The DfE’s forthcoming schools white paper will set out plans to crack down on bad behaviour. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-to-crackdown-on-bad-behaviour-and-boost-attendance>

**The DfE has named the first 21 of 90 new integrated behaviour and attendance hubs set to open in September** with more set to be opened throughout the year. Behaviour and attendance hubs are being merged. The first 21 attendance and behaviour hubs schools are:

* Tennyson Road Primary School, East of England
* Denbigh High School, East of England
* Bedford Free School, East of England
* Bluecoat Wollaton Academy, East Midlands
* Tidemill Academy, London
* Charles Dickens Primary School, London
* Forest Academy, London
* St. Paul’s Way School, London
* Drayton Manor High School , London
* Ashington Academy, North East
* The Beacon Cof E Primary School, North West
* Wright Robinson College, North West
* St Edmund’s Catholic School, South East
* Wallscourt Farm Academy, South West
* Marine Academy Primary, South West
* St James School, South West
* E-ACT Heartlands Academy, West Midlands
* E-ACT North Birmingham Academy, West Midlands
* Shireland Collegiate Academy, West Midlands
* Moor End Academy, Yorkshire and Humber
* Dixons Trinity Academy and Dixons Kings Academy, Yorkshire and Humber
* **The reasons given for disruptive behaviour that interrupted lessons during the survey week in May 2024**



* England’s 63 biggest trusts, running more than 2,300 schools between them, were asked for the number of **behavioural incidents resulting in injury** in the five years to 2024-25. Out of the 29 trusts with 25 or more schools that provided usable data under the Freedom of Information Act, 18 had seen an increase in incidents up to the most recent year available and six had seen a rise that peaked just before the most recent year of data provided. Only two had seen an overall fall, and the remainder could only provide data for a single year. The rise in serious incidents is not confined to secondary schools DFE data shows a large rise since the pandemic in physical assault against an adult being listed as the reason for suspension or exclusion. And a survey by the NASUWT earlier this year found that two in five teachers reported having experienced physical abuse or violence from a pupil in the previous year. More than eight in 10 said they felt that the number of pupils exhibiting this behaviour had increased. For details and examples, see <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/rise-violent-incidents-schools>
* For an interview with **Tom Bennett,** The DfE attendance and behaviour ambassador, see <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/tom-bennett-strict-rules-dovetail-inclusion>

**Unregistered alternative provision**

* **For the DfE’s non-statutory standards for non-school alternative provision (also known as unregistered alternative provision**), see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/non-school-alternative-provision-voluntary-national-standards> Based on a consultation, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/strengthening-protections-in-unregistered-alternative-provision> The government is pressing ahead with plans to limit the amount of time pupils can spend in unregistered alternative provision, despite widespread concerns raised in the consultation that inflexible time limits would be harmful for some children. Placements can be extended beyond the time limits, but only in exceptional circumstances The new national standards will cover five areas: safeguarding and the wellbeing of children; health and safety; admissions, guidance and support; quality of education. But these new national standards for unregistered AP will be “voluntary” initially, with plans to make them statutory at a later date. Government figures show 24,325 children were educated in unregistered AP last year, with placements from councils almost doubling to 11,436 since 2019. As of Spring 2023-24 the average placement lasted 276 days – equivalent to more than 39 weeks.

Under the new standards, children can be placed in AP for “short, intensive periods of support, for a maximum of 12 weeks”, before returning to full-time education in mainstream or specialist schools. Alternatively, they can be given longer-term, part-time placements for up to two days or four sessions a week, alongside attending school. Under the new voluntary standards, children in AP must also be registered with schools, so they are “connected with a school throughout their placements”, to support re-integration. Local authorities will be made responsible for quality assuring AP against the new national standards, to ensure interventions “are meeting individual needs”. The government also said it would like to see more LAs create “multidisciplinary inclusion teams” to “routinely review” AP placements to “support successful re-integration”. The government says it intends that Ofsted and the CQC will evaluate a local authority’s quality assurance process. EOTAS, “education otherwise than in school”, special education provision is not included in the new voluntary national standards. See also <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/dfe-pushes-ahead-with-unregistered-ap-time-limits/>

**Educational Inequality**

* DfE has issued a report identifying that **the main factors shaping educational inequalities** **are socioeconomic background, behavioural factors and the home learning environment**. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-home-learning-environment-and-attainment> Ministers should consider interventions that “go beyond the classroom” such as “restorative” behaviour approaches and parent engagement workshops in “low education” areas to boost grades. The paper found pupils eligible for free school meals, who engaged in anti-social behaviour or felt unsafe in their local area were less likely to achieve level 2 and 3 qualifications. However, youngsters whose parents ensured they completed homework on time and had “warm” relationships had a better chance of achieving well. **Other key recommendation**s:
	+ Restorative, not punitive, behaviour interventions
	+ Prioritise emotional wellbeing alongside exam results
	+ Foster innovation with national platforms which could help pilot and share successful interventions, solutions and community partnerships.
	+ Parent engagement workshops in ‘low education’ areas

AI to aid personalised interventions

* **Nearly a third of pupils eligible for free school meals say cost is an important factor when choosing GCSE subjects, while nearly a quarter say it has prevented them from choosing a more expensive subject**, new research has found. A report by the Child Poverty Action Group (CPAG) <https://cpag.org.uk/news/back-school-blocked-learning-secondary-pupils-excluded-costs> warned that disadvantaged pupils are being “cut off from opportunities
* 23% of those on free school meals (FSM) say the cost or worries about the cost of taking a subject has prevented them from choosing a subject to study (compared to 9% of non-FSM pupils).
* 29% on FSM say the cost is important to them when choosing their subjects, compared to 11% of pupils not receiving FSM.
* 30% of students eligible for free school meals say it’s difficult to afford what they need for homework, including access to technology and devices.

**GCSE subject-costs** can include the cost of fieldwork trips for geography, the cost of an exchange or language learning trip for modern foreign Languages, of learning to play an instrument for music, ingredients for food and nutrition and extra kit and equipment for PE. These costs vary from school to school and come on top of general school expenses such as uniform, stationery and textbooks

**Physics**

* **A quarter of state secondary schools in England will start the new term with no dedicated physics teacher**, with schools in poorer areas worst affected, analysis has found. The lack of specialists means more than half (58%) of pupils studying for a science GCSE will have the physics component taught by a teacher who has not studied a physics-related subject beyond the age of 18. An estimated 700,000 pupils are affected, according to the Institute of Physics, which carried out the analysis and is calling for urgent action to tackle what it describes as a “chronic and critical” shortage of specialist physics teachers. The IoP report says students in schools without a specialist physics teacher are half as likely as those with sufficient physics specialists to go on to study A-level physics. It calculates that more than 12,000 students are missing out on taking A-level physics as a direct result of having no specialist teacher, while more than 300 English state secondaries are failing to produce any pupils who progress to study physics at A-level. The report says the shortage is having a bigger impact on students in disadvantaged areas because their schools are less likely to have “in-field” physics teachers, while independent and top-scoring state schools cream off the best recruits. “Data show that only 4% of students in the lowest socioeconomic status quintile take physics A-level, compared with about 11% in the highest quintile, and that 70% of A-level physics students come from just 30% of schools,” it says. See <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2025/sep/02/quarter-schools-england-lack-physics-teacher>

**Mandarin**

* DfE has issued “**Join the Mandarin Excellence Programme**.” This programme funds and supports schools to deliver intensive Mandarin study, and to develop teachers and help them increase the number of pupils studying Mandarin. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/join-the-mandarin-excellence-programme> Schools offering Mandarin lessons have had their funding cut by a quarter, with flights to China and enrichment trips to Chinese universities for pupils also no longer paid-for. Schools taking part in the Mandarin Excellence Programme will now receive £15,000 per year, compared to £20,000 previously, and the programme will now offer six hours a week of teaching instead of eight. But “financial support” will continue to help pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds attend a year 9 trip to China. The programme will also continue to fund professional development opportunities for teachers and online resources. Previously, the programme has supported more than 16,000 students. More than 4,000 have sat Mandarin GCSEs, with the same number also having visited China.

**AI**

* **Pupils’ ability to learn could be damaged by becoming too reliant on generative artificial intelligence tools**, according to a new report by a former DfE adviser. In a paper for the Social Market Foundation, Tom Richmond warns that an expansion in the use of AI could lead to a “cognitive collapse” in which standards fall because pupils and teachers are no longer thinking as hard about the tasks they must complete. And he raises a concern that recent government guidance to schools on using AI “pays too little attention to its effect on learning”. This includes a study of 666 participants that identified “a significant negative correlation between frequent AI tool usage and critical thinking abilities” and concluded that the use of AI “may inadvertently diminish users’ engagement in deep, reflective thinking processes”. A separate randomised experimental study of 117 pupils found that AI tools could improve short-term performance, but may also “promote learners’ dependence on technology and potentially trigger metacognitive ‘laziness’”. See <https://www.smf.co.uk/publications/ai-and-learning/>

**What should reasonably be expected of schools and colleges?**

* **ASCL has published a roadmap for a sustainable education system**, <https://www.ascl.org.uk/ASCL/media/ASCL/Our%20view/Campaigns/A-roadmap-for-a-sustainable-education-system.pdf> The paper examines what should reasonably be expected of schools and colleges, how they should be resourced to deliver those responsibilities, and how to make sure they are able to attract the staff they need. Ministers must be “explicit” about the role they expect schools to play in their communities as “underfunded wider public services crumble around them” Schools are “increasingly being expected to expand their remit and provide support and services to pupils and families which go far beyond teaching and learning”. Core educational activities, including safeguarding, and “education enablers” such as attendance and pastoral support should be carried out by schools. But “broader societal responsibilities” like running food banks, health checks or helping families with housing issues should not be expected of schools, the report said. The union has called for the government to be more “explicit” about schools’ potential role as community hubs and to give them appropriate funding. In addition, at present, limited remote working opportunities have made teaching ‘an unattractive outlier. The education sector is “increasingly struggling to compete against other industries and professions to recruit staff of all ages For a useful summary, see <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/be-clearer-about-schools-role-as-wider-services-crumble-say-heads/>

**ITT**

* DfE has issued “**Offer a trainee teacher placement**. Explains what schools need to do to offer initial teaching training (ITT) placements from September 2024.” See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/offer-a-trainee-teacher-placement>
* **More than 1,000 extra teachers could be recruited by boosting opportunities for trainees to study part time** Despite applications to part-time teacher training courses tripling in recent years, the number of people starting a part-time teacher training course in England is falling, indicating that provision may not be meeting demand, according to charity Now Teach. In 2023-24, more than 5,000 candidates applied to study teacher training part-time, but only 345 of these (7 per cent) actually started a course. There are also large regional variations in availability. Applications from those over 30 - which comprises over half of part-time teacher trainees - have more than doubled since 2021, whereas the number of entrants aged under 30 has fallen by 14 per cent in the past two years. Also, the rising dropout rate for part-time teacher training shows the need for a dedicated support service to help people, especially career changers, through the application process. See <https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/part-time-training-opportunities-1000-extra-teachers>
* **The contract for the training scheme currently run by Teach First will be worth nearly £74 million less than previously listed and contain a reduced recruitment target**. The indicative contract value for the Future High Potential Initial Teacher Training (HPITT) programme had previously been estimated as £180 million including VAT, covering up to five cohorts, in details posted by the DfE in April. However, in the latest procurement notice this had dropped significantly to £106.8 million including VAT. Teach First’s current annual recruitment target is 1,750; it achieved 1,415 in the 2024 cohort and 1,335 in 2023. However, the recruitment target for the new supplier, which will be a “key performance indicator”, will be lower, at 1,000 participants. The new supplier will still be expected to target “high-quality candidates with a 2:1 degree or above, who would be otherwise unlikely to join the profession” Three initial cohorts of participants will be recruited and trained for the 2027-28, 2028-29 and 2029-30 academic years. This could potentially be extended to two more cohorts. See [https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/dfe-cuts-74m-teach-first-contracthttps://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/dfe-cuts-74m-teach-first-contract](https://www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/dfe-cuts-74m-teach-first-contracthttps%3A//www.tes.com/magazine/news/general/dfe-cuts-74m-teach-first-contract)

**RSHE**

* Reminder. **Updated guidance on Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education for introduction on 1 September 2026**. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/relationships-education-relationships-and-sex-education-rse-and-health-education>

DfE has issued “An assessment of the effect that the revised guidance on ‘Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) and Health Education (for introduction 1 September 2026)’ **will have on groups with relevant protected characteristics**.” See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/implementation-of-revised-rshe-guidance>

**KCSE**

* **DfE has issued the new September version of Keeping children safe in education. Statutory guidance** for schools and colleges on safeguarding children and safer recruitment. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2> **This includes a table of changes from the September 2024 version**

**School management**

* DfE has issued “**How public sector schools can join the risk protection arrangement (RPA),** an alternative to commercial insurance, which may save time and money.” See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/join-the-risk-protection-arrangement-rpa-for-schools>
* DfE has issued “**Martyn’s law for education settings**. How educational settings can prepare for the Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025 and protect their children and young people.” See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/martyns-law-for-education-settings>
* DfE has issued an **evaluation of the virtual school heads national extension to all children with a social worker and evaluation of the Pupil Premium Plus post-16 programme.** See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/evaluation-of-the-virtual-school-heads-extension-and-the-pupil-premium-plus-post-16-pilot>
* FFT Education DataLab has issued a **detailed analysis of Exclusions and suspensions in 2024/25** See <https://ffteducationdatalab.org.uk/2025/09/exclusions-and-suspensions-in-2024-25/> Published DfE statistics show that suspensions have increased every year since the pandemic, reaching record levels in 2023/24. Data for the 2024/25 academic year so far suggests that the rate of increase is at least beginning to slow. A peak may have been reached, or is close to being reached. It remains the case though that disadvantaged pupils are disproportionately (far) more likely than other pupils to experience exclusion or suspension.
* Ofqual has issued “**Vocational and other qualifications quarterly: April to June 2025**. “ See <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/announcements/vocational-and-other-qualifications-quarterly-april-to-june-2025>
* For the latest **DfE Update**, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/dfe-update-3-september-2025>
* For an article “New guidance by the Information Commissioner’s Office offers advice about **how to avoid accidental data breaches due to hidden data in files**.” See <https://www.tes.com/magazine/analysis/general/information-security-avoiding-release-hidden-data>
* DfE has issued “**Guidance for managing staff and employment issues**.” See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staffing-and-employment-advice-for-schools>
* DfE has issued “**Free breakfast clubs: summer term 2025 take-up by region**.” See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/free-breakfast-clubs-summer-term-2025-take-up-by-region>
* Ofqual has issued “**Ofqual Handbook**: General Conditions of Recognition.” Rules and guidance for all awarding organisations and all regulated qualifications. See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ofqual-handbook>
* For an article “‘**Our site is on a knife edge’: the school buildings crisis deepens**.” See <https://www.tes.com/magazine/analysis/general/school-buildings-not-safe-funding-crisis>
* DfE has updated its manual “**Complete the school census**.” See <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complete-the-school-census>
* The NASUWT is calling on the government to introduce **“comprehensive, mandatory lockdown guidance in schools**”, amid concerns some schools are ignoring advice and ill-prepared for “a potentially violent intruder”. News reports on Google show that 117 separate incidents of reported lockdowns since January 1 last year. Almost 100,000 pupils attend the affected schools. See <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/lockdown-the-schools-forced-to-take-emergency-measures/>
* **Ofsted is to deploy senior inspectors to “shadow” inspection teams in a bid to test the consistency of judgments under its new report cards system**. The watchdog has confirmed it will introduce extra quality assurance (QA) visits focused specifically on consistency, validity and reliability when inspections resume in November. During QA visits, senior inspectors will “advise and guide the inspection team to the right result” before reporting back to Ofsted about areas where they reached different conclusions. See <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/ofsted-plans-more-shadow-inspections-to-test-consistency/>

**Academies and trusts**

* DfE has issued “**A financial management and governance self-assessment (FMGS) form for new academy trusts to complete and submit online, and a preview of the form’s questions**.” See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academy-financial-management-and-governance-self-assessment-guidance>
* DfE has updated “**Guidance for academy trusts reporting or seeking approval for related party transactions (RPTs**).” See <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/related-party-transactions-information-for-academy-trusts>
* **Andy Barnett has been appointed the new CEO of Delta Academies Trust, succeeding Sir PaulTarn**, who held the position for nine years. See <https://schoolsweek.co.uk/delta-academies-trust-names-sir-paul-tarn-successor/>
* **Ark Schools has unveiled plans to merge with the Pontefract Academies Trust next year**, having eyed expansions into “new regions”. The schools will form the “founding base of a new northern hub” for the trust, which currently has schools in London, the south and the Midlands. See <https://www.pontefractacademiestrust.org.uk/proposed-trust-merger/>

**Health and welfare of children and young people**

* Teenagers who have moderate or severe period pain are much more likely to develop chronic pain as adults, according to research. Researchers said the findings should **serve as a wake-up call to improve menstrual education, reduce stigma, and ensure young people have access to effective support and treatment** early on. See <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/aug/31/teenagers-period-pain-menstruation-chronic-pain-adults-research-study>

**Doctors have raised the alarm about high levels of vaping among children worldwide, saying they are convinced e-cigarettes are causing irreversible harm to their health**. Cardiologists, researchers and health experts said they were “extremely concerned” about the harmful effects of e-cigarettes on millions of teenagers and young people, including exposure to toxins and carcinogens – some of which are still unknown. Nicotine levels in e-cigarettes can be very high, raising the risk of addiction and injury to the developing brains of adolescents. Children are also risking long-term cardiovascular effects as a result of vaping at school and college, experts say. See <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2025/sep/01/vaping-may-be-causing-irreversible-harm-children-health-doctors#:~:text=Nicotine%20levels%20in%20e%2Dcigarettes,school%20and%20college%2C%20experts%20say>.

* **The government will consult on banning the sale of high-caffeine energy drinks to under 16s** due to negative impacts on children's physical and mental health. Evidence links the drinks to negative impacts on children’s physical and mental health, sleep quality, and educational outcomes. The move is backed by parents and teachers and will deliver significant long term health benefits. See <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ban-on-selling-high-caffeine-energy-drinks-to-boost-kids-health>
* **Parents could be alerted if their teenagers show acute distress while talking with ChatGPT, amid child safety concerns as more young people turn to AI chatbots for support and advice**. The alerts are part of new protections for children using ChatGPT to be rolled out in the next month by OpenAI, which was last week sued by the family of a boy who took his own life after allegedly receiving “months of encouragement” from the system. Other new safeguards will include parents being able to link their accounts to those of their teenagers and controlling how the AI model responds to their child with “age-appropriate model behaviour rules” See <https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2025/sep/02/parents-could-get-alerts-if-children-show-acute-distress-while-using-chatgpt>
* **Roblox to extend age checks in attempt to curb adults talking with children**. The fast-growing platform which has more than 110 million users a day playing games like Grow A Garden and Brookhaven RP has been hit by child safety concerns as experiments found children as young as five may be able to communicate with adults while playing games. See <https://www.theguardian.com/games/2025/sep/03/roblox-age-checks-adults-children-safety>
* For an article **“Academics have warned that safeguarding professionals are often uncertain how to act when incidents of harmful sexual behaviour don’t fit into neat legal categories.**” See <https://www.sec-ed.co.uk/content/news/harmful-sexual-behaviour-professionals-uncertain-certain-cases>

**Education news for schools**

* For the “**Get Britain Working White Paper**” the government's proposals to reform employment, health and skills support to tackle economic inactivity and support people into good work, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/get-britain-working-white-paper>
* For the latest **SecEd Best Practice Bulletin** see <https://email.sec-ed.co.uk/q/12JpfhcqsDFwXxu9b5W6Aaa9/wv> This includes an article **“How to be a great teacher: 10 common traits**.”
* DfE has issued “**Higher Level Learners in England 2023-2024**.” See <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/find-statistics/higher-level-learners-in-england/2023-24>

**Tony Stephens**