



Summer 2023 Newsletter

Welcome to the final edition of the Connex Education Partnership newsletter for the 2022-23 academic year. We say it every year; but time really does seem to fly in the world of education!

KCSIE updates and FREE webinar

The latest update to the **[Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance has been published by the Department for Education](#)**, outlining new changes and requirements for schools as part of their safeguarding duties.

There are some new recommendations and expectations on schools worth being aware of before the guidance comes into force in September. These include:

- Informing job applicants about online searches
- Online filtering and monitoring software used by schools
- Clarification on allegations against outside organisations and individuals using school premises
- Confirmation on DBS documents

To hear more about these updates Connex Academy are running a free webinar with our external guest expert.

This Newsletter will cover some of the hot topics being discussed in school's, including:

- **KCSIE updates and FREE webinar**
- **England Fourth in Reading Rankings**
- **The True Cost of School**
- **Free Resources for Schools**
- **Magic Breakfast Success**
- **External Defibrillator Eligibility**
- **Early Years Research Opportunity**
- **Summer Listening**
- **Sowing Seeds for the National Education Nature Park**
- **Expanding Attendance Hubs**
- **School Business Network**
- **September Ice Breakers**

Any individual can attend to hear the latest updates on KCSIE 2023. **The event takes place online on 20 June at 4pm.** To register for your free ticket please use the registration link **[here](#)**.

www.ellasavellboss.co.uk team have put together this handy things to do guide which can be downloaded **[here](#)**.





England Fourth in Reading Rankings

In May 2023, the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study* (PIRLS) results were published in which England was ranked fourth out of the 43 countries assessed. The test assessed reading ability of the 9–10-year-old cohort and is considered to be a benchmark for literacy competency internationally.

The Prime Minister, Rishi Sunak, said *'driving up literacy rates is central to our plan to grow the economy, one of my 5 key priorities, so it's great to see England move up to fourth in the international rankings for reading.'* Read the Department for Education's press release about the 2023 PIRLS [here](#).



As you're planning your 2023–24 strategy for student progress in literacy, reading and oracy next academic year, don't forget that Connex Education Academy has a range of online CPD courses suitable for leaders, teachers and support colleagues.

Courses include:

- [**How to Develop Critical Literacy Skills in Your Learners**](#)
- [**The Reading Framework: Supporting Children at Risk of Reading Failure**](#)
- [**How to Develop Writing Skills for Secondary English Learners**](#)

Check out the [**Connex Education Academy catalogue**](#) for more information.



Date for the Diary



Friday 8th September 2023
International Literacy Day

International Literacy Day is a United Nations holiday observed every year on September 8. The day was created to highlight the importance of literacy, as well as to raise awareness of the literacy problems that impact around 770 million adults and children around the world. International Literacy Day also encourages governments to take action to improve their country's literacy rates.*

Why not celebrate International Literacy Day in your school by asking all teachers to include a specific literacy-based activity in every lesson that day, deliver an assembly about the importance or run a competition for students, staff and parents! What a great way to start the new academic year!

(Taken from <https://www.calendarr.com/uk/international-literacy-day/>)



The True Cost of School

In their May 2023 report, Child Poverty Action Group* (CPAG) reported on the true cost to families of sending children to school in the UK. Whilst many children and young people are fortunate to access free top quality schools, the associated payments required of families is often significant.

In **their report, CPAG** state:

'Researchers have found that going to school in the UK costs families of primary school children at least £864.87 a year, or £18.69 a week. This is before childcare costs are accounted for. For families of secondary school children, the cost of sending a child to school is at least £1,755.97 a year. This is £39.01 a week. This means the total cost of meeting a child's minimum educational needs across all 14 years of school (primary and secondary but excluding household costs such as laptops) is £18,345.85. This can be broken down as £6,054.09 for seven years at primary school and £12,291.76 for seven years at secondary school.'

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School uniform, meals and trips are cited as being some of the most expensive associated costs of sending children to school. At a time when many families are already struggling with the rising cost of living, ensuring all children and young people can access a rich and fulfilling education is stretching both school and parents' budgets.

In his recent writing in SecEd*, Sean Harris explores how schools can respond to the impact of disadvantage within their communities through using a model of 3 Cs – classroom, culture and children. The article outlines how schools can consider how best to address social inequality and support the most vulnerable by:

- ensuring purposeful and high-quality delivery of education in the classroom
- nurturing a culture of openness and transparency to genuinely understand the community
- actively listening to what children are saying about their experience of poverty, and delivering lessons to help them make sense of what is happening.

The full article can be accessed [here](#), and may be of interest as you design your 2023-24 strategic priorities.

Free Resources for Schools

In a time where every penny really does count, freebies are always gratefully received by schools and teachers. Scholastic* helpfully compiled their list of the [Top 50 Places to Find Free Teaching Resources](#) in a blog post. It might be worth a browse as you start to plan your September lessons.

Magic Breakfast Success

In our last newsletter we shared our exciting plans to fundraise for 1 million breakfasts for children and young people in primary, secondary, and special schools nationwide through the Magic Breakfast scheme.

Magic Breakfast* explain how they work to *'ensure that no child in our partner schools is too hungry to learn by providing healthy breakfast food and expert support to help identify and reach those pupils at risk of hunger. A hungry child cannot concentrate so could miss out on half a day of lessons every school day if not given anything nutritious to eat first thing.'*



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We are delighted to have raised money for over 50,000 breakfasts towards our 1 million breakfasts for children and young people in primary, secondary, and special schools nationwide. From taking part in The Great Big Breakfast, to running the London Marathon and hiking mountains, the Connex Team has smashed our target and have been delighted to hear about how the funds are already ensuring full tummies set for great learning in schools

It's not too late to donate! If you'd like to contribute to making sure children don't start the day hungry, click the button below.



External Defibrillator Eligibility

Primary, secondary and alternative provision schools in areas of high levels of deprivation may be eligible to receive a fully funded defibrillator for their school and community. The list (published on 3rd May 2023) of eligible schools, can be found [here](#). Public access defibrillators are literally a community lifeline which we are sure your neighbours would greatly appreciate.



Early Years Research Opportunity

The Education Endowment Foundation* (EEF) are recruiting nursery and early years settings to take part in their next round of research designed to explore early language and numeracy development. You can find out if your school is eligible to apply [here](#).



Summer Listening

If you're looking for something to listen to on a long summer drive, or whilst sat in a sunny garden, take a look at these two recommendations.

Teacher Hug Radio* describes itself as 'an online talk radio station for the education community. Together, we unite teachers, leaders, disruptors and innovators. This is radio that is buzzing with ideas, one that supports, nurtures and evolves our teaching practice and enhances our teaching careers.' Find out more [here](#).

Connex Education Academy's 'After the Bell' podcasts provide quick tips, insights, and professional opinions about a wide range of education topics. The back catalogue of podcasts includes topics such as SEND and pastoral needs, support for ECTs, teaching and learning practice and a focus on tuition... plus many more. Listen [here](#) and follow on [Spotify](#) to never miss an episode.

Sowing Seeds for the National Education Nature Park

Primary schools nationwide received a free packet of wildflower seeds as part of the celebrations for the King's Coronation. This is only one part of a new and exciting partnership between the Department for Education, the National History Museum* and The Eden Project* who have joined forces to create the National Education Nature Park.



'The National Education Nature Park will be a network of outdoor spaces in education settings across England, managed by young people.'

Young people will lead the way in mapping, monitoring and enhancing their learning sites for nature - boosting biodiversity, equipping them with green and digital skills, and enhancing their wellbeing through an increased connection to the environment.'

(Natural History Museum)

Schools can register their interest to be part of the scheme [here](#) and can access free outdoor learning idea resources from [Learning through Landscape* here](#).

The National Education Nature Park is part of the Department for Education's desire to improve access to outdoor learning spaces and nature for children and young people living in the areas with the least access to natural spaces. **A £15 million funding boost** has been ring fenced to support projects including the Nature Park.

If you're a primary school in England looking to build more climate awareness and sustainable development themes into your curriculum and culture in 2023-24, don't forget to check out Connex Education Partnership's ground-breaking project with Our Classroom Climate. A full package of carbon awareness and clean air projects with accompanying lesson materials can be [explored here](#).

Expanding Attendance Hubs

Following a successful pilot of the Attendance Hubs model, the Department for Education recently announced nine schools and academy trusts who will form a wider network of regional attendance support. 600 schools are set to receive support as part of the expansion of the Hubs programme, in addition to the growth of an attendance monitoring programme currently being piloted in the North East.



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Many schools have struggled to improve student attendance since the Covid-19 pandemic, and much is still to do to support the most prolific absentees to reengage with education. We are sure that topics around attendance will continue to hit the headlines in the new academic year and remain committed to supporting schools to support students in making academic and social progress through providing top quality tutors and tuition. If you have a cohort of students who would benefit from additional support from one of our QTS Tutors following a period of absence, [contact your local branch](#) for more information.

School Business Network

Did you know that the Department for Education have developed a [School Business Professional Networks Directory](#) designed to enable school business personnel connect and engage with peer-to-peer support in your area? Teachers and other student-facing colleagues are encouraged to share best practice and network widely. It's great to see an opportunity for business staff to do the same.



How much does a polar bear weigh?

Enough to break the ice!

Sorry – we couldn't help ourselves! But if you're starting to plan for the start of the new academic year, welcoming new staff, students and classes, you may like to include some 'ice breaker' activities to create a positive start.

We particularly like some of the 70 ideas shared by Tristen Taylor* in this [blog post](#), including 'Would You Rather', 'Two Truths and a Lie' and a 'Bad Jokes Contest.' Enjoy!

From everybody here at Connex Education Partnership, we wish you a relaxing and restorative summer break!

Just a reminder that we will be here all summer and encourage you to get in touch with your local branch to discuss any staffing and recruitment needs. Connex Education Academy will also be live all summer to provide online CPD and accredited courses.

*Connex Education Partnership does not have any professional affiliations with organisations referenced throughout this newsletter. We share information that we believe will be of use and interest to schools in good faith, and in the spirit of sharing good practice for the benefit of all.

We are now on TikTok

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