

Be Connected (schools and academy trusts): July 2024

18 July 2024

Welcome to the last edition of Be Connected for the 2023-24 academic year.

As always, this issue is packed with the latest legal updates, sector insights, expert advice and guidance from our dedicated team of education lawyers and HR consultants.

Sector insight and developments

Commentary on the King's Speech

Our team have been quick to review and summarise the proposals set out in the King's Speech to provide you with a steer on what this will likely mean for schools and trusts. Included are Ofsted inspections for multi-academy trusts, a review of the national curriculum and a new legal requirement for schools to run breakfast clubs and limit branded items for pupils.

[Read more](#) →

General Election reaction

Nick MacKenzie, our Head of Education reflects on the results of the General Election, saying: "Schools and academy trust leaders and governors will hope the new Government listens carefully to and acts on the sector's priorities genuinely "grasping some of the nettles" it needs to.

"With future demographic trends leading to a fall in pupil numbers over the next decade and changes to where people live and work, as well as the rising influence of digital technologies such as artificial intelligence in the classroom, the new Secretary of State for Education must work closely with the sector to ensure schools are prepared for further challenges coming over the horizon."

[Read more](#) →

Trusts breaking barriers to support local communities

School trusts across England are increasingly playing a key role in bringing people and services together, helping to fix problems in their local communities, says a report by the Confederation of School Trusts (CST) in partnership with Browne Jacobson.

It highlights four approaches being used by academies and trusts to support pupils, parents and the broader community beyond the classroom.

It draws on existing examples from school trusts, featuring the work of Embark Federation, Oasis Community Learning, Windsor Academy Trust, the Reach Foundation and Dixons Academies Trust.

[Read more](#) →

Legal and regulatory updates

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSiE) 2024

KCSiE 2025 looks like it will be significantly updated and with the change in Government we may even see new guidance launched to replace it.

For now, though, let's focus on the changes coming into play this September and what we need to do about them.

We've prepared a breakdown of what's changed (and what hasn't!) and provided some practical advice and support so you can prepare.

[Read more](#) →

DfE review of relationships, sex and health education guidance

Earlier this term, the Department for Education (DfE) released a new draft of the relationships, sex and health education (RSHE) statutory guidance and ran a nine-week consultation which closed on 11th July.

The finalised guidance was expected to be in place for the Autumn term, but due to the change in government, it appears unlikely that the guidance will be published in its current form, particularly given recent reports of more than 100 organisations urging the new government to ditch the draft guidance. We shared some initial thoughts at the point the draft was released for consultation as to what this could mean for schools and trusts.

[Read more](#) →

Employment

What the new government could mean for employment law

Prior to publication of their manifesto, Labour had already set out its plans for employment in "Labour's plan to make work pay: Delivering a New Deal for Working People". Their manifesto committed to implementing that plan in full, including introducing legislation within 100 days.

It's been touted as "the biggest upgrade to rights at work for a generation", so it's worth considering what these changes might mean for employers now that we have a new Labour government.

The key features of the plan include:

- Recruiting 6,500 new expert teachers in key subjects.
- Banning exploitative zero hours contracts.
- Ending fire and rehire.
- Changing the remit of the independent Low Pay Commission so that it accounts for the cost of living.
- Avoiding any increase in National Insurance and Income Tax.
- Removing the age bands on the National Minimum Wage and ensuring it is a genuine living wage.
- Tackling the Access to Work backlog and improving employment support and access to reasonable adjustments for disabled people.
- Introducing a Race Equality Act and ethnicity pay gap reporting for large employers.
- Taking further action to reduce the gender pay gap.
- Strengthening equal pay rights and protections from maternity and menopause discrimination and sexual harassment.
- Enacting the socio-economic duty within the Equality Act 2010.
- Introducing a full right to equal pay for disabled people and disability pay gap reporting for large employers.
- Introducing basic rights from day one to parental leave, sick pay, and protection from unfair dismissal.
- Creating a Single Enforcement Body responsible for ensuring employment rights are upheld.
- Strengthening rights around workplace whistleblowing and sexual harassment.

Labour has pledged to "consult fully with businesses, workers, and civil society on how to put [their] plans into practice before legislation is passed".

Yet not all of these pledges will require legislation. For example, changing the remit of the Low Pay Commission, legislation and consultation will be required to bring into effect other pledges such as a new Race Equality Act. Therefore, whilst it is possible that draft legislation may be introduced within the first 100 days, it will likely take longer before such measures become law.

[Labour party manifesto](#) →

Learning and development

Making the most of your INSET day

September's INSETs are just around the corner, and many of you will already have at least one eye on topics, content, objectives, and outcomes for the training to be delivered. With that in mind, we provide a few tips on how to get the most out of the day and how to use it to gain insight into the training and updating your staff need throughout the year.

[Read more](#) →

Gain insight from influential sector leaders

Our #EdInfluence podcast has featured some very special guests and valuable leadership insight this term. Hosted by our head of education and executive coach Nick MacKenzie, the latest episodes feature:

- **ASCL Special with John Camp OBE**, President of the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) and CEO of the Compass Partnership of Schools. In the same episode, we also hear from other sector leaders from the floor of this year's ASCL Annual Conference, including:
 - **Dr Peter Kent**, Trustee and Past President of ASCL and the ICP
 - **Anna Crawte**, School Improvement Director from HEART Academies Trust
 - **Emma Balchin**, Co-Chief Exec of the National Governance Association (NGA).
- **Series 3 Retrospective, with Emma Hughes and Iain Blatherwick**, executive coaches and partners and Browne Jacobson. In the final episode of this academic year, they reflect on the highlights, recurring themes and hard-hitting ideas shared by guests throughout Series 3 of #EdInfluence.

You can access the podcast and subscribe via your [preferred podcast channel](#).

[Listen now](#) →

Meeting compliance requirements for the new academic year

Make sure your staff are up to date and demonstrate your school is compliant in key areas such as safeguarding, data protection, cyber security, and more with EduCompli.

Developed by our education lawyers in partnership with E3, our online compliance training is fun, engaging and built around our experiences of advising schools and trusts. Staff can access the training anytime, anywhere and on any device, all in one easy app.

You can experience EduCompli for yourself by registering for a free trial.

[Find out more](#) →

Training and CPD opportunities

With new cohorts starting in the new academic year, we currently have availability on our range of interactive online training programmes. Places are limited and courses tend to book up quickly, especially as we now offer group booking discounts, so it's worth registering now to secure your place.

Managing parental complaints

For school and trust leaders and their teams to gain the skills, knowledge and confidence to effectively manage parental complaints.

[Find out more](#) →

HR Pathways

Designed for newly appointed head teachers, school leaders and managers or those aspiring to move into a school leadership. The programme will help you get people-management right.

[Find out more](#) →

Data Protection Officer CPD

Our Data Protection Officer (DPO) CPD programmes provide school and trust DPOs with all they need to keep their knowledge up to date throughout the academic year.

[Find out more](#) →

Safeguarding training

This safeguarding course is designed specifically for governors and trustees, with an extended version for leads. It steers away from operational safeguarding matters and instead focuses on strategic safeguarding and good safeguarding governance, meeting the latest requirements of Keeping Children Safe in Education.

[Trustee and governor safeguarding training](#) →

[Training for Lead Safeguarding Governors and Trustees](#) →

Events

Our team of education lawyers and HR consultants have been delivering webinars throughout this term to support you with some of the key challenges and emerging issues you face.

These events are free to attend, open to all, and now available on demand if you missed them first time around. Just register using the links below and feel free to share with any colleagues you feel would also benefit.

How should academy trusts be preparing for procurement reform?

When schools return in September there'll be less than two months to get everything in order for the Procurement Act 2023 going live on 28 October 2024. The sooner you make preparations the better, as the new act brings significant reform.

[Find out more](#) →

The role of company secretary for academy trusts (webinar)

With significant changes in company law and the DfE requirements, it's more important than ever academy trusts gain a good understanding of the changing role of company secretary.

[Find out more](#) →

In the media...

- [School uniform costs: How things could change under Labour](#) | [Tes](#)
- [When will Labour deliver its education policies?](#) | [Tes](#)
- [Political debate causing tension in workplaces](#) | [People Management](#)
- [Key questions to shape your school's complaints policy](#) | [Tes](#)
- [Schools and trusts 'can't solve social challenges alone'](#) | [Tes](#)
- [The rise of parent activism and how schools are tackling it](#) | [Schools Week](#)
- [How to handle online incidents that start outside school](#) | [Tes](#)
- ['Blackophobia' teacher wins case](#) | [People Management](#)
- [Polly O'Malley joins Browne Jacobson's education practice](#) | [Schools Week](#)

- [Investigation: How trusts use teacher pay freedoms | Tes](#)
- [Leaders divided over Labour plan for Ofsted trust inspections | Schools Week](#)

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