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Introduction

Dear colleagues,

You will have seen that we will have a new Chair of the Trust Board from September 2026. Mark Blackman is a very experienced educational leader who has held a range of senior roles including Headteacher, County Education Director and Trust Chief Executive. He is now doing freelance work, often supporting Trusts that are facing difficulties. He brings a great deal of experience and connectivity to our Trust and I am greatly looking forward to working with him in the next phase of our story.

We will be thanking Adele Haysom for her remarkable contribution to the creation and development of Lighthouse Schools Partnership at our Governance Conference on Thursday. Adele is not disappearing from our board and will continue to be with us as a Trustee for the foreseeable future.

Sarah Cran, Lead on Governance, will be launching our Next-Gen governance model at the conference and Chairs and Clerks have had some pre-reading circulated; it is also [available here](#) and if you are joining us on Thursday you may wish to give it a look over.

I am delighted to congratulate Fran Martin, Headteacher at St Andrews, and Abi Oldfield, Headteacher at High Down Schools, on their appointment as Senior Headteachers. They will be joining the Education Team with School Improvement and Line Management responsibilities. This is another sign of the evolution of our structures, and development of our people, as we mature as a Trust. Fran and Abi will bring knowledge and capacity to the team and I'm really pleased that they have made themselves available in this way.

Finally, on National Thank a Teacher Day, I would like to expand this theme and take the opportunity to thank each and everyone of you for the support you give our pupils and colleagues every day.

With best wishes as ever,

Gary Lewis, Chief Executive



Update on Chair of Trustees

As you are aware Adele Haysom is stepping down as Chair of the Board of Trustees at the end of this academic year.

At the Trustees' meeting last week, following due process, a vote was undertaken to appoint a new Chair. We are pleased to announce that [Mark Blackman](#) has been appointed as Chair from 1 September 2026.

A robust handover process will now begin, with the rest of the board supporting this transition, over the next few months. More details on this, including updating the wider staff body and parents, will take place in the coming weeks.

Complaints - Policy review and key reminders

Over the coming weeks we will be reviewing the Trust-wide Complaint Policy (due for review in September 2026). We already have some alterations and updates to make, if you have any suggestions or ideas on how this could be improved please do drop [Eleanor Capel-Davies, Head of Administration](#) an email with your thoughts by **Wednesday 1 July 2026**.

A reminder that a copy of Stage 1 complaint response letters needs to be emailed to enquiries@lsp.org.uk for logging centrally. You should also be logging and complaints you deal with at a school level.

The Complaints Policy can be found on the [LSP website](#) and on [Foldr](#) (*LSP Policies\Operational Policies\Complaints policies, guidance and templates*) we have provided some template letters for Stage 1 complaints (school level). We [also have a page on the LSP website](#) which pulls together lots of information and guidance for parents on communicating with schools (including how to use AI effectively), and best practice approaches. This may be helpful for you to direct parents if you receive any emails regarding making a complaint or raising an issue. It is important that they provide us with all of the information within Appendix A of the Complaints Policy so you have all of the information you need to address their concerns.

If you have any questions connected to the Complaints Policy, how to respond or advice on draft letters please feel free to contact [Eleanor](#) who is experienced with both the policy and trained in complaints management by our solicitors Browne Jacobson.



Policy Consultation: Attendance and LSP Attendance Commitment

We are launching the annual consultation for the Trust-wide Attendance Policy. You can access the draft [Attendance Policy and LSP Commitment here](#).

The changes are highlighted in blue (yellow highlight is for schools to update once the policy has been approved by Trustees). Please provide any feedback or comments to enquiries@lsp.org.uk by **Thursday 25 June**.

The LSP Attendance Commitment document is an internal document which highlights the attendance behaviours that are important across our schools. This will be shared in more detail at the next Attendance Network and is only being shared now for your information rather than for consultation.

Natalie Wilcox, Director of Secondary Education and Lead for Attendance and Priority Pupils

Cancelled: Primary Geography Network

Unfortunately, we have had to cancel the final Primary Geography Network of the year (due to be held on Monday 29 June). If there is anything you would like support with in September, please [let me know](#) and we can look at your school's individual needs.

Neil Lankester, Director of Primary Education

Changes to support for Neurodivergent Children and Young People: Sirona Care and Health

A new needs-led approach is being introduced across North Somerset and Bristol to improve how support is provided for neurodivergent children and young people.

As part of this needs-led model, Sirona Care & Health are launching a Neurodivergent Needs Analysis tool, for education settings to use with families to better understand a child's strengths and needs. Please [click here to read further information](#) about these changes and what you need to do.

Schools will also be able to attend an information session - [click here to book your place](#).



Primary School Improvement Partners (SIP) for 2026/27

I am pleased to confirm the Primary School Improvement Partner allocation for 2026-27. We are really pleased to welcome Abi Oldfield and Fran Martin into new roles as Senior Headteachers working with two schools each next academic year. With this in mind there have been changes made to which SIP some schools will have next year. The table below indicates who your SIP will be and the number of days of support you will receive. The Central Admin Team will be in touch in the next month of so to confirm dates for these visits.

Neil Lankester, Director of Primary Education

School name	SIP 2026-2027	Days of support allocation
Backwell Schools Federation	Debbie Coker	6
Winford C of E Primary School		9
Easton C of E Primary School		12
Blagdon Primary School		6 x 0.5 days
High Down Federation		4
Yatton Schools Federation	Neil Lankester	7
Bishop Sutton and Stanton Drew Schools Federation		6
Northleaze C of E Primary School		9
Fishponds C of E Primary School		12
St Mary Redcliffe C of E Primary School		12
Golden Valley Primary School		4
Burrington and Wrington C of E Schools Federation	Chris Chamberlain	6
Ubley and East Harptree C of E Primary Schools Federation		6
Horfield C of E Primary School		12
Hannah More and Grove Schools Federation		4
St Peter’s C of E Primary School		5
St Mary’s C of E School		6 x 0.5 days
Flax Bourton C of E Primary School	Abi Oldfield	6
Whitchurch Primary School		6
Portishead Primary School	Fran Martin	5
Churchill C of E Primary School		5
St Andrews C of E Primary School	Natalie Wilcox	5



National Thank a Teacher Day - 17 June 2026

Today (17 June) is National Thank a Teacher Day, so we would like to take this opportunity to say a big thank you to all our teaching staff, who work tremendously hard in each of our schools.

Please feel free to share the image below ([download here](#)) on your school's social media or with staff, as we celebrate the passion, dedication and hard work of all our staff.





Reminder: Rewilding walk at the Belmont Estate

[The Belmont Estate in Wraxall](#) has been owned by the Rossiter family since 2012. It sits right beside the Tyntesfield Estate, of which it was once a part. Their mission is environmental restoration and public engagement. Watercress Farm in the valley bottom is being rewilded and the estate is hoping to offer more and more opportunities to schools to experience this environment and connect to nature. We have been offered a rewilding walk for leaders and teachers on **Monday 29 June at 4.30pm**. You are invited to join Gary to meet with Martin Williams who leads the educational work on the estate and there will be a chance to see what is going on and the facilities available for school groups. There will be some light refreshments to keep us going. If you or some of your staff or governors would like to participate, please let [Louise Bradberry](#) know by Monday 22 June so we can plan the event. You will need walking boots/shoes/wellies and appropriate clothing.





School Financial Benchmarking Comparisons for 2026-27 Budget Planning

Further to the benchmarking report produced from IMP based on the Initial Draft Budget on 22 April, the Central Finance Team have downloaded a follow-up report based on the Approved Budget 2627V1 as at **Friday 5 June**. Please note that the data contained in the report excludes any impact of the end of the PE & Sports Premium. It is also subject to any final changes following the quality assurance of the final budgets.

The report is available to [download from Foldr](#).

School Business Managers - Trust Wide -Information for 2026-27 Budgets - 2026-27 & 2027-28 IMP Benchmarking Reports - Primaries, Secondaries and Federations - APPBUD2627.V1

New Support Fund

The Board of Trustees approved the operation of the new support fund at their meeting on Wednesday 10 June. The fund will now operate to support schools, where applicable, with in year deficits for the 2026-27 and 2027-28 financial years. There were a few changes made to the arrangements as part of the consultation and as a result of Trustees consideration. An updated copy of the guidance showing the changes in yellow text [is provided here](#). The 'clean' version of the guidance is [also available](#). We are now working on the more detailed process and timescales for applications and will share this with you shortly. There are no actions that you need in relation to the support fund at the moment but this will be shared in our next communication.





Changes to FSM eligibility and funding from September 2026

As reported in the [bulletin on Wednesday 10 June](#), the DfE is expanding Free School Meal (FSM) eligibility to include all pupils from households in receipt of Universal Credit from the start of the 2026-27 academic year. [Guidance from the DfE has now been published](#) and we have summarised the guidance here to ensure that schools can prepare for the changes ahead.

As previously notified, there will be two categories of free school meals:

- ‘**Targeted FSM**’, which continues to be based on the existing £7400 income threshold; and
- ‘**Expanded FSM**’, a new category, which will apply to meals only, covering pupils who do not qualify for Targeted FSM, but who are in households in receipt of Universal Credit.

New applications and rechecks:

The transitional protection for free school meals (which has been in place since April 2018 and has meant that pupils becoming eligible for free meals under the benefits-based criteria have retained their entitlement for 6 years, even if their household circumstances have changed) is ending at the end of July 2026. This means that all pupils currently in receipt of FSM meals will need to be rechecked over the summer break and before the start of the academic year to establish FSM eligibility for the new academic year and ensure families have advance notice about any changes to their FSM entitlement.

These rechecks, as well as new applications, will be processed via a new digital system called the FSM eligibility checking service (ECS) which is replacing the existing checking system made available by the DfE. It will be available for all local authorities to use from Monday 1 June 2026, although Bristol City Council have been advised that access for them will not be up and running until July (TBC). It is our understanding that all schools in the Trust are in a contract for service with their LA for FSM checking, and so rechecks, in most cases, will be carried out automatically on schools’ behalf, but some action is still required by schools:

1. **Schools should ensure that all pupils with FSM eligibility recorded on Bromcom are also logged on the LA FSM checking portal.** If there is a discrepancy, with no record of the check on the LA system, parents/guardians will need to start a new application. If parents/guardians do not reapply, their entitlement will end at the end of the 2025-26 academic year as the transitional protection will end for all children this summer.
2. **Families should be advised of the need for rechecks to be carried out over the summer.** For pupils who have a current FSM eligibility record with the LAs, these rechecks will be carried out automatically except for pupils in North Somerset Council schools who were awarded FSMs over 2 years ago. Parents/guardians of these pupils will need to apply via their North Somerset Citizen’s account as North Somerset Council no longer hold their personal details to contact them or reassess their eligibility. If parents/guardians do not reapply, their entitlement will end at the end of the 2025-26 academic year as the transitional protection will end for all children this summer. For pupils in North Somerset moving to another North Somerset School in September, rechecks will be carried out automatically.

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Changes to FSM eligibility & funding from September 2026

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3. Once FSM eligibility is confirmed through a re-check or a new application has been accepted, the FSM eligibility is valid for the full academic year. If a pupil loses their entitlement, families can obviously reapply at any time if their circumstances change. Where rechecks carried out during the summer term show that a household no longer meets any eligibility criteria for FSM, schools should provide free school meals for that pupil until the end of that academic year. Rechecks will be required every year.
4. Schools must promote the extended eligibility criteria to families including new pupils joining the schools in September. Families who think that they may be eligible should be encouraged to apply and given the appropriate support with their application. New starters and any parents/guardians who think they may be eligible should apply in the summer break, so pupils receive the free school meals that they are eligible for at the start of next term.
5. At the start of Term 1, schools should check FSM eligibility on the LA portal, or via information provided by the LA at the start of term, so free school meals can be provided to eligible pupils.

It is obviously vital that the expansion of FSM eligibility and the need for re-checks and new applications is **heavily promoted** with families as much as possible before the summer holiday to ensure that there is not a significant drop off in entitlement or funding. To assist with this a webpage and posters have been created for you to use (see below).

Communication for Parents

We have put together the webpage below and information posters, which contain information and links for parents/carers regarding the FSM changes and any actions that should be taken, for you to share with parents/carers:

- [Webpage: Changes to Free School Meals](#)
- Information for parents Poster: [Changes to Free School Meals](#)
- Information for parents Poster: [How to apply for Free School Meals](#)
- [FSM Application form: download here](#)

Applications can be made online via the LA websites - please see links below:

[Bristol City Council](#)

[Bath & North East Somerset](#)

[North Somerset Council](#)

Alternatively, parents and carers can apply using the **application form above**, which should be returned to your school office by the end of the summer term.

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Changes to FSM eligibility & funding from September 2026

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Recording FSM eligibility in the school census:

Rechecks and new applications under the new FSM eligibility checking system will confirm whether pupils continue to be eligible for FSM, and whether they meet the targeted or expanded eligibility criteria. Schools must ensure that they return accurate information about the FSM eligibility of their cohort of pupils through the school census. From the start of the 2026-27 academic year, school census returns must specify whether pupils who are eligible for FSM meet the targeted or expanded criteria. A 'last verified' date (referring to the most recent check of FSM eligibility) in the school census returns between and inclusive of 1 June and 1 October is required for a pupil to be deemed as eligible for FSM and for the school to receive associated funding.

Pupil Premium funding:

Benefits linked to free school meal eligibility, including Pupil Premium, will **only be available** to the Targeted FSM cohort. Therefore, where Pupil Premium allocations are calculated using October 2026 census data, only the 'targeted' FSM cohort will be included. However, although transitional protection is ending for FSM eligibility from the end of the 2025-26 academic year, pupils who were eligible for FSM before the expansion will continue to be part of the Ever 6 FSM cohort after the expansion for Pupil Premium funding, even if these pupils are no longer eligible for FSM. That includes any pupil whose household income increases after the expansion, such that they either lose FSM eligibility altogether or become eligible for FSM through Expanded FSM. Such pupils will remain part of the Ever 6 FSM cohort for Pupil Premium funding for 6 years.

Funding for free meals:

Mainstream schools (for pupils from Reception to KS4) would normally receive funding in respect of free school meals as part of their core funding allocations (GAG). However, since core funding is allocated on a lagged basis, it will not include funding for the FSM expansion in the 2026-27 financial year.

Schools will therefore receive additional funding to reflect the increase in FSM eligibility from the start of the 2026-27 academic year through the FSM Expansion Grant for the 2026-27 financial year. The grant will be paid for one year only until the lagged system has caught up after which core funding will include funding for both targeted and expanded FSM pupils. Funding allocations will be based on the difference in FSM eligibility between the October 2025 and October 2026 census, at a per pupil rate of £505 per annum. Final allocations will not be issued until February 2027 and will be paid to schools in March 2027.

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Changes to FSM eligibility & funding from September 2026

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Funding for Post 16:

Schools will receive additional funding through the existing Further Education Free School Meals grant to cover the cost of additional Post 16 pupils eligible to FSM from September 2026. The eligibility criteria are the same as for Pre 16 outlined above and the transitional protection arrangements for Post 16 pupils are also ending at the end of the 2025-26 academic year. Checks should be completed ahead of the 2026-27 academic year to allow pupils to be eligible for free meals from the start of Term 1. The meal rate will, as a minimum, match last year's rate of £2.61 per student, but will be kept under review. Schools cannot carry forward free school meals funding for Post 16 for more than one year, and schools must notify the DfE the total of any unspent funds from any year up to and including 2024-25 (if not previously reported) so that unspent funds can be recovered.

Universal Infant Free School Meals (UIFSM):

Children in Reception and Years 1 and 2 will continue to be entitled to free meals, regardless of the earnings or benefit status of their households. However, families should still be encouraged to apply for benefits-based FSM. If they are eligible for targeted FSM, they could attract additional funding for their schools.

UIFSM funding is provided through a separate grant outside of core funding allocations. Funding for UIFSM is provided for infants who:

- are not eligible for FSM through the benefits-based criteria (through either targeted FSM or expanded FSM)
- take up the offer of a free meal

As FSM eligibility expands, it is likely that some infant pupils will switch from being funded for UIFSM to being funded for expanded FSM. As a result, the number of infants funded through UIFSM will decrease. Temporary revisions to the allocation of the UIFSM grant will be made to reflect the fact that infants currently receiving UIFSM will become eligible for the new FSM entitlement and that schools will receive funding via the FSM expansion grant for 2026-27 instead.

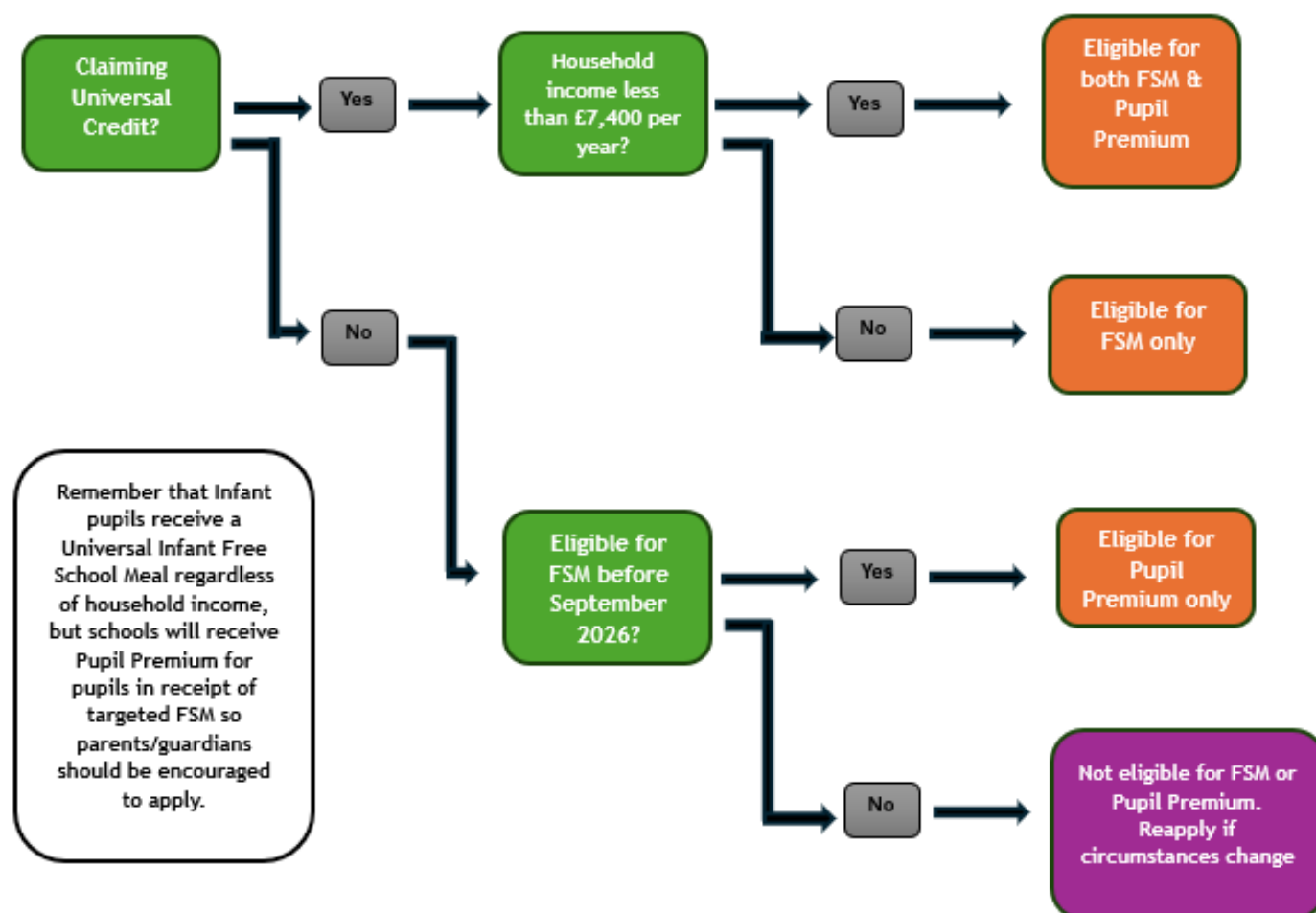
Each year, the UIFSM grant is paid in one instalment. This is comprised of a provisional allocation for the next academic year based off infant take-up of meals in the current academic year, and a final allocation for the current academic year based off infant take-up of meals in the current academic year. The provisional payment for the UIFSM grant in 2026-2027 will be adjusted downwards by 20%, based on DfE estimates of the increase in pupils becoming eligible to FSM. This is not a reduction in overall funding, but instead a transfer between 2 different funding streams.

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Changes to FSM eligibility & funding from September 2026

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Until we can begin to estimate the amount of FSM Expansion Grant that schools will receive for 2026-27, we recommend that schools do not include the additional grant and leave the existing estimates of UIFSM in their Master Scenario on IMP for budgeting purposes. The Central Finance Team will advise schools on changes to income when we have more data available, and at the same time, schools will need to increase costs for the provision of free school meals.



Reminder - Long Service Awards

As you are aware, as a Trust, we reward long service for staff with 20 or 25 years' service.

As we come to the end of the academic year, please can you check if any of your staff are eligible for a long service award and contact the [Central HR Team](#) with the application form to start the process.

We will also be recognising all those who have reached this milestone in the summer edition of The Beacon so we are keen to not leave any colleagues off the list!

To make sure colleagues are included in newsletter please ensure you have [contacted the Central HR Team](#) by the start of July.

A copy of the Long Service and Retirement Award Policy [can be found on Foldr:](#)

\\LSP Policies\\HR Policies





Aspens - Kitchen Cutlery

There has been a plea from Aspens for schools to please check their staff rooms, and any other appropriate area, to try and locate any of the school kitchen cutlery. These often disappear into staff rooms and are not returned. Locating and returning to the school kitchens will be a huge help in ensuring there is always enough cutlery to meet usage needs and will also ensure funds are not wasted on replacements. Saved funds go back into supporting the Aspens led school enrichment activities so the more found and returned the better!

Browne Jacobson newsletter and webinars

As part of the package of services we receive from Browne Jacobson, a range of webinars and a BeConnected e-newsletter are available to schools. If you'd like to receive their e-newsletter and details of the webinars direct to your inbox, please [click this link to register](#).

Data Protection - Advertising for school support staff

As a reminder, if you're advertising for school support staff outside of ESS/iTrent, please ensure the application form includes a link to the correct privacy notice. This can be [found in Foldr](#):

*LSP Policies / Operational Policies / Data Protection Policy and Appendices / Appendix 7
Job Applicants Privacy Notice*

Educational Visits Coordinator (EVC) Training

North Somerset Council are able to provide a bespoke Educational Visits Coordinator training session for LSP schools if there is enough demand. Please [email Trust Services](#) if you would be interested in further details.



Submission of minutes and LGB updates to the Central Team

At their meeting in July, Trustees will be ratifying changes to LGBs and reviewing RAG rating comments/feedback. Please can you ensure that, by **9.00am on Friday 3 July**:

- You have sent your latest minutes, including the RAG rating comment box to lgbreturns@lsp.org.uk
- You have [updated this form](#) with any leavers, new starters or reappointments to your LGB. A reminder that Trustees can make re-appointments in advance (for example reappoint in July for a term of office which will expire in October 2026).

Thank you to all those who have already submitted their board minutes. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to email [Sarah Cran, Lead on Governance](#).

Guidance for LGB Review of Survey Findings

A set of suggested questions has been prepared to support LGBs in reviewing and discussing recent pupil and parent survey outcomes. You can [access the questions here](#).

These prompts are designed to help deepen understanding, identify key themes, and guide constructive conversations with school leaders.

Please take a moment to look through them ahead of your next meeting so you can use them to inform your challenge and support.





Upcoming Lighthouse Learning Sessions and CPD Networks

The full programme of Lighthouse Learning CPD on offer for 2025-26 can be found on the [LSP website](#).

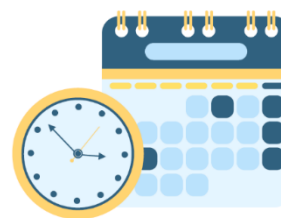
DATE	EVENT	AUDIENCE
Term 6		
Wednesday 17 June 3.30-5.00pm	An Introduction to Maximising the Impact of Learning Partners with Sally Franklin Online Webinar via MS Teams	All teachers & SLT in schools moving to Learning Partners in September 2026
Thursday 18 June	LSP Governance Conference In person at Backwell School	Chairs, Governors, Trustees and Clerks
Monday 22 June 3.30-4.30pm	Primary Priority Pupils Network Online via MS Teams	Primary Priority Pupil Leads
Wednesday 24 June 3.30-5.00pm	Practical Strategies for Maximising the impact of Learning Partners with Suzy Divine Online Webinar via MS Teams	All teachers & SLT in schools moving to Learning Partners in September 2026
Wednesday 24 June 3.30-4.30pm	Secondary Priority Pupils Network Online via MS Teams	Primary Priority Pupil Leads
Wednesday 24 June 3.30-5.00pm	Secondary Maths and MFL Networks Online (link to be circulated by Natalie Wilcox)	Secondary Maths and MFL Leads
Thursday 25 June 3.30-5.00pm	Secondary English Network Online (link to be circulated by Natalie Wilcox)	Secondary English Leads
Monday 29 June 1.00-4.00pm	SEND Network (all phases) Online via MS Teams	SENDCos (Primary and Secondary)

The rest of the Term 6 events will follow in due course.

KEY LINKS, DATES & DEADLINES



These reminders do not replace the LSP Annual Planner so please ensure you are checking this regularly (link on next page).



DATE	INFORMATION	FAO
3.00pm on Friday 19 June	Deadline to confirm Learning Partners attendance at INSET training (Friday 4 September)	Primary Headteachers/SEND COs
Thursday 2 July 8.30-11.30am	Primary Headteacher's Meeting	Primary Headteachers
Friday 3 July	Deadline to submit LGB minutes and changes to the Central Team	Clerks
Friday 3 July	Last day for submitting orders for goods and services for the current financial year	All
Thursday 9 July (all day)	Operations Away Day @ Leigh Court	SBMs/OMs

KEY LINKS, DATES & DEADLINES



Please note the following links will only work for those who already have access to the relevant site or folder. If you feel you need to be given permission to access something please [let us know](#).



Annual Planner 2025/26

Click to view the Annual Planner for next academic year (Via Sharepoint)

Bulletin Index

Click to access an index of previous bulletin articles



Previous Bulletins

Click to access previous editions of the LSP Weekly News Bulletin

The Beacon

Click to read the latest edition of the LSP Newsletter: The Beacon



SHARE WITH US

Don't forget, you can submit your school news stories to be shared in our newsletters and on our social media.

Email your stories to: newsletter@lsp.org.uk



LIGHTHOUSE
SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP