

8 December 2022

Dear Parents/Carers

Last day of term arrangements: Tuesday 20 December 2022

Please see below, the arrangements for the last day of term on Tuesday 20 December 2022.

	Years 7 – 11	Years 12 & 13
8.40am – 9.10am	Tutor time for Years 7,8,10&11 Assembly for Year 9	Tutorials/Tutor time
9.10am – 10.10am	Lesson 1	Lesson 1 Assembly
10.10am – 10.50am	Lesson 2	Lesson 2
10.50am – 11.20am	Break	Break
11.20am – 1pm	Tutor time and PM registration 3&4 Year 7 assembly 11.20am Year 8 assembly 11.50am Year 11 assembly 12.20pm	Private study and work on UCAS application, personal statements and CVs
1.10 pm	Buses depart	Buses depart

- Students will have the opportunity to purchase food and drinks during the extended break.
- The normal school buses will collect students from school at the end of the school day at 1.10pm.

Spring Term

Students will return on Thursday 5 January 2023.

Additionally, parents/carers may find the advice and sources of support below helpful for the coming weeks.

Children's Health Matters

Our local NHS has produced a free **Children's Health Matters guide** which is packed with expert advice and guidance on what to do when your child is unwell.

It explains how to treat children at home, when to see a GP or call 111, and when you should seek emergency help because symptoms are more serious.

The call to action is for parents/carers to refer to the [Children's Health Matters guide](#) which has been updated for winter 2022/23.

Scarlet Fever

You will have heard that there is an increase in scarlet fever in school age children in England. Here are some information resources that may be useful:

A fact sheet that covers what scarlet fever is and other frequently asked questions: [Factsheet \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/612422/factsheet-scarlet-fever.pdf)

Scarlet Fever guidance on symptoms, diagnosis and treatment: [Scarlet fever: symptoms, diagnosis and treatment - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/scarlet-fever-symptoms-diagnosis-and-treatment)

This gives the initial symptoms of scarlet fever as a sore throat, headache, fever, nausea and vomiting, which is followed after 12 to 48 hours by a characteristic fine red rash develops. Typically, the rash first appears on the chest and stomach, rapidly spreading to other parts of the body. On more darkly-pigmented skin, the rash may be harder to spot, although a 'sandpaper' feel to the rash should be present.

It also makes it clear that anyone with symptoms should seek a consultation with a GP. If the GP thinks it is scarlet fever the GP will prescribe appropriate antibiotics. The individual will need to be away from school for 24 hours after starting the antibiotic (or until fully recovered if not accepting antibiotics).

Cost of Living

[Help for Households](#) is offering support to help residents prepare for a challenging winter.

Visit [Energy Saving Trust](#) to find out how you can save money on your energy bills.

Funding for energy efficient improvements: If you're an Essex homeowner with a household income below £30,000, you may be eligible for £10,000 funding to make energy efficient improvements to your home through the [Sustainable Warmth Scheme](#).

Get specialist advice: You could get help from a specialist energy advisor if you are finding it hard to pay energy bills or have debts with energy suppliers. They might be able to help you get a grant to improve your home's energy efficiency. Visit [Warm Homes Essex](#) or contact the Citizens Advice Warm Homes team on 0300 3033 789.

Funding towards household costs

Anyone living in Essex can apply for the Essex Essential Living Fund. You will need to answer questions about your income, earnings and savings. You also need to give proof of your financial situation.

The Essential Living Fund can help pay for:

- furniture
- household furnishings
- white goods
- clothing and footwear, including school uniforms in exceptional circumstances
- general living expenses such as groceries, nappies, toiletries and money for pay-as-you-go fuel meters

You must live in Essex and [apply for the fund through Southend Borough Council](#).

Help with the costs of school uniform: Buttle UK are working in partnership with George at Asda to provide some of the most vulnerable children in the UK with school uniform this year. You can learn more about the campaign [here](#).

If you are looking for help with the costs of school uniform please read the information [here](#).

Warm Spaces across Braintree: In response to the rising cost of fuel and it becoming increasingly expensive for people to afford to heat their homes. Braintree District Council has compiled a [list of Warm Spaces](#) that are being offered across the District.

The aim is that no one is lacking a regular place to be warm and maybe grab a hot drink.

Please use the [map](#) or view the list of warm spaces across the district where you can go and meet local people, enjoy a warm environment and drink and feel welcomed.

Essex ActivAte Winter Programme

Working with a network of trusted local delivery partners, Active Essex are continuing to co-ordinate face to face clubs over the Xmas holidays.

These clubs are FREE for children and young people eligible for benefits based free school meals. They are also able to extend this support to a number of other children and young people who may otherwise experience in-activity or social isolation without access to this free support.

This is decided on a case by case basis so please speak to the organisation running the club you are interested in to discuss if this is an option for you.

If you have any queries please use the club contact details within each booking page, message us on Facebook – @EssexActivAte or reach out to one of the team to see how best we can support, by scrolling to the bottom of this page.

For more info and to book a place click [here](#)

Support for Ukrainians in Braintree

Since June 2022 Braintree District Council have been holding community meet up events to provide support for Ukrainian guests and sponsors in the Braintree District.

Dates for the events have been secured until the end of the year for Ukrainian guests and sponsors to meet and talk to others, share experiences, and learn about local services available to them.

The event will also include an English conversational language lesson to help guests with everyday English language at the beginning of the event. A Ukrainian and Russian translator will be available to support where needed.

They will run once a month on the following dates from 10:00-13:00pm at Braintree Community Centre, 19-21 Bocking End, Braintree CM7 9AE.

- Friday 9 December

It is a free event and there is no need to book a space. Refreshments will also be available.

Youthful Wellbeing Service for young adults aged 18-25

Working in partnership with local Minds they have launched a new service for 18-25 year olds who may be struggling with their mental health.

How can they help?

- Support young adults to re-discover their passions and interests
- Increase self-esteem, confidence and coping strategies
- Widen knowledge and understanding to help in decision- making

- Link young adults to local initiatives and opportunities
- Build a wider support network
- Provide tools for overcoming personal challenges.

Click here for more details of the service in [Mid Essex](#)

For further enquiries email: epunft.youngadultsMID@nhs.net telephone: 01375 531710

Braintree Library Events

A comprehensive list can be found here: [Events \(essex.gov.uk\)](https://www.essex.gov.uk/events)

Winter reading challenge: This year's challenge is all about the journey of Lyra the penguin. Challengers will help Lyra as she travels around the zoo, asking her animal friends all about how they celebrate the winter season differently around the world.

Children of all ages will need to complete at least 6 of the 12 challenges in our interactive booklet. There are prizes to all who finish, and an extra special prize to those who finish early!

Running from Saturday 26 November to Saturday 28 January, the challenge will support children's literacy skills.

The campaign is being led by Essex Library Service, in partnership with Penguin books and the Essex Year of Reading.

You can sign up to the challenge by visiting any of our Essex libraries!

For more information click [here](#)

Essex SEND Local Offer relaunch

We are pleased to share the new [Essex Local Offer website](#). This has been developed following research with families and practitioners. It includes improved navigation and a new look and feel. Information about SEND services and how to access them has also been updated. The aim is to help families and SEND professionals understand the breadth of support and early help on offer.

The new Local Offer website marks a significant milestone in our wider SEND improvement journey. It reflects our ongoing commitment to improving outcomes for children and their families. You are integral to this journey, and we welcome your support in sharing the new site with families.

Please visit the new site and share through your networks. We will continue to update the site, based on any feedback we receive. Please send any comments to essex.localoffer@essex.gov.uk.

Healthy relationships support in Essex

In Essex we believe that family stability is the key to delivering the best outcomes for children and young people, and that good parental relationships (whether parents and carers are together or not) are at the heart of that stability.

Arguments and conflict between parents occur for a number of reasons and when they are managed and resolved there are few, if any, lasting effects on the relationship or on children. However, where arguments are frequent, intense, and poorly resolved, children can be affected in many different ways; they may feel responsible, become withdrawn, sad or angry. These effects can have many impacts including their ability to form and maintain healthy relationships of their own.

Visit the [Healthy Relationships](#) page where you can find resources, hints and tips and links to some new online digital programmes.

One Plus One – online digital courses

If you are a parent living in Essex and you need some guidance and resources to help you with managing stress and conflict in your relationship you can access [online digital courses](#) for free.

There are three courses to choose from:

- Me, You and Baby Too is for new and expectant parents.
- Arguing better is for parents who want help with stress and arguing.
- Getting it Right for Children is for separating or separated parents.

On the One Plus One page, choose the **Central England** map and then area you live in (**Essex county, Southend-on-Sea or Thurrock**). You will be able to access the courses via Edge, Chrome, Firefox and Safari.

Family Mediation Scheme

The [Family Mediation Voucher Scheme](#) is a time-limited scheme, designed to support parties who may be able to resolve their family law disputes outside of court.

The Government has set up the scheme in response to Covid-19 to support recovery in the family court and to encourage more people to consider mediation as a means of resolving their disputes, where appropriate.

To support this, a financial contribution of up to £500 towards the cost of mediation will be provided, [if eligible](#).

Only mediators authorised by the [Family Mediation Council](#) (FMC) are taking part in the voucher scheme.

For more information click [here](#)

Essex Opportunities – Targeted and personalised employment support for parents

Targeted and personalised employment support is being offered to parents in Essex.

Parents can now book an appointment with a qualified Employment and Skills Advisor.

The advisor will provide online, telephone and outreach support. They will discuss individuals' employment goals and aspirations and have in-depth knowledge of jobs opportunities, careers advice and skills and training. The advisor can also help with things like interview preparations and presentation of CVs.

If you would like to speak with an adviser for information, advice and guidance please call **03330 320509** or email workingfamilies@essex.gov.uk.

Or visit the Essex Opportunities website [here](#).

Wishing you and your families a happy and peaceful Christmas break.