



Schools' HR Bulletin

Autumn Term 2026

For All Staff

Welcome to the Schools' HR Bulletin for autumn 2026 (post-summer edition).

The HR Bulletin is aimed at providing relevant information to all staff on a half-termly basis.

Any documents and resources referenced in the bulletin can be accessed on West Sussex Services for Education by your school's Headteacher, Bursar or School Business Manager.

Contents



Section One: Oracle Fusion	3
Moving to Digital Payslips, and Other Upcoming Changes.....	3
Section Two: Pay Matters.....	4
1. Pay Award for Schools' Support Staff.....	4
2. Pay Award for School Teachers and Leaders	5
Section Three: Apprenticeships News	6
1. Level 5 Specialist Teaching Assistant.....	6
2. New/Upcoming Apprenticeships:.....	7
3. Support	8
Section Four: Employee Benefits.....	8
1. West Sussex Choices Staff Benefits Platform	8
2. A Guide to Salary Finance.....	9
3. Gymflex.....	9
Section Five: Health, Safety and Wellbeing	10
1. New Statutory Allergy Requirements for Schools.....	10
2. Latest <i>Your Health</i> Newsletters	11



Section One: Oracle Fusion

Moving to Digital Payslips, and Other Upcoming Changes

From October 2026, the County Council will be replacing its core HR and Payroll system with Oracle Fusion. This will support the council's people processes, from recruitment to payroll, leading to some changes to how employees undertake personal tasks.

What is changing?

Employees with a unique school email addresses (name.surname@school or similar) will be able to access Oracle Fusion to:

- View digital payslips and P60s. The first Oracle payslip will be October 2026.
- Manage their own bank details
- View their own personal data.

Employees without a unique school email address will continue to receive printed payslips and P60s through existing arrangements. There is no action required for these employees at this time.

When is this change taking place?

Oracle Fusion will be introduced in two phases for school colleagues:

- School Business Professionals will gain access from 5 October.
- All other school employees will gain access from 12 October.

This phased approach will give School Business Professionals an opportunity to become familiar with Oracle Fusion, including the login process and supporting guidance. It will also provide an opportunity to confirm that the system is operating as expected before access is extended to all school staff.

Support

Short videos and how-to guides will be available to support employees in understanding how to access Oracle Fusion, how to view personal information, and view payslips.

School Business Professionals will also be invited to a series of online drop-in sessions providing more detailed guidance and an opportunity to ask questions to ensure they can appropriately answer any questions they might have at go-live.

Find out more

Further information on the upcoming changes can be found on the [Oracle page on West Sussex Services for Education](#), with answers to Frequently Asked Questions as well as the latest news. For further information, please reach out to your School Business Professional, who will be able to contact the Oracle team on your behalf.

Section Two: Pay Matters

1. Pay Award for Schools' Support Staff

Following negotiations at a national level with trade unions including UNISON, an agreement has now been reached for the 2026/27 annual pay award for employees on NJC, HAY, and SMG pay scales.

All staff on National Joint Council (NJC) (scale points 3 to 43), HAY, and SMG pay scales will receive a pay increase of 3.3% which will be backdated to 1 April 2026.

The 3.3% pay increase will be reflected in September's pay, which will also include the associated backdated payments. Pay day is Thursday 24 September.

The following information is available to support school staff who may be impacted by the pay award:

Further information regarding the pay award

If you either have a student loan or are in receipt of Universal Credit, and your pay is higher in September, you may experience some changes to your payments or deductions.

Regrettably there is no alternative way of paying the backdating and no option of phasing the payment. The following information may therefore be helpful to you.

Universal Credit

If you are in receipt of Universal Credit (UC) payments, the amount you receive is likely to change if your take home pay changes, including any amount of backdated pay following a pay award agreement. UC is calculated on your personal circumstances, so we, as your employer, do not know if, or how, you may be affected.

If you get any additional pay within a UC assessment period (month), e.g. when the pay award is implemented and backdated to April, your UC payment for the following month will be less than you normally receive, or your income may be too high to qualify for a payment.

If your income is too high for you to qualify for a payment your UC claim will close, and you will see a message on your online UC account.

All employees in receipt of Universal Credit will see a reduction in their payments the month following the one-off backdated payment, because earnings in the assessment month have increased. You only need to take action if your UC payment has stopped.

Will Universal Credit Payments start again automatically?

No. If your payments are stopped, due to receiving additional pay, you must start up your claim again. You should do this as soon as you can.

How do I reclaim Universal Credit?

You will need to log into your UC account and follow the advice about how to 'reclaim'. You will be asked to answer a few questions. You can access your UC Account on the [GOV.UK website](https://www.gov.uk)

If you have any problems, contact your Work Coach or visit your local Jobcentre Plus. There is also a Universal Credit helpline – 0800 328 5644.

Student Loans

If you have a student loan, please be aware of the following:

- If the backdated pay award puts you above the monthly repayment threshold, then a student loan repayment will be deducted from wages. However, if in the following months, wages return to below the relevant monthly repayment threshold then further student loan repayments should not be taken.
- If you are repaying a student loan you are likely to see an increase in your student loan deduction in September 2026, as the backdated pay award increases your overall income for the month.
- In some instances, the pay award may increase normal monthly pay above the monthly repayment threshold, in which case student loan repayments will be deducted for as long as wages remain above the threshold.

At the end of the tax year if total wages for the year are below the annual repayment threshold, you can request a refund of the student loan repayment/s that you have made. Details on how to get a refund can be found here on the [GOV.UK website](https://www.gov.uk)

2. Pay Award for School Teachers and Leaders

On 1 July the 36th School Teachers' Review Body (STRB) Report was published.

The STRB Report made the following multi-year pay recommendations which are currently subject to the Government's consultation process:

- From 1 September 2026, a 3.5 per cent increase will be applied to all pay and allowance ranges and advisory points, except for the minimum of the unqualified teacher range (covering England outside of London and the Fringe) where a 5 per cent increase will be applied.
- From 1 September 2027, a 3 per cent increase will be applied to all pay and allowance ranges and advisory points.
- The STRB also recommended an indicative increase of three per cent to all teachers' pay ranges and allowances for 2028/29.

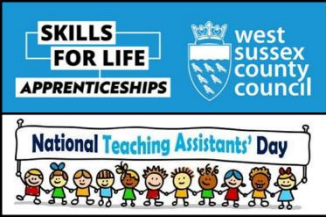
Teachers and leaders who wish to see how their salary could change following the 2026 pay award can use this [indicative teachers' pay calculator](#) provided by the DfE.

The pay award will be implemented following the conclusion of the Government's process and further information will be provided to schools when available.

Section Three: Apprenticeships News

The following provides information about apprenticeships and the support available.

1. Level 5 Specialist Teaching Assistant



Webinar: Level 5 Specialist Teaching Assistant
(New Enhanced Offer)

🕒 Thursday 24 September, 3:30 pm - 5:00 pm
📍 Online

Register

WSCC's new enhanced Level 5 Specialist Teaching Assistant apprenticeship is open for enrolments!

Click [here](#) or the banner above to register your attendance for our launch webinar on Thursday 24 September 2026.

As well as providing £12,000 in levy-funded training and assessment costs, comprising of:

1) Core higher-level teaching assistant (HLTA) training

2) Specialism training (choose one):

- A) Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
- B) Social and emotional wellbeing
- C) Curriculum provision

... the Level 5 Specialist Teaching Assistant apprenticeship now also includes:

3) Optional extra linked to specialism training at **no added cost** (choose one):

- Masterclasses: SEND leadership or autism
- Practitioner status: [ELSA](#) or [Thrive](#)
- Speech and language qualifications: [Elklan](#), [HLCP](#), or [Speech & Language Link](#)

Graduates also gain exclusive access to a [reduced-cost, assessment-only route](#) to gain professional HLTA status.

Name	Training in...	Relevant roles	Open for enrolments?	Levy funding
Level 2 Administration Assistant	Carrying out routine admin tasks to support school operations. Please note: the Level 3 Business Administrator	▪ Admin Assistant or Officer ▪ Exams or Finance Admin	From approx. January 2027	£4,000

Name	Training in...	Relevant roles	Open for enrolments?	Levy funding
	apprenticeship is also available.			
Level 4 Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Automation Practitioner	Leading the safe, efficient, and practical use of AI and automation in school settings.	- IT or Data Manager - School Leader - Teacher	From approx. November 2026	£18,000
Level 4 Early Intervention Practitioner	Delivering practical and emotional support to help learners overcome concerns or barriers (e.g., behavioural, learning difficulties, health etc.).	- Attendance and/or Behaviour Officer - Family Support Worker - Head of Year or House	From approx. December 2026	£5,000
Level 5 Specialist Teaching Assistant	Higher-level teaching assistance (HLTA) that includes specialism options (SEND, social and emotional wellbeing, or curriculum provision) and a reduced-cost, assessment-only route to gain HLTA status. New – enhanced offer that includes no-cost added value: please see section 2 for more information.	- Forest School Leader - Higher-level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) - Learning Support Assistant - Teaching Assistant	Yes	£12,000
Level 6 Early Years Teacher (EYTS)	The learning, physical, emotional, social, and intellectual development, and care of children from birth to five years. Includes gaining Early Years Teacher Status (EYTS).	Early Years Teacher	From approx. February 2027	£27,000

2. New/Upcoming Apprenticeships:

Email apprenticeships@westsussex.gov.uk to register your interest and click [here](#) to access the full catalogue of 50+ apprenticeships for schools.

3. Support

Contact Emma Morris, WSCC's Apprenticeship Consultant (WSCC PAYE schools), for assistance with answering questions about the WSCC Apprenticeship Scheme.

- Email: apprenticeships@westsussex.gov.uk
- Telephone: 0330 222 3751
- To book a Teams call click on the link [here](#).
- To read more about the WSCC Apprenticeship Scheme view our webpage [here](#).
- To apply for an Apprenticeship, click [here](#).

Section Four: Employee Benefits

1. West Sussex Choices Staff Benefits Platform



Provided by



New to your role? Make the most of your employee benefits from day one.

West Sussex Choices is your dedicated employee benefits platform. Through West Sussex Choices, you can access:

- Retail discounts
- Cycle to Work scheme
- Discounted gym memberships
- Health Cash Plan
- Financial Wellbeing tools and support

Visit westsussexchoices.vivup.co.uk now to find out more.

How to register on West Sussex Choices

- Visit westsussexchoices.vivup.co.uk or scan the QR code on the right.
- Select Register
- Choose West Sussex County Council – Schools Staff.
- Enter your personal details and employee number (found on your payslip)
- Confirm your registration via the email you receive.
- Start exploring your benefits!

TIP: have your employee number ready before you start



2. A Guide to Salary Finance

We'd like to remind schools about [Salary Finance](#), a valuable benefit available to all employees, designed to support financial wellbeing through affordable borrowing, saving and guidance. Their new [app](#) makes it even easier for employees to access their services. Salary Finance benefits include:

- **Affordable Loans:** low interest loans repaid through salary, designed to help consolidate existing high interest debts or reduce the overall cost of borrowing. Representative Rate 11.9% APR (fixed).
- **Save:** Automatically save a portion of your salary into a savings account to help reach your goals.
- **Learn:** A range of free tools and resources to help you understand your money, plan ahead and build better financial habits.

[Download the Salary Finance app](#) or explore the options on the [Salary Finance hub](#).

Important: This is an option, not a recommendation. Your employer does not benefit from offering this service and all your communications will be with Salary Finance. Loan applications will be assessed to ensure the loan is appropriate and affordable for you. "Learn" content is for guidance and educational purposes only and is generic in nature. Salary Finance does not offer regulated financial advice. Please seek independent financial advice. Salary Finance Limited and Salary Finance Loans Limited are authorised and regulated by the Financial Conduct Authority (firm reference numbers: 758053 and 734585) and are registered in England & Wales (company numbers: 09677777 and 07643748) at Scale Space, 58 Wood Lane, London, W12 7RZ. Data Protection Registrations: ZA152606 and ZA099501.

3. Gymflex

Save on gym and leisure centre memberships with Gymflex

Looking to boost your mental and physical wellbeing this summer, then why not sign up to **Gymflex**, our health and fitness staff benefit available to West Sussex County Council employees.

You can enjoy **discounts of up to 40%** off all the big chains, like Nuffield Health, David Lloyd, Better and Virgin Active, the low-cost operators like PureGym and The Gym Group, as well as many local leisure centres including Places Leisure and Everyone Active.

Additionally, you'll find hundreds of independent clubs on the scheme offering discounts on HIIT, CrossFit, yoga, pilates, bootcamps and lots more. With lots of options available, there's something on offer to suit everyone's location, preference and budget.

Your chosen annual membership is paid for by West Sussex County Council and then reclaimed from you via 12 monthly net salary deductions.

For the full details including how to apply visit [West Sussex Choices](#), our employee benefits platform and click the **Gym Membership tile**. Please ensure you read the full Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and the Ordering Process

Guide which are available on West Sussex Services for Education under West Sussex Choices Employee Benefits Information [here](#) before placing an order.

We also partner directly with local leisure centres across West Sussex offering discounted memberships. Check these out via the **Lifestyle Savings** tile and go to **Local Benefits** in [West Sussex Choices](#).

Section Five: Health, Safety and Wellbeing

1. New Statutory Allergy Requirements for Schools

The new statutory allergy requirements for schools known as Benedict's Law came into force on 1 September 2026, honouring Benedict Blythe, a five-year-old boy who tragically suffered a fatal allergic reaction while at school in 2021.

The introduction of Benedict's Law transforms allergy management in schools from recommended "best practice" into a mandatory legal requirement for all schools in England.

In July 2026, the Department for Education (DfE) published its statutory guidance, *Allergy Safety in Schools*, setting out the legal duties that schools must comply with from 1 September 2026. The guidance can be found [here](#).

Mandatory Requirements

From 1 September 2026, schools must have the following life-saving safeguards in place that staff should be aware of:

- A stock of spare Adrenaline Auto-Injectors (AAIs) that are appropriate for the age range of pupils attending the school (see table below).
- A standalone whole-school allergy policy, which must be published on the school's website and reviewed annually.
- Detailed healthcare plans for every pupil diagnosed with a serious allergy.

All staff working on site, including teachers, support staff, catering staff, and cleaning staff, should expect to receive mandatory allergy awareness and emergency response training annually.

A senior member of staff should act as the Allergy Lead, with responsibility for overseeing allergy management and ensuring compliance across the school.

Please check the Health and Safety pages on West Sussex Services for Education, where you can find model policies and templates including an example allergy safety policy for schools to download and edit, as well as access guidance issued from the Department for Education. Further guidance can be sought by contacting healthandsafety@westsussex.gov.uk

School type	AAIs for children under age 6 years (150 micrograms) e.g. EpiPen Junior, Jext 150	AAIs for individuals over 6 years of age (300 micrograms) e.g. EpiPen, Jext 300
State-funded nursery school	One pair of "spare" AAIs	n/a
Primary school	One pair of "spare" AAIs	One pair of "spare" AAIs
Secondary school	n/a	One or two pairs of "spare" AAIs *
Special school	One pair of "spare" AAIs	One pair of "spare" AAIs

* Secondary schools with large sites should consider having two pairs of "spare" AAIs, so that a pair of "spare" AAIs are available within five minutes of wherever they may be needed.

2. Latest *Your Health* Newsletters

The August, September and October *Your Health* newsletters published by our Occupational Health service provider Health Partners are now available.

In the [August edition](#) two expert counselling psychologists, Dr. Ana Silvestri and Dr. Emma Clarke, look at the 'comparison trap' which is often amplified during the summer months by social media. They explain what it is and how to shift mindsets. In addition, there is information on the benefits of 'mindful snacking'. Links to additional resources on both subjects are provided.

The [September edition](#) provides a guide for new and regular runners. In addition, there is information on understanding anxiety and your mind with insights from Dr. Anna Wachowska a clinical psychologist.

The [October edition](#) explores the menopause and why it's not just a women's health issue. In addition, there is also an article that provides information about cholesterol covering what it is, what it does and why it matters.

The newsletters can be viewed online by clicking on the images below:



END OF HR BULLETIN 16/09/2026. PREPARED BY KMG HR POLICY TEAM.