

News and information for Special Guardian families in Essex



Dear Kinship Carer,

As usual, we aim to keep you informed with the latest news, peer support such as Coffee Mornings and other agencies who can provide information. Remember we are always here if you require guidance, advice, or support.

Best wishes

Kinship Post Order Support Team

Upcoming Coffee Mornings



However you take it, you are guaranteed a warm welcome and a cup of what you fancy, interesting conversations and a chance to meet new friends.

Please be reminded that it is not appropriate for children to attend our coffee mornings, due to the adult content of some of the discussions.

Area	Venue	Date and Time
Basildon	Mother's Kitchen Café 6 Felmores End, Pitsea, Basildon SS13 1PN	Thursday 27 th February and 20 th March and 24 th April 2025 9.30am to 11.30am
Clacton	Weeley Village Hall, Clacton Rd, Weeley, Weeley Heath, Clacton-on-Sea,	Friday 7 th February and 7 th March and 4 th April 2025

	CO16 9DH	<i>10am to noon</i>
Canvey Island	Leigh Beck Infant School, Point Road, Canvey Island, SS8 7TD	Thursday 13 th February and 13 th March and 24 th April 2025 <i>9.30am to 11.30am</i>
Cressing	St. Barnabas Church Hall, Claud Ince Avenue, Cressing, CM77 8HG	Friday 14 th February and 14 th March and 25 th April 2025 <i>10am to noon</i>
Harlow	Woodlands Family Centre, 9 Peterswood, Harlow, CM18 7RJ	Wednesday 5 th February and 5 th March and 2 nd April 2025 <i>10am to noon</i>
Virtual	Via Teams – link sent out the day before	Tuesday 4 th February and 4 th March and 1 st April 2025 10am to noon

Imagination Library free books for children under 5

The Virtual School are very excited to let you know that they are ready to launch the Dolly Parton Imagination Library scheme for all 0-5s who have been known to social care, including those who are in kinship arrangements or who are adopted. 0-5s who are children of care leavers are also eligible.

This scheme gifts a monthly age-appropriate book to children alongside a parent/carer support email up to the month the child turns 5. It is completely free.

For your children that are eligible parents can sign up directly by returning a scanned/photographed copy of the consent form to the Virtual School inbox (virtual.school@essex.gov.uk), or through their allocated social worker/support worker if they have them. You will then be added to the system to receive the books. Please be advised that it is your responsibility to inform the virtual school of any change of address or if they want to stop receiving the books. Please see attached flyers for more information.

If you would like a consent form sent to you, please let me know and we will send you one.

Virtual School

The Essex Virtual School is dedicated to supporting children in care (CiC), previously looked-after children (PLAC), and those under Special Guardianship Orders, helping them to thrive as learners.

They aim to enhance educational outcomes by providing guidance and support that raises aspirations and expectations for these children and young people.

They work with designated teachers, social workers, carers and other partners at times of difficulty and need.

Their aim is to:

- improve understanding of the unique barriers to learning and education experienced by many of our children and young people
- promote and foster a culture that takes account of children and young people's views according to age and understanding, identifying, and meeting their educational needs
- work in partnership with all of those who support our children and young people to raise aspirations and expectations and build capacity to make a positive difference to their educational experiences and outcomes
- provide support and challenge where needed to ensure that the educational needs of our children are prioritised

For support and advice contact them on virtual.school@essex.gov.uk

<https://schools.essex.gov.uk/pupil-support-and-wellbeing/essex-virtual-school>

For further guidance please contact virtualschool@essex.gov.uk or www.essex.gov.uk/virtualschool



Training Opportunities through Kinship Compass

Compass is an independent online information, advice, and support hub just for kinship carers run by Kinship. They hold a number of free workshops. With the following planned for August. You can sign up for these using this link [workshops and roadshows](#) or by searching <https://kinship.org.uk/support-and-advice/training-and-events/>

- EHCP/SEND Processes
- Preparing for Sensitive Conversations
- Understanding trauma and attachment

From January 2025 Kinship are extending their training with new workshops which are now available to book.

- Foetal Alcohol Syndrome - understanding FAS
- Raising a biracial child - understanding the importance of identity, impact of racism
- Life story work - practical tools and resources to support kinship children to understand their family history.
- Understanding aggressive and challenging behaviours

As always, they also have their peer support and Someone Like Me services running, as well as our online and phone line advice support. <https://compass.kinship.org.uk/> or call them 0300 123 7015

Essex Kinship Post Order Support Team - Contact Details:

Tel: 03330139860

kinship.support@essex.gov.uk

<https://www.essex.gov.uk/children-young-people-and-families/special-guardianship>

Children & Families Hub: 0345 603 7627

After hours - Emergency Duty Team: 0345 606 1212

Mon - Thurs 5.00pm - 8.45am and Fri 4.30pm - Mon 8.45am inc. Bank holidays

If you no longer wish to receive our newsletter, please let us know by emailing kinship.support@essex.gov.uk and we will remove you from our mailing list.

Last but not least we would like to take this opportunity to thank each and every one of you for the wonderful caring task you do every day!!

