

## News and information for Special Guardian families in Essex



Dear Kinship Carer,

I truly hope that you have all enjoyed an amazing festive break, that all the left-over chocolates are now gone and that you are embracing the return to routine and normality.

My wish for each and every one of you is to experience lots of care, laughter and good health in 2025!

Having recently completed our Kinship Service Audit report I was struck by the overwhelmingly positive feedback from you, confirming that you receive the right support at the right time, at your pace and also praise for how the responsive the team are. The teams person centred approach that leads to building trusting relationships and an openness to accepting support and advice is truly heartwarming to have read and may our working relationship keep improving in 2025.

This is a personal invitation to please email me with any compliments or indeed concerns you have about our service, how we respond and support you and any realistic suggestions of what else could be done to support you and your family better. My email address is [corrie.castleman@essex.gov.uk](mailto:corrie.castleman@essex.gov.uk)

Best wishes

Corrie Castleman

## School Admissions – Primary School September 2025

Apply online for your child's primary (reception) school place.

<https://educationportal.essex.gov.uk/CitizenPortal/en>

Please ensure that your online application is submitted by 15 January 2025. Remember to re-submit after making any changes before the deadline.

All applications received after 15 January will be treated as late and will only be processed after all on-time applications.

Telephone: 0345 603 2200 or Email: [admissions@essex.gov.uk](mailto:admissions@essex.gov.uk)

## **Training Opportunities - NVR Course in Chelmsford**

The NVR course aims to offer a series of tools and techniques to support Kinship carers of children and young people who display difficult attitudes and behaviours. Carers are guided through a set of core principles based on the idea of carefully planned actions which will support them to manage their own and their children's emotions during stressful situations. As carers gain greater confidence and self-control, this enables difficult issues to be addressed in an effective manner through a process of increasing parental presence. As parental presence grows, the relationship between carer and child becomes stronger and more secure.

The course is comprised of a briefing and 9 two-hour sessions, taking place once a week. Carers will need to commit to attending all 9 sessions in order to successfully complete the course.

The course is being held on a Thursday morning from the 23rd January (excluding half term) 10am to 12.30pm at Victoria Rd S, Chelmsford CM1 1LN. Easily accessible from the railway and bus station and parking nearby at High Chelmer Car Park.

To book a place or for information please call us on 03330139860.

## **Safeguarding Kinship Carers to Safeguard their Children (via Teams)**

How to keep yourselves and your children safe: know the signs, what to look for and how to access support.

Monday 20th January 2025 10am to 12.30pm

Group to meet via Teams and Facilitated by Colleen Double – Kinship Post Order Support Team. If you are interested in attending please contact Colleen via email on [colleen.double@essex.gov.uk](mailto:colleen.double@essex.gov.uk) or call the duty number on 033301 39860

## 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 23rd January, 27 <sup>th</sup> February and 20 <sup>th</sup> March 2025 <i>9.30am to 11.30am</i>
Clacton	Weeley Village Hall, Clacton Rd, Weeley, Weeley Heath, Clacton-on-Sea, CO16 9DH	Friday 10 <sup>th</sup> January, 7 <sup>th</sup> February and 7 <sup>th</sup> March 2025 <i>10am to noon</i>
Canvey Island	Leigh Beck Infant School, Point Road, Canvey Island, SS8 7TD	Thursday 16 <sup>th</sup> January, 13 <sup>th</sup> February and 13 <sup>th</sup> March 2025 <i>9.30am to 11.30am</i>
Cressing	St. Barnabas Church Hall, Claud Ince Avenue, Cressing, CM77 8HG	Friday 17 <sup>th</sup> January, 14 <sup>th</sup> February and 14 <sup>th</sup> March 2025 <i>10am to noon</i>
Harlow	Woodlands Family Centre, 9 Peterswood, Harlow, CM18 7RJ	Wednesday 15 <sup>th</sup> January, 5 <sup>th</sup> February and 5 <sup>th</sup> March 2025 <i>10am to noon</i>
Virtual	Via Teams – link sent out the day before	Tuesday 7 <sup>th</sup> January, 4 <sup>th</sup> February and 4 <sup>th</sup> March 2025

		10am to noon
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## 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](mailto:virtual.school@essex.gov.uk)

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

## Pupil Premium

**Pupil Premium for all children adopted from care or left care in England or Wales under a Special Guardianship Order or Child Arrangements / Residence Order**

All children adopted from care in England and Wales, or who left care under a Special Guardianship Order or Child Arrangement / Residence Order, are eligible to attract the Pupil Premium (PP). The PP is to help schools and other providers of education raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and close the gap with their peers. It is paid to schools in respect of disadvantaged pupils in Reception to Year 11.

Carers will need to inform the school by mid-January 2025 that their child is subject to a SGO from care in either England or Wales and provide supporting evidence (e.g. show the school the original Special Guardianship Order). Mid-January 2025 is the date schools complete the annual School Census - this will then trigger the payment of the PP to the school from April 2025.

For further guidance please contact [virtualschool@essex.gov.uk](mailto:virtualschool@essex.gov.uk) or [www.essex.gov.uk/virtualschool](http://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](https://kinship.org.uk/support-and-advice/training-and-events/) 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

Kinship carers can also sign up here for compasses Cambridge taking place on 15 January and 26 February 2025 respectively, 9:30am - 2:30pm. For more information and to register please use the link [Kinship Roadshow Cambridge - Kinship](https://kinship.org.uk/support-and-advice/training-and-events/kinship-roadshow-cambridge/#about-the-event) <https://kinship.org.uk/support-and-advice/training-and-events/kinship-roadshow-cambridge/#about-the-event>

## Contact Details

[kinship.support@essex.gov.uk](mailto:kinship.support@essex.gov.uk) Tel: 03330139860

<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](mailto: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!!

