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Professional Development Opportunities 2025-26

Provided by Education and Children &
Young People's Services Directorates

www.eani.org.uk

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Foreword


In today’s changing educational landscape, professional learning and development is critical to enable continuous improvement and the achievement of positive outcomes for all children and young people. The recently launched DE TransformED Strategy NI and DE SEN Reform Agenda, clearly identify the central importance of professional learning and development in delivering educational excellence and better outcomes for children and young people.

This ‘Programme of Professional Development Opportunities’ brochure has been developed to provide a guide to the professional development opportunities available to school staff through the EA’s Education, and Children and Young People’s Services Directorates. This is a dynamic brochure, designed to be responsive to the needs of schools and will continue to be updated as new opportunities or needs arise.

Our professional learning opportunities cover a number of areas, and span across a wide range of roles within schools, from experienced Principals to Early Career Teachers, SENCos/Learning Support Coordinators to Classroom Assistants. By participating in these learning opportunities, we hope that you will not only gain valuable skills and knowledge but also become part of a community of learners engaging in professional dialogue and committed to excellence across our system.

Thank you for your interest in and commitment to professional learning. We hope that the opportunities set out in this brochure will support you as you support the learning and achievement of children and young people across our education system.


Cynthia Currie


Dale Hanna



Cynthia Currie
Interim Director of Education



Dale Hanna
Director of
Children and Young People's Services

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING



Professional Learning

Teacher Professional Learning refers to the learning and development of teachers and school leaders that will, through the acquirement of new knowledge, behaviours and practices, improve student achievement.

The approach to Teacher Professional Learning in NI has been outlined in the Department of Education's Learning Leaders – A Strategy for Teacher Professional Learning (2016), click on the tile below to view. The Strategy envisages a connected approach, allowing teachers and school leaders to identify their own needs based on the context and learning needs of the children/young people, thus enabling them to direct their own professional learning.

Professional Teaching
and Learning



The Supporting Learning Website

The website is available for all teachers to access, providing resources for professional learning such as:

- Registration for professional learning opportunities
- Signposting to useful and supporting resources
- Small bite-size case studies from a range of practitioners
- Self-led learning modules
- Featured modules with access to topical resources and support.

Supporting
Learning





Supporting Early Professional Development – Professional Learning for Early Career teachers completing Induction/EPD

Induction is stage two of Career Long Progressional Learning after a teacher has completed Initial Teacher Education. The overall aim of Induction is to continue to address the Core Values and Teacher Competences and encourage early career teachers to develop their critical reflective practice to continue to improve their teaching and the quality of pupil learning.

EPD is the third stage of teacher education, designed to build upon Initial Teacher Education and Induction and is an essential part of professional learning in which all teachers are required to participate. All teachers who have completed Induction are required to register with the EA to access professional learning in support of EPD.

Early career teachers are asked to register their status with EA each academic year to access professional learning in support of Induction/EPD.


Early Career Teachers
Induction and
Early Professional
Development



Supporting Teacher Tutors

The Teacher Tutor Professional Learning Programme is designed to build the capacity of new recently appointed teacher tutors. The teacher tutor professional learning opportunities provide information on the key principles and practices of the teacher tutor role as well as opportunities for collaboration and learning from experienced practitioners.

Supporting Teacher
Tutors



TPL Thursdays!

TPL Thursdays! is a programme of bitesize professional learning designed to support the busy teacher. Webinars take place on a Thursday afternoon between 3.45 pm and 4.30 pm. These short sessions are focused on ideas and practice that can be implemented immediately in the classroom with the intention of impacting on pupil outcomes.

TPL Thursdays!



STEM Health and Safety - Technology and Design and Science

The STEM Technical Team within the Education Directorate is responsible for providing Health and Safety advice and training to schools.

The Education Authority (EA), under its legal responsibility as an employer provides Health and Safety advice, affords CLEAPSS (Consortium of Local Education Authorities for the Provision of Science Services) membership to Primary and Post Primary schools of all Management types.

The Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations (PUWER) 1998 (Regulation 9)3 requires that employers ensure that 'all persons who use work equipment have received adequate training'.

STEM Health and
Safety - Technology
and Design



STEM Health and
Safety - Science





Community of Lifesavers

In March 2022, legislation came into effect stating that cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) and Automated External Defibrillator (AED) must be included in the minimum statutory content in Learning for Life and Work at Key Stage 3. CCEA has partnered with the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS), the Department of Education (DE) and the Education Authority to create the Community of Lifesavers Education Programme to support schools in meeting this requirement.

Community of Lifesavers



AmmA Creative Learning Centre

AmmA Creative Learning is an integral part of the Education Authority, Northern Ireland. It is a centre where technology alongside traditional media can be used creatively by schools, organisations, the youth sector and the community. Since 2005, the AmmA Creative Learning team have successfully implemented various programs and initiatives, benefiting teachers, adult learners, children, and young people. AmmA specialise in supporting the integration of mobile technology into classroom practice, including iPad. AmmA have been an Apple Regional Training Centre for 15 years. EA AmmA Centre has been co-funded by DfC / NI Screen for 20 years.

CREATIVE
LEARNING



Magilligan Field Centre

Magilligan Field Centre (MFC) is located in Binevenagh Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), one of the most varied and unspoilt parts of the coast of Northern Ireland. MFC staff facilitate and provide on and off site support for teachers and students in the delivery of day and residential outdoor education programmes with a primary focus on field study investigations.

MAGILLIGAN
50
mfc
Field Centre
1973 - 2023



PROFESSIONAL LEADERSHIP



Professional Leadership

Contact schoolleadership@eani.org.uk

The Professional Leadership Service provide a series of regional professional learning opportunities as part of the Education Directorate's continuum of teacher professional learning. The continuum ensures alignment between role complexity and learning needs, fostering continuous growth. The suite of programmes reflects a progressive, scaffolded model that supports school leaders as they move from classroom-based leadership roles to broader, system-wide leadership responsibilities.

Team Website
School Leadership
TPL



Steps into Leadership

This programme will provide **new and aspiring middle leaders** with the opportunity to engage in professional learning that will:

- Inspire, support and challenge through a research-informed programme.
- Challenge and develop thinking about key leadership issues.
- Provide opportunities for collaboration and engagement with other middle leaders across NI.
- Build capacity to lead an aspect of school improvement by taking the lead role in a school improvement project which has a direct impact on improving learner outcomes.

Steps into Leadership



Senior Leadership Pathways

This programme will provide **new and aspiring senior leaders** with the opportunity to engage in professional learning that will:

- Inspire, support and challenge through a research-informed programme;
- Impact both the person of the leader and the practice of the leader;
- Provide opportunities for collaboration and engagement with other senior leaders; and
- Build capacity to lead an aspect of school improvement at whole school level, by taking the lead role in a school improvement project, which has a direct impact on improving learner outcomes.

Senior Leadership
Pathways





First-time Vice-Principal Programme

This leadership programme is designed to support a network of senior learning leaders to explore their leadership role to lead high-quality learning and teaching in their school. The programme has an emphasis on leadership presence, effective communication, the principal and vice-principal as school leaders, and leading change that positively impacts on the school's learning culture.

The programme will provide opportunities for newly appointed or acting vice-principals to engage in professional learning that will:

- Develop leadership skills and dispositions;
- Inspire, support and challenge both the person of a leader and the practice of a leader;
- Encourage collaboration and connection.

This programme is complemented by the support of a coach-mentor.

First-time Vice-Principal



First-time Principal Induction Programme

This professional learning programme has an emphasis on the three domains of leadership practice: leading ethos, leading learning and leading improvement. In addition, the principal induction programme provides support on the operational leadership elements of the role with cross-directorate inputs from Human Resources and Legal Services, Children and Young People Services, Special Schools and Specialist Provisions, Operations and Estate, and Finance and ICT.

This programme will provide opportunities for first-time principals or acting principals to:

- Develop the knowledge and understanding of school leaders in relation to the systems and processes that lead to school improvement.
- Develop appropriate leadership behaviours and skills which empower them to lead impactful and positive change in their setting.
- Engage in professional learning conversations with other colleagues about a range of leadership issues and how these can impact their school.

This programme is complemented by the support of a first-time principal mentor.

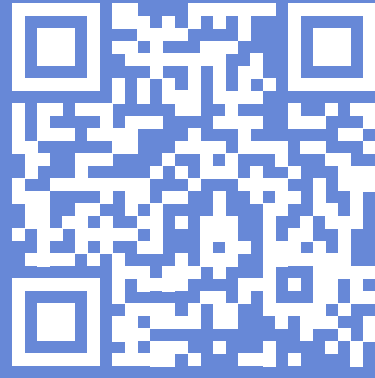
First-time Principal



Coaching Conversations and Practices in School

This programme is for teachers and school leaders who have line management responsibilities within their school setting. It is designed to equip participants with the fundamentals of coaching to support them in their professional conversations with colleagues. The purpose is to empower staff through solution-focused conversations.

Coaching Conversations
and Practices in School



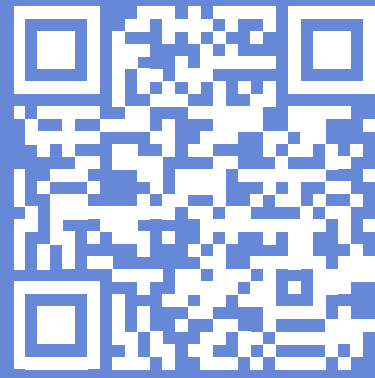
School Leader as Coach

School Leader as Coach is designed to equip school leaders with the skills and confidence to utilise coaching as a leadership tool that helps develop and improve performance of staff, to maximise the potential of all children and young people.

This key learning is explored through the lens of a school leader and makes specific reference to how coaching can be developed, expanded and embedded in a school setting. Therefore, it is recommended that all **members of SLT** participate in the programme in the same year.

School Leader as Coach is recognised and certified by the Association for Coaching.

School Leader as
Coach




Coaching Service for School Principals

The Coaching Service for School Principals provides school leaders with up to seven hours of one-to-one coaching focused on building and sustaining their resilience and capacity to lead effectively in an increasingly demanding climate.

This service is provided by qualified coaches from Inspire Wellbeing.

Coaching Service for
School Principals





SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

School Improvement

Through teams of School Improvement Professional Partners (SIPP), the School Improvement Service supports and challenges school leaders to build the capacity of their schools and settings to continuously improve educational experiences and outcomes for children and young people. Key areas include building and nurturing collaborative learning partnerships, supporting schools in identifying and planning for priorities, pre- and post-inspection engagement including intensive support for schools in the progress inspection process, identifying and facilitating teacher professional learning opportunities and leadership development programmes, implementing DE policy and EA initiatives and priorities.





School Improvement - Nursery

Enriching Teaching and Learning in the Nursery Setting Through the Use of ICT

To increase awareness of the ICT tools /platforms available to Nursery Practitioners. To increase knowledge and understanding of progression and development in Digital Skills. To provide opportunities for self-reflection through the sharing of good practice from case studies.

Enriching Teaching and Learning in the Nursery Setting Through the Use of ICT



Physical Development and Movement in the Nursery Setting

To support the development of children's physical skills through indoor and outdoor play. To provide opportunities for self-reflection through the sharing of good practice from case studies.

Physical Development and Movement in the Nursery Setting



Planning for Improvement

To support principals through the stages of self-evaluation leading to the development of a collaborative and impactful school development plan (SDP).

Planning for Improvement



School Improvement - Primary School

Learning in the Great Outdoors (KS1)

To promote high quality teaching and learning in the Great Outdoors. To provide opportunities for self-reflection through the sharing of good practice from a range of case studies.


Learning in the Great Outdoors (KS1)



Planning for Improvement

To support principals through the stages of self-evaluation leading to the development of a collaborative and impactful school development plan (SDP).

Planning for Improvement



Supporting High Quality Activity Based Learning in KS1

To support High Quality Activity Based Learning in KS1. To provide opportunities for self-reflection through the sharing of good practice from a range of case studies.

Supporting High Quality Activity Based Learning in KS1





Developing Middle Leaders

To support the leadership capacity of middle leaders by exploring their core roles and responsibilities, emphasizing the value of effective collaboration, and providing practical resources and support via a dedicated Microsoft Teams site.

Developing Middle
Leaders



Mathematics and Numeracy

The Mathematics and Numeracy Curriculum for Northern Ireland develops children's knowledge, skills and understanding in the five keys of Processes, Number, Measures, Shape and Space and Handling Data.

In 2024/25 the Professional Learning Programme of Offer focussed on Leading and Managing Mathematics and Numeracy for Leaders / Co-ordinators of this area of learning and on two key areas of learning and teaching: Number and Mental Calculation and Mathematical Reasoning and Problem Solving. The 2025/26 offer builds on this work and includes Mathematical Word Problems and the Use of Manipulatives to develop Conceptual Understanding in Mathematics.

Developing the Teaching and Learning of Mathematical Word Problems

This webinar will provide a range of ideas to engage pupils in solving mathematical word problems.

Developing the
Teaching and Learning
of Mathematical Word
Problems



Using Manipulatives to develop Conceptual Understanding in Mathematics

This one day 'in person' event will provide opportunities to explore a range of manipulatives and how they can be used effectively to develop conceptual understanding in Mathematics.

Using Manipulatives
to develop Conceptual
Understanding in
Mathematics



School Improvement - Post-primary & Special School

Self-Evaluation and Planning for Improvement

Two face-to-face workshops for principals and school leaders to support the process of school development planning.

Self-evaluation and Planning for Improvement - Making it Meaningful, Manageable and Impactful



Leading School Improvement Locality East

A series of 8 face-to-face after-school sessions for senior leaders and aspiring senior leaders in Locality East schools, aiming to build their capacity to lead school improvement.

Leading School Improvement Locality East



The Engine Room - Building the Capacity of Middle Leadership

A series of three face-to-face sessions for middle leaders to build their capacity to lead with impact.

The Engine Room - Building the Capacity of Middle Leadership



Transforming Classroom Practice – Using Evidence to Lead the Development of Learning and Teaching

A series of four face-to-face sessions aimed at leaders of learning and teaching which aims to build their capacity to foster a ‘finding out culture’ leading to improvement in pedagogy.

Transforming Classroom Practice



EDIS/C2K



EdIS/C2k

The C2k service provides connectivity, infrastructure, end-user devices, curriculum software, and a School Management System to all schools. Dedicated locality teams provide training and guidance to enhance learning and teaching and support critical school processes.

Professional learning opportunities are available for teachers, administrators and school leaders to support use of C2k services to encourage and develop continuous school improvement in the following key areas:

- Digital technologies and eLearning applications/tools
- Data Management including:
 - Pupil core data including Attendance, FSM, SEN, PLP, Interventions, Behaviour
 - Assessment tracking/baseline data recording, reporting and target setting
 - Exams administration in compliance with JCQ and AO requirements
 - Timetable & Curriculum Planning
 - Statutory return obligations
 - Personnel & Cover Management
 - Performance Analysis & inspection support
 - Payroll & Fees management (VGs/GMI only)
 - Financial verification and statutory obligations
 - Resource management & financial reporting (VG/GMI only)

For further details on the training and professional development opportunities available please visit the relevant sector link:

Nursery



Primary (including
Special & EOTAS)



Post Primary
(including Special &
EOTAS)



EdIS/C2K CPD





SCHOOL GOVERNANCE



School Governance

Governors are the key strategic decision-makers in schools and therefore have a vital role in improving and sustaining school and pupil performance, ensuring that resources are used well to give every child and young person the best possible education. Governors work in partnership with the principal to ensure that pupils have every opportunity to develop their skills and talents to their full potential, within a caring and stimulating learning environment.


This programme will help governors focus on their strategic responsibilities and understand how effective governance can contribute to raising the educational standards of all our pupils.

More information for school governors, and for principals as secretary to the Board of governors can be found under our School Governors Section on the EA website (click on the tile below to access).

EA provides training for governors across a wide range of topics linked to governors’ roles and responsibilities. The programme is open to all governors and comprises a mix of webinars, face-to-face events, and opportunities for individual, on-line learning. Full details are shared with schools each term, and can be accessed by clicking the tile below.



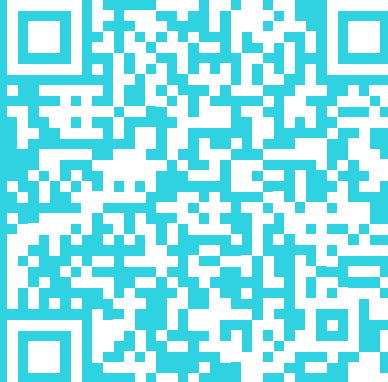
School Governance CPD



School Governors Section on EA Website



DE Governors’ Guide



SHARED EDUCATION AND SECTORAL SUPPORT



Support for Shared Education

SESS is responsible for working with schools and other stakeholders to promote, facilitate and encourage partnership through Shared Education. The SESS team currently support work in the following Shared Education areas: Mainstreaming Shared Education, the ASPIRE PeacePlus Project, Strule Shared Education Campus (Omagh), Shared Campus Programmes (Limavady, Ballycastle, & Brookeborough) and the implementation of the Community Relations, Equality and Diversity (CRED) Policy.

Shared Education
CPD



EA Ulster-Scots
Hub



EA Shared
Education Hub



Shared Education Co-Ordinator - Professional Learning Workshop

To support Shared Education Co-ordinators in planning, facilitating and evaluating high-quality Shared Education Programmes across Partnerships.

Shared Education Co-
Ordinator - Professional
Learning Workshop





Support for Integrated Education

The Head of Shared Education & Sectoral Support (SESS) and a dedicated School improvement Professional for Integrated Education provide dedicated support to all Integrated Schools. The team provide targeted support to schools who are embarking on or have been approved for Transformation to Integrated Status. This programme of support helps leaders and educators through the challenges associated with the transformation process by co-designing a strategic plan for transformation which compliments the School Development Plan.

EA Integrated Education Hub



Integrated Education Middle Leaders Professional Learning Workshop

To build capacity of middle leaders, within Integrated Schools, to deliver high-quality Integrated Provison within their setting.

Integrated Education Middle Leaders Professional Learning



Support for Irish Medium Education

The Shared Education & Sectoral Support (SESS) have dedicated Irish-Medium School Improvement Professionals who provide support to all Irish-Medium Primary and Post-Primary Settings. This involves hands on support, in school with leaders and educators, focusing on Immersive Pedagogy and the bespoke requirements of Irish-Medium Education.

The SESS Team have worked in collaboration with the EA Professional Learning Team to update Core Programmes to meet the needs of IM educators. This includes the Early Career Teacher Programme and the Teacher Tutor programme which now have a distinct Irish-Medium component facilitated by SESS Officers.

In 2025/26 the SESS Team will be delivering an Irish-Medium Middle Leadership Programme for Primary and Post-Primary IM Schools. This will be facilitated through the medium of Irish and carefully consider the bespoke needs within the settings.

Irish-Medium Primary and Post-Primary Settings will be supported through a 'Cluster Model' from 2025/26 onwards. This will help develop staff capacity through research-informed practice, build professional relationships to help support sharing and establish a culture of collaboration across Irish-Medium Schools.

The EA Irish-Medium Hub has been developed to support educators and leaders across Irish-Medium Schools. This platform provides a wide range of resources and materials which can assist educators within immersive classrooms. This repository will continue to evolve in 2025/26 with a focus on incorporating voices of leaders, educators and pupils to advance Irish-Medium Education.

EA Irish-medium
Hub



Irish Medium eLearning Conference - Using Digital Technology to Support IME

To build capacity of Irish-Medium Educators in the use of Digital Technology to improve outcomes for children and young people.

Irish Medium eLearning
Conference - Using
Digital Technology to
Support IME





COMMUNITY AND SCHOOLS



Community and Schools

This two-session series offers schools an opportunity to explore how CUOS can impact children’s learning and school improvement. After completion of the two sessions schools will be given access to an online portal of information, resources, case studies and a network of contacts to enable them to apply the learning from the sessions.

Building Synergy
Session 1 - Community
Use of School



Building Synergy
Session 2 - Community
Use of School



EDUCATION WELFARE





Education Welfare Service – Leading the Introduction of Restorative Practices in Education

The Education Welfare Service is proud to take the lead in embedding Restorative Practices (RP) across all educational provisions, creating a consistent, relationship-centred approach that enhances the emotional wellbeing, engagement, and sense of belonging among pupils and staff alike.

Recognising the central role that relationships play in a positive and inclusive school climate, the RP team will work in partnership with schools and educational settings to support the implementation of restorative approaches that align with existing pastoral and behavioural frameworks. These practices are not only effective in preventing and resolving conflict, but are also a powerful tool for building and maintaining strong, respectful relationships throughout the school community.

To support schools in this journey, a range of professional learning opportunities will be made available. These are designed to ensure that all staff – teaching and non-teaching – feel confident and equipped to contribute to a restorative culture. The learning offer includes:

- Introductory Workshops for whole-school staff, providing a shared understanding of restorative principles, values, and potential impact.
- Specialist Training for staff in key roles, focusing on skills and tools to support the implementation of relational restorative approaches in education settings:
 - Getting Started with Restorative Practice
 - Facilitation Skills for restorative conversations and meetings.
 - The use of restorative circles as practical tools for strengthening connections, encouraging pupil voice, and creating inclusive dialogue.
 - Techniques for resolving conflict and repairing harm in a way that promotes accountability and empathy.

This phased and flexible approach will ensure that schools are equipped to embed restorative practices in a sustainable way, tailored to their specific context and needs. As the lead within EA, the EWS Restorative Practice Team, will provide ongoing guidance, resources, and capacity building to support implementation and long-term impact.

By investing in restorative practices, we are investing in healthier school communities, stronger relationships, and more positive outcomes for all our young people. For further information, please contact RestorativePractice@eani.org.uk.

Getting Started with
Restorative Practices



Facilitation Skills



Education Welfare CPD



SPECIAL EDUCATION



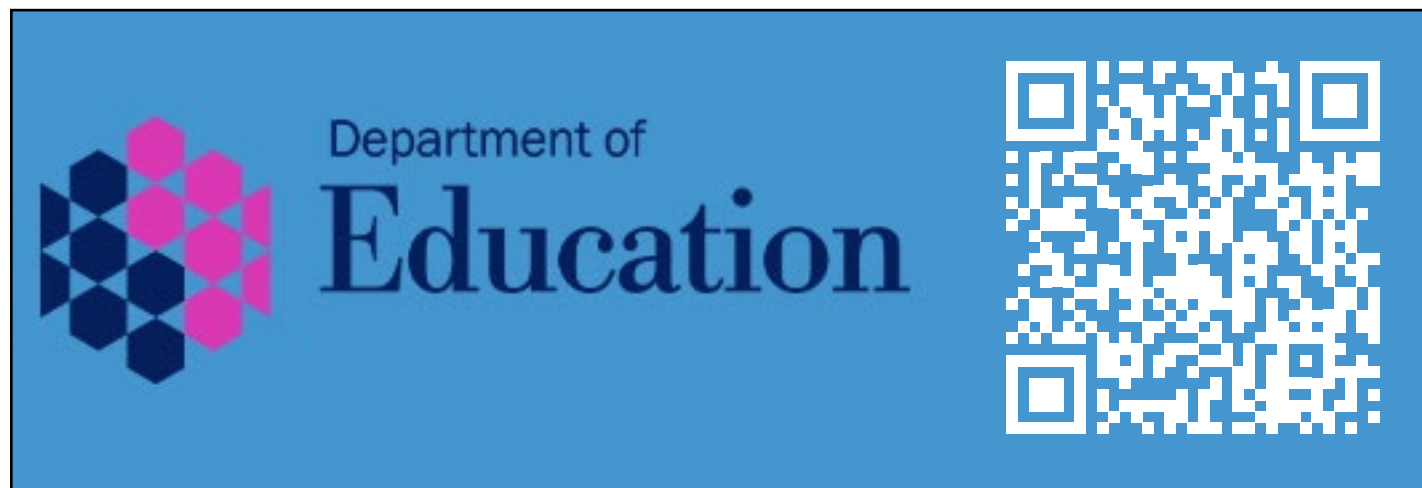


SEND Implementation and Development

Professional development opportunities are available to a range of teaching and non-teaching staff on the evolving legal and statutory landscape underpinning SEND provision in schools and educational settings. This enables practitioners to keep pace with changes in SEND provision and understand the day-to-day practicalities.

The current professional development offering focuses on the new SEND Framework including the Graduated Response Framework underpinned by the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (Northern Ireland) 2016, the new draft SEND Regulations and associated draft SEND Code of Practice.

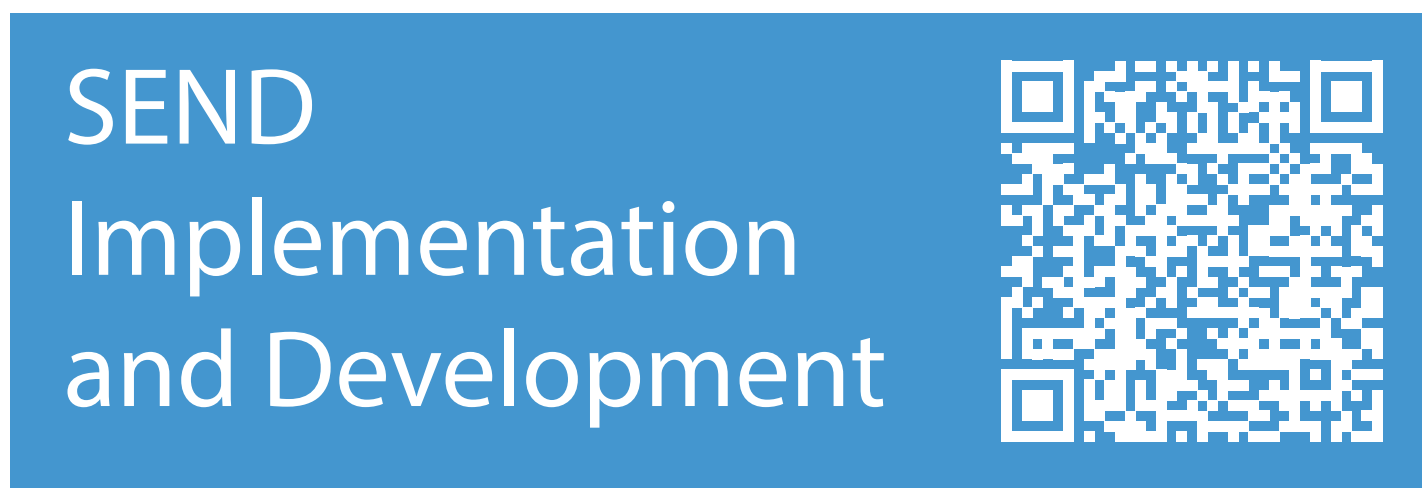
Further detailed information on this new SEND Framework, including each of the three elements is available on the Department of Education website by clicking the tile below.



The main aims of training and development provided by SEND Implementation and Development are listed below;

- Share updates on changes to legislation, regulations and the draft Code of Practice and support an understanding of SEND changes under the new Framework.
- Explain the resources and materials available to support staff working with children/young people with SEN, including the Graduated Response Framework.
- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders within the new SEND framework, such as the school SENCo/Learning Support Coordinator, and how to plan and manage these in various school settings.
- Provide an overview of the key operational duties and the management of these in various settings, including the recording of children/young people on the school SEND and medical registers.
- Provide an understanding of the process schools should employ when assessing the needs of children/young people and providing appropriate provision, including measuring impact/outcomes.

Select the tile below for a full list of professional development opportunities on SEND Implementation and Development throughout 2025/26.



Special Educational Needs

The EA works with schools and educational settings to help reduce the barriers to learning that children/young people with special educational needs may experience. Our dedicated team of professionals have a clear shared vision: To work collaboratively within an inclusive community, providing the right support at the right time to empower everyone around the child or young person, ensuring they thrive, reach their full potential, and be the best they can be.

EA's Graduated Response Framework sets out the learning continuum for children and young people with a range of educational needs and identifies examples of the types of interventions and support available. Central to this vision is empowering school staff by providing evidence-based learning opportunities which support improved outcomes for children/young people with special educational needs.

Five overarching SEND categories are used to help identify the support a child/young person may need:

- 1. Cognition and Learning
- 2. Social, Behavioural, Emotional, and Wellbeing
- 3. Speech, Language and Communication
- 4. Sensory (Deaf/Hard of Hearing and Vision Impairment)
- 5. Physical Needs.

Select the relevant tile below to view the SEND professional development opportunities for that phase.

Early Years

↓

School Age
(Primary/Post-primary)

↓





SEND - Early Years

Select a tile below to see the Early Years professional development opportunities available to statutory nurseries and non-statutory Pre-School Education Programme settings, relating to the five over-arching categories of SEND need alongside Autism, Medical Needs and those development opportunities which are Universal across a range of SEND categories.

A link is also provided to development opportunities specific to staff in Specialist Settings, and opportunities available through the Regional Integrated Support for Education in Northern Ireland (RISE NI).

Cognition and Learning



Social, Behavioural, Emotional and Wellbeing



Speech, Language and Communication



Sensory
Deaf/Hard of Hearing and Vision Impairment



Physical Needs



Universal



Autism



Medical



Specialist Settings




SEND - School Age (Primary/Post-primary)

Select a tile below to see the School Age professional development opportunities relating to the five over-arching categories of SEND need alongside Autism, Medical Needs and those development opportunities which are Universal across a range of SEND categories.


A link is also provided to development opportunities specific to staff in Specialist Settings and opportunities available through the Regional Integrated Support for Education in Northern Ireland (RISE NI).

See also a link to professional development opportunities to support the embedding of Nurturing Approaches.

Cognition and Learning



Social, Behavioural, Emotional and Wellbeing





Speech, Language and Communication



Sensory
Deaf/Hard of Hearing and Vision Impairment




Physical Needs



Universal



Autism




Medical



Nurturing Approaches



Specialist Settings










Specialist Settings

Specialist Settings Support Team (SSST) is a cross-service, multidisciplinary support team which aims to provide high quality integrated support for children and young people (CYP), parents/carers and staff of specialist provisions in mainstream schools.

Select the tile below to see the full list of professional development opportunities relating to Specialist Settings throughout 2025/26.

Specialist Settings



Special Schools

The Special Schools Service facilitates a cross-directorate, multi-disciplinary approach to supporting Special Schools, promoting and facilitating collaboration across Education and Health to help meet the complex needs of children and young people. A Designated Support Officer is assigned to each Special School, to assist leadership teams in resolving operational challenges, such as those linked to the expansion of the special school estate, to staffing pressures or to the expertise and resourcing required in meeting complex pupil needs.

The Special Schools Service also has full responsibility for the allocation and review of core staffing (teaching and non-teaching) across each of the 40 Special Schools, and for the financial management of the associated budget. A Designated Budgetary Officer is assigned to each Special School, offering support, training and guidance to senior leadership, to improve and enhance financial management.

The Service offers the following Professional development opportunities for Special Schools on request, in the following areas:

Early Career Teacher (ECT) Training

To meet the specific professional development needs of ECT working in Special Schools, specifically tailored to the special school environment. This includes a programme delivered across Term 1 & 2 designed to help teachers understand and meet the needs of their pupils, facilitate regional cluster groups and encourage and develop peer support.

This training can be requested by contacting Gillian Dowds Gillian.Dowds@eani.org.uk or Denise White Denise.White@eani.org.uk.

Manual Handling Training

This training is designed for handling children and young people with special needs and can be requested by contacting Thomas McLaughlin (Armagh) Thomas.McLaughlin@eani.org.uk.

Restorative Practice

Restorative Practices are evidenced to help develop individual's resilience so that they can navigate difficulties in a positive way. Restorative approaches address and repair relationships that have been broken through conflict and harm, focusing on relationships, communication and connections.

Professional development options available in this area are as follows:

1. Introduction to Restorative Practice
2. Getting started with Restorative Practice
3. Facilitation Skills for Restorative Practice
4. Restorative Circles Training
5. Peer Mentor Programme

This training can be requested by contacting Gillian Dowds Gillian.Dowds@eani.org.uk.





Summer Scheme Staff Training

Professional development opportunities are available to staff in special schools, specifically tailored to the special school environment in preparation for Summer Scheme.

This training can be requested by contacting Mary Loughran Mary.Loughran@eani.org.uk.

Financial Management

Professional development options available in this area are as follows:

- Use of Finance Reports - Designed for Principals, focusing on Financial reporting, such as Expenditure, Earmarked, Encumbrance, Requisitions
- Use of I-Procurement – Designed for Principals, focusing on the use of the I-Procurement system, including coding

This training can be requested by contacting Bernie Donnelly Bernie.Donnelly@eani.org.uk or Catherine Hull Catherine.Hull@eani.org.uk.

Select the tile below to see further professional learning and development opportunities for special school staff throughout 2025/26.

Special Schools



SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION





Safeguarding and Child Protection

Safeguarding and Child Protection in Education refers to the policies, practices and measures that schools and settings implement to protect children from harm, abuse and neglect.

Ensuring the welfare of our children must be our highest priority. All staff working in education share a responsibility to ensure children are safe while at school and that our schools and EOTAS settings play a full role in the wider child protection and safeguarding system.

The EA’s Child Protection Support Service (CPSS) provides a range of courses to help support good practice and build capacity in this area. Some of these courses are only open to staff who have been appointed to their schools’ safeguarding team. However, there are a range of wider pre-recorded webinars that are available to all school staff. These are being added to on an ongoing basis.

Select the tile below for a full list of professional development opportunities relating to Child Protection and Safeguarding throughout 2025/26.

Safeguarding and Child Protection Training for Principals, DTs & DDTs



Professional Development Opportunities



EMOTIONAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING



Emotional Health and Wellbeing

The Department of Education and Department of Health jointly published the Children & Young People’s Emotional Health and Wellbeing in Education Framework on 26 February 2021.

The main emphasis of the Framework is to support educational settings to promote emotional health and wellbeing at a universal level, through a holistic, multi-disciplinary approach, building resilience to enable our children and young people to cope with challenges they may face in life and providing early and enhanced support for those who may be at risk or showing signs of needing further help.

The Children & Young People’s Emotional Health and Wellbeing in Education Framework can be accessed by scanning the QR code below.

Emotional Health
and Wellbeing in
Education Framework




Educational settings play a vital and unique role in fostering the emotional health and wellbeing of their entire school community. Emotional Health and Wellbeing professional development and learning is tailored to meet the needs of school staff in various roles (see individual course details) who will be provided with knowledge, skills and practical strategies to support children and young people. Professional development opportunities include:

- Promoting Positive Emotional Health and Wellbeing
- Nurturing resilience
- Emotionally Based school Non-Attendance
- Suicide Awareness Training – Connections link Life
- Bereavement and Loss
- Developing a Whole School Response to Bereavement and Critical Incidents (2 day)

Scan the QR code below to find out more.

Emotional, Health
and Wellbeing





In addition, the Being Well, Doing Well (BWDW) Whole School Approach to Emotional Health and Wellbeing Programme provides a comprehensive framework of support and guidance to help schools to baseline audit and improve their emotional health and wellbeing policies and practice. Participating schools also have access to professional development and learning opportunities for all staff.

Scan the QR code below to find out more.

Emotional, Health
and Wellbeing
Website



Child Looked After (Primary)

The creation of an informed and responsive environment for Children Looked After in Education is vital to ensure children can feel emotionally safe, settled to learn and achieve to their full learning potential. The Primary Children Looked After Advisory Service (PCLAAS) is an early intervention, prevention, and advocacy provision that seeks to implement and sustain best evidence-based practice in Schools and Education Settings.

Whole School and specific professional development opportunities are available in the following areas:

- The Attach Programme (TAP) Trauma and Attachment Whole School Approach
- Understanding the Social Care System and Children Looked After
- It Begins with You: Take Care and a Culture of Caring

Select the tile below to review the full PCLAAS professional learning and development offer for 2025/2026.

Professional Development Opportunities





Nurturing Approaches

The development and implementation of universal early intervention and preventative school-based supports and training is facilitated by the Nurture Advisory & Support Service (NASS) through the delivery of the Nurture in Education Programme (NEP).

The NEP is a progressive, trauma informed, strengths-based model of school capacity building that focuses on developing an awareness of nurturing approaches and Trauma Informed Practice (TIP). The NEP enables schools to establish a culture and ethos of wellbeing for all, whilst implementing more targeted interventions for pupils experiencing a range of social, behaviour, emotional and wellbeing (SBEW) needs.

The programme promotes the key principles of attachment, consistency, resilience and trauma informed practice at a whole school level by utilising the six principles of nurture to enable children who attend school, in challenging circumstances, to begin to have more consistency and stability in their lives.

Whole school and bespoke professional development opportunities are available in areas such as early intervention and preventative practice.

Select the tile below to see the full Nurturing Approaches professional learning and development offering for 2025/26

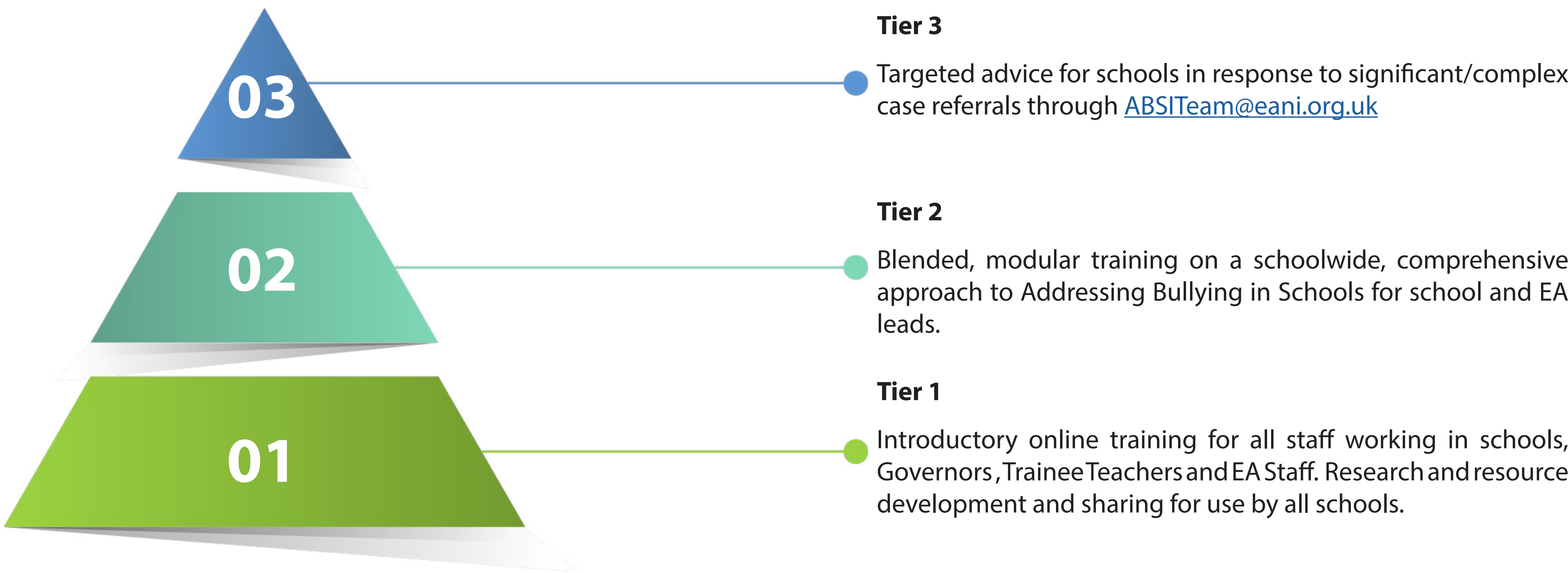
Professional
Development
Offering

Addressing Bullying Type Behaviour

Part of the role of the Addressing Bullying Behaviour in Schools Team (ABSIT) outlined by Department of Education is to:

- Support schools with the implementation of the Addressing Bullying in Schools Act (NI) 2016;
- Deliver a tiered training model;
- Provide guidance and advice to schools, signposting statutory guidance and resources for families and supporting multi-service/agency response as appropriate;
- Share with schools evidence informed examples of best practice in addressing bullying type behaviour.

To support schools, ABSIT provide a tiered model of professional development:



Select a tile below to see the full Addressing Bullying Type Behaviour in Schools professional learning and development offering for 2025/26.

Professional Development Offering

School Leadership Training Programme

School Governor Training

