

Notice of Schools Forum



Date: Monday, 29 September 2025 at 10.00 am

Venue: Royal Hampshire Committee Room, BCP Civic Centre, Bournemouth
BH2 6DY / Via MS Teams

Chairman:

Geoff Cherrill Maintained Special

Vice-Chairman:

Patrick Earnshaw Academies – Secondary

Kate Carter	Academies - Primary
Esther Curry	Academies - Primary
Chris Jackson	Academies - Primary
Chris Moody	Academies - Primary
Sean Preston	Academies - Primary
Heather Spring	Academies - Primary
Vacancy	Academies - Primary
Mark Avoth	Academies - Secondary
Sian Phillips	Academies - Secondary
Michelle Dyer	Academies - Secondary
James Sankey	Academies - Secondary
Matthew Woodville	Academies - Secondary
Vacancy	Academies - Secondary
Sarah McCurrie	Special Academies
Ben Doyle	All Through Academies
Russell Arnold	Alternative Provision Academy
Chris Barnett	Maintained Secondary
Phillip Gavin	Mainstream PRU
Vicky Peters	Early Years
Linda Duly	Early Years
Vacancy	Catholic Diocese
Richard Wharton	C of E Diocese Representative

All Members of the Schools Forum are summoned to attend this remote meeting to consider the items of business set out on the agenda below.

The press and public are welcome to attend this remote meeting and should email any request to do so to the meeting contact below, and a meeting invite will be sent.

<https://democracy.bcpCouncil.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?MIId=6262>

If you would like any further information on the items to be considered at the meeting please contact: Claire Johnston on 01202 096660 or email democratic.services@bcpCouncil.gov.uk

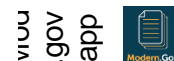
Press enquiries should be directed to the Press Office: Tel: 01202 118686 or email press.office@bcpCouncil.gov.uk

This notice and all the papers mentioned within it are available at democracy.bcpCouncil.gov.uk

**DEBATE
NOT HATE**

BCP Council Civic

urnemc



AIDAN DUNN
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

19 September 2025

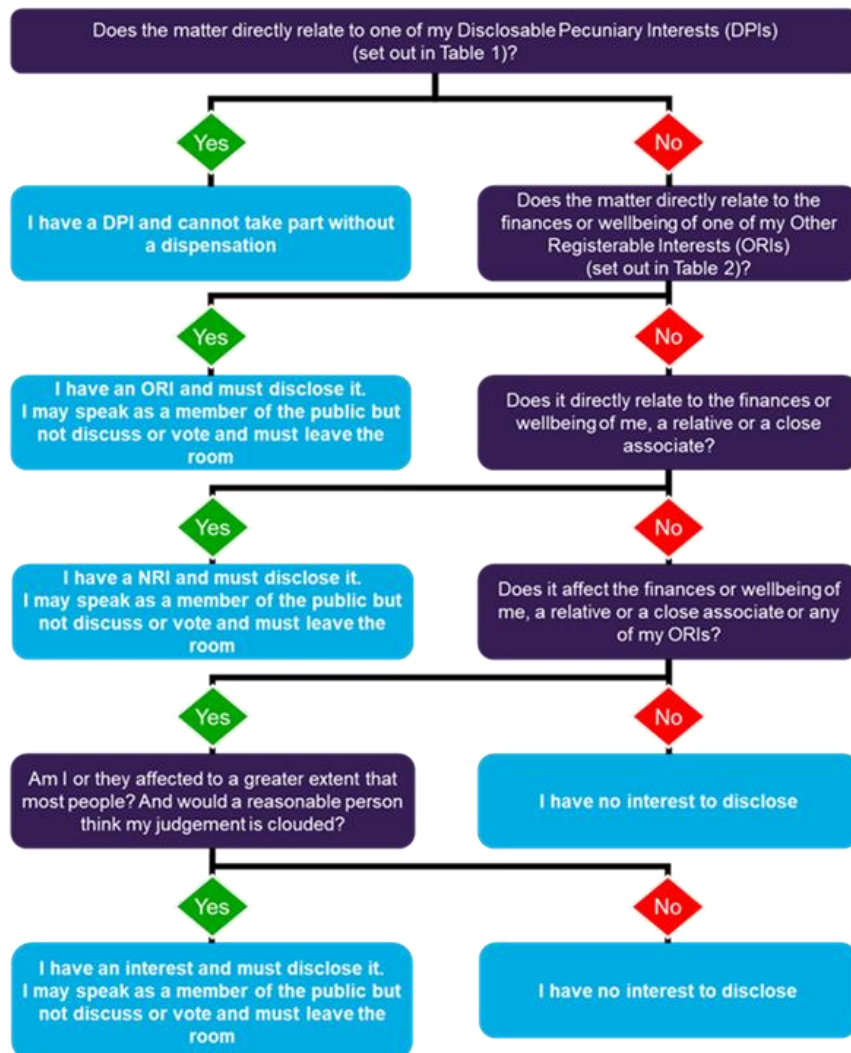


Maintaining and promoting high standards of conduct

Declaring interests at meetings

Familiarise yourself with the Councillor Code of Conduct which can be found in Part 6 of the Council's Constitution.

Before the meeting, read the agenda and reports to see if the matters to be discussed at the meeting concern your interests



What are the principles of bias and pre-determination and how do they affect my participation in the meeting?

Bias and predetermination are common law concepts. If they affect you, your participation in the meeting may call into question the decision arrived at on the item.

Bias Test

In all the circumstances, would it lead a fair minded and informed observer to conclude that there was a real possibility or a real danger that the decision maker was biased?

Predetermination Test

At the time of making the decision, did the decision maker have a closed mind?

If a councillor appears to be biased or to have predetermined their decision, they must NOT participate in the meeting.

For more information or advice please contact the Monitoring Officer

Selflessness

Councillors should act solely in terms of the public interest

Integrity

Councillors must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must declare and resolve any interests and relationships

Objectivity

Councillors must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias

Accountability

Councillors are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this

Openness

Councillors should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing

Honesty & Integrity

Councillors should act with honesty and integrity and should not place themselves in situations where their honesty and integrity may be questioned

Leadership

Councillors should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs

AGENDA

Items to be considered while the meeting is open to the public

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| 1. Apologies for Absence
To receive any apologies for absence. | |
| 2. Declarations of Interest
Councillors are requested to declare any interests on items included in this agenda. Please refer to the workflow on the preceding page for guidance. Declarations received will be reported at the meeting. | |
| 3. Election of Chair
To elect a Chair of the Forum. | |
| 4. Election of Vice-Chair
To elect a Vice-Chair of the Forum. | |
| 5. Minutes of the Previous Meeting
To confirm the minutes of the previous meeting, held on 23 June 2025, as a correct record. | 5 - 10 |
| 6. School Forum Membership/ Reconstitution/ Terms of Reference | To Follow |
| 7. Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) - Budget Monitoring and High Needs Update at Quarter One 2025-26 | To Follow |
| 8. Funding Update

To provide a verbal update to the Forum on Funding. | Verbal Report |
| 9. Pre EHCP Funding - discussion

To receive an update and have a discussion regarding Pre EHCP Funding. | Verbal Report |
| 10. Any Other Business
To consider any other business, which, in the opinion of the Chairman, is of sufficient urgency to warrant consideration. | |
| 11. Forward Plan
To consider and note the Forward Plan | 11 - 12 |
| 12. Dates of Future Meetings
The Forum is asked to note the previously agreed dates: | |

- 24 November 2025
- 19 January 2026
- 22 June 2026

And to agree its future meeting dates as outlined below:

- 21 September 2026
- 16 November 2026
- 11 January 2027
- 21 June 2027

No other items of business can be considered unless the Chairman decides the matter is urgent for reasons that must be specified and recorded in the Minutes.

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BOURNEMOUTH, CHRISTCHURCH AND POOLE COUNCIL
SCHOOLS FORUM

Minutes of the Meeting held on 23 June 2025 at 10.00 am

Present: Geoff Cherrill (Maintained Special) – Chairman
Patrick Earnshaw (Academies - Secondary) – Vice-Chairman
Kate Carter, TEACH Academies Trust, Academies – Primary
Chris Jackson, Avonwood Primary, Academies - Primary
Chris Moody, CFO - Delta Education Trust, Academies – Primary
Heather Spring, Twynham Primary, Academies – Primary
Mark Avoth, Bourne Academy, Academies - Secondary
Michelle Dyer, Avonbourne Academies, Academies - Secondary
Matthew Woodville, Twynham School, Academies - Secondary
Sian Phillips – Poole High School, Academies - Secondary
Ben Doyle, Principal - St Peter's School, All Through Academies
Russell Arnold, The Quay School - Headteacher, Alternative
Provision Academy
Phillip Gavin, Christchurch Learning Centre - Headteacher,
Mainstream PRU
Linda Duly, Cuddles Day Nursery, Early Years
Richard Wharton, C of E Diocese Representative

Also in attendance: Cllr R Burton, Portfolio Holder for Children's and Young People
Cllr Carr-Brown, Chair, Children's Services O&S Committee

Officers in attendance: Cathi Hadley, Corporate Director Children's Services
Chris Lee, Interim Head of School Inclusion
Lisa Linscott, Director of Education and Skills
Tanya Smith, Head of School Planning and Admissions
Nicola Webb, Assistant Chief Finance Officer

1. Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Vicky Peters, Early Years representative.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made on this occasion.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 13 January were approved as a correct record.

4. Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Outturn 2024-25

The Assistant Chief Finance Officer presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'A' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

The report considered the end of year position for the DSG budget 2024-25. The budget was set with a funding gap of £28m, a similar level compared with the previous year, with the expectation that the innovation fund and other initiatives would start to have impact in reducing the demand for education health and care plans (EHCPs). This was alongside the creation of new SEND places in mainstream schools through capital investment to limit the use of higher cost independent provision.

It was noted that the three blocks—early years, central school services, and school block—were broadly balanced. However, the high needs block showed a significant funding gap, with the outturn exceeding previous forecasts. The outturn was a net in-year funding gap approaching £50m. This is £5m more than indicated at quarter three.

More children were remaining in mainstream schools but the growth in demand for EHCPs overall has more than offset any potential savings. The demand has continued to grow for independent school places, alternative provision, and bespoke arrangements for those unable to attend any school setting. The trajectory of the accumulated deficit has therefore continued a significant upward path from £65.5m for March 2024, to £113.3m for March 2025.

It was noted that national trends indicated that deficits were growing and nearly doubling annually. The statutory override for deficits had been extended to March 2028. Government support was anticipated in the local government provisional finance settlement later in the year.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

5. High Needs Update

The Assistant Chief Finance Officer and the Head of School Planning and Admissions presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'B' to these Minutes in the Minute Book. The Chair advised that he had received a number of questions on this prior

The report provided a summary of the high needs budget for 2025-26 and included details of new activities to support pupils with additional needs in mainstream schools – the inclusion fund and outreach plus.

The Forum was advised that the inclusion fund was funded by surplus school block funding as agreed by Schools Forum in January 2025. The report set out the how the fund would be allocated in 2025-26 following further consultation with headteachers.

Outreach Plus was a new service to support mainstream schools establish resourced provision with the aim of increasing specialist capacity for children with autism spectrum condition and social, emotional and mental health needs. Once fully implemented these two activities should deliver savings to the high needs budget through future cost avoidance.

A question was raised regarding the distinctions between the £550,000 allocated for specialist outreach and the £380,000 for training and support,

It was clarified that:

- The **£550,000** covered the extension of existing outreach support from specialist SEND services into mainstream schools.
- The **£380,000** was allocated for training and development, including trauma-informed schools training and mental health first aid training.

These elements were part of the actions referenced in previous minutes and would be clarified with Schools Forum representatives to ensure appropriate coverage. The elements which would be affected by any reduction in fundin would be considered moving forward. It was also noted that outreach plus was funded separately.

RESOLVED that the report be noted and that it be noted that discussions with Forum members regarding the finer details of the training funding would begin shortly.

6. Schools Forum - Exceptional Circumstances Funding for 202526

The SEND and Inclusion consultant presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'C' to these Minutes in the Minute Book.

The report provides an update on:

- The Exceptional Circumstances Funding for 2025/26.
- The resolution of previously unpaid funding from Autumn 2023 to Spring 2025.

A revised criteria and funding model was now in place for 2025-26 that will be reviewed after 2 months to determine future frequency of calculation moving forwards. Previously unpaid funding amounts had now been paid to all eligible schools.

The Chair read out a query received prior to the meeting for the benefit of all members. Concerns were raised that the payments recorded as having been made were, in fact, inaccurate. She highlighted that the agreed policy—confirmed in April 2023 and again in November 2023—had not been followed. This policy included a 3% threshold, a payment of £650 per year (pro-rated by term), and the inclusion of EHCPs that were outside the 20-week statutory window. It was also noted that delays in EHCP processing had unfairly impacted census data, and that these late plans were supposed to be included in the funding calculations.

This oversight was acknowledged, and it was confirmed that the local authority would honour the previously agreed policy. The data team had been tasked with recalculating the payments to include the delayed EHCPs, and the Forum was assured that this work would be completed by the end of the academic year, with additional payments issued by the end of July 2025. Schools would receive supplementary payments to reflect the correct amounts. The complexity of the situation was acknowledged and the officers response to this issue was appreciated and this would be reported to head teachers.

The new funding formula that would take effect from April 2025, covering the 2025–26 financial year was outlined. The first set of data for this model

would be available at the end of July 2025, and eligible schools would be informed and paid accordingly. The new model would no longer include EHCPs outside the 20-week window. A review would be conducted after the first year of implementation.

It was asked whether a written policy document would be produced to formalise these arrangements. It was confirmed that the intention was to develop a comprehensive financial policy covering all funding elements.

It was asked whether the new formula would include post-16 pupils. It was explained that the data was sourced from the census and but the ages included in this would need to be clarified. It was agreed that a response to this would be sourced and provided to all Forum members. It was suggested that including post-16 pupils could skew the percentages, especially for settings without post-16 provision, and suggested that projections might be needed to assess the impact. It was agreed that this would be followed up on.

RESOLVED that the report be noted and that response to the issues raised above be provided to Forum members.

7. Schools Forum Special School Banding Review

The SEND and Inclusion Consultant presented a report, a copy of which had been circulated to each Member and a copy of which appears as Appendix 'D' to these Minutes in the Minute Book. The report provided an update on progress made with the Special School Banding Review. The Forum was informed that BCP paid among the highest rates for special school banding in the region. A new model was being developed to reflect current needs and costs. Special schools were working together to trial the new framework. Pending further consultation it was expected that the new model would be implemented from September 2025

A representative from the special schools confirmed that discussions with BCP had been ongoing and that the work was progressing constructively. In response to a follow-up question regarding the mainstream banding review, the Forum was advised that a two-week pilot using would begin in early July. Schools that had expressed an interest would be contacted to finalise arrangements, and the outcomes would be shared more widely to inform future planning.

It was requested that both the special and mainstream banding reviews be added to the September agenda for a further update. It was acknowledged that the timing presented challenges but reassurance was given that the pilot would be designed to minimise the burden on schools whilst generating meaningful data.

RESOVLED that the report be noted.

8. Forward Plan

The forward plan was reviewed and noted.

It was agreed that a proposed finance policy report would be added to the September agenda, subject to confirmation from officers.

9. Dates of Future Meetings

The date of the next meeting was noted as Monday 29 September.

10. Any Other Business

Additional comments were made regarding forum membership and the need to reconstitute representation. Members were encouraged to suggest candidates for vacant positions. Forum membership would be reviewed and reconstituted in September.

The meeting ended at 10.40 am

CHAIRMAN

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Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Schools Forum

Forward Plan

29 September 2025

- School Forum membership/reconstitution/ terms of reference
- Quarter 1 Budget Monitoring and High Needs Update 2025-26
- Funding Update
- Pre EHCP Funding – discussion
- AOB
- Forward Plan and dates for 2026/27

24 November 2025

- Finance Update – 2025-26 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Budget Monitoring
- 5 Year High Needs Forecast
- Early Years Single Funding Formula 2026-27
- Update of the Scheme for Financing Schools
- Update on resource allocation
- Update on Place Sufficiency
- AOB
- Forward Plan

19 January 2026

- 2026-27 Financial Settlement and draft budget
- Mainstream School Funding and High Needs Transfer
- Maintained School Services and Central retention
- Early Years Single Funding Formula
- Forward Plan

22 June 2026

- DSG Outturn 2025-26
- High Needs Block Update
- Forward Plan

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