

12<sup>th</sup> September 2025

Dear Chair of Governors or Trustees,

On behalf of the Kent Association of Leaders in Education (KALE), formerly known as Kent Association of Headteachers (KAH), I am writing to make you aware of support that is available to your new Headteacher.

KALE is an organisation led by and comprising school leaders from Kent. All Headteachers, Heads of School and Principals are welcome and automatically members. KALE's mission is to **Support**, **Connect** and **Represent** leaders and we offer a range of opportunities for colleagues to network, undertake shared professional development, learn from and share the practice in their schools and have their views heard to inform local and national education policy and strategy.

We know that you and your leaders are deeply committed to providing fantastic educational opportunities to the children and young people of Kent. We also know that the early period of Headship can be challenging and that support from experienced colleagues and strong professional networks can make a short- and long-term positive difference to the effectiveness and wellbeing of leaders.

The following pages provide details of the opportunities we offer specifically to new Headteachers in 2025/26:

- Joint KCC and KALE New Headteacher Welcome Event.
- Engage with networks and professional development offered by the KALE community.
- Access support from a Headteacher mentor.
- Attend the annual KALE Conference on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2025

We hope that you will encourage and enable your new Headteacher to take full advantage of these opportunities which have been designed to support them in their first year of Headship and beyond.

We would particularly encourage you to make sure your new Headteacher attends the KALE annual conference. This is such an important opportunity to build connections with other Kent Education Leaders.

Yours sincerely

**Ashley Crittenden**

KAH Chair, Executive Headteacher, Orchard Academy Trust

[acrittenden@orchardacademytrust.co.uk](mailto:acrittenden@orchardacademytrust.co.uk)

[www.kale-connect.org.uk](http://www.kale-connect.org.uk)

 @KALeadersinEd

 [kent-leaders-in-education](https://www.linkedin.com/company/kent-leaders-in-education)

### **New Headteacher Welcome Event**

This event is taking place on 10<sup>th</sup> October 2025 at Mercure Maidstone Great Danes Hotel. The first session of the morning will be hosted by KCC and the second part by members of KALE.

The KALE session will be a great opportunity for new Headteachers to:

- Hear more about the KALE community and how they can connect with colleagues.
- Meet other new Headteachers and hear reflections on early Headship from experienced Headteachers.
- Learn more about the broader professional development offer.
- Sign up for coaching support and network sessions
- Consider how to get the most from working with your mentor.

The overall purpose is to ensure that every new Headteacher feels welcomed, valued and engaged as members of KALE. The event is open to anyone appointed since January 2024 and includes those new to headship and those appointed to a new school.

### **The KALE Community**

All Headteachers in Kent are automatically members of the Kent Association of Headteachers (there is no membership fee). The Association aims to:

- Support school-led continuous improvement of performance
- Increase leadership capacity in the county's schools
- Promote partnerships and networks that support school-led improvement
- To place the voice of education leaders at the centre of the local education system.

KALE operates through four Area Boards and School Improvement Sub-Groups, whose members are elected Headteachers and Education Leaders. We encourage Headteachers to contact the Chair of the relevant Area Board who will be able to share information about local Headteacher networks that they may wish to join. More information about the work of KALE can be found at [www.kale-connect.org.uk](http://www.kale-connect.org.uk)

### **Area Board Chairs**

|                                                                         |                                                             |                                                                                      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>North</b> (covering Dartford, Gravesham and Sevenoaks districts)     | Chris Norwood<br>Headteacher<br>Northfleet School for Girls | <a href="mailto:c.norwood@nsfg.org.uk">c.norwood@nsfg.org.uk</a>                     |
| <b>South</b> (covering Ashford, Dover and Folkestone & Hythe districts) | Jamie McLean<br>Principal<br>Free Turner School             | <a href="mailto:jamie.maclean@turnerschools.com">jamie.maclean@turnerschools.com</a> |

|                                                                                     |                                                                |                                                                                        |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>East</b> (covering Thanet, Swale and Canterbury districts)                       | Susie Burden<br>Executive Headteacher,<br>Fulston Manor School | <a href="mailto:sburden@fulstonmanor.kent.sch.uk">sburden@fulstonmanor.kent.sch.uk</a> |
| <b>West</b> (covering Maidstone, Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge & Malling districts) | Maz Cleaves<br>Headteacher,<br>Bower Grove School              | <a href="mailto:mcleave@bower-grove.kent.sch.uk">mcleave@bower-grove.kent.sch.uk</a>   |

### **KALE Annual Conference – 27<sup>th</sup> November 2025**

The annual Headteachers' Conference is a great opportunity for Headteachers to network and to examine key issues and themes together. The title for this year's conference is Connected Leaders: Reclaim Your Joy. We would like to offer your Headteacher a 50% discount on the price of the full-day conference and we would be delighted if they would join us. We would appreciate your support in encouraging your Headteacher to find out more and book their place [here](#).

### **Mentoring Support**

We are committed to ensuring that all new Headteachers in Kent have the opportunity to access a mentor, usually an experienced Headteacher who has been designated as a system leader and trained to provide mentoring to those in the early stages of Headship.

We would encourage you to ensure that your new Headteacher accesses support from a suitably experienced mentor. If your Headteacher has not yet found a mentor and would like one, please encourage them to contact the Chair of the relevant Area Board, who will be able to guide and broker contact with a suitably experienced colleague.

### **Professional Development**

You may be thinking about the next steps in professional development for your school's new leader. At the new Headteachers' event (10<sup>th</sup> October), colleagues will share information about opportunities to access coaching, and details of Kent-based organisations that provide professional development.

If you are considering an NPQ for your leader (perhaps the NPQ in Headship or Executive Leadership, or the new Early Headship Coaching Offer), please note that there will be only 1 cohort in the 2025/26 academic year, starting in November 2025. Applications are opening in September and there will be a finite number of funded places available.

Teachers and leaders can choose from any of the nine [Lead Providers](#) accredited by the DfE to deliver NPQs. In Kent, the local provision is offered by:

The Thames Gateway Teaching School Hub, working with [LLSE](#)

The Kent Teaching School Hub, working with [Ambition](#).

**KCC New Headteacher Induction Programme**

We would encourage your Headteacher to consider the programme of induction sessions offered by KCC, which covers topics including school development planning, safeguarding, finance, governance and behaviour management. There is no charge to attend and full details of the programme and booking arrangements will be sent to your Headteacher by KCC.