

Calendar: **Spring**

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Spring

Nurture school purchasing decisions

8 January
The Big Schools' Birdwatch

2 February
NSPCC Number Day

1 March
Women's History Month

Marketing to Schools in the **Spring Term**

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Marketing to Schools in the Spring Term

Christmas time is here again, but as ever, it'll be January before we know it!

The Christmas period is a time when everyone has a chance to stop and reflect. As schools enter January and February there's a deliberate shift in focus, moving from the festive ambience of the autumn term to concentrating on preparation for exams and monitoring student progress.

During the spring term, the shortest of the academic year, we'll start to see mock exams, practice tests, and revision classes finding their way into an already-packed weekly schedule.

Spring term also sees the end of the financial year for many schools, so building towards the end of March, bursars and business managers will be looking to ensure any unspent money is strategically invested to maximise budgets for the next cycle.

In short, it's all hands to the pump in another busy term for education marketing!

But are you ready to meet the challenge this January?

Read on to find out how you can build a standout marketing-to-schools strategy and make this your most successful spring term yet!

Key dates to consider during the spring term

The spring term ushers in the start of the new calendar year. Starting in early January, the term is punctuated by the spring half-term break in February and finishes a week or so before Easter, which this year falls at the very end of March.

January

The spring term continues to be an incredibly busy period for schools, as all pupils and students can now see their end-of-year exams and tests off in the distance. This is the shortest term of the year, with school events pulling pupils and students in all sorts of different directions. Routines are well-established, but the addition of new clubs and activities for the winter and spring months, not to mention the start of revision classes, means the spring term is packed to bursting.

Secondary school teachers in many schools return to the mock exam period, that golden opportunity to build a clear picture of the progress their students are making, informing them of the work that will need to be put in for success in the summer exams.

It's also decision time for students who are embarking on the next phase of their school journey, with Options Evenings for GCSE and A-Level pupils taking place throughout the spring term. This period also gives teachers an idea of what their classes might look like in the next academic year.

Spring term sees the second round of parents' evenings, which usually take place in February and March. Schools must hold at least one parents' evening a year, with most schools holding two. The second in the spring allows parents to catch up with their child's teacher or teachers and discuss their progress, highlighting areas of success and areas of development.

Spring half term

For most schools in England, Scotland, and Wales, the spring half term tends to fall on the third week of February. With Northern Ireland marking their shorter, mid-term break, in the same week.

Dates can vary because school employers are required to set the term dates of their school year. The local authority sets term dates for their schools, whereas academies, foundation schools, voluntary-aided schools, and independent schools are responsible for setting term dates for themselves.

The run-up to Easter

Time quickly slips by in February and March, as schools begin to prepare for the Easter holiday.

Both Primary and Secondary Schools will be planning events such as spring concerts and Easter bonnet parades before breaking up for the spring holiday. Many schools are also embarking on ski trips, while Duke of Edinburgh expeditions will start to take advantage of the improving weather conditions.

There's plenty to keep track of in the education calendar between January and March, so here's a small selection of the events that many schools will want to participate in:

Calendar Highlights

The Big Schools' Birdwatch

8th January - 19th February

The Big Schools' Birdwatch is an annual event where pupils can contribute to a national study counting and identifying the bird species that visit their school grounds, helping collect valuable data for bird conservation.

National Storytelling Week

27th January - 4th February

National Storytelling Week is a celebration dedicated to the art of storytelling, where people come together to share and enjoy a wide range of stories that inspire, entertain, and connect.

LGBT+ History Month

1st - 29th February

LGBT+ History Month is a month-long observance that honours the history and achievements of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community while promoting awareness and equality.

NSPCC Number Day

2nd February

NSPCC Number Day is an annual event that encourages schools and organisations to come together and have fun with numbers while raising funds to support the NSPCC's work in protecting children from abuse.

Children's Mental Health Week

5th - 11th February

Children's Mental Health Week is a dedicated week aimed at raising awareness and providing support for children's mental wellbeing, with a focus on helping young people understand and manage their emotions.

National Apprenticeship Week

5th - 11th February

National Apprenticeship Week is an annual event that celebrates and promotes the benefits of apprenticeships for both employers and individuals, offering opportunities to learn about different apprenticeship programmes and their positive impacts on career development and workforce training.

Women's History Month

1st - 31st March

Women's History Month celebrates the achievements of women throughout history, fostering awareness of gender equality, and serving as a platform to inspire the next generation to pursue their dreams and contribute meaningfully in all aspects of society.

National Careers Week

4th - 9th March

National Careers Week is an annual awareness campaign that encourages educators, employers, and career professionals to inspire and inform young people about the array of career paths and opportunities available to them, empowering them to make informed choices about their future careers.

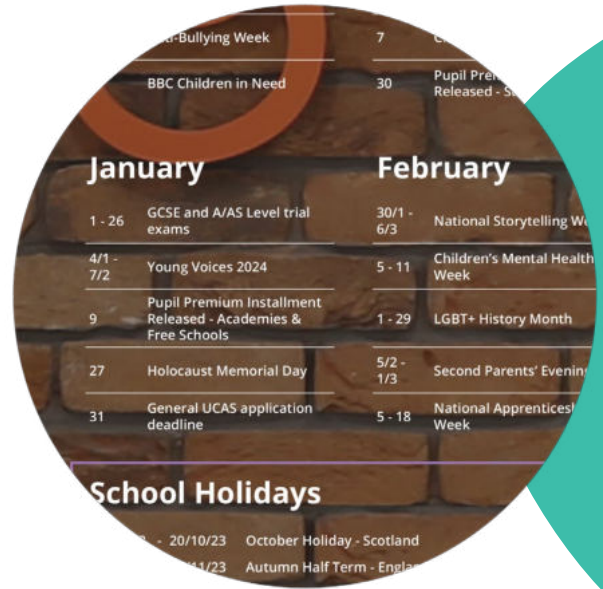
British Science Week

8th - 17th March

British Science Week is an annual event that celebrates science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) with engaging activities, events, and discussions, promoting the importance of STEM in our everyday lives and inspiring young people to pursue careers in these fields.

Key dates at your fingertips

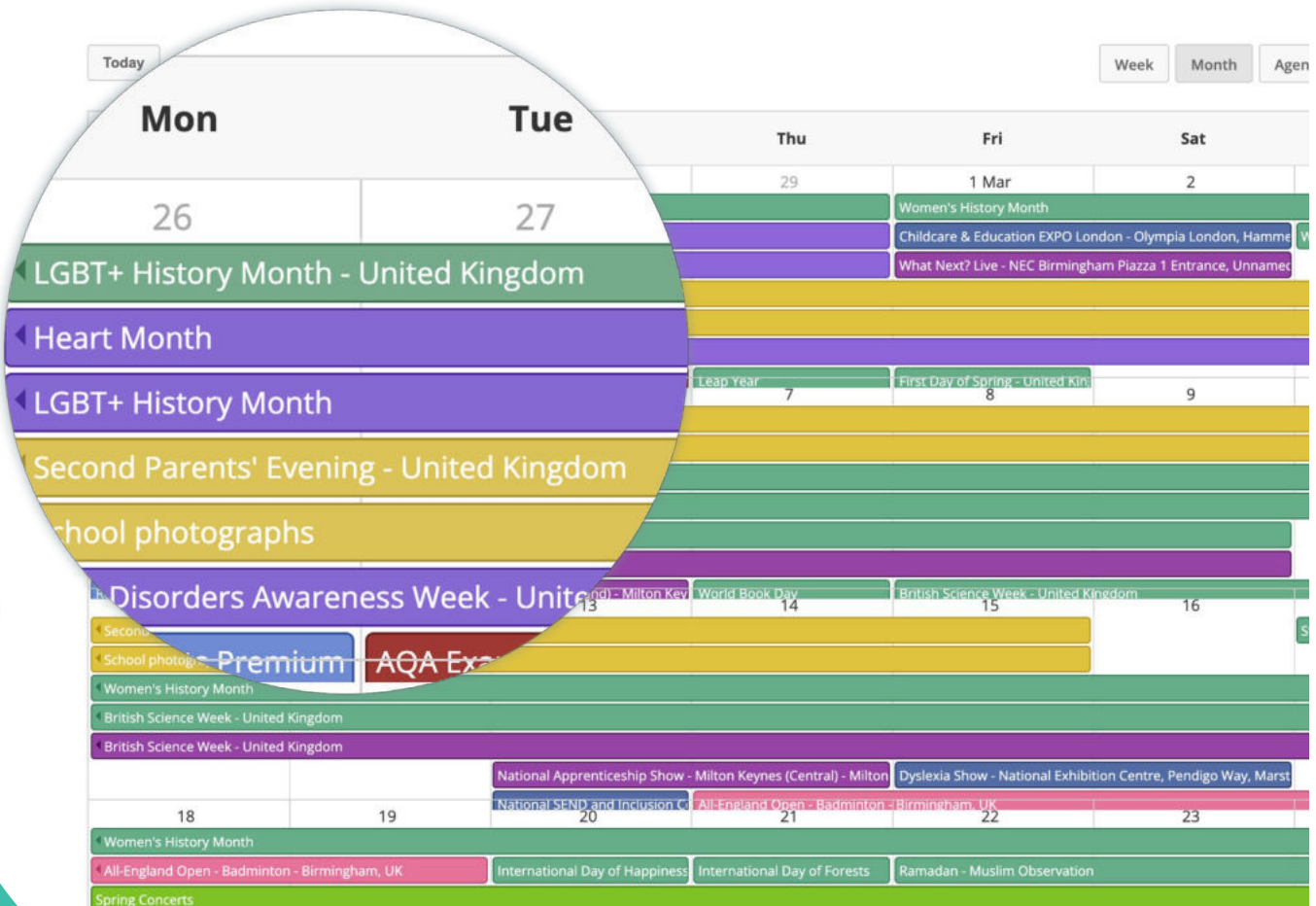
Stay organised with our [free-to-download](#) Desktop Calendar for the academic year to easily access the key school holiday dates and major education events happening throughout the year.



Need full calendar access?

Campus, our marketing and selling-to-schools platform, gives you access to an advanced digital education calendar.

Receive live updates across hundreds of education events and dates that are occurring across the UK, International, and US education sectors and filter by more than a dozen categories including exams, budgets, wellbeing, trips, careers, and political events. Campus empowers you with the precision and clarity to act. To find out more [contact us today](#).



The shape of school budgets during the spring term

Maintained schools run their budgets in line with the financial year, from April to March. In contrast, academies run them in line with the school year, between September and August.

With many major spending decisions having been made in the autumn term, maintained schools will be looking to ensure that they have made the most of their current budget. They will begin forecasting for the new financial year between January and March while reviewing their current budget to identify any areas for improvement or any underspending.

Academies will be looking ahead and starting to plan for their new budgets going into the summer term and what they may need to purchase in September.

It's worth a reminder too that in addition to their core budget, you should also be aware of other key sources of income, including:

The Sports Premium initiative

In March 2023, the DfE confirmed that PE and sports premium funding will continue for the academic years 2023-24 and 2024-25. The funding is a ring-fenced grant to all primary schools in England to improve the quality of PE, sport, and physical activity. £600 million will be delivered to schools over the two years, with the average school receiving £18,000 for the academic year.

The PE and sport premium is released in two allocations per year, with the first arriving in October or November, and the second in April or May, depending on the type of establishment.

Schools must follow guidelines with their purchases, and publicly report how they've used the funding. This funding stream provides a wealth of opportunities for any business offering products and services relating to sports, physical health, swimming, clubs, and more.

Pupil Premium

Similar to the PE and sport premium, the pupil premium provides schools with extra funding on top of their standard budgets. The pupil premium provides schools with the funds to provide extra support for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.

In 2023-2024, this breaks down as:

- £335 per child.
- £1455 per primary school pupil eligible for free school meals.
- £1035 per secondary school pupil eligible for free school meals.
- £2530 per looked-after child.

The pupil premium is paid to the local authority in four quarterly instalments, with an allocation delivered in September to local authorities and in October for academies and free schools.

As per the PE and sport premium, schools must follow certain rules, and document their spending to ensure the money is being used to support eligible pupils in the best possible way. This can include providing targeted support or professional development for staff or tackling non-academic barriers to success in school, such as attendance, behaviour, and social and emotional issues.

In 2023-2024, this breaks down as:

- £335 per service child.*
- £1455 per primary school pupil eligible for free school meals.*
- £1035 per secondary school pupil eligible for free school meals.*
- £2530 per looked-after child.*

Spring spending habits

The best place to go to really understand school spending habits is straight to the teachers and school staff that make those all-important spending decisions.

Educators insights

We conducted our most in-depth education survey ever at the start of 2023, capturing insights from nearly 6,000 teachers and school staff to ask questions about school spending decisions. Alongside that, we went back to teachers in the summer of 2023 to see how the cost of living crisis is affecting spending in their schools.

In particular, we asked about areas where schools would be reducing spending and, if the cost of living crisis were to last into 2024, what the next round of services would be to be reviewed, as well as what support education businesses could provide for schools.

Spending impacts

The cost of living crisis has led to significant spending reductions in various areas, affecting resources, equipment, and staffing. Notably, 62.5% of staff report resource spending decreases, followed by reductions in furniture (55.2%) and supply teachers (51.7%). Issues related to staffing, including learning support (44.3%) and recruitment (42.3%), have also seen substantial budget reductions due to recruitment challenges.

On a positive note, SEND provision (17.3%) and safeguarding (4.8%) have been less impacted,

reflecting legal requirements and increased demand for SEND support post-pandemic. Looking ahead to the latter half of 2023, there are encouraging signs of easing inflation, which could potentially alleviate some of the impact on school budgets in 2024.

Navigating purchasing decisions

We asked educators how they'd cope if high inflation and external price pressures stuck around into the next year.

Teacher responses for each option dipped by nearly 20% on average compared to 2023, hinting at increased uncertainty about future school budgets. Notably, even though teaching resources and equipment remained the top areas for budget cuts at 32.9%, fewer respondents chose this option — almost half compared to 2023 (62.4%).

Predicted spending reductions in staff recruitment and staff CPD ranked second and third, with percentages dropping from 2023. This suggests scepticism about overcoming recruitment challenges and less investment in training in nearly one-third of schools. Neglecting professional development can erode teacher retention, prompting educators to seek opportunities elsewhere, and potentially worsening staffing levels.



Support that teachers value

When asked how education businesses could best support teachers, respondents offered valuable insights, which can be targeted in your next campaign.

A clear majority of 67.6% stressed the importance of sharing free resources and advice, with 60.9% seeking improved incentives and rewards for schools. Over half (53.8%) expressed interest in sponsoring school events, and 51.7% requested bursaries or sponsorship for specific pupils, all of which provide opportunities for businesses to become trusted education thought leaders.

Moreover, 45.8% of teachers were keen on free trials/demos of products, while 39.1% preferred free webinars to streamline the decision-making process for school purchases. A smaller percentage (14.3%) wanted more video content about products, and even fewer (12%) sought consultation services, emphasising the need for efficiency and tailored support in marketing strategies to address current school needs.

You can read more about school spending habits and how to tailor your marketing-to-schools approach to support schools and maintain sales in our [Cost of Living Report](#).

Your marketing-to-schools strategy this spring term

Plan ahead

While the spring term officially kicks off in January, it's essential to recognise that teachers invest considerable time ahead of the new year planning for the term ahead. To capitalise on the January momentum, delaying your initial marketing outreach until the term begins might be too late.

Start building awareness early, especially if your product or service involves a significant purchase. Senior leaders will likely require time to secure buy-in from the entire senior leadership team, possibly the board, especially amidst the ongoing cost of living crisis in 2023.

Ideally, initiate your email strategy before the Christmas holiday period to establish connections, lay the foundations of your offer, and prompt schools to consider collaborating with you. By January, when you send a reminder email, they'll already be familiar with your offering, trust your brand, and be ready to commit.

Optimise timing

Steer clear of the holiday season's hustle and bustle. Planning ahead doesn't mean inundating staff during their well-deserved winter break. As they enjoy quality time with family, keeping their inboxes clear ensures a more receptive audience when you do reach out.

Towards the conclusion of the winter break, after the New Year bank holiday (with an additional day off in Scotland), some teachers begin transitioning back into 'work mode'. This period presents an opportune time for you to introduce or remind them of your solution. However, for broader reach, the first full week back in school is best placed for scheduling impactful emails.



Harness motivation

With the advent of the new year comes renewed motivation. Capitalise on this positivity by offering immediately useable resources, quick guides, expert advice, or software trials, sparking excitement among your audience. Even consider the launch of a new product or service during this time, as teachers tend to be more open-minded about adapting to and embracing innovative approaches now that they know their classes.

Wider decision-making period

January calendars and inboxes can be busy. To make your emails stand out, you'll need to stay focused on what's on top for educators in those first few weeks back with impactful, eye-catching emails.

January holds significance, but it's not the only month to pursue sales during the spring term. Our insights from school decision-makers handling budgets revealed that 42.1% make their most significant purchasing decisions from January to March. This figure climbs even higher, reaching 46.3%, for cyclical and renewal purchases.

This period coincides with the end of the financial year for many schools, as previously mentioned. However, it's also a pivotal time for long-term planning. Investing in an effective email strategy throughout the spring term can yield substantial rewards for education businesses.

To ensure your emails land at the right time, stand out amidst the inbox noise, and remain in teachers' minds, it's crucial to understand the strategies that optimise delivery timing.

While visibility is paramount, striking a balance is key—avoid overwhelming your audience with intrusive sales pitches. Initiate your strategy by providing value early on, such as free resources and advice, reserving direct sales messages for those who actively engage with your outreach. Consider offering a tempting discount code closer to the term's end to enhance the appeal.

In conclusion, these tips pave the way for a successful January and beyond!



Need more?

If you're not sure where to start, there are two pathways you could take:

Fully managed email strategy

Need help with getting started? Our managed strategy option does it all for you. From our data-driven strategy frameworks to stunning email designs, we take care of every aspect of your marketing-to-schools strategy. Discover why you can [trust our team](#) to connect you with school decision-makers.

One platform for all of your strategies

Want more control over your campaigns? We've revolutionised edu-marketing with Campus - our complete marketing-to-schools solution, the emailing platform used by world-class edu-businesses. Learn about why Campus can [win you more business](#) with schools.

If you have any questions at all, simply [get in touch](#) with our team today.



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