



Legal advice for maintained schools & academies

Oxfordshire County Council's legal team can provide you with top-class legal advice in all matters, helping you to maintain your school as a centre of excellence.



The legal services we can provide

Often you'll know in advance what sort of legal assistance you might need, but occasionally problems may occur that require immediate help. All schools and academies must ensure that they have adequate legal cover in place for all eventualities, not just as a legal necessity but also to avoid finding help in an emergency, which can be extremely costly as well as stressful.

We can provide you with the following legal advice and services:

- ✓ **Contracts and procurement law** – drafting and advising on contractual issues and related procurement matters.

Please initially contact Christian Smith
Principal Solicitor, Contracts
christian.smith@oxfordshire.gov.uk
01865 323932

- ✓ **Disability discrimination claims** – including advice and attendance at special educational needs tribunals.

Please initially contact Angela Mills
Principal Solicitor, Litigation
angela.mills@oxfordshire.gov.uk
01865 323858

- ✓ **Child protection** – where out-of-hours advice might be required on children who are at risk.

Please initially contact Carol Watts
Principal Solicitor, Child Care
carol.watts@oxfordshire.gov.uk
01865 323922

- ✓ **Employment law** – your responsibilities as an employer, including advice and guidance on compliance with employment legislation, mediation of employment disputes, and managing Employment Tribunal claims.

Please initially contact Angela Mills
Principal Solicitor, Litigation
angela.mills@oxfordshire.gov.uk
01865 323858

- ✓ **Land and property law** – including leases and land transfers, title deeds of premises, boundary disputes, planning, encroachment, rights of way, and easements across property.

Please initially contact Julia Taplin
Principal Solicitor, Environment & Conveyancing
julia.taplin@oxfordshire.gov.uk
01865 323930





- ✓ **School admissions** – including legal advice to the school or academy.

Please initially contact Angela Mills
Principal Solicitor, Litigation
angela.mills@oxfordshire.gov.uk
01865 323858

- ✓ **Managing pupil behaviour** – particularly in relation to exclusion, parenting contracts, and school attendance orders.

Please initially contact Clare Stacey
Legal Officer
clare.stacey@oxfordshire.gov.uk
01865 323858

- ✓ **Parental complaints and behaviour** – including advice to Governing boards and seeking injunctions or taking forward prosecutions for trespass.

Please initially contact Clare Stacey
Legal Officer
clare.stacey@oxfordshire.gov.uk
01865 323858

- ✓ **Disputes** – with neighbours and suppliers.

Please initially contact Angela Mills
Principal Solicitor, Litigation
angela.mills@oxfordshire.gov.uk
01865 323858

- ✓ **Data protection, freedom of information, and access to educational records** – support and advice.

Please initially contact the Access and Disclosure Team
foi@oxfordshire.gov.uk
01865 815885 or 01865 815889

The only area in which we cannot act is in the unlikely event of a conflict of interest.

For advice on anything not covered above, you should initially contact Laura Grainger on laura.grainger@oxfordshire.gov.uk



Why have your legal cover with us?

Oxfordshire County Council's legal team is made up of committed and experienced solicitors, each of whom has specialist knowledge. When you contact us with an issue, you can be assured that you are receiving the very best in legal advice.

While solicitors in private practices might claim the same, working with us has clear benefits.

We have:

- ✓ Many years of experience in advising schools on all kinds of legal issues
- ✓ An excellent understanding of the role of the local authority and the interplay with academies
- ✓ Broad experience of working for public-sector organisations and the particular problems they encounter
- ✓ Significantly cheaper rates than private practice as we don't aim to make a profit from our work
- ✓ Considerable experience of providing bespoke training



How to sign up to our legal services

We can start working for you as soon as you have entered into an agreement with us. First you will need to sign our Service Level Agreement. You can get a copy of this form by contacting:

Diane Surman, Office Manager

Tel: 01865 323949

Email: diane.surman@oxfordshire.gov.uk

How to pay for our legal services

For maintained schools - when you call/email us for legal advice we will start to charge for our services via a journal transfer via SAP. We charge schools our reduced in-house rate of £88 per hour.

For academies – when you call/email us for advice we will start to charge for our services and then invoice you quarterly. We charge academies our reduced external rate of £150 per hour (plus VAT).

For any questions or concerns about finance, charges or invoices you should contact our Office Manager.

Diane Surman, Office Manager

Tel: 01865 323949

Email: diane.surman@oxfordshire.gov.uk