



HEADS INDUCTION CONFERENCE 2026

The Courage of Leadership



Hanbury Manor, Ware

Wednesday 14 - Thursday 15 January

The ISA Heads Induction Conference is an opportunity for Members new to the Association to discover how ISA can support you as Head, as well as to explore the latest thinking on school leadership. The wealth of expertise at the conference includes our delegates, who are knowledgeable and talented school leaders from across the sector. Through a mix of keynotes and scenario-based explorations, delegates will build collegiality and further develop the skills necessary for successful and sustainable leadership.

WEDNESDAY

- 10.00 **Registration and refreshments**
- 10.25 **Welcome and introduction** *Jonathan Hetherington, ISA Chair 2025/26*
- 10.30 **Welcome from Headline Sponsor**
- 10.40 **Creating emotionally intelligent schools: understanding brain development –** *Victor Allen*
Victor Allen helps school leaders to develop a critical understanding of emotion and brain development. Highlighting significant changes which take place during their school years and how this should affect our interactions, as well as what is beneficial considering the impact of the pandemic. Helping Generation Z and Alpha prepare for adult life.
- 11.30 **Legal pitfalls and opportunities for Heads –** *Gemma Woodhouse, Penningtons Manches Cooper LLP*
There is an increasing amount of regulation and legislation relating to the operation of Schools. This session identifies the key legal pitfalls that Heads may face whilst running their Schools as well as highlighting opportunities that may be available. We will cover a broad range of subjects ranging from equality law, consumer regulations and contracts, safeguarding issues and the use of third-party data.
- 12.30 **Lunch** in the Assembly Hall
- 13.30 **Getting value out of ISA Membership: opportunities for children, staff, heads and parents –** *Peter Woodroffe and the ISA Team*
ISA wants you to get the most from your membership. Here we provide an overview of our support and the opportunities for your staff and pupils.
- 14.00 **Critical incident management –** *Stuart Nicholson*
At some stage all Heads are likely to have a crisis to deal with in their school. Whilst all crises are different, there are some common themes in them and there are important approaches to handling them. This session considers some real-life crises, drawn from within ISA, to give Heads the chance to consider how they would handle these real situations.
- 15.00 **Networking and refreshments**
- 15.30 **How to look after your mental wellbeing –** *Michael Crossley*
This session focuses on maintaining good mental health and wellbeing in yourself and those who surround you, whilst ensuring highly effective leadership.
- 16.20 **An opportunity to discuss current topics and today's sessions with fellow members**
Drop-in session for new Heads, led by Helen Stanton-Tonner
Drop-in session for more experienced Heads led by Peter Woodroffe

- 17.00 **Hotel check-in** at the ISA registration desk
- 18.30 **Drinks reception** in Poles Hall - **Sponsored by** [GO 4 Schools](#)  **GO 4 Schools**
- 19.00 Wifi Wars
- 19.45 **Dinner** in the Great Hall – **Sponsored by** [Community Playthings](#) 

THURSDAY

- From 07.30 **Breakfast** in the Cast Iron
- 08.50 **Welcome** [Jonathan Hetherington, ISA Chair 2025/26](#)
- 09.00 **Panel discussion on experiences of practical leadership**
It's recognised that our views of headship and leadership are honed by experience. Three successful ISA Members, at different stages in their careers, share their experiences and thoughts of leadership.
- 10.00 **Making the most of...** (this session is divided into two groups)
- ✓ your new headship – for experienced heads – [Jonathan Dunn](#)
 - ✓ ISI Inspection: what to expect and how to be ready – for new heads – [Liz Coley](#)
- 11.00 **Networking and refreshments**
- 11.30 **Marketing Mastery for Independent School Heads: Tools for Success** – [Rachel Hadley-Leonard](#)
This session equips new (and new to ISA) Heads with the essential strategies and tools to effectively market their schools, highlighting why marketing is crucial to thriving in a competitive educational landscape.
- 12.15 **So, what does ISC do for you?** – [Julie Robinson, General Secretary, ISC](#)
ISA is one of the five Heads' Associations under the ISC umbrella. Schools aren't direct members of ISC, but what can ISC do for you and your school?
- 12.45 **Final Words** – [Jonathan Hetherington, ISA Chair 2025/26](#)
 Followed by Lunch in the Assembly Hall