



# Alice de Coverley

**Year of Call:** 2014

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## Education

Alice has an exceptional education practice. She is passionate about Education Law and children's rights. Prior to commencing pupillage, Alice was the Chief Director of The School Exclusion Project for four years. This is an award-winning pro-bono unit dedicated to representing parents of permanently excluded school children.

Alice also acts for Ofsted in the Care Standards Tribunal, and is currently acting for Ofsted as Junior Counsel on the Independent Inquiry into Child Sex Abuse (IICSA). For full details of the work that Alice is currently dealing with please see her [Public Law profile](#).

She has specialisms within the Education arena and has dealt with a number of matters including claims brought under the Equality Act 2010 for disability, sex, race, pregnancy, sexual orientation and gender reassignment discrimination, harassment and victimization. Alice also regularly appears in appeals in the context of EHC Plans (Sections B F and I) and National Trial cases.

Alice acts for parents, children, young people, schools, Universities, Local Authorities, charities and governmental organisations. She is instructed to act and advise in relation to a broad range of education law matters, including:

- Appeals to the SEND Tribunal on the content of EHC Plans
- Discrimination (particularly disability discrimination) claims in the FTT and County Court
- Compliance with the Equality Act 2010
- School Exclusions
- Judicial Review
- Breach of contract and negligence claims involving education providers
- School Admissions
- Home Education
- Internal academic appeals
- Fitness to Practice appeals
- Appeals to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator
- Public consultations
- Public inquiries
- Data protection and subject access requests.

**Recent education law matters which Alice has been involved in include:**

- Successfully representing a child with epilepsy in a disability discrimination claim against his school, with the decision being sent by the Tribunal to the EHRC, the DfE and to Ofsted as a result.
- Successfully representing a child with complex and mental health difficulties in a disability discrimination claim against an Academy which had unlawfully place him in isolation for 3 months.
- Successfully representing a child with ADHD ODD and sensory processing disorder in a claim against his school for failure to allow him to attend a skiing trip and punishing him for behaviors arising from hi disability.
- Successfully representing a number of children in their Section I appeals, enabling their progress at the right school which meets their needs.
- Successfully representing children in appeals against "refusal to assess" or "refusal to issue" EHC plans.
- Successfully overturning a permanent exclusion decision regarding a 6 year old child that brought a cheese knife to school.
- Drafting Ofsted policies and consultation responses on schools, social care settings, unregistered schools, and equality law matters.
- Policy drafting in relation to counter-terrorism measures taken by schools.
- Advising medical and nursing students in claims under the Equality Act 2010 where the University's competency assessment standards conflicted with the duty to make reasonable adjustments.
- Advising and representing in relation to negligence claims for failure to spot learning difficulties.
- Advising and representing in relation to breach of contract claims involving Independent Schools.
- Advising parents of school pupils with disabilities who have been unlawfully permanently excluded.
- Drafting funding applications to the European Human Rights Commission, to support client's cases concerning discrimination in education.
- Drafting submissions to the Health and Conduct Committee/Fitness to Practise Committee.
- Drafting submissions to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.

Alice has also helped to create a number of BBC Radio 4 programmes about [school exclusions](#). Whilst Alice was Chief Director of The School Exclusion Project, it featured in the press several times addressing unlawful exclusions – for instance this [Guardian article](#).

She is also a volunteer for the charity Inspiring the Future, which connects young people in state schools and colleges with those from the world of work. She has recently been part of their Inspiring Women campaign, mentoring girls from various schools to raise their aspirations and break down gender stereotypes.

Whilst dealing with a busy practice, Alice also finds time to assist the [Centre for Women's Justice](#) by providing pro bono legal advice to Women that approach the charity in need of assistance in a range of matters.

Alice is happy to provide training in relation to education law. Of late she provided training on school admissions appeals to Local Authorities, a talk on disability discrimination to a children's charity and ran a seminar on school exclusions for solicitors. Please get in touch with her clerks should this be something you would wish to organise.

## Articles

[Alice de Coverley](#) and [Alex Leonhardt](#) analyse how the tricky, balancing questions around children's rights, school uniforms and school discipline have been dealt with by the Courts.

This article also appeared in the Education Law Monitor.

[View Article](#)

3PB Barristers are proud to announce the launch of the first book on the law on school exclusions since 2002, co-authored by Charlotte Hadfield and Alice de Coverley.

[View Article](#)

3PB's specialist education barristers Alice de Coverley and Matthew Wyard have co-authored a two-part report, for students and schools separately, about today's GCSE results day (20 August 2020).

The guidance offers tips for students and their parents about the GCSE grade that students will receive; the appeals process in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland; Exam results Helplines available; Subject Access Requests for finding out information to support you in pushing for an appeal; grounds for appeals; Centres' duties to students/learners.

[View Article](#)

In this article, Alice de Coverley and Matthew Wyard answer some of the most significant questions facing both students and schools on A-level results day 2020, providing practical advice on what to do next.

[View Article](#)

Matthew Wyard and Alice de Coverley have produced a guide to remote hearings in SENDIST including practical top tips for both practitioners and witnesses. They cover topics from using technology to adapting your approach to this new style of hearing.

[View Article](#)

## Recommendations

A well-regarded junior with expertise covering a wide range of education matters. She is regularly instructed to represent government bodies, schools, universities, families and students, and is experienced in the handling of exclusions and disability discrimination claims.

Strengths: *"Very knowledgeable and passionate. She really helps her clients to understand what the issues are and identifies the legal risks and next steps."* *"She is very approachable, very supportive to parents and very calm and collected in a stressful environment."*

Recent work: Represented Ofsted in several strands of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse.

**Chambers UK 2021**/Education London Bar – Up and Coming

*'Very knowledgeable in her field, has excellent communication skills and is an all round great advocate.'*

**Legal 500 2021**/Education – London – Tier 1 Rising Star

*"Alice is extraordinarily understated and approachable for someone quite so terrifyingly clever. She combines a forensic and encyclopaedic legal mind with a keen eye for strategy and an absolute commitment to her clients, and she has an understated confidence that just allows you to relax. It was clear from the start that we were in Rolls Royce hands – whatever happened, in instructing Alice we'd given our child his absolute best chance. That confidence proved very well placed, as she managed to secure absolutely everything we sought. She achieved a complex EOTAS package for him, which are rarely granted. It's the only area with SEN Tribunals where the parent is unlikely to succeed – yet Alice did, with bells on. She didn't just secure our child a Personal Budget, she achieved a mid 5-figures one, including elements even the SEN Code says should be restricted to exceptional circumstances. We have two disabled children, both of whom are represented by Alice. We wouldn't consider instructing anyone else."*

*"Thank you so much for fighting our corner so hard. [My child] is over the moon. You gave me hope where before I honestly had none."*

*"I spoke with my client last night and wanted to relay to you how pleased she was with yesterday. She could not praise you enough and said that you went above and beyond what she expected."*

*"I thought I would pass on Mr C's comments as to how much he appreciated your time on Friday and he said what a fantastic Barrister that you are. I thought you should know how much he thought of you."*

## Academic qualifications

- City Law School GDL (Commendation)
- City Law School BPTC (Very Competent)
- Durham University BA Hons Theology (2:1)

## Scholarships

- "Just Rights" Human Rights - the Big Voice Mooting Competition Champion, 2013, winning in the final at the Supreme Court
- In 2012 the School Exclusion Project won the Bar Pro Bono Award
- In 2014 the School Exclusion Project was runner up in the Attorney General LawWorks Pro Bono Awards for 'Best Contribution by a Team of Students'.

## Professional qualifications & appointments

- Attorney General's Junior Junior panel
- Editorial Board Member of [Counsel Magazine](#).

## Professional bodies

- Education Law Association (ELAS)
- Personal Injury Bar Association (PIBA)
- [Centre for Women's Justice](#)

## Direct Access

Alice accepts Direct Access instructions for Education Law cases.

Alice is particularly passionate about Education Law. Prior to commencing pupillage, Alice was the Chief Director of The School Exclusion Project for four years. This is an award-winning pro-bono unit dedicated to representing parents of permanently excluded school children.

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- School Exclusions
- School Admissions
- Appeals to the SEND Tribunal on the content of EHC Plans
- Discrimination (particularly disability discrimination) claims in the FTT and County Court
- Internal academic appeals / Fitness to Practice appeals
- Appeals to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator

### Recent matters which Alice has been involved in include:

- Advising medical and nursing students in claims under the Equality Act where the University's competency assessment

standards conflicted with the duty to make reasonable adjustments.

- Advising a Higher Education provider on their duties under the Equality Act when a student disclosed a previously unknown disability after examinations had taken place.
- Advising in relation to negligence claims for failure to diagnose learning difficulties.
- Advising in relation to breach of contract claims involving Independent Schools.
- Advising parents of school pupils with disabilities who have been unlawfully permanently excluded.
- Drafting funding applications to the European Human Rights Commission, to support client's cases concerning discrimination in education.
- Drafting submissions to the Health and Conduct Committee/Fitness to Practice Committee.
- Appeals against Termination of Registration.
- Drafting submissions to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator.

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