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Date: 02/09/2019

We hope that you all had an enjoyable relaxing summer break. There has been some changes within the Virtual School Team and this academic year the structure is as follows. We will no longer be working within localities instead across Telford as In borough and Out of Borough, this is to reflect the current education landscape and in line with good practice within Virtual Schools nationally.

Virtual School Head Michelle Salter  
Education Advisor In Borough EY/PLAC Anna Loveland  
Education Advisor Post 16 & Out of Borough (OOB) - Lucy Wright  
Education Advisor In borough (Interim) Amanda Price  
Education Officer In borough and PEP Lead Sarah Summers  
Education Officer OOB Sharron Jones  
CIC Tracking Officer (Interim) Amanda Price  
PEP Coordinator Kerriann Hughes  
BSO Sarah Herbert

All general enquires to our service mailbox at [virtualschool@telford.gov.uk](mailto:virtualschool@telford.gov.uk) remembering to use initials rather than names in full in any correspondence, or contact the relevant person as listed above.

The role of the **Virtual School for Children in Care** is to champion the needs of Telford and Wrekin's looked after children and previously looked after children wherever they may be placed. This is achieved through support and challenge to schools and other education providers, the local authority, and any other relevant partners to ensure they have the best possible education.

Reflecting from last academic year I wanted to take the time to thank you for all your hard work in supporting our children to do their best at school. It is pleasing to report that the quality of PEPs has improved each term. This, coupled with the fact that fewer children in care have received a fixed term exclusion in 2018-2019 compared to previous years, and attendance rates have remained at the consistently high level compared to the previous year, is much to celebrate.

As a virtual school we recognise the importance of working closely with schools, parents, social care colleagues and foster carers. This year the virtual school is aiming to:

- Develop and improve Early Years and Post 16 including PEPs through the work of the Education Advisors



- Build on the Designated Teachers' networks and the Governor Network meetings, to further support schools in particular with the embedding of EPEPS to ensure that the percentage of PEPs graded good or better is above 80%.
- Continue to strengthen collaboration with other agencies such as health, social care and the other teams in the local authority. Through this we hope to provide children and young people with a "seamless offer" and take a holistic approach to each child's development.
- To raise attainment & progress for all our Children in Care (Outcomes) through effective engagement with partners in improvement of educational outcomes for Children in Care
- Ensure the Belonging Strategy is embedded into Telford & Wrekin schools practice for our most vulnerable children.
- Encourage schools to be 'attachment friendly schools' linked to Attachment Research Community

### **Attachment Aware Schools and the Belonging Strategy**

A key area for this academic year will be that all schools implement some of the objectives described in the Belonging Strategy, using approaches which suit each individual educational establishment. It is paramount that all children have a sense of belonging. The five priorities link to a variety of training which will be offered this year including Attachment, Emotion Coaching, Youth Mental Health First Aider to name but a few. Check out the CPD brochure and sign up, uptake is already high! A copy of the Belonging Strategy has also been emailed to all Designated Teachers. **We are also encouraging all schools to commit to ARC Attachment Research Community, and you could use your Pupil Premium money to become a member.** Please explore the following link for further information. <https://the-arc.org.uk/>

### **PEP meetings**

Last academic year saw a significant increase in the number of PEPs completed compared to previous year's 35% to now 100% all Children in Care of compulsory school age. We aim to continue this result by continuing to work in close partnerships with all stakeholders. Kerriann Hughes the VS PEP Coordinator who will coordinate all PEPS- **any changes to PEP dates are to be undertaken by PEP coordinator only.** As always, the best practice being seen is where effective and supportive joint working is taking place. This is also where the feedback from Children in Care is most positive about the experience. Collectively the number of PEPS graded green and good or better has risen term on term. We aim to work with close partnerships to ensure our target of 80% of all PEPS graded good or better is achieved, through robust quality assurance model

**Please remember the submission of PEP documents by the deadline, SMART Targets linked to costings, attendance recorded daily on the portal are all essential elements to ensure that your school can continue to receive any funding it might be eligible for in the future.**

The Education Advisers' first task will be to design and develop an Early Years PEP and a Post 16 PEP. Therefore, if any Designated Teachers would like to input to this please contact the [virtualschool@telford.gov.uk](mailto:virtualschool@telford.gov.uk) and the Education Advisers will be in touch directly.

### **Therapy support**

The Virtual School will continue to explore SEMH commissioning to support our most vulnerable children and young people this academic year, please contact us directly to discuss further.

### **Results**

Well done to all our children in care who have recently sat their SATS, GCSEs and Post 16 studies early indications show that all pupils have worked exceptionally hard and achieved fantastic results to support them all in the next steps of the education journey.

## Expectations

Whilst I fully appreciate that the majority of schools already have effective methods for reporting to the Virtual School. I thought that it would be prudent to outline the key areas following on from a recent meeting with other Virtual School Headteacher and Ofsted. Ofsted has described the following expectations:

- **Attendance** - must be reported to the Virtual School regularly. Please can schools utilise the Telford and Wrekin school portal to record attendance daily or at least weekly. If you require a user being set up with an account access rights. Please provide [kerriann.hughes@telford.gov.uk](mailto:kerriann.hughes@telford.gov.uk) with a name and work email address.
- **Fixed Term Exclusions**- Ideally if a school is considering to issue a FTE to a CIC in the first instant please can the Designated Teacher/ School contact the VSH to discuss.
  - Last academic year saw a reduction in the number of FTE issued to CIC as previously it was significantly higher compared to other regions for CIC.
  - If a FTE is issued there is an expectation that the local authority is informed, please can a copy of FTE letter be sent to [accessandinclusion@telford.gov.uk](mailto:accessandinclusion@telford.gov.uk) and the virtual school copied in [virtualschool@telford.gov.uk](mailto:virtualschool@telford.gov.uk)
- **Modified Timetables** - whatever the nature of a proposed MTT, this should be in consultation with the virtual school and regularly reviewed.
  - All modified timetables require a parental signature, for Children in Care this would normally be the Social Worker, but **there is an expectation that the Virtual School agrees this prior** to a Social Worker signing.
  - Pupils who are not accessing full time education and are on part time timetables; this is something that needs to be in consultation with the virtual school, and reviewed weekly (modified timetables reviewed weekly is an expectation that has been shared by Ofsted). This is the responsibility of the school at which the CIC is on roll to liaise with the VS regarding number of hours currently received, assurances that safeguarding requirements are met if CIC are not accessing full time education. An agreed plan for increasing the hours, which is reviewed weekly and shared with the Virtual School allocated case worker.

## CIC annual report 18-19

Please can all Designated Teachers' provide the Virtual school with your CIC annual report for last academic year before October half term.

## Policies

Pupil Premium & CIC policy- The following policies have been sent to schools this week for this academic year for implementation.

## Designated Teacher PEP Training

If you are interested in any additional training please in the first instance please contact Sarah Summers PEP Lead [sarah.summers@telford.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.summers@telford.gov.uk)

## Dates for your Diary:

4 <sup>th</sup> October	<b>HOTSHOTS Annual Awards Ceremony – The Place Oakengates 6:30-9:00pm</b> Invitations have been sent out to all at the end of the summer term. We hope to see you all there...
17 <sup>th</sup> October	<b>Autumn Designated Teachers Network Meeting an opportunity to share good practice and network... Sir Alexander Fleming Primary School 4-5:30</b>
12 <sup>th</sup> November	<b>Autumn Nominated Governor Training Wrekin View Primary 4-5:30</b>

Thank you all, for your ongoing support and commitment, and on behalf of the Virtual School we all look forward to continuing to work closely to support all our children in care,

Kind Regards,

**Michelle Salter Virtual School Head Teacher Telford & Wrekin Virtual School**