



Telford and Wrekin Virtual School

Autumn 2020 Newsletter

Welcome to the Virtual School Autumn 2020 Newsletter

On behalf of the Virtual School, as the Virtual School Head Teacher, I would like to thank you all for your continued commitment, hard work and support to ensure that our pupils develop, flourish and maximise all opportunities to succeed in the next steps of their learning despite the many additional challenges we have faced this term.

I am pleased to report that at 97%, our combined attendance is in the top quartile nationally. We also have just a 1% exclusion rate, which is significantly lower than other local authorities.

We also have a number of exciting plans for 2021 to ensure we enrich the education and lives of our Children in Care – further details are included in this Newsletter.

Michelle Salter – Virtual School Head Teacher

Events

Young Person's Conference and National Takeover Challenge Day-

This year we are aiming to host our first ever Young Person's Conference, combined with National Takeover Challenge Day – providing our young people with the chance to be in real-life, decision making positions with our council. A 'save the date' for 30th April 2021 has been sent out to Telford and Wrekin colleagues and external partners (depending Government restrictions). External speakers have confirmed their attendance for the conference. Letters of invitation to be sent out to Years 7, 8 and 9 CiC by the end of the Autumn Term.

Hotshots-

This is our annual awards ceremony to recognise and celebrate the achievements of our young people. A 'save the date' email for 11th of June 2021 has been sent out to Telford and Wrekin colleagues and external partners.

Getting in touch

If you have any comments, suggestions or require any advice/support, please do not hesitate to get in touch:

General Enquires: **01952 381045**

Secure email: virtualschool@telford.gov.uk

Virtual School Head Teacher: michelle.salter@telford.gov.uk

EYFS/PLAC Education Adviser: anna.loveland@telford.gov.uk

In Borough Education Adviser/CPD Lead: john.newton@telford.gov.uk

In Borough Education Officer/PEP Lead: sarah.summers@telford.gov.uk

In Borough Education Adviser/CiC Tracking Officer: amanda.price@telford.gov.uk

Out of Borough Education Officer/Events Lead: sharron.jones@telford.gov.uk

Education, Training and Employment Officer/Post 16: emily.lane@telford.gov.uk

Out of Borough Education Adviser/Post 16: louise.aubrey@telford.gov.uk

PEP Coordinator/Arts Link Lead: kerriann.hughes@telford.gov.uk

Virtual School Website: [Virtual school for children in care - Telford & Wrekin Council](https://www.telford.gov.uk/virtual-school-for-children-in-care)

Please visit our website and in particular our gallery section - we love receiving updates and your work to showcase.

CPD

The Virtual School has had a busy term when it comes to delivering and participating in CPD. We held a successful virtual termly update for Designated Teachers and Nominated Governors for Children in Care and Previously Looked After Children that was attended by almost sixty delegates from within and beyond the borough. We were glad to be joined by guest speaker, Tim Allin from the StayTrue Project, who shared his own experience of supporting young people through his residential care role.

The Virtual School also offered the first 'education workshop' for Foster Carers, which this term focussed on the teaching and learning of phonics and early communication and language. We hope to deliver a similar session next term, to support foster carers in developing children's number and calculation skills through fun and engaging activities at home.

The Virtual School has also successfully applied for some of our local schools to participate in funded research projects within the Spring and Summer Terms. These national projects have a focus on strengthening language and literacy through improving the impact of intervention and pupils' engagement and on engaging families in supporting learning at home. These projects are in the early stages of planning, but we're glad to have been invited to participate.

A number of Telford schools attended in this year's Attachment Research Community (ARC) Annual Conference on 24th November, which included inspirational keynotes from Paul Dix, Professor Barry Carpenter and Kim Golding – to name but a few. It was wonderful to see some familiar names on the delegate list! Please do consider signing up to the ARC membership, which will offer your setting access to national research, practical advice and resource and valuable training and self-evaluation tools to aid your school in becoming 'attachment aware'. Details at <https://the-arc.org.uk/>

Did you know that the Virtual School can offer your setting free, bespoke training around supporting Children in Care and Previously Looked After Children who may be managing Early Trauma and/or attachment disorders? The 'Introduction to Early Childhood Trauma and Attachment Difficulties' training can be adapted to suit your specific setting and offers staff information and support to reflect on your current challenges and provision to best meet the needs of your learners. If you'd like to know more about the training we offer, please email virtualschool@telford.gov.uk

Spring Term CPD Diary Dates:

Foster Carers' Education Workshop: 19th January at 1:00pm

DT for Post 16 Termly Update: 20th January at 4:00pm

DT/ Nominated Governor for CiC (Compulsory School Age) Termly Update: 2nd March at 4:00pm

Early Years Network Termly Update: 17th March at 4:00pm

Post 16

The Virtual School has two new staff dedicated to Post 16.

Lou Aubrey – Education Advisor – Lou is an experienced teacher, who leads on Post 16 for the Virtual School. Alongside PEP meetings, Lou can offer advice and support to help ensure the best outcomes for our young people.

Emily Lane – Education, Employment and Training Officer – Emily is experienced in re-engaging Post 16, NEET young people. Alongside PEP meetings and NEET action plans for our care leavers, Emily can provide advice and support to help ensure the best possible outcomes for our young people. This will include an exciting social enterprise research project.

Early Years

As a Virtual School we are continuing to support our EY CIC. PEP Meetings are now taking place for every EY CIC the term following their second birthday. Anna Loveland continues to support settings and has delivered updates at the Child care Network Meeting and the Early Years Co-ordinators Termly Update.

The EY PEP will be going live in January 2021 for the completion of online PEPs for our Early Years provisions. In order for us to support you and ensure that you are able to access and complete PEPs online for our children in care, we recommend that you attend one of our online training sessions which will cover:

- Accessing and completing the online PEP
- Support with the writing of SMART Targets
- EYPP spend and guidance on how to record this
- The PEP quality assurance form and non-negotiables.

The dates of the training sessions are:

- 15 December 2020 - 6.30pm - 8pm
- 17 December 2020 - 9.30am - 11am
- 25 January 2021 - 1.30pm - 4pm.

To book a place or for more information please contact Anna Loveland - anna.loveland@telford.gov.uk or Kerriann Hughes - kerriann.hughes@telford.gov.uk.

Previously Looked After Children (PLAC)

Together4Children officially launched in September. Together4Children is a partnership between Shropshire Council, Staffordshire County Council, Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Telford & Wrekin Council. It is the regional adoption agency for the four councils. Also providing other services and initiatives that support children's permanency. As a Virtual School we have already supported an Education Workshop for adoptive and SGO parents, with more training opportunities in the pipeline

As a Virtual School we are getting more and more requests to support PLAC. We continue to offer advice and guidance to parents and providers.

REMINDER – January School Census

It is for those with parental responsibility (adoptive parents, special guardians and carers of former looked after children on residence / child arrangements orders) to decide if they wish to self-declare their children's status to schools. Schools should ensure parents and carers are aware of this and that this information is collected to help ensure that the designated teacher for previously looked after children can support those children and the school can attract pupil premium funding to support this cohort. Parents are to provide supporting evidence, for example, a photocopy of the adoption order, and confirm that their child was previously in care in England or Wales.

And finally...

The Virtual School Team would like to wish you all a relaxing

Very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!