

# Barnet Virtual School Foster Carer Newsletter

Autumn 2021

Welcome to the Autumn 2021 edition of the Barnet Virtual School Foster Carer Newsletter. Thanks to all of you for the amazing support you gave your children over the last academic year. I hope this year is an easier one for all of us and that our children get more consistent access to education.

We have a number of changes this term. Over the summer break, one of our caseworkers Catherine Rooney left the Virtual School. Those of you who worked with Catherine will know how brilliant she was at her job and we will really miss her knowledge, experience and organisation! We have a new caseworker who started with us on the 1st September, Hannah Hudson. Hannah will be working mainly with Key Stage 2 and 3 and will be getting in touch with schools over the coming weeks.

At the end of the Summer Term, the DfE announced that from September 2021 Virtual Schools will take on a strategic and advisory role for children who have or ever had a social worker—primarily children with a child in need or child protection plan. This will initially be for a trial period. This new guidance does not change existing duties for looked-after and previously looked-after children. We have a new member of the team who will lead on this—her name is Nicola Axford.

Hopefully your young people have started school smoothly and, as always, our team will be continuing to support them in accessing education so do get in touch if you have any queries.

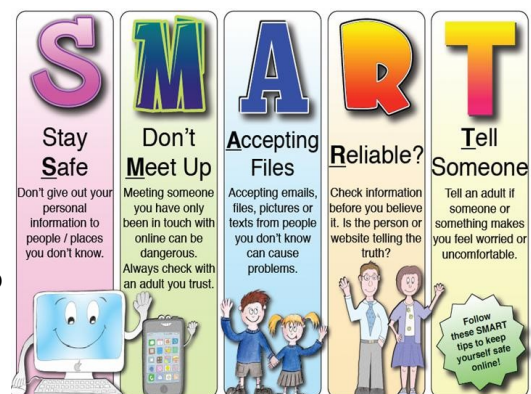
Sarah Deale Head teacher, Virtual School

## INTERNET SAFETY

Internet Safety is key if your child has access to a laptop, smart phone, gaming console etc. If your young person has a laptop from us, there will be a second login. This is so you can set parental controls and privacy settings but you will need to regularly review these.

Parental controls are the names for a group of settings that put you in control of what content your child can see. Combined with privacy settings these can help you protect your children from the things they shouldn't see or experience online. Parental Controls and Privacy Settings are useful tools to help minimise the risks your children may face, but they are not 100% effective. It's really important to teach your child skills like critical thinking and resilience, so they know what to do if they encounter risk. Always encourage them to talk to you about anything they find upsetting online.

Internet Matters has useful advice on how to set Parental Controls on a variety of different devices. Please look on this site to find the advice <https://www.internetmatters.org/parental-controls/>



# FEEDBACK

Thank you to all of you who responded to the School Review back in the summer and gave your feedback - we really appreciated so many of your positive comments. I wanted to respond to some of the comments and questions:

## Could the training be repeated?

We think each year about what training to offer and it may well be similar themes that we know people want. Please see on for this term's training and email [Barnet.virtualschool@barnet.gov.uk](mailto:Barnet.virtualschool@barnet.gov.uk) if you have any specific ideas.

Both the VS workers I have worked with are supportive, do what is agreed and offer really good advice.

## I did not know about enrichment activities

I have only had positive experiences with the virtual school. They are happy to help and are supportive whenever it has been necessary. Thank you

We run a variety of different opportunities. Please make sure you check your emails, as we will email you with any opportunities appropriate to your young person. Thank you for your suggestions for enrichment activities—one suggestion was the opportunity to try different career options which is an idea we will look into. If you have other ideas, please let us know by emailing [Barnet.virtualschool@barnet.gov.uk](mailto:Barnet.virtualschool@barnet.gov.uk)

## Can we have more tuition?

If your young person would like more tuition, please contact your caseworker or raise it at their PEP meeting. If the school can provide additional tuition, this is ideal as they know the young person. If not, we can provide external tuition but this would be to meet specific targets and time limited.

Really helpful all round. It feels like we all work together as a team for the best of the children.

## Foster carers with children with complex Special Needs needing support at home

This is a complex area and very individual. It really needs the team around the child to support to put in place strategies which may help. If the child has a diagnosis of autism, there are avenues to access support and similarly if your child has an EHCP, there should be professionals to help. Your school should be able to also offer advice on the strategies they use in school which you may be implement at home. If things are challenging at home, please do raise it at PEP meetings so that thought can be given as to the best way to help.

## Training for Foster Carers

Free!

This term we are offering two training sessions. These are virtual training sessions. If you would like to come to one of the courses, please email [bar-net.virtualschool@barnet.gov.uk](mailto:bar-net.virtualschool@barnet.gov.uk), stating which course you want to attend. We will then send you a link before the course and a certificate of attendance afterwards.



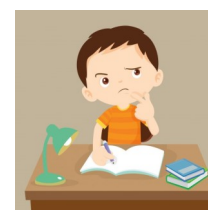
**Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> November 2021 – 9.30-11.30am**

Supporting early reading and home learning for primary aged children

– Lucy Baker and Samantha Rothwell (Inclusion Advisory Team)

**Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> November 2021 – 9.30-11.30am**

Strategies to support reading and home learning for secondary aged children—Sam Rothwell (inclusion Advisory Team)



## Contact Us



Follow us twitter to keep up with news and opportunities to support our young people.



You can read more about the Virtual School and find useful resources by going to

<https://www.barnetlocaloffer.org.uk/> and searching for Virtual School



Tel: 020 8359 4534



[barnet.virtualschool@barnet.gov.uk](mailto:barnet.virtualschool@barnet.gov.uk)

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