

# Barnet Virtual School Newsletter

Summer 1 2023

Welcome to the Summer Term newsletter from the Virtual School. We hope you all had a restful break and have returned refreshed for the last term of 2022/23.

**Just a reminder that the deadline for Summer PEPs is the 16th June.** Please ensure that your PEP meetings have happened and the PEP document is complete by this date. **For statutory age children, any PEPs completed after this date will not be able to have funding agreed.** Please remember that we hold both recovery funding and Pupil Premium Plus funding for looked after children and that you can request this through the PEP attached to an outcome for the young person. Any questions please just get in touch.

Sarah Deale Virtual School Headteacher

## Attendance

As we know, school attendance is challenging particularly for some of our older children and Working together to improve school attendance ([publishing.service.gov.uk](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)) made clear how it is everyone's responsibility.

Please ensure that attendance is accurately recorded in every PEP document along with the context of any absences. The Virtual School caseworker, in collaboration with the wider network, can then support with ideas to help and prevent any further deterioration. If a child's attendance is below 95% (unless there is a specific reason e.g. in the Autumn Term it is quite easy to be below 95% with one bout of illness) please ensure there is a target on the PEP. The Spring 1 newsletter had ideas for targets and strategies which you may find helpful. You find previous newsletters on our website—[Newsletter Archive | Barnet Virtual School | London Borough of Barnet \(barnetvs.org\)](#)

In February 2023, the DfE produced this document [Support for pupils where a mental health issue is affecting attendance: effective practice examples \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#). It has lots of useful case studies :

- A pupil diagnosed with ASC where a temporary part time timetable builds confidence
- A pupil experiencing exam anxiety and reasonable adjustments
- A pupil with anxiety-based school avoidance and reasonable adjustments

It also has other ideas for strategies which may help particular young people e.g.

- Pupils can pre-order lunch and it is collected by the staff and distributed to them to eat in alone.
- Pupils can be provided with "Early Leave" cards, that will allow them to avoid main transition times in corridors between classes.
- A short period of phased timetabling to allow a transition back into school and to attend full-time, where the child is in school but does not attend all lessons, working with the pupil to support with any anxiety they are experiencing during time not spent in class.
- Children with sensory difficulties are considered as part of the school uniform policy, such as allowing them to wear shorts instead of trousers, which helps to alleviate anxiety about attending.
- Some pupils are offered a "meet and greet" at the school gate to support transition back into school after period of absence.

There is also a blog which has some useful stats you may want to share with parents/carers [Why is school attendance so important and what are the risks of missing a day? - The Education Hub \(blog.gov.uk\)](#)



## Personal Education Plans

School is a very key agent for change in a child's life and the PEP is a critical vehicle for capturing the shared aspirations we have for our children and all the planning in place to secure their future. The PEP is a record of the child's education and training. It should describe what needs to happen for a looked-after child to help them fulfil their potential. The PEP is a vital document because it provides a 'collective memory' about the child's education. It is an integral part of a looked-after child's wider care plan.

As a statutory document, it is vital it is completed fully and that the targets/outcomes are meaningful and relevant to the young person. Sometimes the targets are not measurable and have no real way to achieve them outlined e.g.

SMART target	What is the reason for the target?	What strategies will be used to help support the child to meet their target?
To improve school attendance	Attendance is currently below 95%	Pupil to attend school more regularly
To improve comprehension skills.	Meet ARE in reading in SATS	Comprehension homework tasks
Know 2,5,10 times tables	To know times tables	Weekly times tables test Times tables homework
To attend an afterschool club.	- To be given the opportunity to attend an extracurricular club	- weekly afterschool club.

Here are these targets changed into ones which are much clearer and achievable with strategies outlined.

SMART target	What is the reason for the target?	What strategies will be used to help support the child to meet their target?
To improve my attendance from 82.5% to at least 95% by the end of the Spring term	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Target for attendance is 95%, currently attendance is 82.5%</li> <li>- Pupils academic attainment to improve as will be attending more lessons</li> <li>-Pupil will feel more settled as will have a more familiar structure and routine</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Pupil to be met and welcomed to school each morning by the learning mentor</li> <li>- School to monitor attendance weekly and liaise with foster parent regarding any concerns.</li> <li>- Any appointments to be scheduled outside school hours.</li> <li>- Agree rewards system with pupil for improved attendance after an agreed time period e.g., full attendance for a 2 week period.</li> </ul>
To develop my comprehension and inference skills and build confidence in using these skills so I can achieve ARE in KS2 SATS.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- In order to meet the age-related expectations for reading x will need to develop her comprehension skills and be able to locate information directly from a text to answer fact-based questions.</li> <li>- X also needs to develop her inference skills and start to understand what is implied through certain words, phrases and actions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1:1 session at £25 x twice a week with a specialist literacy teacher before school for 10 weeks.</li> <li>- Participate in weekly small group intervention focussing on comprehension and inference skills through text related tasks and activities.</li> <li>- Provision and support to complete previous SATs papers to give her experience of what will be expected in May.</li> </ul>
To recall 2,5,10 times tables accurately on three separate occasions by the end of summer term.	X needs to consolidate his times tables knowledge so that he can transfer this to help support him in other maths areas e.g., solving word problems, division and equations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 10 min daily Times Tables rockstar programme practice during early morning work.</li> <li>- 1 x weekly small group times tables maths games support group</li> <li>- Weekly specific times tables homework task</li> </ul>

See on

<p>To develop social skills, turn taking, team building and expand peer friendship group by attending a weekly after school football club.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To develop the ability to take turns and listen to others when working as a team</li> <li>-To develop understanding of appropriate social interactions with peers as this is something x finds difficult.</li> <li>- To develop a sense of belonging and expand circle of friends by attending a football club with a range of different pupil as x is new to the school</li> <li>- To support mental health and wellbeing by attending and participating in an extracurricular activity of interest.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Attend 10 x 1-hour weekly afterschool football club</li> <li>- Learning mentor to ensure attends each week</li> <li>- Carers to ensure x has correct kit and that it is brought to school on the correct day to encourage participation</li> <li>- PE coach to provide praise for good teamwork and turn taking and share successes with form tutor and wider school community</li> </ul>
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If you need any support with writing your targets, please contact your caseworker.

## Useful Resources/Virtual School Updates

Some of you will know Aiysha Iqbal, Post 16 caseworker. She has now started her maternity leave. She is being covered by Esther Marlsey-Burkson who will be making contact with colleges/schools her young people are attending shortly. BELS are also continuing to fund our mentoring project for another year—this was previously known as the Transition Hub. Unfortunately there is no in-reach provision so Hassan Sufi left at the end of last term. We wish him all the best with his next endeavours.

The government has announced that Post 16 Pupil Premium Plus is to be rolled out to all local authorities. They have not yet announced the amount each LA will get but it is definitely positive news. They have also announced that funding is to continue for Virtual Schools for all children with a social worker for another two years.



The official release for outcomes for children in need including looked after children has just been released. You can access it here: [Outcomes for children in need, including children looked after by local authorities, in England: 2021 to 2022 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/outcomes-for-children-in-need-including-looked-after-children-2021-to-2022)

The **Education Endowment Foundation** in February 2023 published new resources dedicated to supporting high quality early years practice: [Evidence for the early years | EEF \(educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk\)](https://www.educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence-for-the-early-years) They are also looking for secondary schools in England to sign up to projects around attendance. These are:

Grassroots, [Grassroots: a programme to improve pupil behaviour \(2023/24 –... | EEF \(educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk\)](https://www.educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/grassroots) which aims to improve attendance by empowering well-connected pupils to positively impact their peers' attitudes and behaviours.

BITUP, [BITUP: Updating Parents on Number of School Days Missed... | EEF \(educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk\)](https://www.educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/bitup), which aims to improve attendance by sending personalised text messages to parents and carers updating them on the number of days of school their child has missed. The EEF also has lots of useful information on effective use of Pupil Premium funding—[Pupil Premium menu evidence brief.pdf \(d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net\)](https://d2tic4wvo1iusb.cloudfront.net/pupil-premium-menu-evidence-brief.pdf)

The **Office for National Statistics** have produced interesting information on the education background of looked-after children who interact with the criminal justice system. [The education background of looked-after children who interact with the criminal justice system - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://www.ons.gov.uk/people-population/children-and-young-people/looked-after-children/education-background-of-looked-after-children-who-interact-with-the-criminal-justice-system)

The **UK Trauma Centre** [Resources - UKTC \(uktraumacouncil.org\)](https://www.uktraumacouncil.org/resources) has lots of useful resources including Childhood Trauma and the brain and resources for responding to critical incidents.



## Training

### Understanding and supporting young people who experience anxiety



This course is relevant to all D.Ts, safeguarding leads or any school staff who want to learn more about anxiety and approaches to supporting children and young people's wellbeing within their setting. It is free to ALL schools. You do not need to buy into BPSI.

This course will:

- Develop an understanding of anxiety through psychological theory
- Explore how anxiety may present in children and young people
- To consider strategies of support and specific interventions at different levels (whole school, group and individual)

**Leader:** Dr Aimee Cole—Educational Psychologist

**Thursday 8th June 2023 9:30 - 12:00** This will be in person at the PDC

**To book, please open this link:** [CPD Strand-doc v3.9c \(schoolcircular.co.uk\)](https://www.schoolcircular.co.uk/cpd-strand-doc-v3.9c)

**Scroll to the bottom to find Virtual School Training**

## Key Contacts at the Virtual School

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