



# BRIGHTON & HOVE VIRTUAL SCHOOL

# NEWSLETTER

AUTUMN 2023

## A note from our Virtual School Lead, Sam Wilson

Welcome to our Virtual School Autumn Newsletter! I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all of our children and young people who sat exams in the summer and wish them well for the future. Thanks to all of you who have supported them throughout.

This newsletter shares some of the activities and training we offer, as well as some useful resources that teachers, support staff, foster carers and social workers can use to support children in care, children previously in care and children who have a social worker. We are really pleased to be able to offer bespoke training specifically for Designated Teachers who are new into post, or who would like to refresh their knowledge and look forward to seeing as many of you on Wednesday 11th October as possible.

At the beginning of a school year many of our children are starting a new school setting and this can be a particularly daunting time for them, and they may need more support and attention than other children, in order to settle. Please remember the Virtual School team is on hand to help and do get in touch if you need support or have any queries.

We are looking forward to working closely with you through this new academic year to promote the educational achievement of all our children in care, children previously in care and children with a social worker.

## Upcoming training for DTs

### Termly Designated Teacher (DT) Networks

Primary and Secondary networking opportunity for DTs to meet termly with the Virtual School. This is to discuss current national and local issues around the education of Children in Care (CiC), Children Previously in Care (PiC) and Children with a Social Worker (CSW).

### Session for New DTs/ Refresher for current DTs

- Wed 11 October 2023, 14.00 – 16.00, Portslade Hub, Room G07

### Autumn 1: Attendance for children in care/children previously in care/ children with a social worker

- Thu 05 October 2023 15.30-17.00, online

### Autumn 2: Empowerment Approach with Kit Messenger

- Tue 05 December 2023, 15.30 – 17.00, online

### Spring 1: PEP Quality

- Wed 17 Jan 2024, 15.30-17.00, online

### Spring 2: Strategies to support SEMH in schools

- TBC

### Summer 1: Evidence-based Interventions & Funding

- Wed 01 May 2024, 15.30-17.00, online

### Summer 2: Attachment, Trauma & Mental Health Support

- Tue 11 June 2024, 15.30 – 17.00, online

## Celebrating Sporting Success

Sport and physical activity can do so much for mental as well as physical wellbeing and we wanted to take a moment to recognise some of the achievements and sporting successes of some of our young people. Although we are not able to name them here or share photos, we would like to draw attention and give credit to several young people's recent moments worthy of celebration- we hope carers can pass this newsletter on to them so that they can recognise themselves here!

- You scored your first try whilst attending your school's Rugby & Athletics Club and described it as your proudest moment.
- You came 2nd competing against others up to age 18 in the spring term synchro-trampolining competition after committing to the after school trampolining club for three hours each week.
- Being keen on athletics in school, you were chosen by the athletics squad and attended race meetings on behalf of the school in the summer term.
- You play basketball for Brighton Cougars U12 team and in the summer term won the U12 Sussex Play Off final in Lancing.
- Last but not least, you were recently featured in the local newspaper for your achievements playing Rugby, having already won the Player's Player and Coach's Player Awards in addition to playing for your school team. Your carer who is very proud of you describes you as 'a natural, very fast with no fear'.

We'd like to pass on our huge congratulations to these young people: keep doing what you love!

Do you know of a young person in care/ previously in care/ with a social worker who has a success story to share? We would love to hear about it. Please drop us an email at [virtualschool@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:virtualschool@brighton-hove.gov.uk)

VIRTUALSCHOOL@BRIGHTON-HOVE.GOV.UK



## Training & Resources

### For Education & Social Care Professionals

**PEP/Education Matters Training for Social Workers**  
(email us to book on):

- Thu 12 Oct 2023 @ 13.00 – 15.00, Portslade Hub, Rm G56
- Thu 22 Feb 2024 @ 13.00 – 15.00, Portslade Hub, Rm G56
- Thu 20 Jun 2023 @ 13.00- 15.00, Portslade Hub, Rm G56

#### Designated Teacher Guide

The DT guide, created by the Virtual School, can be accessed via the BEEM page linked below or please email us for a copy:

- [Virtual School Guide for DTs](#)

### 'Always Heard' service now called NYAS

From 1st October, the national advocacy helpline service will be provided by the National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS). New details for accessing the service are available below. Please ensure to use the new contact details below after 1st October 2023:

- [Website and online chat](#)
- Freephone: 0808 808 1001
- Email: [help@nyas.net](mailto:help@nyas.net)
- WhatsApp: 07494788875.
- Text: text NYAS to 85258.

### For Young People and Foster Carers

#### Virtual School Foster Carer Conference

Wed 20 March 2024, Bramber House, Sussex University.

You will be able to book your place at the start of the Spring term.

#### Children in Care Awards Ceremony 2023

Friday 17 Nov 2023, Amex Stadium, Brighton.

(For more info please email us).

#### PEP/Education Matters Training for Foster Carers (email us to book on):

- Thu 29 Sep 2023 @ 13.00 – 15.00, Portslade Hub, Rm G56
- Tue 08 Feb 2024 @ 13.00 – 15.00, Portslade Hub, Rm G56
- Tue 06 Jun 2024 @ 13.00- 15.00, Portslade Hub, Rm G56

#### New Mobile Phone app for care leavers

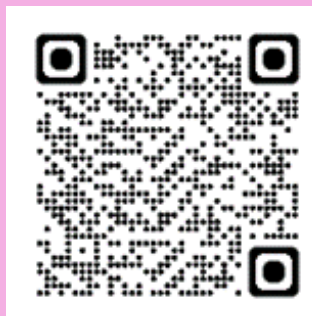
A new app for Brighton and Hove children in care and care leavers has been launched by Brighton & Hove Council. A plethora of useful information can be found through this app. Go to your phone's app store and type in 'Brighton Journey' – click on the pink/purple image of West Pier and you can download the new app for children in care. Link for apple phones:

- <https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/journey-brighton-hove/id1614243357>

### Encyclopaedia Britannica: attention teachers, carers and social workers!

A reminder that we have purchased an Encyclopaedia Britannica licence for every child in care, child previously in care and child with a social worker as well as any adult working with a young person. It can be accessed online from any device, using login details below: please scan the QR code or [click here](#) to access the login page.

- Britannica School Link: <https://school.eb.co.uk>
- Britannica ImageQuest Link: <https://quest.eb.com>
- Username: brighton
- Password: hove



### Help us update the PEP

**Calling all designated teachers, social workers & foster carers!**

Have your say on the PEP process: we are reviewing the Personal Education Plan (PEP) document as well as the wider PEP process and would very much appreciate your involvement in any changes that may come about. To this end, we will be contacting all DTs, social workers and Foster Carers of B&H CiC with a questionnaire. It will take less than 10 minutes to complete but could really make a difference to yours and the young people's experience.

## Transition Support

- Please remember that for children who are **previously in care** and transferring from Year 6 to Year 7, their parents or carers will need to inform secondary schools of their care status and provide evidence (e.g. the permanency order); they will also need to agree to their primary school sharing this information (it is up to them of course whether they choose to do so).
- Parents and carers may assume schools already know their child's care status and this vital information may be missed, along with eligibility for a year of Pupil Premium Plus grant of £2530.
- We have an example letter that schools can send to parents/carers of all new starters in Year 7 inviting them to let the school know if their children are previously in care; schools may wish to include this in their transition packs/information sessions. Contact for more information [sarah.lindfield@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.lindfield@brighton-hove.gov.uk)
- The resource linked below has ideas to support transition, enhanced transition plan examples (primary and secondary), as well as the BHISS Good Practice Guidance for Secondary transfer at Appendix 4, pages 18-19.  
[Transitions in and between education settings – Learning from Parents and Carers](#)



## Raising Aspirations Day: **Wed 29 November 2023**

As part of Raising Aspirations for Children and Young People in Care, we will be working with the University of Sussex to develop and deliver an informed and sustained programme of events aimed at children in care. Events will be held on the University of Sussex campus, where children can attend and experience student life and gain insight into how studying in higher education (HE) may differ from their school and college experiences. As well as content focused on pathways, there will be opportunities to experience different subject areas intended to demonstrate the range and scope of higher education study.

The first programme will include an introduction to higher education, including information on the support available in HE for care leavers, student life and a campus tour. This session is running on **Wednesday 29th November 2023** and is open to young people in Year 7 – 13.

For more info or to refer a child, please contact: [kirsty.baker@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:kirsty.baker@brighton-hove.gov.uk)

## Attendance

We would like to remind you that the Brighton and Hove Attend Plan is available to support children to improve their attendance, and can be accessed by following the link below:

- [BHISS attend form for professionals](#)

## Events & Conferences: **important dates for your diary**

### Children & Young People in Care Awards Ceremony

- **Fri 17 November 2023, Amex Stadium.**

### Virtual School Foster Carer Conference

- **Wed 20 March 2024, 09.30 - 14.30, Bramber House, Sussex Uni.**

### Virtual School Summer Education Conference

- **Thu 04 July 2024, 09.00 - 14.30, Bramber House, Sussex Uni.**

Contact us at [virtualschool@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:virtualschool@brighton-hove.gov.uk) for more info on any of these events.

**SAVE THE DATE!**

**Virtual School Summer Education Conference**  
Thursday 04 July 2024, 9am-2.30pm,  
Bramber House, Sussex University, Brighton

★★★★★ ★★★★★★ ★★★★★★

*"A rare diamond in the meadow of monotonous training"*  
*"Best conference I've been to for years"*  
*"An exceptional event full of useful and inspiring content"*  
*"One of your best ever"*

## Extracurricular Activities

### Art Club for CiC/ PiC ages 6-13

The Virtual School continues to offer a free holiday art club for children in care and children previously in care aged 6 to 13. The most recent art club took place over the Summer holidays where the young people involved created some brilliant work along the theme of a 'Woodland Wonderland', and exhibited their creations during a 'show and tell' display for parents and carers during the last afternoon of the club.

The next art club will be during October half term. To sign up an eligible child, please email us: [virtualschool@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:virtualschool@brighton-hove.gov.uk)

### **New!** Free Dance Programme for children in care

We are excited to let you know about a great opportunity for children and young people in care (who fall under the remit of Brighton and Hove LA) to sign up for a free 12 week dance programme.

Please take a look at the attached flyer for more information and if you wish to sign up an eligible child, then please send an email to [kirsty.baker@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:kirsty.baker@brighton-hove.gov.uk)

Places are limited so please do not delay.

**CARE TO DANCE**  
BRIGHTON & HOVE VIRTUAL SCHOOL

Join our 12-week inclusive dance programme for children and young people in care

Starting September 6th

**Wednesdays 4.30-6pm**

At The Dance Space  
2 Market St, Circus St, BN2 9AS

All ages 7-18yrs

Hip Hop Contemporary, and other styles

Free offer

If you are interested please contact Kirsty:  
**07522620187**  
[Kirsty.Baker@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:Kirsty.Baker@brighton-hove.gov.uk)  
[www.caretodance.co.uk](http://www.caretodance.co.uk)  
insta: care\_to\_dance



## Art Competition & Exhibition

For the second year running, the Virtual School ran an art competition for children in care, children previously in care and care leavers up to age 25. Being motivated by the success of last year's competition which culminated in several online exhibitions as well as in galleries such as the Phoenix Art Space and the Brighton i360, we decided to offer our young people the opportunity to do it all again this year.

In order to gain a better awareness of each young person's unique interests and passions, this year's theme asked young people to note down or photograph 'what inspires you?' and submit it alongside their work.

Choosing a winner from each keystage was tougher than ever; a huge and heartfelt thank you to all that took part and all that supported a young person to take part. Please hold onto that art work so that it can be exhibited in this year's exhibition titled 'Bright'n Inspired', which will take place starting **Sat 16 to Sun 24 September 2023** at the [Liberation Art Gallery](#), Brighton, and will be launched by the young artists who took part.

Please go along and see the work- we hope you will enjoy it.



Brighton & Hove Virtual School proudly invites you to:  
An exhibition of art work from upcoming young artists currently or previously in care  
[@Liberation Art Gallery](#)  
38 Meeting House Ln, Brighton, BN1 1HB  
Opens: 12pm, Sat 16 Sep,  
ends 5pm Sun 24 Sep 2023

For any queries, email: [virtualschool@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:virtualschool@brighton-hove.gov.uk) or call 01273 293992



## Competition Winners

**Key Stage 1 winner: W.B (left) – 'My Cats'**

They 'make me feel happy and safe' and 'make me calm'. These jelly prints were made one weekend in May when W visited the studio of her foster mum's mum in the countryside (she is an artist and has 3 cats). W cut them out and stuck them on the paper and made a happy background with sky and grass and rainbows. She hopes the picture makes you happy too!

**Key Stage 2 joint winner: L.R (right)**

L has created a futuristic intergalactic costume design for a full-size mannequin who stands over 6 foot tall. She took her inspiration from her love of Lady Gaga and glamorous fashion. She listened to a playlist of (clean) Lady Gaga songs and danced as she made the design. She is particularly inspired by Lady Gaga's outrageous style and sassyness.

The mannequin is carrying a handbag containing a crown adorned with images of some of the other glamorous and fierce women and outfits she is inspired by.



**Key Stage 2 joint winner: J.T (left)**

This wolf was inspired by research I did with Shaz (art club teacher). It took two days to make, I used a jigsaw, drill, hammer and glue gun. My friend loves wolves and that why I started to love them. I give £1 a week from my pocket money to a charity who want to bring wolves back to Britain. It's the biggest thing I've made and I don't know where we are going to keep it. I like the mirror eyes best. We got all the things to make the wolf from the pavement in Hollingdean and from Shabitat.

**Key Stage 3 winner: F.G (right)**

F created a triptych using mixed media (spray paint, posca pens, acrylic and stencils) on A1 paper. F has taken his inspiration from the artist Andreas Preis, as he really enjoys his style. He has also taken inspiration from his love of football, especially Liverpool FC his favourite team and the players Mo Salah, Virgil Van Dijk, and Trent Alexander-Arnold.





## Competition Winners Cont'd



### Key Stage 4 winner: J.T (left)

The Horse print has been made by J. At our school we have a horse called Dinky, pictured above. J has a special bond with this horse. He finds it therapeutic to spend time grooming him and leading him to trot and jump.

### Group Winners: A, J, K and O (right)

We were inspired by encouraging collaboration between our learners on the Autistic spectrum. Therefore, we have created a single art piece - it is very large and measures nearly 2m x 2m. We were inspired by the Japanese artist Kiyoshi Yamashita as he also had learning needs. He created art by using torn paper and often used items, paper and material he found. We feel this links to sustainability so we challenged ourselves to create an art piece using only recycled materials. Kiyoshi Yamashita made wonderful scenes with fireworks and we wanted to incorporate this in our art. The fireworks were made by painting the blank side of recycling and then shredding it. The students did well gluing these coming from a circle, as can be seen in the photos. To finish the art we had in incorporate ourselves! So those with a keen eye for detail may spot the students on the beach gazing up at the fireworks.



## Virtual School Team- Contact Us

### Core Team

- Virtual School Lead: Sam Wilson (Full time) [sam.wilson@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:sam.wilson@brighton-hove.gov.uk)
- Education Support Worker Yrs R-2: Una McCartan (Tue -Thu) [una.mccartan@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:una.mccartan@brighton-hove.gov.uk)
- Education Adviser Yr 9: Robert Caddick (Wed-Fri) [robert.caddick@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:robert.caddick@brighton-hove.gov.uk)
- Education Support Worker Yrs 3-6: Zoe Pantelli (Full time, term time) [zoe.pantelli@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:zoe.pantelli@brighton-hove.gov.uk)
- Education Adviser Yrs 10 -11: Fran Coughlan (Full time, term time) [fran.coughlan@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:fran.coughlan@brighton-hove.gov.uk)
- Education Support Worker Yrs 10- 11: Kirsty Baker (Mon-Wed) [kirsty.baker@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:kirsty.baker@brighton-hove.gov.uk)
- Education Support Worker Yrs 7-8: Lesley Oram (Tue- Fri) [lesley.oram@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:lesley.oram@brighton-hove.gov.uk)
- 16 Plus Adviser Yrs 12-13 Stevie Mather (Full time) [stevie.mather@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:stevie.mather@brighton-hove.gov.uk)
- Education Support Worker (Previously in Care): Sarah Lindfield (Tue- Fri, term time) [sarah.lindfield@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:sarah.lindfield@brighton-hove.gov.uk)
- Education Adviser for Children with Social Worker: Candice Bocking (Mon-Fri) [candice.l.bocking@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:candice.l.bocking@brighton-hove.gov.uk)
- Administrator: Hadia Saeh (Full time) [hadia.saeh@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:hadia.saeh@brighton-hove.gov.uk)

### Wider Team

- Performance Analyst: Paul Neville (Full time) [paul.neville@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:paul.neville@brighton-hove.gov.uk)
- Educational Psychologist: Nathalie Hojka (Full time) [nathalie.hojke@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:nathalie.hojke@brighton-hove.gov.uk)
- Educational Psychologist: Shahinaz Mahdi (Full time) [shahinaz.mahdi@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:shahinaz.mahdi@brighton-hove.gov.uk)
- Early Years Consultant: Angie Casey (Full time) [angie.casey@brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:angie.casey@brighton-hove.gov.uk)

Website: [Virtual School for Children in Care and Previously in Care \(brighton-hove.gov.uk\)](https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/virtual-school)

Twitter: [@VirtualSch\\_BHCC](https://twitter.com/VirtualSch_BHCC) / Twitter

## Our Mission Statement

To enhance the life opportunities for children in care, children previously in care and children who have a social worker, by supporting their education and enabling them to achieve the best they can.