

Somerset Virtual School

For Children looked After



Summer Term Update

Summer Term Designated Teachers' Network Meeting 5th July 2018 – Dillington House. Please make a note of this date and plan to attend. All schools with Somerset CLA on roll are welcome to send a suitable representative, ideally the Designated Teacher. Headteachers and Governors with responsibility for CLA are also most welcome. The agenda and invitations with details for requesting places will go to all schools later this term. Please notify thevirtualschool@somerset.gov.uk if there has been a change of Designated Teacher in your school so we can make sure the right people get the most up to date information.

Somerset CLA are National Competition Winners. Many schools submitted entries from Somerset CLA in the Pearson Publishing 2018 'Creative Me' competition that the Virtual School publicised earlier this year. We were delighted to find out that we had winners in three of the four age range categories with learners at Churchfields, Dilton Marsh and Yeovil College winning and runners up attending Chilton Trinity, Hazelbury Bryan and Creech St Michael. All were sent certificates from Pearson and the winners received book tokens too. There has been some lovely feedback from teachers and social workers indicating the young people were thrilled by their achievements and some happy book shopping has already been undertaken!

Well-being and Exam Preparation Packs for Year 11s. We currently have 61 year 11 pupils on roll with Somerset Virtual School. The preparation for and time during exams is a very stressful one for any young person but can be even more challenging for some CLA. Not only is there a great deal of pressure to achieve good outcomes but all the usual patterns and structures are disrupted, time at school is ending and with it much that is familiar and established, the next phase may well be exciting and challenging but also unknown and a source of some anxiety. To help our year 11 cohort, we have prepared a pack that supports both revision and study but also well-being and mental health and are distributing these to all year 11s for whom it is appropriate in the lead up to exams.

Supporting the Attendance of CLA. We continue to work with Welfare Call to monitor the attendance of all school aged Somerset CLA. All education providers are contacted daily to ensure our children and young people are attending. Although this represents one more phone call for schools and centres to field in their already busy days, it means we are swiftly made aware of any attendance issues and can intervene where necessary. Attendance for our cohort is improving but there are still concerns and the need for high quality joined-up working between education and Children's Social Care to remove as many obstacles to excellent attendance for all.

Working with the traumatised Child. The Virtual School delivered a three day programme of training for schools and CSC during the spring term. Dee Henderson our Senior Specialist Educational Psychologist devised and delivered the high quality training which has been very well received by all who have attended. We were overwhelmed by the requests for places from Somerset schools, social work teams and other agencies working closely with CLA and adopted children in Somerset. Such

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was the demand that a second round of training is taking place this term and we are looking at continuing this into the next academic year.

New Statutory Guidance for Designated Teachers and the LA. Following the Children and Social Work Act 2017, the Department for Education has updated the statutory guidance in relation to the role of the Designated Teacher and the LA, this will be effective from September 2018. There are some significant changes to the role and new responsibilities in relation to children adopted from Local Authority Care and on Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs) or Child Arrangement Orders (CAO). The Virtual School will be providing an overview for schools via the Designated teachers' Network Meetings this term and next and a link to the new guidance can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-teacher-for-looked-after-children>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-the-education-of-looked-after-children>

and also on our website www.somersetvirtualschool.co.uk