

Barnet Virtual School Newsletter

Summer 2 2024

Welcome back to the second half of the Summer Term and we hope you all had a good break.

Just a reminder that the deadline for Summer PEPs is the 14th June. Please ensure your PEPs are completed as soon as possible before that date. We cannot agree funding for schools after this date.
Any questions please just get in touch. Sarah Deale

Preparing for end of year transitions

The end of an academic year brings lots of activities and change: exams, school plays, warm weather, goodbyes, transition visits, and more. For all of us (children and adults) this evokes a range of emotions, including excitement, sadness, anxiety and hope.

For children and young people who are looked after or adopted, the end of the school year can be especially difficult. It can offer reminders of previous losses and separations, and their sense of safety, security and stability is threatened. This can evoke strong feelings of fear, anxiety, anger, loss and rejection (as well as joy and hope) and lead to changes in the child's wellbeing and behaviour. We may notice them becoming withdrawn, or clingy, or seem to regress to a younger developmental stage. They may prematurely cut off relationships with adults and peers, and relationship ruptures can take place. They may express feelings of anger (towards themselves, others, or their surroundings), anxiety, or over excitement.



During these times we can fear that the child is going backwards, and our knowledge and skills can be tested. This can leave us feeling deskilled and fearing we are no longer able to meet their needs. Our own fears and anxieties can often provide good insight into how the child is feeling.

What can we do?

- ⇒ Prepare early: be ready to weather the transition storm. Prepare for wobbles and start transition planning early (these children will need more preparation than most other children).
- ⇒ Stay curious about the child's feelings, thoughts and behaviours: What are they communicating through their behaviour?
- ⇒ Label emotions: e.g. *'I can see you're feeling worried'; 'I wonder if you're feeling sad about leaving school?' 'You seem angry about that, maybe you're finding it hard to say goodbye?'*

Preparing for end of year transitions continued

- ⇒ Offer additional emotional support: Provide extra check-ins with their key adult, practice soothing strategies together.
- ⇒ Maintain routines: Familiarity and consistency offers safety. Routines are important when all other things feel like are changing.
- ⇒ Maintain key adult relationships: keep the child's trusted adult close. Ensure the child has at least one adult in school who can be a source of safety across the transition. If the child is moving to another school, ensure they can meet their new key adult in advance.
- ⇒ Give information: on what will happen in the last few weeks of term and when the new school year starts e.g. timetables, changes in adults. Transition books and additional transition visits to their new classroom or school may be useful.
- ⇒ Provide transitional objects: items that represent an important person, place or memory of school, which the child can keep over the holidays (like a security blanket). This could be a letter/drawing from their teacher, photograph of their class, favourite classroom toy.
- ⇒ Work together: plan the transition with the rest of the child's support network. Involve the child where possible so they know what is going on and can share hopes and concerns.
- ⇒ Look after our own wellbeing: it's important to care for ourselves as we help a child weather the transition storm. And remember that we can also find transitions tricky too!



Further information and advice

'The Transition Storm' resource, Beacon House [Resources \(beaconhouse.org.uk\)](https://www.beaconhouse.org.uk)

Ealing Virtual School, on supporting transitions from primary to secondary school [Ealing virtual school guidance on transition of looked after children and previously looked after children \(egfl.org.uk\)](https://www.egfl.org.uk)

Our website—[Transitions | Barnet Virtual School | London Borough of Barnet \(barnetvs.org\)](https://www.barnetvs.org) - has useful information and links to a variety of resources.

Training

Emotions/social skills in school for the looked after child 10/6/2024—3.30—4.30 or 24/6/2024 11.30—12.30 on Teams

In this workshop will focus how early experiences can affect how the LAC child understand emotions/social situations with attention to practical supports within the school setting.

Leader: Speech and Language Therapist, Virtual School

The Adolescent Brain 04/07/2024 9.30—12.30 at the PDC

This training session will explore the development of the teenage brain and how this critical period influences learning, wellbeing and social interactions. It will then consider how adverse child experiences faced by Looked After Children can interact with typical teenage development.

Aims of the training session

- Explore brain development through the stages of adolescence.
- Consider how the developing teenage brain shapes learning, interactions, identity and wellbeing.
- Understand how adverse childhood experiences can influence brain development.
- Look at ways to support teenagers to understand their brain.

Leader: Aimee Cole, Educational Psychologist

ACES and the looked after child 24/06/2024 3.30—4.30 on TEAMS

This workshop will talk about Adverse Childhood Experiences and what this can mean for the LAC child or young person.

Leader: Speech and Language Therapist, Virtual School

To book these training courses, please open this link: [Training & Events | BELS | Barnet Education and Learning Service \(belstradedservices.uk\)](#)

Our training is free to ALL schools. You do not need to buy into BPSI/Bels training

Key Contacts at the Virtual School

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Resources



As always, The Bell Foundation is proactive in producing resources and guidance for our EAL learners. Their latest guidance is to support educators in planning interventions for EAL learners. Using adaptive strategies to integrate learners into mainstream lessons is always the best way to work with learners who use English as an Additional Language (EAL). There are times though when a focused and time-limited intervention might be beneficial. Included in the guidance is:

- Key points to consider before planning to run an intervention;
- General guidance around effective interventions;
- Ideas for how the suggestions in [Classroom Guidance and Strategies to Support EAL Learners](#) can be used with intervention groups;

You can access the primary and secondary guides here: [Strategies and Guidance to Support EAL Learners in Intervention Groups - The Bell Foundation \(bell-foundation.org.uk\)](#) . There is also a free webinar about it available here: [Intervention Groups: Supporting Secondary EAL Learners Beyond the Classroom \(youtube.com\)](#)




The International Rescue Committee provide useful training. The Healing Classroom Basics training consists of **three 1hr 15min sessions** that provide school staff with the basics of the Healing Classrooms Approach. Sessions feature case studies, discussions and good practice-sharing activities on how to best support refugee students in schools across the UK. You will learn about about the key psychological impacts of conflict, forced displacement and re-settlement on children's brain development, behaviour and learning , develop your understanding about trauma within the context of refugee communities , explore psychosocial support strategies that schools can adopt to create healing spaces for students seeking sanctuary and receive a printed copy of the Healing Classrooms Basics Training Handbook . There are a variety of different times—please see here for further information [Healing Classrooms Basics Training | International Rescue Committee \(IRC\)](#)



Website: [Home | Barnet Virtual School | London Borough of Barnet | England \(barnetvs.org\)](#)

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