

# Barnet Virtual School Carer Newsletter Spring 2024

Welcome to the Spring 2024 edition of the Barnet Virtual School Carer Newsletter. We hope you had a good break and the return to school has gone smoothly. Please do contact your young person's caseworker if you have any questions or queries—contact details are further on. Sarah Deale Headteacher

## FOSTER CARER TRAINING THIS TERM

Barnet Virtual School are offering a range of virtual workshops over the Spring Term. These are an opportunity to learn more about a particular topic, meet other foster carers and ask questions.



### **Narrative skills—what are they and why are they so important?**

**Monday 22nd January 10-11a.m. OR Monday 4th March 10-11a.m.**

Many speech and language screens are showing that our looked after children have difficulties with narrative skills. This session will focus on understanding what we mean by 'narrative skills' and how this is an essential skill for a child to have for both home life and the school curriculum. It will include practical tips and strategies to use with the child in the home setting.

### **An introduction to the Education Health Care Needs Assessment process (EHCNA)**

**Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> January 2024 10.00- 11.15am**

An Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment (EHCNA) is an assessment of the education, health care and social care needs of the child or young person. This is an opportunity to gain an understanding of this process, the timeline for an assessment of need and your role within this.

### **How to support Key Stage 4 Study Skills and Revision**

**Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> February 2024 10.00- 11.15am**

An opportunity to explore practical ways you can support young people during their Key Stage 4 study including how to support GCSE learning and skills as well as revision tips to support preparation for exams.

*If you would like to do any of these, please email: [barnet.virtualschool@barnet.gov.uk](mailto:barnet.virtualschool@barnet.gov.uk) stating which course you would like to do and we will set up access for you.*

*You will be given a certificate of attendance for each workshop that you attend.*

## Pupil Premium Plus funding

For educational settings to secure the above Pupil Premium Grant for children who left care subject to an Adoption Order, Special guardianship Order or other Child Arrangement Order where a child is not returned to their birth parents, it is the responsibility of the educational setting to prompt parents and guardians who will have needed to inform the setting about their child's circumstances in time for the setting to record the child's status on the January census. From 1st April 2023, Pupil Premium funding is also available for pupils who have been adopted from care or have left care from outside of England and Wales.

Please make sure your school is receiving this funding if you have any children who left care subject to an Adoption Order, Special guardianship Order or other Child Arrangement Order where a child is not returned to their birth parents.

## Important dates

### Admissions Deadlines

15th January 2024 is the closing date for Reception and Junior transfer applications each year

Closing date UCAS • 31 January 2024 for 2024 entry at 18:00 (UK time) – for the majority of courses.

Post 16 courses Many colleges have open events. Check college websites for details. Applications are open right up to August 2024 but apply early for popular courses.

Apprenticeships Look out for vacancies early in new year which is when many businesses start to advertise.

## Contacts in the Virtual School

**Head Teacher:** Sarah.deale@barnet.gov.uk

**School Business Manager:** Jane.thrift@barnet.gov.uk

**PEP Coordinator:** Caroline.Gladkow@barnet.gov.uk

**Caseworker:** Ornella.rochfort@barnet.gov.uk

**Caseworker :** Sejal.patel@barnet.gov.uk

**Caseworker:** Isabella.underhill@barnet.gov.uk

**Education Lead—children with a social worker:** Nicola.axford@barnet.gov.uk

**Senior Learning Mentor—** Amy.wight@barnet.gov.uk

**Deputy Head of School:** Julie.locke@barnet.gov.uk

**Caseworker:** Allan.newby@barnet.gov.uk

**Caseworker :** Hannah.hudson@barnet.gov.uk

**Senior Caseworker:** Frazier.stroud@barnet.gov.uk

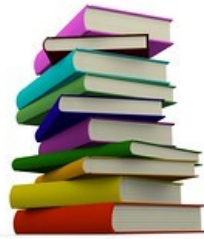
**Caseworker—Post 16:** Sinead.garvey@barnet.gov.uk

## Supporting Early Years Children with Literacy

Developing vocabulary and speech is absolutely vital in the early years. Remember children learn to talk a long time before they learn to read.

You can help children by reflecting upon and explaining events as much as possible.

- Make comments to describe what your child is doing. "You are choosing the red pen". "I can see that you are enjoying being on the swing".
- Model sentences by responding and repeating what the child says and then add new words e.g. child says 'I want the teddy', repeat 'You want the brown teddy'. Share books with children from birth.
- Share books with children from birth and talk about the pictures and comment on what is happening. Wordless picture books can be great for this.
- Build up concentration by starting with one or two pages in a book and gradually increase.
- Reinforce the aspects of the book: the title, first page, second page etc, link the picture to the text by pointing out details in the picture "Look there is the dog" and then next time "Can you find the dog?".
- Think about using props such as puppets, soft toys to add interest and help bring the words alive.
- Sing nursery rhymes together.
- Play I Spy and memory games such as 'I went to market and bought ...' and matching pairs.



### Pencil Grip

Encourage your child to mark make and use different kinds of pens, pencils, brushes etc.



It is essential that your child does not get into bad habits with pencil grip. Please ensure they use a tripod grip when holding a pencil or crayon from as early as possible. Persist in supporting them to adopt this grip by gently changing grip every time they pick up a pencil.

1. Put your thumb and forefinger just above the cone shaped part of the pencil
2. Let the pencil rest between your thumb and forefinger
3. Then put your middle finger underneath for support

## Attendance

# ATTENDANCE

## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

**ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL**  
Children are required by law to attend school 190 days per year. The Government states that every pupil's attendance should be at least 95%.

How do YOU measure up?

Attendance	Days	Weeks	Lessons
	Absent	Absent	Missed
95%	9 Days	2 Weeks	50 Lessons
90%	19 Days	4 Weeks	100 Lessons
85%	29 Days	6 Weeks	150 Lessons
80%	38 Days	8 Weeks	200 Lessons
75%	48 Days	10 Weeks	250 Lessons
70%	57 Days	11.5 Weeks	290 Lessons
65%	67 Days	13.5 Weeks	340 Lessons

89% & Below

Drastic effect on academic achievement

95% - 90%

Cause for concern

100% - 96%

Excellent

We take attendance very seriously at Barnet Virtual School as we know that good attendance at school gives our young people the very best chance to reach their true potential and achieve success. We monitor the attendance of our young people regularly and work closely with our schools, carers, social workers and young people to put support in place where it is needed. If you have any concerns whatsoever about your young person's attendance, please contact your Virtual School Caseworker as soon as possible. Thank you for your ongoing support.

## Beacon House Resources

Beacon House is a team of chartered psychologists, psychotherapists and occupational therapists. They have a range of useful resources around developmental trauma:



[Resources \(beaconhouse.org.uk\)](https://beaconhouse.org.uk)

There are also practical ideas e.g. fine motor activities.

Many children struggle with fine motor skills and this in turn affects their writing skills, ability to do buttons, use cutlery and join in with play. It can have a knock on effect on confidence and also in turn on regulation. If you have additional time at home you can make the opportunity for some fine motor activities. This is the time to dig deep in the cupboards, go in the loft and dig out those old fashioned games! [Hand Gym \(beaconhouse.org.uk\)](https://beaconhouse.org.uk)

It is well worth having a browse through their website.