

Devon Virtual School for Children in Care

Autumn Term 2017 - Newsletter No.1

Virtual School Lead: Ian Hemelik



Important Dates:

3 November 2017: Routes into STEM Event for Y10 at Exeter University (**please book ASAP**)

16 March 2018: CiC Taster Day at Exeter University

23 March 2018: CiC Celebration Event in Exeter - nominations will be opening in November, look out for the email.

ePEP

Apologies but the launch date for the ePEP has, once again, been postponed. It will now be launched fully in January 2018. If you would like to trial the new ePEP for any meetings you have planned during December please email aga.spier@devon.gov.uk. Once the ePEP is fully introduced in January 2018 we will gather feedback throughout the year and any necessary changes will be made in time for the following academic year.



New Responsibilities for Schools & Virtual Schools regarding Adopted/SGO Children



Schools and Virtual Schools have recently been given additional responsibilities under the Children and Social Work Act 2017. The act re-

ceived Royal assent in April and extends our roles to promoting the education of **previously** looked after children. This covers children who are adopted and those under orders such as the Special Guardianship Order. The Virtual School must make advice and information available and schools must designate a member of staff to promote the education of previously looked after children. It would make sense for the current DT to take on the additional responsibility but this is not part of the act. We emailed you all the Education Plan for Adopted Children (EPAC) and guidance in the summer (and again this week). This is designed for all children receiving Pupil Premium+ and, therefore, covers those under an SGO. It remains optional but is a very effective way of working with families and targeting the additional funding. The EPAC can be found on our website under the section 'Support for Adopted Children', <https://new.devon.gov.uk/educationandfamilies/young-people/children-in-care/education-of-children-in-care/support-adopted-children> If you use the EPAC, it would be very helpful if you could let us have any feedback or changes you think would be positive. Please email feedback to kate.clarke@devon.gov.uk

Exclusions

Virtual School staff need to be involved as early as possible when the behavior of a Child in Care becomes a concern. We, therefore, need schools to notify their Area Learning Advocate as early as possible and to also notify our CiC Data Coordinator, Sarah Short, of any exclusions at sarah.short@devon.gov.uk

Storytime Magazine

Devon Virtual School have signed up for the monthly Storytime Magazine – this replaces the Letterbox Scheme used in previous years. Storytime will be posted out to our current Years 3, 5 and 6 Children in Care, to their placement address, every month from September until August – they will have received their first issue already. Storytime



gives children brilliant stories in a fun magazine format. **Something that works for reluctant readers who won't pick up a book**, and appeals to children who already enjoy reading. It's used by thousands of schools around the world for class reading, to support Pupil Premium funded children, for English as an Additional Language (EAL) children and class storytelling. **A sample of the magazine can be viewed via this link** <http://www.storytimemagazine.com/downloads/Storytime%20sample%20issue.pdf> If you have any queries please contact Kate Clarke at kate.clarke@devon.gov.uk or 01392 384786.

Designated Teachers' Conference

Our annual conference was held on 6 October, the theme this year was resilience. The Keynote Speaker was Jean Gross CBE and she also ran a workshop on Communication. Miles Chambers (Bristol's Poet Laureate) gave a very entertaining and inspirational performance and workshop on 'Getting Boys to Write'. Other speakers and workshops were run by colleagues from the Independent Reviewing Unit, CAMHS CiC Team, Adoption, Educational Psychology Team and Advisory Teachers. All presentations will shortly be loaded on to the VS website and can be found via this link: <https://new.devon.gov.uk/educationandfamilies/young-people/children-in-care/education-of-children-in-care/information-for-schools-and-settings/designated-teacher-conference>

Exeter University Routes into STEM Day for Year 10 Children in Care



The University of Exeter and Devon County Council are pleased to offer the opportunity for young people to visit and get a taste at a top university. The day is aimed at students in Care from schools based in Devon and Torbay.

Young people, who have often never considered higher education will spend a day at a top university and experience what it will be like to be a student studying a STEM subject.

Included in the programme; students will learn about progression routes and careers in STEM. Receive a tour of the facilities with student ambassadors and take part in interactive sessions. Refreshments and lunch will be provided.

Young people will need to be accompanied and this can be by a member of the school staff or by their carer. Please register early using the registration form sent to schools and available from kate.clarke@devon.gov.uk and return it to Natalie Bracher, Outreach Officer, University of Exeter, Outreach@exeter.ac.uk

Designated Teacher's Conference

We would like to thank all those who attended as well as the presenters for making the conference so successful. We have had some very positive comments on the evaluation forms.....???



Miles Chambers and Jean Gross keynote speakers

The conference began with the members of the Participation Team and two young people in care talking about their experiences in school and what makes a good DT and PEP meeting. We will be

publishing their leaflet and sending out to all DTs soon.

Their list of DO is below

- Listen to me and be someone I can talk to about anything
- Praise me and take an interest in how I am doing
- Be understanding but don't give me special treatment unless necessary or requested.
- Ask me what I want, need and how I feel
- Educate other students to understand more about being in care
- Help other teachers to understand more about being in care and the impact it can have on learning
- Be considerate of anniversaries or big meetings that may be happening for us
- Help us to find ways to manage our thoughts and feelings
- Help us to make friends and join in activities
- Our experience of care is influenced by the people around us so be positive
- Help us to achieve what we want to

And Don't

- Arrange meetings in school time—it's embarrassing and people ask questions
- Take me out of lessons
- Give me letters in class about being care
- Make me stand out from other students
- Treat me differently from other students

