



Virtual School News

Summer Term 2026

Keep up to date with the latest news and offers for children in care, previously looked-after children (PLAC), children with a social worker (CWSW) and those in kinship care

Welcome back to the new term

We hope you all enjoyed a wonderful Easter break and had a well-deserved rest! I want to express my sincere thanks for everything you do to support our looked-after children and those with a social worker. These are some of the most vulnerable children in our care, and I am continually inspired by the incredible work schools are doing to help them achieve their very best.

Virtual School Moodle



Social Workers



Key Information
and Resources



School and
Education
Settings



Parents and
Carers

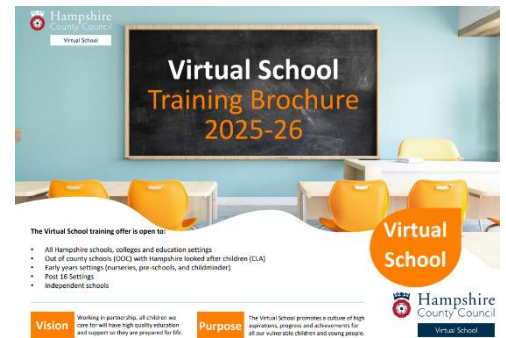
Last term we shared our refreshed [Moodle site](#). The Moodle provides a comprehensive hub of learning materials, practical tools, and professional guidance designed to support everyone involved in the education and wellbeing of children in

care, previously looked-after children, those in kinship care, and children with a social worker. It serves as a central space for staying informed, confident, and connected, supporting best practice and ensuring that every child receives the consistent, high quality support they need to thrive. We hope that by streamlining the content, it is now easier to navigate.

Training & events – what’s new this term?

For all training, please see our [training brochure](#). Our offer includes:

- Additional attachment webinars
- Support for the Attachment Research Community (ARC)
- Writing an effective PEP – including using needs analysis tools
- Gathering child voice
- Termly sessions with our Educational Psychologist. This term’s focus is **sexualised behaviour**
- Termly network meetings



Our last statutory DT training session for this academic year is on **23/06/2026**. Please see our [brochure](#) for booking instructions.

Additionally, Virtual School offer a three day train the trainer **Supporting Trauma and Attachment Aware Relational Settings (STAARS) programme**. Previously known as ATAS (Attachment and Trauma Aware Settings), the programme has been rebranded to reflect the central importance of relationships in all aspects of our work.

This programme is suitable for settings for all ages and phases, and both mainstream and specialist. The programme is led primarily by Hampshire Virtual School, with specialist input from the Primary Behaviour Service (PBS) and HIAS SEN Advisers on Day Two.

Cohort two dates are **Thursday 25 June, Thursday 1 October and Tuesday 17 November**

If you interested in being part of the second cohort or would like to reserve a spot on cohort three, please contact HCC.VSTraining@hants.gov.uk



Attachment Research Community (ARC)

The Virtual School has funded [ARC](#) memberships for **all** Hampshire schools and settings, supporting them to use the online self assessment framework to develop attachment and trauma aware practice. This approach strengthens the whole learning community, especially its most vulnerable members, by sharing and celebrating effective practice.

Over 270 schools and settings are now members, with 19 on the Bronze Pathway, eight on Silver, one on Gold, and many more working towards their next level. You can find excellent Silver case studies and two webinars delivered by schools on our [Moodle](#), with two further webinars scheduled later this term.

This work aligns closely with the Hampshire Approach to Inclusion, where relational practice is a key pillar.

If you would like to sign up to ARC, please complete this [form](#)



🧠 Relational Inclusion

I have previously shared the Relational Inclusion blog by Anthony Benedict. This now lands in my inbox every fortnight, and is thought-provoking, reflective and very useful in terms of resources.



There are generally a couple of print-and-stick images that may be useful to share with staff, and some good quotes.

You can subscribe to the fortnightly blog by clicking [here](#).

📄 Virtual School Educational Psychologist (EP) consultations

Our Virtual School EP is holding weekly consultations throughout the year. These are bookable for children in care, previously looked-after children (PLAC), children with a social worker (CWSW) and those in kinship care. Details on how to book a one-hour consultation are [here](#).

What is an Educational Psychologist (EP)? EPs work to support children and young people in education settings to reach their full potential by working with them and key adults supporting them. They draw on a range of psychological theories in their work, and the underpinning ethos involves looking at the environment around the child.

What is a consultation? The consultation is a problem-solving space where key adults in a child's life meet to discuss their strengths, needs and aspirations with an EP. During the



hour, the group will work to understand the child’s situation and whether this can be moved forward in any way.

Consultation with the Virtual School EP is not:

- Part of an education, health and care needs assessment.
- Part of a diagnostic pathway for disorders such as ADHD and ASD.
- A pathway to an in-depth EP assessment and school visit.
- Linked to Hampshire Educational Psychology team.

For further information on how to access any of the above, please speak to your school SENDCo.

Who can come? Important adults in the child’s life, such as parents/carers, teachers and other school staff, social care staff, virtual school staff, and other relevant adults and professionals. The child may also want to join the meeting to share their views.


Needs analysis tools

The Virtual School has two needs analysis tools: the PEP Toolkit, developed by Virtual School staff and Hampshire Educational Psychology, and Reach2Teach, which we have purchased for all DTs. Our [Writing an effective PEP training](#) provides designated teachers with an understanding of the purpose and significance of needs analysis tools, alongside exploring the different tools available. It will help DTs look deeper and beyond the operational aspect of completing the personal education plans (PEPs) and focus on an effective process for writing a meaningful PEP.

The needs analysis tools are proving particularly useful not only for our children in care but also for PLAC, CWSW and those in kinship care, as they focus on presenting behaviours and how professionals can use strategies to support the young person.

A Team Around the Child can help to increase understanding and explore helpful strategies. If you would like support with using the app, please contact the Extended Duties team at VSExtendedDuties@hants.gov.uk.

If you are a new DT or a DT who hasn’t accessed Reach2Teach yet, please do so through the PEP or contact virtualschool@hants.gov.uk.



REACH 2TEACH		The BIG APP (Behaviour Intervention Guide)				
Highly anxious	Clingy	Can't sit still	Hypervigilant			
Denies need for support	Can't organise or forgets work	Overly dependent	Resists teacher's guidance			
Continually avoids work	Argues		Rubbishes teacher's work			
Rubbishes or rips up work			Wants to work on their own			
Rapid mood changes			misinterprets others' behaviour			
Sulks if not picked			finds transitions & endings difficult			
Appears arrogant & controlling			Appears indifferent or uncaring			
Insists on going first	Talks about self		Angry & aggressive			
Steals or gorges food	Needs constant reassurance	Avoids eye contact	Hates & rejects praise			
Gets Upset easily						
	Emotional and Behavioural Regulation: does the child/young person:	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Frequently	Almost always
EBR1	Have difficulties calming themselves down after an altercation? The optimal level is approximately one and a half hours					
EBR2	Have uncontrolled/unpredictable emotional outbursts (to release/relieve pent-up anger/aggression/anxiety)?					
EBR3	Have difficulty controlling reactions when they do not get immediate attention (poor frustration tolerance)?					
EBR4	Overreact to affection or attention? (they may become overexcited, loud, boisterous)					



Extended Duties team

The Extended Duties team within Hampshire Virtual School plays a vital role in supporting vulnerable children and young people who fall outside the scope of the Virtual School's statutory responsibilities. This includes, but is not limited to:

- **Children with a social worker (CWSW)** who are not in care
- **Previously looked-after children (PLAC)** who are no longer eligible for statutory support
- **Children in kinship care** (such as special guardianship orders, child arrangement orders and informal kinship arrangements)

While not offering direct case management, the team provides consultation and advice to schools and professionals working with individual children. This includes advice and guidance around transitions, reintegration, and education planning for children in complex circumstances.

If you would like to get in touch with the Extended Duties team, email VSExtendedDuties@hants.gov.uk.

Education support plan (ESP)

The ESP is a collaborative tool developed by Hampshire, Southampton, Portsmouth, and Isle of Wight Virtual Schools, along with Adopt South, to support children affected by trauma and loss. It is now used in place of the previous EPAC (education plan for adopted children). The ESP provides carers, schools and professionals with a clear process to identify and respond to the needs of children who have experienced care adversity – such as adopted children, those under special guardianship orders (SGO), child arrangement orders (CAO), those in kinship care or those supported by a social worker on CP or CIN plans.

Education Support Plan

Principles: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child led and focused. • Inclusive in practice. • Holistic in view. • Needs led and outcome focused. 	Purpose: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote attachment aware and trauma informed approach and practice. • Add value to any other plans and provide SMART actions. • Increase visibility and understanding of needs of children who have experienced adversity. • Collaborative and inclusive of the views of the whole team around child. • Dynamic and flexible, responding to need and reflective in practice.
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My name is: _____

My education is provided by: _____

My year group: _____

SEN status: None/SEN support/EHCP (please provide the date of request or issue of an EHCP) _____


Why are we completing this plan? _____

People who support me:

Role	Name and contact details	Dates of involvement

My experience of life so far: _____

A tool created by local authorities working together for all our children



Whilst the ESP is **not statutory**, it is strongly recommended to support improved attendance, engagement and outcomes. The ESP should be initiated at the start of the academic year or when a child moves to a new education setting and then reviewed termly.

Whilst we recognise a child may have many plans, the ESP focuses on the specific needs of children impacted by trauma and loss that are not already addressed in other plans, ensuring tailored support for vulnerable learners.

More information and a copy of the ESP can be found on the Virtual School Moodle: [Course: Education Support Plans](#).



School Attendance and Children with a Social Worker

New Department for Education guidance sets out **clear expectations for social workers** to prioritise school attendance as part of their safeguarding and child protection duties. Attendance is recognised as a key protective factor and should be routinely considered within children's plans.

The guidance also highlights the important role of schools. Children with a social worker are more likely to experience persistent absence, which can be linked to lower attainment, poorer wellbeing and increased safeguarding risk. Regular attendance is therefore a vital indicator of a child's welfare.

What schools should expect from social workers

- Attendance discussed routinely as part of the child's plan
- Early contact with schools when concerns arise
- Focus on understanding and addressing barriers to attendance
- Use of attendance data to identify patterns and risks
- Clear communication where absence may be a safeguarding concern

Strong partnership working between schools, social workers and local authority teams is essential. Schools support this by sharing attendance concerns promptly, helping to identify patterns, and contributing to coordinated plans that address issues such as mental health needs, bullying, safety concerns or key transitions.

By keeping attendance central to safeguarding and inclusion work, schools and social workers together can help ensure children feel safe, engaged and ready to learn.

Does someone from your school attend the Inclusion and Educational Engagement (Attendance) hubs? These district termly meetings are open to all schools and are also attended by social care professionals. They are an ideal place to share best practice and problem solve. You may also wish to consider booking a Targeted Support Meeting to discuss attendance issues with local authority staff. Information and booking forms can be found here [Course: Attendance Hubs | Home](#)

If you wish to discuss attendance concerns for a child with a social worker (CIN, CP, PLAC) or a child in kinship care, please contact the Extended Duties team, email VSExtendedDuties@hants.gov.uk.

Stay connected – fortnightly emails for designated teachers

We continue to send fortnightly emails to designated teachers (DTs) with updates, resources and PEP information. Feedback from these has been positive. If you'd like to receive these emails and be added to our mailing list, please contact us at virtualschool@hants.gov.uk.

If you're a **new** designated teacher, please ensure we have your contact details and don't forget to book a place on our [Statutory Designated Teacher Training](#).



Hampshire
County Council

Virtual School

Lastly, please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or comments.

Have a great term 😊

Michelle

Michelle Nye
Virtual School Head