

Date: Monday 19th September 2016
Our Ref:
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Dear Headteacher

Re: Support for children who have previously been in care (those on Residence Order, Special Guardianship Orders or have been Adopted).

I hope you are well and had an enjoyable summer break.

I am writing to update you on the provision within the Local Authority to support these children. It is important to realise that data within Brighton and Hove suggests that this group achieves significantly below all children, so they will often require extra support.

1. Attachment Aware Training and Self-Evaluation for Schools

Children within this group often have significant attachment issues. The Educational Psychology Service (EPS) in partnership with the Virtual School is leading on a citywide Attachment Aware Strategy, which links to the wider Social Emotional and Mental Health framework and aims to support schools and the wider children's workforce to understand and effectively manage in a consistent way the whole range of attachment needs amongst children and young people.

An Attachment Aware Training Programme has been developed, based on the Secure Base Model. This year, all Brighton and Hove maintained schools are again being offered whole school training delivered by their link EP and another EP colleague, free of charge.

There is also a two-day Attachment Aware course for staff from maintained schools who have been unable to access recent whole school training or require a 'refresher', details of which can be accessed via **BEEM** on <http://www.beem.org.uk/TrainingAndEvents>

As part of the Attachment Aware Strategy, all schools were asked at the end of the last academic year to complete an Attachment Aware Self-Evaluation with their link EP. It is hoped schools who were unable to complete this by the end of last term can do so early on in their planning meetings with link EPs in September 2016. This will be an annual process. If you have any specific questions about any of this, please contact **Abigail**

Bickford-Smith (EP) or Sarah Ahmed (SEP) who are leading on the Attachment Aware B&H Strategy.

2. New PEP for children previously in care

Children previously in care have access to £1,900 Pupil Premium yet no statutory Personal Education Plan (PEP) process. It is good practice to continue with this process on an at least annual basis with parents. The Virtual School has learnt through school visits that the key to the PEPs effectiveness is parental involvement. The Post Care PEP can be found at <https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/content/children-and-education/schools/adopted-children-and-education>. This form is intended to be used at a meeting between parent/carer, designated person at school and child if appropriate.

3. Support for Childrens' Families and Professionals

A range of information and support can be accessed on the Adoption Passport. See <https://www.adoptioninbrightonandhove.org.uk/content/adoption-support-passport-0>. This includes a helpline offered by the Virtual School that can be contacted on 01273 293992.

4. Workshops for parents of children previously in care (adopted)

The following workshops are available to parents of adopted children –

1. 19th September 2016- Settling to Learn
2. 17th October 2016 - Friendship and Play
3. 21st November 2016- Psychological difficulties: Control battles
4. 12th December 2016 NEW- Executive functioning difficulties: Organisation and Planning
5. 16th January 2016 - Managing disappointment and Holding On
6. 20th February 2017 - Regulation difficulties: Staying Calm
7. 13th March 2017 NEW- Exams and stress : How to manage
8. 20th March 2017 - The 3 R's : Regulate, Relate and Reason
9. 22nd May 2017 - Team Pupil - Working effectively together at home and school
10. 5th June 2017 - Moving to Secondary
11. 19th June 2017 - Starting School
12. 3rd July 2017 - NEW - Self care for the pupil and adults involved

We will be promoting with parents but it would also be helpful if you could highlight these workshops with parents. For further details and bookings please contact nicola.frost@brighton-hove.gov.uk

5. Network for Adopters in Brighton and Hove Schools

There is a growing network of successful school based groups for parents of young people adopted from care. If you are interested in setting up such a group, wish to discuss this further, or to let us know about your group, then please contact Sarah Lindfield on: virtualschool@brighton-hove.gov.uk

Also see link for further details:

<http://wave.brighton-hove.gov.uk/schools/bulletins/Lists/Posts/DispForm.aspx?ID=4141&Source=http%3A%2F%2Fwave%2Ebrighton%2Dhove%2Egov%2Euk%2Fschools%2Fbulletins%2Flists%2Fposts%2FArchive%2Easpx%3FCalendarDate%3D20%252F05%252F2015>

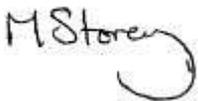
6. Adoption Support Fund (and support for SGO)

This national fund is to help pay for essential therapy services for adoptive families and those on an SGO as and when they need it. To access the fund Parents should contact Brighton and Hove Fostering and Adoption Service to be allocated a Social Worker who will conduct an assessment and apply for funding on their behalf. Adoption Support Helpline: 01273 295444 Adoption.SupportHelpline@brighton-hove.gov.uk For further info visit <http://www.adoptionsupportfund.co.uk>

Finally, it is key that all schools fully support this process by appointing a designated teacher for children who have previously been in care. Most schools have already done this and the Childrens and Scocial work Bill 2016 indicates this will become statutory. I will continue to assume if I do not hear differently that this is the same person as the designated teacher for Children in Care but please let the Virtual School know if this is not the case (virtualschool@brighton-hove.gov.uk)

Should you have any questions about any of the above or need advice supporting any child who has previously been in care then do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely



Mark Storey

Headteacher of the Virtual School