

Welcome to our New Termly Newsletter

About Sandwell Virtual School

As the Executive Head Teacher, I believe that children can do amazing things and that it is our responsibility to support each other to help make their potential a reality. With an outstanding education, every child has the freedom to shape their own future. I look forward to working with you in a holistic way to improving the life chances of our children in care.

Our motto is: Learn. Achieve. Together. This represents the high aspirations we have for our children so that they have every opportunity to access the very best education and achieve their potential.

Balwant Bains (Children in Care, Previously in Care and Children with a Social Worker)



Celebrations and Success

Sandwell Virtual School - Annual CIC Awards Evening

Sandwell VS hosted this year's Awards Evening on 6th October 2023. As the 254 guests arrived they had the opportunity to play an instrument, have photos taken in the booth, eat a buffet dinner and be amused by a roving entertainer!

Over 170 children were nominated to receive an award with 58 of the children being invited onto the stage to receive a certificate and a voucher worth £15.

Presenting the awards at the ceremony included: Lead member for Education and Sandwell Childrens Trust, Simon Hackett and the Rt Hon Jacqui Smith.



The Virtual School team with Lead member of Education Simon Hackett, posed for a closing photo after a successful night.

Sandwell Virtual School - Designated Teacher Training

As part of our role in supporting children in care, we provide at least two face to face training events. This years first event was hosted at West Bromwich Albion Football club with two guest speakers.

Scott King was able to share his life story of being in care. He is a passionate advocate for CIC and care leavers with his main goal being to reduce the amount of moves children are subject to in the care system by providing care providers a new level of understanding and new ways of thinking.

Feedback from DTs included: 'It is so important that you do have speakers that have been through the things that are being discussed as it makes it all relevant and real and I was totally engaged being taken on a personal journey with Scott'.

During the afternoon David Hodgson, engaged the whole room sharing his personality profiling technique that can support young children in a learning environment.

One designated teacher commented, 'Exploring our personality traits with David Hodgson was very informative- I particularly liked the fact that he said you can't change your traits but recognise them. Working with personality traits to get the best out of that person and helps us in understanding them.'

Scott King



David Hodgson and Balwant Bains



As well as Designated Teacher and Designated Safeguarding Training, we also offer ePEP training.

4 th October 23	3.30pm – 4.30pm
6 th December 23	3.30pm – 4.30pm
7 th February 24	3.30pm – 4.30pm
10 th April 24	3.30pm – 4.30pm
5 th June 24	3.30pm – 4.30pm

To ensure you are allocated a place on ePEP training, please email: Michelle_geer1@sandwell.gov.uk

Feedback from recent ePEP training: 'I thought it was fantastic I learnt so much and didn't recognise half of the choices you went through today and thank you for that document helpful' (Social Worker from Sandwell).

Top Tips for a Successful PEP Meeting

Ensure a PEP invite has been sent out after a date has been agreed for all who need to be in attendance.

Capture pupil voice prior to the meeting in order to be discussed in detail within the PEP meeting.

Ideally, create three SMART targets, one based around pupil voice, one based on any area of concern from the SDQ score, and one around learning and development gaps.



Further Training Opportunities

Throughout the year, for DT,DSL,SW and linked professionals, Sandwell Virtual School offers many training opportunities.



Sandwell Virtual School work in partnership with Dr Jenny Nock to ensure staff are knowledgeable and Trauma Informed. Workshops are free and held face to face or virtual.

To guarantee a place for any upcoming training events, please keep an eye on any announcements on the Notice board when logged into your ePEP account.

DT and DSL training programme 2023/2024			
20 October 2023	Continuing Professional Development (CPD) day for all professionals working with vulnerable children	Face to Face West Bromwich Albion	9.00 to 3.00 pm
30 November 2023	Anxiety based difficulties and school	Webinar	3.30 to 6.00 pm
01 February 2024	Developing emotional Regulation in children and YP who experience Trauma	Webinar	3.30 to 6.00 pm
14 March 2024	Restorative School Culture	Face to Face West Bromwich Albion	9.00 to 3.00 pm
01 May 2024	A world of distraction, successful inclusion of children and YP with ADHD	Webinar	3.30 to 6.00 pm
04 July 2024	Pathologic Demand Avoidance and school	Webinar	3.30 to 6.00 pm

Training and Support for DT, DSL and Children with a Social Worker

Practitioners drop in sessions

We continue to offer advice, sign posting and support to school staff and social workers related to individual children or wider whole school issues around policy and procedure.

We have worked with a range of practitioners in social care and education to facilitate improved outcomes for children.

Please email Rachael or Scott to arrange a time and receive a Teams link:

rachael_wolffel@sandwell.gov.uk
scott_johnson@sandwell.gov.uk

Poverty Proofing

We are pleased to continue to offer fully funded poverty proofing audits to all schools in Sandwell in partnership with Children North East. Twenty-two schools have already taken up this offer and been part of the audit process which enables schools to identify where poverty is a barrier to engagement with school life and utilise practical strategies to overcome them.

For more information and details on how to sign up, please email Emily or Scott:

emily_morgan@sandwell.gov.uk
scott_johnson@sanwell.gov.uk



Recommended Membership for further support



ARC membership is open to Schools and other Learning Settings, Virtual Schools, Psychologists and Higher Education Institutions who commit to supporting the development of best practice and understanding of attachment within education.

Email Michelle_geer1@sandwell.gov.uk for more information.

During the spring term we have a number of free training and development opportunities for all designated teachers and social workers to attend.

Impact of trauma – 8th March at 10am

Learning Behaviours – 20th March at 10am

Working Effectively with a Social Worker – 23rd March at 10am

rachael_wolffel@sandwell.gov.uk scott_johnson@sandwell.gov.uk

Projects and Updates

Letterbox Club

Sandwell Virtual School participates in the Letterbox club for our reception cohort. Look out for parcels being delivered over the course of the year.

DJ Workshop

In October at the Legacy Centre of Excellence, children from across the borough who had the fantastic opportunity to experience a DJ workshop. The children were taught by the renowned DJ Oli Jackson. The children were taught how to blend, mix about the tempo and different beats of genres of music. Oli Jackson said that it was great to work with such an engaged and enthusiastic children. He is looking forward to working with us again soon.

What's on in Sandwell

Go Play sessions are available for children and young people aged 5-12 and are free of charge. They take place during school holidays, after school, or on weekends.

Just Youth offers a range of free activities for 11 to 19-year-olds (up to 25 for those with SEND) throughout Sandwell. These activities include sports, arts, music, virtual reality experiences, and more. To find out more visit: www.goplaysandwell.co.uk

The Albion Foundation invites children in KS2-KS3 to attend the 120 Club. This is a multi-sports club delivered on a Monday and Thursday evening at Wednesbury Leisure centre. Contact: LACE_Team@sandwell.gov.uk for the latest availability.



We very much look forward to continuing to work with schools, social workers and carers to achieve the very best outcomes for all of the children in our care.

Children and Education Directorate

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