

VIRTUAL SCHOOL NEWSLETTER | SUMMER 2023



CLOSING THE GAP AND RAISING THE BAR

Meeting the team

Hi, my name is
Jose Omolu.

I am an Assistant Headteacher and Special Educational Needs Coordinator in the Aspire Virtual School. I joined the Virtual School in September 2022 and have responsibility for all Looked After Children (LAC) within our Local Authority who have an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP). I support 4 other colleagues who also work with children who have EHCPs. I work with children and young people who are placed within borough and out of borough. I support designated teachers, social workers, foster carers, and key workers in educational planning, and I work with a wider professional network such as health colleagues, education providers and education health care teams in order to improve outcomes for our children and young people.

My role is quite involved, both at a strategic and school level. I have my own caseload of LAC for whom I attend and support with their termly PEP meetings and EHCP annual reviews. I attend and contribute towards Child in Care Reviews (CiC), Placement Planning Meetings (PPMs) and professionals' meetings as and when required. I also attend regular High Needs Panel Meetings for our LAC who are awaiting placement or are not in school. I work closely with my education health care colleagues in ensuring that tuition is put in place for children who are awaiting school places and that annual reviews of EHCPs are carried out for children who are placed in alternative provisions. I monitor the attendance for those placed in schools and alternative provisions and I support with PEP input ensuring that all areas of the PEPs are covered and that SMART targets are set and reviewed in a timely way.



I observe children in schools when a need is identified and advise designated teachers on what assessments, interventions and teaching styles can be used to support access, engagement, and progress.

I also have experience of developing communication friendly schools and working with whole school teaching and learning support staff in developing speech, language, and communication through the use of baseline assessments, resources and classroom adaptations. I am trained in trauma informed practice and reducing parental conflict. My extensive experience of working in the early years, primary and secondary sectors in education has enabled me to contribute to the introduction of new systems within the Virtual School. Please do contact me should you require advice, a visit to your school or a virtual/in-person drop-in session. I look forward to hearing from you in the future.

WHAT WE DID DURING EASTER

Easter Coding Club: The Virtual School in partnership with CORAM children's charity offered children a fun time of Robotics and Creative computing during the Easter holiday which was facilitated by the London South Bank University. It was four days of fun and excitement as children used lego in building robots and programmed their robots.

Some of the children were emotional as the event came to an end as they said they had not had this much fun in a long time.



WHAT WE PLAN TO DO THIS SUMMER

The Virtual School is organising a weekend trip to Trewern- August 11th - 14th (inclusive). This will be in the lovely region of Wales where young people yr 6, yr 7, yr 8 and yr 9 in mainstream school would have an opportunity to network and do fun activities. The activities will include mountain walking, caving, gorge walking, canoeing, full day activities or climbing wall, bushcraft, BMXing.

To register your young person to participate Foster Carer or Social Worker need to contact Kathy Adams Kathleen.adams@lbbd.gov.uk

Places will be available on a first come first served basis (maximum 15 students). A coach has been arranged by the Virtual School, but Foster Carers will need to drop the child/ren at a pick up point.

EPPING FOREST

City of London with its funded scheme of Learning in Epping Forest organised activities inviting LBBd Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers (UASC). This was a one-day session run by the learning centre members of Epping Forest staff and KABS (kids activities and bootcamps) represented by two ex-members of the British Army.



The session started with some light competitive activities and emotional health and wellbeing programmes integrating some melodious Sudanese music. It was a lovely outing that included visiting the Tudors Hunting Lodge and a discovery trek into the forest.

TIPS TO SUPPORTING STUDENTS IN THE EXAM SEASON

With exam season upon us, it is essential for educators and schools to provide comprehensive support to help students navigate the challenges that lie ahead. There may be tears; there may be troubled nights. Therefore, fostering a supportive, positive learning environment and empowering students to excel is the name of the game here

1. Encourage Effective Study Habits

One of the keys to success during exams is cultivating effective study habits. Educators can guide students by teaching them how to create a study schedule, break down subjects into manageable chunks, and employ active learning techniques such as note-taking and self-quizzing. Promoting a growth mindset and emphasizing the importance of regular revision will help students develop a positive attitude towards their studies.

2. Provide Targeted Revision Resources

Tailored revision materials play a crucial role in supporting students' exam preparation. Students need a variety of resources such as past papers, study guides, and online revision platforms to support them. These resources can help students familiarize themselves with the exam format, identify areas that require improvement, and reinforce their understanding of key concepts.

3. Offer Individualized Support

Recognizing that every student has unique needs, it is important to provide individualized support during the exam season. Regularly check in with students to gauge their progress, address any concerns or challenges they may be facing, and provide personalized guidance. Offering one-on-one sessions, either in person or virtually, allows for targeted assistance and creates an atmosphere of support.

4. Promote Stress Management Techniques

Exam season can be a stressful time for students, and it is crucial to equip them with effective stress management techniques. Encourage students to engage in activities such as exercise, mindfulness, and relaxation exercises to help alleviate anxiety and maintain a healthy balance between study and leisure. Additionally, teaching time-management skills can assist students in effectively prioritizing their workload, reducing stress levels.

5. Foster a Supportive Classroom Culture

Creating a supportive classroom environment is key to students' emotional well-being and overall success during exams. Encourage peer collaboration, where students can form study groups, exchange ideas, and support each other. Celebrate milestones and successes, fostering a sense of achievement and boosting motivation. By fostering a positive and inclusive classroom culture, students will feel empowered and motivated to excel.

6. Communicate with Parents and Guardians

Maintaining open lines of communication with parents and guardians is essential during the exam season. Provide regular updates on students' progress, offer suggestions for how parents can support their children at home, and address any concerns or questions they may have. Collaborating with parents and guardians as partners in education strengthens the support network around the student and ensures a holistic approach to their success.

During the exam season, supporting students goes beyond academic instruction. It is about nurturing the whole student, encompassing their academic, emotional, and social well-being.

Article by: PROSPERO EDUCATION

A leading tutoring agency committed to student success.



Summer Activities IN THE BOROUGH.

This summer promises to be exciting in Barking and Dagenham as fun activities have been planned children would enjoy.

ARTBASH CAMP BOUNCE

ARTBASH Camp BOUNCE will be retuning this Summer for the Holiday Activity and Food programme. Their four-day art Camp will explore different art workshops, delve into some energetic movement, and provide the young ones with some much-needed bounce throughout the Summer.

LOCATION:

Manor Longbridge School, RM8 2FL

TIME: 15:30 • Age Group: 5 to 11

Booking email: georgia@artbash.uk

FUTURE YOUTH ZONE

This Summer, Future Youth Zone will be offering a range of free summer activities from football, basketball, athletics, art, music, dance, cooking, and many more. We want our young people to have fun in a healthy environment, powered by good food and encouraged by professional youth workers who bring out the best in you.

LOCATION:

Future Youth Zone, 201-225 Porters Avenue, Dagenham RM9 5YX

DATES: 24 July - 25 August

DELIVERY TIMES: 09:00 - 15:00
Age Group: 8 to 12

Booking Link:
Book a Session - Future Youth Zone

Contact email:
enquiries@futureyouthzone.org
T: 020 3941 6722

LANDMARK

AN URBAN ARTS CAMP AT STUDIO 3 ARTS

Join the team of brilliant artists at Studio 3 Arts' urban arts camp this Summer holiday. Share your skills with them and learn new techniques in dance, drama, and visual arts to bring together a unique immersive experience that explores the themes of journeys, travel and identity within and beyond your imagination.

LOCATION:

Studio 3 Arts, The Galleon Centre,
Boundary Road, Barking IG11 7JR

DATES: 31 July - 4 August

DELIVERY TIMES: 11:30 - 16:30

AGE GROUP: 8 to 11

Booking Link: [www.studio3arts.org.uk/
event/landmark-an-urban-arts-camp](http://www.studio3arts.org.uk/event/landmark-an-urban-arts-camp)

Email: Sharlene@studio3arts.org.uk

T: 07383 026 359

INSPIRE MINDS THROUGH SPORTS

This Summer, Inspire Minds Through Sports will be running healthy eating and nutrition workshops for both children and their families. They encourage those they serve to make new friends and to find out more about the services in our local community.

They have some new and exciting activities planned for this Summer, so come along and check it out!

LOCATION: St Peter's Goresbrook Road,
Dagenham RM9 6UU

DATES: 24 July - 11 August

DELIVERY TIMES: 09:00 - 15:00

Age Group: 5 to 11

BOOKING LINK: www.imtsports.org

Email: Imtsports@hotmail.com

T: 07957 117 313

LEARNING HIVE

Get ready for an amazing Summer adventure with Learning Hive's Holiday Camp at John Perry and Becontree Primary School! Learning Hive will be offering a varied selection of workshops with a focus on keeping primary school children active, creative, sociable, and eager to learn over the Summer holidays.

Your child will be delving into exciting activities like cooking, spy experiences, karate, football, and arts and crafts. Plus, they provide your children with free healthy lunches to make sure your child stays energised throughout the day.

Come and join the fun - they can't wait to see you there!

LOCATION: John Perry Primary School,
Dagenham RM10 8UR

DATES: 24 July - 27 July
31 July - 3 August

DELIVERY TIMES: 09:00 - 13:00
Age Group: 5 to 11

BOOKING LINK: www.eequ.org/experience/3623

Email: info@learninghive.co.uk
T: 020 7112 8658

FUNDING HOBBIES

Sometimes designated teachers worry about how a young person's hobbies can be funded.

Occasionally targets in Epep are seen to reflect hobbies like swimming, sport etc. and at such times the question is where should the funding come from?

You would be pleased to know that Foster Carers receive an education allowance to fund hobbies. See how much a Foster Carer can expect to receive for a child

AGE	HOBBIES	EDUCATION
0 - 4yrs	£5.50 pw	£5.50 pw
5 - 10yrs	£12.50 pw	£12.50 pw
11 - 18yrs	£18.50 pw	£20.50 pw



MEET OUR WRESTLING CHAMPION

BAHLOL A UASC IS MAKING US PROUD AS HE WON A GOLD MEDAL IN THE UK WRESTLING CHAMPIONSHIP AND IS ON HIS WAY TO THE EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP.

WATCH THIS SPACE OUR STUDENTS ARE HIGH FLYERS!!

FOSTER CARERS CORNER

HEAR FEEDBACK FROM A PASSIONATE FOSTER CARER

Here's some good news to begin your week with. It just seems like yesterday when you invited a group of foster carers and their foster children to have a guided tour of FutureZone. Since then Erska and her big cousin have been to the youth club many times and have tried out lots of activities and yummy food. Recently both girls said they would like to become voluntary youth leaders at FutureZone. They went for an interview and were invited to attend training at the youth centre. They thoroughly enjoyed this and were given homework which they handed in a few days later. I checked over what they did and was impressed with the detailed plans they submitted for the future fun sessions they will facilitate with some of the juniors. The start date can't come quick enough for the girls who are very excited to be doing something for others. I just wanted to give you this positive feedback. Thanks to you and your colleague (the guy who spoke French), my two girls are really looking forward to helping other looked after children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds. Had it not been for the virtual school enrolling everyone in the youth club in the first place, this opportunity to gain valuable work experience may not have presented itself. Now the girls will have something truly meaningful to add to their CV's especially as they both want to become social workers and foster carers. I'm sure they will grow in confidence and be positive role models for the youngsters they will be helping to support.

So we all owe you Kathy and your colleague a very big thank you. The Aspire Virtual school is well named. You provide a solid foundation for our looked after children to build on. The work of the virtual school is very much appreciated by foster carers and their foster children. Thank you really does seem inadequate..

TIPS FOR RESULTS DAY

The lead up to results day can be a stressful and worrying time so it's important to remind our young people how hard they worked and the effort they put into those exams. This is now time to celebrate the end of months' worth of revision. You might be wondering what happens on results and what you can do to help support your young person. Here are some top tips for GCSE and A-Level results.

1. MAKE SURE THEY HAVE CHECKED WITH SCHOOL WHAT TIME THEY ARE DUE TO COLLECT THEIR RESULTS. THEY CANNOT MAKE IT TO SCHOOL, MAKE SURE THEY ARRANGE FOR THEIR RESULTS TO BE POSTED OUT.
2. ENCOURAGE YOUR YOUNG PERSON TO ARRANGE WHO THEY ARE GOING TO TRAVEL TO SCHOOL WITH AHEAD OF THE DAY. ANTICIPATION WILL BUILD UP MOST ON THEIR JOURNEY SO IT'S IMPORTANT THEY GO WITH PEOPLE WHO THEY FEEL SUPPORTED BY AND AT EASE WITH.
3. ONCE THEY GET TO SCHOOL, THEY'LL HAVE THE OPTION TO OPEN THEIR RESULTS THERE OR SAVE THEM UNTIL THEY LEAVE. ENCOURAGE THEM TO THINK ABOUT THESE OPTIONS BEFORE THE BIG DAY. MAKE THEM AWARE THAT IT MIGHT BE DAUNTING TO OPEN THEIR RESULTS IN SCHOOL, BUT THEIR TEACHERS HAVE THE MOST KNOWLEDGE ON WHAT OPTIONS ARE AVAILABLE BASED ON THESE RESULTS.
4. IF THEY DIDN'T GET THE RESULTS THEY WANTED, THERE WILL STILL BE AMPLE CHOICES AVAILABLE TO THEM SO REMIND THEM THAT PLANS CAN BE CHANGED EASILY. ENSURE THEY SPEAK WITH THEIR TEACHERS OR VIRTUAL SCHOOL TO HELP THEM DECIDE WHAT TO DO NEXT. IF THEY APPLIED TO COLLEGE OR SIXTH FORM AND YOU KNOW THEY DIDN'T THE RESULTS THEY NEEDED, IT'S STILL IMPORTANT TO CONTACT THEIR NEXT DESTINATION AS THEY WILL HAVE BACK UP OPTIONS AVAILABLE. YOUR YOUNG PERSON MAY NOT WANT TO DO THIS SO FEEL FREE TO OFFER TO CALL ON THEIR BEHALF.
5. IF THEY GOT HIGHER RESULTS THAN THEY EXPECTED, THERE MAY BE EVEN MORE OPTIONS AVAILABLE THAN ORIGINALLY THOUGHT. AGAIN, SUPPORT THEM IN GETTING IN TOUCH WITH THEIR CHOSEN DESTINATION AND START THE CONVERSATION.