



Harrow Virtual School Newsletter

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Harrow Virtual School

Spring 2021

Letter from the Virtual School Headteacher



Dear Colleague,

Welcome to our Spring Term Newsletter.

I would like to say a huge thank you for your continued hard work with our students over this term. We welcome the full opening of schools this month and are pleased to see so many children return to face-to-face learning.

In the absence of public exams again this Summer, we will continue to work with Designated Teachers via the Personal Education Plan (PEP) process to ensure all educational progress is reflected. If not already arranged, please contact the child's Virtual School lead and their social worker to arrange the Summer Term PEP meeting.

I would like to congratulate my colleagues, Sarah Moriarty and Kathryn Robinson, for successfully completing The Bell Foundation's English as an Additional Language (EAL) Proficiency Primary and Secondary Assessment Training. We look forward to working with schools to help meet the needs and champion the progress of our CLA with EAL.

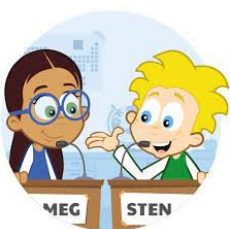
A reminder to schools about the DfE funded laptops which were sent to schools last Summer. The expiry date for the pre-loaded website filtering software is 30th September. At this time, or before, your school or trust will need to apply your own security settings.

I would like to draw your attention to our Virtual School [website](#), which is regularly updated with links to the latest information, support and guidance for our key stakeholders. If you have any further suggestions for our website, please contact Anu Jain on virtualschool@harrow.gov.uk.

And finally, I hope you enjoy this edition of our newsletter. We have introduced a 'Meet our Partners' section on Page 3 and would like this to be a regular feature. I also look forward to even more articles in the Summer Newsletter on some new enrichment activities taking place this term; namely the new Reading Club and The Philosophy Foundation. Both of which have had a great take up. If you have any items to share please let me know.

Thank you again for all your hard work and have a well-deserved rest over the Spring Break.

Mellina Williamson-Taylor
Headteacher, Harrow Virtual School



“It was most impressive to see how you all supported each other and to witness you all sending verbal and written chat messages of encouragement and affirmation to each other.”
(Bernadette Alexander, VS Enrichment Supplier)

Debate Mate Online

In response to the pandemic, [Debate Mate](#) this year moved online. A popular enrichment activity for our young people and this year attracted even more students from KS3 to KS5 from Harrow, Barnet, Brent and Ealing Virtual Schools. 14 young people attended the five after-school sessions and then entered the competition on the first Saturday of

half term.

Oral feedback from the participants was very positive and the majority said that they would like to do more debating sessions. They enjoyed the Wednesday sessions and the Saturday competition, saying that they felt they had improved their powers of argument and will continue to use the skills they learned in their

daily lives. Many also said they now had more confidence in ‘speaking out’.

One young person said they enjoyed debating itself and meeting others whilst another really enjoyed rebuttal.

All 14 young people received a participation certificate and winners’ certificates were sent to the 3 winners.

“...to keep in touch with other Carers which is so important and has helped us to feel part of a bigger picture.”



“We have become more aware of various issues that are current and relevant to us in our role as Carers.”

HVS Video Conferencing Forums

Designated Teacher Forums

Sara Dawson and Michelle Tyson have begun hosting termly online forums for schools to provide additional support and further training.

Previous forums have focussed on tackling some of the difficulties posed by Covid-19 on both students and staff, and using formulation to help get into the heads of our looked after young people and to help us provide tailored, targeted, and effective support.

The date for the next forum is Thursday 13th May.

Carer Forums

Sara Dawson, and Clare Sullivan from Harrow’s Family Placement Service, have also continued to run fortnightly online forums for Foster Carers, which have now moved to Tuesdays.

Each forum focusses on a different topic presented by Sara, and also provides opportunities to connect with other carers and share their experiences and knowledge.

Previous forums have covered a range of topics including attachment, placement

endings, teen anxiety, sibling rivalry, depression in young people, mindfulness, identity, and the power of play.

The feedback received from the carers has been very positive.

To receive information on upcoming topics, dates, and the link to join the forum (run via Zoom), please get in touch with Clare Sullivan clare.sullivan@harrow.gov.uk.

“I really enjoy the way the clinical psychologist is able to present her courses and have found them all to be invaluable.”

Newton Farm Nursery, Infant and Junior School, Harrow

Anu Jain was delighted to be able to catch-up with the Headteacher of Newton Farm School, Matt Bradley, earlier this term.

Colleagues who attended our 'Achieving Excellence Together' Training last December, may recognise Matt as he spoke about the work his school does to support looked after and previously looked after children. Matt started out as a teacher at Newton Farm having originally worked in the City. He subsequently returned from a Deputy Headship at St Luke's School to take the Headteacher position at Newton Farm. He has also been a Governor of a Special School and an elected Councillor in Brent.

All vulnerable groups are offered to join the 'Mighty Minds Group' which is based on the [3 pillars of Newton Farm](#) (Growth Mindset, Philosophy for Children and Rights Respecting). You can watch their video via the hyperlink above.

Children who are deemed vulnerable are also given the opportunity to attend 'Extensive Challenge' sessions where they are able to 'tap into unlocking their potential.

Newton Farm also runs 1:1 tuition, therapies with specialists and a Forest School Programme.

Safeguarding Strategy Meetings are held weekly for every vulnerable child.

In addition to this, termly pupil progress meetings are also held with parents or carers, school staff and social workers.

With 2.5% of their pupil population being a child looked-after or previously looked after, Newton Farm is also a Trauma Aware School.

Thank you to Matt, for taking the time to share how his school supports vulnerable groups.

We will be approaching schools to discuss sharing models of good practice in supporting vulnerable groups in future newsletters. However, do get in touch with Anu Jain on virtualschool@harrow.gov.uk if you would like to be featured.



**Matt Bradley,
Headteacher**



[Click on image above to go to school website](#)

Harrow Virtual School Enrichment Coordination and John Lyon's Charity

In 2018, Bernadette Alexander, a former Virtual School Headteacher, was appointed by John Lyon's Charity as the Enrichment Coordination Supplier for Barnet, Brent, Ealing and Harrow Virtual Schools. The charity supports all four Virtual Schools in enhancing the enrichment opportunities for children looked after.

Bernadette is already a familiar face to our carers, children and social care teams. To date, she has co-ordinated drama workshops, residentials, theatre visits, equine therapy, Jamie's Farm and many more! We can testify to the positive and life-changing impact these activities have on our children and care leavers in the Virtual School.

This past year, the pandemic has seen many of our activities take place remotely. This has created a wonderful opportunity, as we have seen an increase in our participation numbers, particularly those children who live outside of Harrow.

We are extremely appreciative of the close collaboration with Bernadette, the John Lyon's Charity and the joint work with our neighbouring Virtual Schools.

Do watch this space! More to come in the Summer Newsletter...



**Bernadette Alexander,
Enrichment**



**JOHN LYON'S
CHARITY**

[Click on image above to take you to the JLC website](#)



Civic Centre
Station Road
Harrow

virtualschool@harrow.gov.uk

**We are on the web:
www.harrow.gov.uk/virtualschool**

***Acronyms used
in this edition:**

- HVS:** Harrow Virtual School
- CLA:** Children Looked After
- DT:** Designated Teacher
- DSL:** Designated Safeguarding Lead
- PEP:** Personal Education Plan
- EAL:** English as an Additional Language



Achieving Excellence Together

Meet The Team

Headteacher: Mellina Williamson-Taylor E: Mellina.Williamson-Taylor@harrow.gov.uk

Assistant Headteacher: Sarah Moriarty E: Sarah.Moriarty@harrow.gov.uk

Senior Education Officer: Joanne Tortipidis E: joanne.Tortipidis@harrow.gov.uk

Education Support Officer: Michelle Tyson E: Michelle.Tyson@harrow.gov.uk

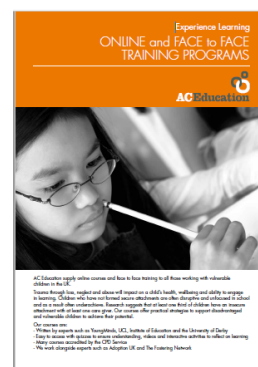
Advisory Teacher: Kat Robinson E: Kathryn.Robinson@harrow.gov.uk

Clinical Psychologist: Sara Dawson E: Sara.Dawson@harrow.gov.uk

Teaching and Learning Consultant: Anu Jain E: Anupameya.Jain@harrow.gov.uk

AC Education Online Training

A final reminder that HVS continues to offer AC Education's Online Training modules for free to schools. For the latest available courses, click on the image to the right of this article to direct you to the latest courses. There are currently 35 places left. Courses can also be completed in the Summer Term as long as participants enrol before 30th April 2021.



**Click on above image
for direct link to
learning programs**

To register please email Michelle Tyson at virtualschool@harrow.gov.uk.

Summer Term Training for Schools

Breaking the Cycle: The legacy of early trauma and disruption on children and how to help them achieve their full potential.

Course Facilitator: Sara Dawson

Thursday 17th June 2021



Date for Termly DT & DSL Seminars

The Summer Term Safeguarding in Education Seminars for Designated Teachers and Designated Safeguarding Leads will continue to take place via MS Teams. Please **note the change in the date** from the Autumn Newsletter:

Tuesday 8th June 2021