Welcome to the seventh edition of the regular Designated Teacher input.

Please circulate to any staff who are involved in completing review meetings or to any staff who are working with your looked after or previously looked after pupils.

This update focuses on how we are all managing with the current Coronavirus situation and associated school closures.

The Virtual School is even more virtual than usual with all the team working remotely to support schools and young people in Oxfordshire and our schools and pupils out of county. We are available to collaborate with and support designated teachers and heads to ensure the best outcomes for our pupils.

Who are we? We are a team of 18, lead by Michelle Johnson our Head teacher - 07990 367545.

There is a wealth of experience in the team across all phases of education. If you need advice or support, please get in touch. Email: virtualschool.LAC@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Children in Care Council.

Any pupil in care or leaving care can join the CiCC. It is a great way to get and stay connected.

With schools closed it might be a good way for your pupils to make friends and join up with others who may share similar circumstances.

It is an active group who campaign, share views and plan events. If you have pupils who you could encourage to join the CiCC, then you should contact James Collins on 07803 287813 or james.collins@oxfordshire.gov.uk

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Great things happening in schools to support looked after pupils. Thank you

Google classrooms and similar - online lessons and virtual tutor periods.
Support with ICT equipment so pupils can get online. Regular phone contact.
Information for parents and carers to support with learning.
Providing some feedback to pupils on work they have produced at home.
Routines and support available for pupils in school.
Schools being sensitive about helping pupils avoid stigma of being in school.
Great liaison with social workers so that pupils who can be at home safely, are.
Websites, class dojos, form group social media groups - all helpful in keeping contact with families.
Mental health and well-being prioritized in these early weeks of closure.
Differentiated resources available for pupils with learning difficulties.
Information for parents and carers to help understand schoolwork.
Year 11 and year 6 leaver events planned for later in the year so the sense of belonging can be protected.
DFE guidance and useful link here. Foster carer info

Year 11 focus
Without the drive towards GCSE exams, many year 11s are unsure how their next steps are going to work out.
For the year 11 cohort the issues include;
Pupils unlikely to achieve a level 4 in E/M who will need to re-sit in year 12
Pupils aiming for sixth form who may need to re-sit either E or M
Pupils aiming for sixth form who need to continue to study E/M to give them the best start to A levels. Online tuition has been set up for these pupils via The Virtual School.

Schools can continue to support year 11s by helping guide them towards resources in subjects they are choosing to study, pointing them towards material in subjects of their interest and encouraging them to continue to study subjects at GCSE level to keep the momentum going so they are college or sixth form ready.

Izzy Crowther is available to support year 11s with post 16 steps. Schools can flag up any pupils who they feel would benefit from targeted support to research, apply and transition to post 16 courses. Izzy has good contacts with colleges and can help individual pupils navigate the transition process.

Personal Education Plan news
PEPs due to be held in March or upcoming in April and May should still go ahead.
EPEPs can be completed and Designated Teachers can do these in the following ways:
✓ Fill out all you can re progress and attainment data, key information, review outcomes in the usual way.
✓ Gain the pupil voice - by a telephone call, send the PV form (click on blue button which says download this form only) to the carer or by Skype.
✓ Ensure carer and social worker have a chance to share their views - Skype meeting, telephone call or by email correspondence.
✓ Setting new outcomes - clearly this is not a straightforward as usual, but there will be some natural outcomes (supporting the child to complete work at home; sourcing a laptop or resources; accessing online tuition from school; supporting well being through regular school/home contact etc)

Thank you all for keeping these going and please keep in touch with your case workers who can also help set up Skype meetings, so PEPs can include everyone involved.

Attachment
Social distancing and school closures are difficult for us all.
Relationships are seriously stretched and tested in times of adversity.
Schools continue to have an important role in helping children feel a sense of belonging. PEPs are a way of letting the child know you are bearing them in mind and listening to their voice. Any regular contact from key staff is going to be a protective factor for many pupils.
Useful guidance for coping with the virus measures from The Attach Team Oxfordshire found here.