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Virtual School Training Programme

Descriptors for 2025/2026



WEST SUSSEX VIRTUAL SCHOOL

Please note, where the audience is 'all', it is suitable for colleagues' supporting children in any Key Stage.

Where a Key Stage is specified, the training would be most suitable for those supporting children and young people in that particular Key Stage.

An Introduction to Executive Function skills – a brain-based approach: Part 1

Audience: **All**

Duration: **1hr30**

Delivery: **Online**

Delivered by our Educational Psychologist colleagues, this webinar will introduce you to the psychological theories and neuroscience of executive functioning, providing you with the knowledge and skills to recognise and understand the impact of executive functioning on children and young people's learning and emotional regulation.

An Introduction to Executive Function skills – a brain-based approach: Part 2

Audience: **All**

Duration: **1hr30**

Delivery: **Online**

Please only book this course if you have completed part 1

This session builds on part 1 and considers strategies and resources that help to support young people who struggle with executive functioning.



Developing Empathy Skills

Audience: **All**

Duration: **1hr**

Delivery: **Online**

Delivered by our Educational Psychologist colleagues, this webinar explains why behaving empathically can be a challenge for some children and young people who have encountered a multitude of adverse childhood experiences. We will also consider teaching and care practices that may accidentally reduce opportunities for children to learn to feel empathy, before exploring alternative approaches that can develop young people's ability to empathise with others.

Effective Use of Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) to Meet the Needs of Vulnerable Learners

Audience: **Early Years Settings**

Duration: **1hr**

Delivery: **Online**

Delivered by the Virtual School Early Years team, this session will support Early Years providers in planning how to use EYPP to support the engagement and learning of all children within the Virtual School remit. Attendees will consider how to measure the impact of spending, use case studies to support our thinking, and explore innovative EYPP projects.



EYFS Bitesize Training

Audience: **EYFS (age 2 - end of YrR)**

Duration: **1hr**

Delivery: **Online**

Delivered by the Virtual School Early Years team, these bitesize sessions are for Early Years colleagues in settings and schools. These workshops explore a variety of topics that are specific to Early Years. Each session will be delivered through a trauma-informed lens and will provide attendees with useful strategies and interventions to support children in the early years. You are welcome to book on to one or all these bitesize training sessions.

"Ahh there's a bear!" - In this session, we will consider the impact of early trauma, Dr Bruce Perry's 5 states, and Toxic Shame and its impact.

"999 – what's your emergency?" - In this session, we will consider how to support a dysregulated child, Dr Bruce Perry and Louise Bomber's 4 R's (Regulate, Relate, Reason, Repair), and the Window of Tolerance.

"You've got a friend in me" - In this session, we will consider the impact of relationship disruption, the attuned adult and PACE.

"The same but different" - In this session, we will consider changes, quality transitions and the importance of a secure base.

Lying or 'Alternative Truths'? - A Trauma-Informed Perspective

Audience: **All**

Duration: **1hr**

Delivery: **Online**

A commonly reported behaviour among children who have experienced trauma is a tendency to say untruthful things or indeed engage in 'fantastical lying', as well as other behaviours that may be viewed as deceptive. Delivered by our Educational Psychologist colleagues, this webinar outlines the likely underlying needs and communicative functions behind lying behaviours in children and young people who have been exposed to adverse childhood experiences. We will reframe these behaviours as usually indicative of a stress response, in which the young person may not always even be aware that their statements are untruthful; and we will consider supportive ways in which we can respond to this triggering behaviour.



New! Motivating the 'Unmotivated': Understanding Adolescence

Audience: **KS3,4,5**

Duration: **Whole Day**

Delivery: **In Person**

Expanded from our half day course last year, this exciting, new full day training exploring the rapidly growing neuroscience of adolescent brain development, will enable education colleagues to better understand patterns in teenage behaviour and how their developing brain impacts their thinking, learning and emotions. Our Educational Psychologists will facilitate discussions regarding the challenges that young people currently face and consider how we can use neuroscience findings to support our teenagers in a way that works with their brain changes, rather than against them. Based on the principles of Motivational Interviewing, during the final part of the day attendees will learn how to facilitate motivational conversations that engage and support adolescents to pursue their own goals.

PACE Workshop (Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy)

Audience: **All**

Duration: **1hr**

Delivery: **Online**

Delivered by our Educational Psychologist colleagues, this workshop will introduce you to the principles of Dan Hughes' PACE (Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity & Empathy). This is a relational approach that helps to build trust and connection with children of all ages who have been impacted by developmental trauma. There will be an opportunity to think through your own PACEful responses with the young people you work with, and to consider how PACE fits in with your typical relational style.



Polyvagal Theory and Introduction to Fight, Flight, Freeze, Fawn and Flop

Audience: **All**

Duration: **1hr**

Delivery: **Online**

Delivered by our Educational Psychologist colleagues, this interactive workshop begins with an introduction to Stephen Porges' Polyvagal Theory, that helps us to understand our nervous system's responses to experiences of threat and safety. Attendees will reflect on how we can identify survival responses in children within our settings. Finally, we will explore useful emotional literacy and regulation resources that they use in their own practice to support children to feel safe, connected and regulated. As this is an interactive session, there is an expectation that education colleagues have in mind an emotional literacy resource that they would like to share or signpost to the group.

Relational Practice: workshops on PACE, Theraplay Principles, and Trauma-Informed Drawing Activities

Audience: **All**

Duration: **Whole Day**

Delivery: **In Person**

Facilitated by the Virtual School Educational Psychologists, this interactive and practical day begins with an overview of trauma-informed relational practice, and the vital and invaluable role education and care colleagues play as the 'secondary attachment' network that enables children to continue to heal from trauma. Through interactive workshops, attendees will be introduced to and begin to practise key relational approaches, including Dan Hughes' PACE (Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy), Theraplay principles, Tree of Life, and Big Empathy Drawings, which help adults build connections and attunement with children.



New! Responding to Sexualised Behaviours in Children

Audience: **All**

Duration: **1hr**

Delivery: **Online**

Delivered by our Educational Psychologist colleagues, this webinar provides an introduction to understanding the sexualised behaviours that some children who have experienced trauma may display. We will consider what constitutes both typical and concerning sexualised behaviours, and the many factors that may be driving more problematic behaviours. Finally, we will consider the importance of responding empathically to these children's underlying needs, alongside ensuring the safety of themselves and others.

New! Responding to Shame in Young People

Audience: **All**

Duration: **1hr**

Delivery: **Online**

Delivered by our Educational Psychologist colleagues, this webinar will explain how 'toxic shame' impacts on the behaviours of young people who have been affected by adversity, loss and trauma. We will consider what shame responses may look like in an education setting, and why shame can be exacerbated through typical reward-and-punishment practices. Finally, we will consider strategies that are more likely to strengthen relationships and guide children's behaviour while minimising defensive shame responses.



The Impact of Trauma - online Virtual Reality demonstration session

Audience: **All**

Duration: **1hr**

Delivery: **Online**

This online demonstration will enable senior leaders to view films used during the full day training and understand the potential impact of the content on attendees. We will explain the main theories and concepts covered and the structure of the session.

Attendance at this session will enable you to make an informed decision about the suitability of the full day training before agreeing to the attendance of individual staff members in your setting.

In order to safeguard the health and wellbeing of individual staff, they will not be able to attend the full day training without the consent of the nominated person who has attended this demonstration.

The Impact of Trauma – Through the eyes of a child

Audience: **All**

Duration: **Whole Day**

Delivery: **In Person**

Using immersive **Virtual Reality** technology, this full day session will enable attendees to explore and understand the impact of adversity and trauma on a young person's development, their presentation and ability to engage in learning. Using a combination of neuroscience and VR footage, this revised training provides a powerful insight into the lived experiences of children and young people, and practical advice and strategies to support attendees in meeting their needs in school.

Where possible we suggest that delegates attend with a colleague from their school/setting.

Before booking a place, please ensure that a manager or senior leader from your setting has attended an online demonstration and agrees to your attendance.

Due to the nature and content of the training, and in order to safeguard your own health and wellbeing, you will not be able to attend without the consent and support of the nominated person who has attended a demonstration.



New! The Impact of Trauma – Through the eyes of a child – For Senior Leaders and Governors

Audience: **Senior Leaders and Governors**

Duration: **tbc**

Delivery: **In Person**

A bespoke session enabling Senior Leaders and Governors to experience our popular Virtual Reality package that explores adversity, brain development and the neuroscience behind readiness for learning.

An opportunity to understand and discuss how staff attendance at this training will support professional development, knowledge, skills and understanding across your staff team. We will explore how working with the neuroscience has a positive impact on engagement and attainment in learning, and contribute to the wellbeing and resilience of the whole school community.

The Role of the Designated Teacher

Audience: **All**

Duration: **1hr**

Delivery: **Online**

Delivered by the Virtual School team, this interactive session is for new and existing Designated Teachers. Attendees will understand the role of the Virtual School, the statutory duties of a Designated Teacher, your role and responsibilities, and how the Virtual School will support you.



Theraplay Informed Workshops

Audience: **All***

Duration: **2hrs**

Delivery: **In Person**

Delivered by the Virtual School team, these hands-on workshops will introduce you to Theraplay principles and activities.

The goal of Theraplay is to enhance attachment, self-esteem, and trust in others through joyful engagement.

Engagement in this workshop will give you the skills and confidence to use Theraplay informed activities with children and young people in your setting. These activities will help children develop relationships with trusted key adults, build self-worth and develop skills to be able to interact with peers. Please be prepared to join in and play!

** Please book the session relevant to the education phase of the children/young people you are supporting*

Understanding and Supporting Attachment Needs

Audience: **All**

Duration: **Whole Day**

Delivery: **In Person**

In this full day training our Educational Psychologists explore the meaning of attachment and the importance of significant relationships throughout the child's life and educational journey. This training provides education colleagues with an in-depth overview of attachment theory, and opportunities to consider more deeply the needs of children who have experienced adversity and trauma. Attendees are supported to reframe distressed, disruptive, and challenging behaviours and to understand these behaviours in the context of self-protective attachment strategies that have developed as a consequence of extensive disruption and disconnection in key early relationships. We invite attendees to 'hold a child in mind' whilst they engage in the training, with opportunity for reflective discussions, case examples, and school support planning.



Understanding the Impact that Trauma has on Young People: Part 1

Audience: **All**

Duration: **1hr30**

Delivery: **Online**

Delivered by our Educational Psychologist colleagues, this webinar will introduce you to the seven key ways in which developmental trauma impacts on the brain. We will consider examples of both the neurological and psychological consequences of early adversity and trauma on the developing brain, and reframe challenging behaviours according to the latest neuroscience. A case study will be referred to throughout to illustrate the challenges this may present in an education setting.

Understanding the Impact that Trauma has on Young People: Part 2

Audience: **All**

Duration: **1hr30**

Delivery: **Online**

Please only book this course if you have completed part 1

Following on from part 1, we will re-visit the case study and what we have learnt about trauma to then reflect on how education colleagues can support children's recovery from adversity and trauma using the neurosequential model or 'bottom-up approach'.



What Makes a Good PEP?

Audience: **All**

Duration: **1hr**

Delivery: **Online**

Delivered by our Virtual School team, this session will give Designated Teachers and Social Workers working with Children We Care For in all phases the knowledge and information needed to create a high-quality PEP. Led by the Advisory Teacher and PEP champions we will look at the different elements needed to complete a PEP, how best to prepare and plan for the meeting and your role in the process.

Virtual School Breakfast Briefing

Audience: **Designated Teachers**

Duration: **1.5hrs**

Delivery: **In Person**

The Virtual School are delighted to host these locality-based Breakfast Briefings for Designated Teachers and supporting colleagues. Come along and join us for breakfast, updates and discussions. You will have the opportunity to: network with other DTs in your locality, hear updates from the Virtual School, discover training opportunities, discuss relevant issues, ask questions of the Virtual School team, and enjoy a breakfast pastry or two!

To view dates available, and to book, please see the calendar on our website or via the button below:

www.westsussex.gov.uk/virtualschool

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