

VSK WEEKLY UPDATE

9 July 2026



SEND Update: Kent Local Area Inspection Underway

Colleagues may be aware that Kent has now entered a Local Area SEND Inspection, with on-site activity taking place from 6–10 July. Schools and partners may be contacted directly by inspectors as part of the process, and there is a continued request to support the promotion of the Ofsted parent/carers survey so that a full range of experiences is represented: [Area SEND inspection for Kent Local Area Partnership](#)

This comes shortly after the submission of Kent's SEND Reform Plan, a significant piece of work developed with partners across the system and an important step in shaping future provision and support for children and young people. [SEND Strategy 2025-2028](#)

With over 22,000 children and young people in Kent currently supported through an EHCP, alongside many more receiving SEND support, the update is a helpful reminder of the scale of need across our system and the importance of continuing to work together to secure inclusive, high-quality provision.

As always, thank you for the care, flexibility and commitment you continue to show to all of our children in your care —particularly during what remains a busy and pressured period across education.

Safeguarding Update: New Support Levels Guidance Now Live

Kent Safeguarding Children Multi-Agency Partnership (KSCMP) has launched its new **Support Levels Guidance (SLG)**. Developed with partner agencies, the guidance aims to support consistent decision-making, strengthen the whole-family approach and promote early intervention across services.

Colleagues are encouraged to familiarise themselves with the guidance and embed it into day-to-day practice.

[Support level guidance: Guidance for practitioners supporting children, young people and families](#)



Kent Safeguarding Children
multi-agency partnership



THE ADOPTABLES



Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) Auto Funding

We want to take a moment to clarify expectations around the **PP+ auto funding** you receive and how it supports strong educational planning.

What should the funding be used for?

PP+ must be used to support the agreed targets within the Personal Education Plan (PEP). These targets are reviewed three times a year, and funding should clearly align with:

- Academic progress
- Social, emotional and mental health needs
- Wider barriers to learning



It is important that spending is purposeful, evidence-informed, and directly linked to outcomes outlined in the PEP.

PEP Discussions and Evidencing Use of Funding

During PEP meetings, VSK colleagues will work with you to ensure there is a clear, shared understanding of how needs are being met and funded.

Discussions will explore:

- Where schools are already contributing funding
- Whether SEN support is in place (e.g. for pupils with a diagnosis or EHCP)
- Whether High Needs Funding (HNF) or Communities of Schools funding has been accessed
- If funding has been declined, whether the reason has been discussed and understood
- Whether the child is in receipt of Disability Living Allowance (DLA), and how this is being used to support their needs and outcomes

This ensures PP+ is used appropriately and in addition to other available funding streams, not as a replacement. All of this should be clearly recorded in the **summary section of the PEP** to show joined-up planning and accountability.

If you have any questions, your VSK link professional is always happy to support.

What is PP+ Auto Funding?

Schools receive PP+ funding three times a year — typically in June, November and February.

Each allocation is usually around £500, meaning approximately £1,500 per year per child in care placed within your setting.

This funding is provided automatically (auto funding) to enable schools to respond quickly to need and ensure timely support for each young person.

The Role of the Designated Teacher

The Designated Teacher for Looked After Children is key in ensuring:

- PEP targets are clear, ambitious and measurable
- PP+ funding is linked directly to provision
- Impact is reviewed consistently

Using Evidence-Informed Approaches

While PP+ is distinct from the school's wider Pupil Premium (PP) strategy, we expect a similarly evidence-informed approach. Schools should draw on effective practice, such as the DfE's [menu of approaches](#), while ensuring that PP+ funding is clearly targeted to the individual child's needs and PEP outcomes.

- High-quality teaching
- Targeted academic support
- Wider strategies (e.g. attendance, behaviour, wellbeing)

Conditions of Grant

Schools must follow the: [Pupil premium: conditions of grant for the 2026 to 2027 financial year - GOV.UK](#) for pupil premium funding.

This guidance emphasises that funding should:

- Be used to improve educational outcomes
- Be targeted and evidence-informed
- Demonstrate clear impact over time

We recognise the strong commitment schools show in supporting children in care. By ensuring that PP+ funding is:

- **Clearly linked to PEP targets**
- **Used alongside (not instead of) other funding streams**
- **Carefully recorded and reviewed**

... we can work together to secure the best possible outcomes for our young people.



HolidayActivities

Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme – Summer 2026

The Kent **Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) Programme** is now open for Summer 2026. The programme provides healthy meals, enriching activities and wellbeing support during the school holidays.

While looked after children are not eligible through the standard DfE-funded route, alternative funding options may be available. Colleagues supporting previously looked after children, children in kinship care, or care leavers with younger siblings may also wish to signpost families where appropriate.

[Find Holiday Activities and Food Programme \(HAF\) activities near you - Kent County Council](#)



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KSCMP Learning and Training Opportunities

A range of safeguarding training opportunities are available throughout July, including:

- Child Sexual Abuse
- Neglect
- Unconscious Bias and Cultural Competence
- Child Safeguarding Refresher Training
- Prevent and Radicalisation Awareness

Training calendar: <https://www.kscmp.org.uk/training/>

Part of the
National Year of Reading 2026

**GO
ALL
IN.**

Kent Libraries: A Hub of Activities for Children and Young People

Kent County Council (KCC) libraries continue to be vibrant community spaces, offering a wide range of opportunities for children and young people to learn, create, and connect.

Across the county, libraries run an exciting programme of clubs and activities designed to build confidence, develop skills, and encourage creativity in a fun and welcoming environment.

Here are just a few examples of what's currently on offer:

- Lego Club – Ashford Library
- Craft Club – Broadstairs & Sevenoaks Libraries
- Scratch Coding Club – Cheriton Library
- Children's Arts and Crafts – Coldharbour Library
- Family Arts & Crafts – Gravesend Library
- Summer Holiday Comic Book Club – Lydd Library

👉 Explore and search all local activities here:

[Activities for young people – Kent County Council](#)

👉 Browse all library clubs and groups:

[Clubs and activities in libraries](#)

📌 Example session:

[Broadstairs Library – Craft Club](#)



Part of the National Year of Reading 2026

**GO
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National Year of Reading 2026: Inspiring a Love of Books

As part of the **National Year of Reading 2026**, KCC Libraries are delivering a wide range of reading activities to inspire children and young people to enjoy reading for pleasure.

This national campaign aims to make reading a meaningful and enjoyable part of everyday life, helping to improve wellbeing, creativity, and achievement.

Examples of available activities include:

- Fun with Words – Broadstairs Library
- Teen Reading Group – Broadstairs Library
- Storytime with Crafts – Riverhead Library
- Booksmashers & Booksmashers Plus – Rusthall Library
- Children's Reading Group – Coldharbour Library

□ Find out more about library reading events:
[Kent Libraries – National Year of Reading](#)

Supporting Literacy: National Literacy Trust

The **National Literacy Trust** is an independent charity working with schools and communities to give children the literacy skills they need to succeed.

They offer a wide range of high-quality, free and premium resources for early years, primary and secondary settings, including reading, writing, and oracy support materials.

Access resources here:

[National Literacy Trust – Resources for schools](#)

Family support and reading ideas:

[Words for Life – National Literacy Trust](#)



National
Year of
Reading
2026

Kent Choices GCSE Clearing Tool 2026

KENT CHOICES

The Kent Choices GCSE Clearing Tool 2026 is now live and being updated in preparation for this year's results period. The tool will become available to learners during the first week of August, providing a simple way for young people to explore post-16 opportunities if they do not achieve the grades they expected or if they perform better than anticipated.

This year, all schools are included within the tool. Where providers have not yet updated their information, availability will be displayed as "unknown" and learners will be advised to contact the provider directly. Schools are encouraged to ensure their information is up to date by 17 July to help young people access the most accurate and timely guidance.

In early August, all Year 11 learners will receive a postcard highlighting where to access support and information on results day. The clearing tool will also feature details of open days and local clearing events.

Colleagues interested in learning more about how the tool can support careers guidance and transition planning can access a recording of the recent briefing for careers staff.

Kent Choices GCSE Clearing Tool:

[Clearing | Kent Choices](#)

Supporting young people to make informed decisions at this key transition point remains an important part of ensuring successful progression into education, employment or training.



Did your child or a child you know miss Bikeability?

Catch up sessions are being held in the Summer in Gravesend and Ashford, event bright links below...

Cyclopark 22nd July:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/1992475129749?aff=oddttdtcreator>

Cyclopark 23rd July:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/1991914905102?aff=oddttdtcreator>

Ashford 28th July:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/1991916059555?aff=oddttdtcreator>

Ashford 29th July:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/1991916786730?aff=oddttdtcreator>

Ashford 30th July:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/1991916970279?aff=oddttdtcreator>

Kinship Carer's Support Group Coffee Morning

A welcoming opportunity for Kinship carers across Kent to connect, share experiences and access support.



Tunbridge Wells Family Hub

 39a Grove Hill Road, TN1 1SD

 First Wednesday of each month, 10.00am–12.00pm

Dates: 3 Jun | 1 Jul | 2 Sep | 7 Oct | 4 Nov | 2 Dec

Sittingbourne – Milton Court Family Hub

 Brewery Road, Milton Regis, Sittingbourne

 Third Thursday of each month, 9.00am–11.00am

Dates: 18 Jun | 16 Jul | 20 Aug | 17 Sep | 15 Oct | 19 Nov | 17 Dec

Deal Family Hub

 Park Lane, Deal, CT14 9U

 First Friday of each month, 10.00am–12.00pm

Dates: 5 Jun | 3 Jul | 7 Aug | 4 Sep | 2 Oct | 6 Nov | 4 Dec

Newington Family Hub, Ramsgate

 59–62 Prince Avenue, Ramsgate, CT12 6HX

 Second Friday of each month, 10.00am–12.00pm

Dates: 12 Jun | 10 Jul | 14 Aug | 11 Sep | 9 Oct | 13 Nov | 11 Dec

Gravesend ASDA Community Room

 Thames Way, Gravesend, DA11 0DQ

 Third Wednesday of each month, 10.30am–12.30pm

Dates: 18 Jun | 16 Jul | 19 Aug | 16 Sep | 21 Oct | 18 Nov | 16 Dec



Kinship Carer's Support Group Coffee Morning

For more information, please contact the KCC Special Guardian

Support Team: SGOSupport@kent.gov.uk

Ashford – Westchurch House

 Godfrey Walk, Ashford, TN23 7XJ

 Third Tuesday of each month, 10.00am–12.00pm

Dates: 16 Jun | 21 Jul | No Session Aug | 15 Sep | 20 Oct | 17 Nov | 15 Dec

Maidstone – Greenfields Family Hub

 Rutland Way, Maidstone, ME15 8DR

 Fourth Wednesday of each month, 10.00am–12.00pm

Dates: 24 Jun | 22 Jul | No Session Aug | 23 Sep | 28 Oct | 25 Nov | 23 Dec

Virtual Evening Catch-Up

 Microsoft Teams

 Third Wednesday of each month, 7.00pm–8.30pm

Dates: 17 Jun | 15 Jul | 19 Aug | 16 Sep | 21 Oct | 18 Nov | 16 Dec

Whitstable Family Hub

 Tower Parade, Whitstable, CT5 2BJ

 Monthly Sunday Session, 12.00pm–2.00pm

Dates: 8 Jun | 13 Jul | 10 Aug | 14 Sep | 12 Oct | 9 Nov | 14 Dec

Virtual School Kent Advisory Team

Strategically championing the educational needs of children with a social worker, those previously in care and children in kinship care.



Did you know VSK has an Advisory Team?

The VSK Advisory Team provides advice, guidance and signposting for education settings regarding three vulnerable groups of children and young people:

- **Ever6 Children with a Social Worker:** Children currently or previously subject to CIN, CP or assessment in the last 6 years, including those who have returned home from care.
- **Previously Looked After Children (PLAC):** Children who were in care and left via Adoption, Special Guardianship Order (SGO) or Child Arrangement Order (CAO).
- **Children in Formal Kinship Care:** Children living with relatives under a formal court order (SGO or CAO) who were not previously looked after.

What do we offer?

Although children in these cohorts do not have an allocated VSK officer, the Advisory Team is available when needed to discuss concerns about individual children or groups, and to help plan next steps and solutions to support their education and wider outcomes. Parental consent is required to discuss a named child or share personal information. Cohort or anonymised discussions can take place without consent.

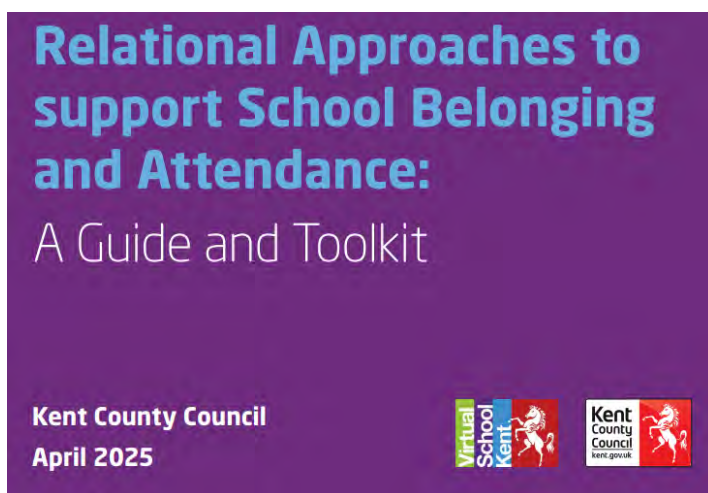
Get in touch

- To find out more, visit the VSKAT section of our website: [VSKAT Introduction | Virtual School Kent](#)
- To discuss a child or cohort, complete the contact form (remember to obtain consent if required) [VSK Advisory Team - Request Advice](#)

We also welcome examples of good practice, strategies, and success stories. Understanding what works well across the county helps us provide the best possible advice to schools, families and professionals supporting the VSK Advisory Team cohorts.

This guide and toolkit was initially developed by the Virtual School Kent and the Kent Educational Psychology Service. Its aim is to support schools in their understanding of the importance of promoting relational approaches to create a sense of connection, school belonging and with trauma informed practices supporting all vulnerable children, particularly those who may struggle to attend school.

[Click here](#)



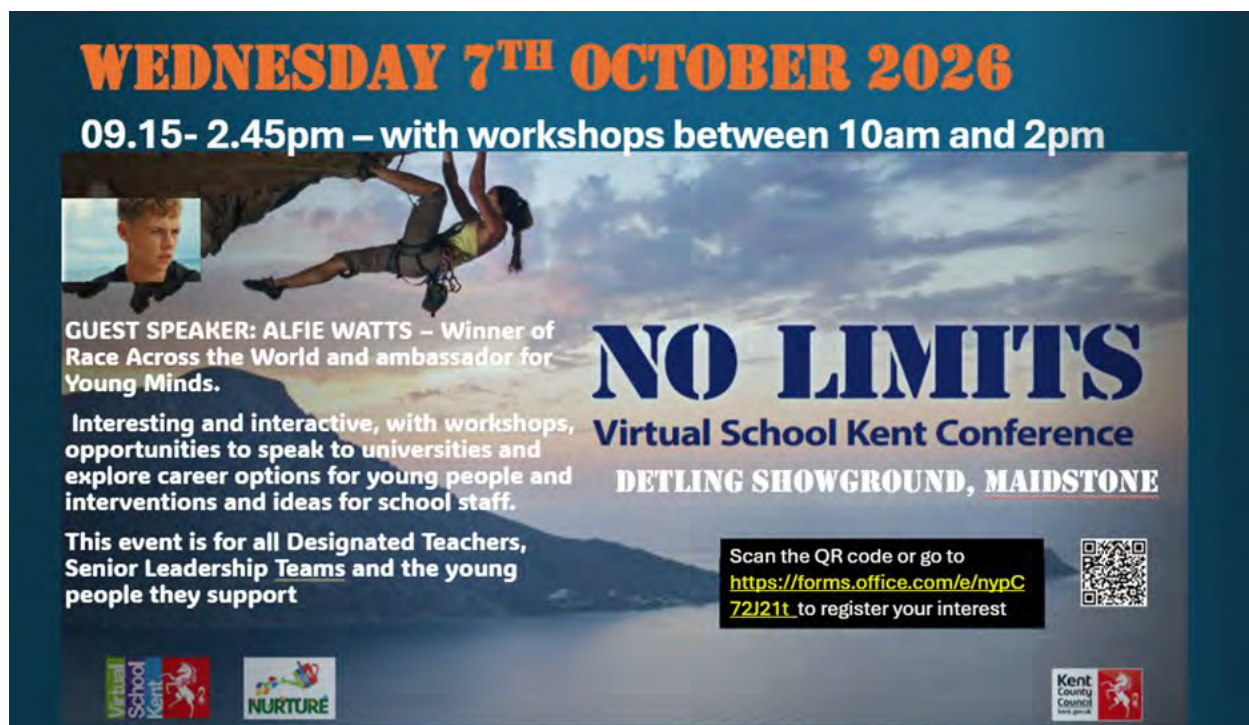
We'd love to hear from you!



How have VSK supported you or your team recently?
Please take a moment to let us know by clicking the link below:

[Feedback Form: Share how VSK supported you](#)





Join Us at the “No Limits” Virtual School Kent Conference!

We’re excited to announce this year’s ***No Limits*** Virtual School Kent Conference on **Wednesday 7th October 2026**, from **10am to 2pm**, at **Detling Showground**.

This inspiring event is designed for **Designated Teachers, Senior Leadership Teams, and the young people they support in Years 8 to 13**. Together, we’ll explore ambition, resilience, and what it truly means to aspire without limits.

We’re also thrilled to welcome our guest speaker, **Alfie Watts – Winner of Race Across the World**, who will be sharing his remarkable journey and the lessons he learned along the way.

Please save the date and start planning which young people you’d like to bring—this is an event they won’t want to miss!

<https://forms.office.com/e/nypC72J21t>

Book Your Place Today!

Click. Book. Secure. *Don't miss out.*

07.10.26	VSK No limits Conference @ Detling showground for Primary/Secondary and College staff. Sign Up form https://forms.office.com/e/nypC72J21t
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Who To Contact



North Kent Assistant Head: Jo Hayes - northvsk@kent.gov.uk

West Kent Assistant Head: Jen Kemp - westvsk@kent.gov.uk

South Kent Assistant Head: Carole Bailey - southvsk@kent.gov.uk

East Kent Assistant Head: Simon Fosse-Collins - eastvsk@kent.gov.uk

Advisory Team Assistant Head: Emma Wills - vskadvisoryteam@kent.gov.uk

Post 16 Assistant Head: Catherine Thompson - 16plusvirtualschoolskent@kent.gov.uk

Post 16 NEET Team Lead: Samantha Perrin - 16plusvirtualschoolskent@kent.gov.uk

Out of County Team Lead: Amanda Ormond - virtualsschoolkentocc@kent.gov.uk



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