

VSK WEEKLY UPDATE

Inspiring Journeys: Celebrating Care-Experienced Role Models

Role models inspire us to dream bigger and strive harder. They embody qualities we admire—integrity, resilience, and compassion—showing us what's possible through their actions. By observing their journeys, we learn valuable lessons about perseverance, decision-making, and overcoming challenges. Role models provide a blueprint for personal growth, guiding us toward our goals while reminding us to stay true to our values. They can ignite confidence, especially when we see parts of ourselves reflected in them. Ultimately, role models don't just shape our ambitions—they help shape our character, encouraging us to become the best versions of ourselves. The link below will take you to a list of inspiring individuals who are all care experienced. It has been compiled by the poet Lemn Sissay who was in care himself and is published by the Children's Commissioner.



Read More here:

[A list of incredible people who were fostered, adopted or in children's homes, compiled by Lemn Sissay - IMO](#)

10 December 2025



**Canterbury
Christ Church
University**

Click:

**[Leaders and Advisors
Conference 2026](#)**

Canterbury Christ Church University are holding their third annual Leaders and Advisors conference, which is also aimed at those involved in Student Support. Taking place on Wednesday 25th February this year they return to their inaugural theme of Compassionate and Sustainable Education. They will explore the compassionate classroom, inspiring young change makers and how to shape your careers programme.

If you have any questions about the conference, please contact:

**sce@canterbury.ac.uk FAO
Megan Mawson.**

Supporting Children in Care at Christmas: A Trauma-Informed Approach

The festive season can be joyful for many, but for children in care, it often brings feelings of loss, anxiety, or isolation. Between 18 December and 3 January, an average of 79 children in care in England are moved to a new home every day, and almost 900 children enter care for the first time—many spending Christmas away from familiar people and surroundings.

This featured guide, [*Christmas in the Classroom: A Trauma-Informed Guide to Supporting Children in Care*](#), offers practical strategies for schools to create safe, inclusive environments during this sensitive time. From predictable routines and flexible participation to inclusive language and empowering choices, these tips help ensure every child feels seen and supported. Small changes in planning and language can make a big difference—because for many children, school is the most consistent and caring place they have.



Managing Christmas Sensory Challenges

The festive season can be exciting—but for children and adults with sensory processing differences, it often brings extra challenges: bright lights, loud music, strong scents, and big changes to routines.

Sensory Integration Education has shared practical tips to help make Christmas more manageable, including:

- ☐ **Planning ahead** with visual aids and social stories
- ☐ **Movement breaks** to stay regulated
- ☐ **Gradual decorating** and creating calm spaces
- ☐ **Sensory packs** for busy public areas

These strategies can help reduce overwhelm and make the holidays enjoyable for everyone.

Read the full guidance [here](#).



TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Click the links to find out more information on courses available currently

[Interventions for improving behaviour and classroom engagement The Theory and Practice of Nurture Groups nurtureuk](#)

Course details: 3 x online training sessions (9am -4pm) and 1 reflective assignment

Dates: 14th & 15th Jan, 25th Feb 26

Cost: FREE - Fully funded by VSK

Upon completion: The training is SCQF accredited and includes an assignment (13 points at level 8)

Available Spaces: **Only 5 spaces left**

[Supporting New Arrivals Who Are New to English \(Online Course\) - The Bell Foundation](#)

Course details: Consisting of 3 modules of online learning over a 4-5weeks period and 2 live webinars

Dates: 13th January through to 14th February

Cost: FREE - Fully funded by VSK

Available Spaces: **Only 7 spaces left**

Booking form - Please complete 1 form per training type request.

[EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FORM - TRAINING SESSIONS – Fill out form](#)

Please contact Michelle.Olden@kent.gov.uk if you have any questions.

Avoid disappointment - Book early!

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.

Relational Approaches to support School Belonging and Attendance: A Guide and Toolkit

Kent County Council
April 2025



[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](#)



Woodpecker Court

Woodpecker Court | Wigmore Lane | Eythorne | Kent | CT15 4BF

Tel: 01304 830958

Email: office@woodpeckercourt.com

Registered Company: 9629678 registered in England and Wales



Woodpecker Court

"Where learning meets the outdoors"

Woodpecker Court invites you to an Open Afternoon

On Tuesday 27th January 2026 - 3.00pm to 5.00pm

Last entry at 4.30pm

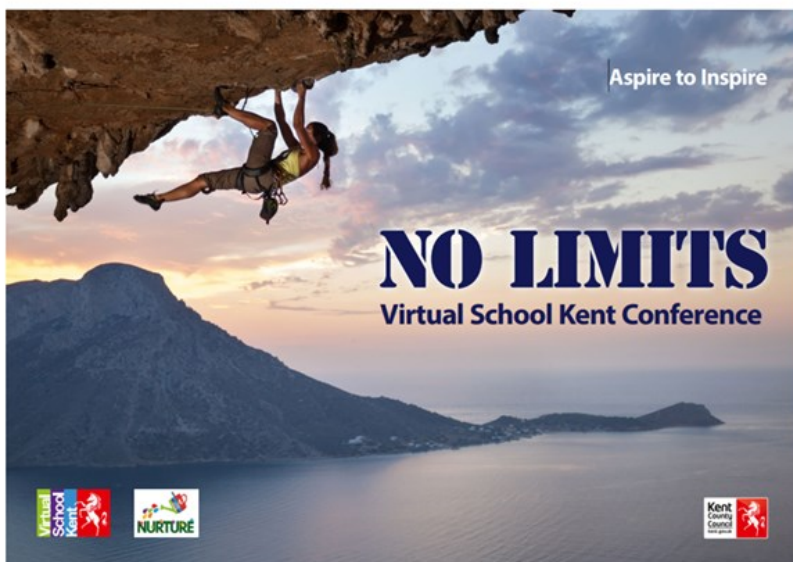
We would like to extend an invitation to schools, year 11, 12 and 13 students and parents to come and see what Woodpecker Court has to offer for young people post 16 with an EHCP.

There will be demonstrations by staff members throughout our beautiful 15 acre site of various courses and activities available to students here.

Please take a look at the video on the attached link by way of an introduction

Relationships, Respect, Resilience

Routine



SAVE THE DATE
Wednesday
7th October
2026
10am til 2pm

DETLING SHOWGROUND

GUEST SPEAKER: ALFIE WATTS –
Winner of Race Across the World

This event is for Designated
Teachers, Senior Leadership
Teams and the young people they
support



DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

21.01.26	Designated Teacher Update 15:45 online
22.01.26	Designated Teacher Update 8am & 12pm online
11.03.26	North Kent Designated Teacher Update 13:30 venue TBC (likely to be Gravesend based)
12.03.26	West Kent Designated Teacher Update 1pm @ TBC
24.03.26	South Kent Designated Teacher Update 13:30 @ Smile Centre Whitfield Primary
24.04.26	East Kent Designated Teacher Forum 13:30
12.05.26	Designated Teacher Update 12:30 & 15:45 online
13.05.26	Designated Teacher Update 8:00 online
30.06.26	East Kent Designated Teacher Forum 13:30
01.07.26	North Kent Designated Teacher Induction 13:30 @ TBC
02.07.26	West Kent Designated Teacher Induction 13:00 @ TBC
07.07.26	South Kent Designated Teacher Induction 13:30 @ Smile Centre Whitfield Primary

Post16 Bulletins

To help young people in Canterbury and Thanet, the Post-16 team has produced two bulletins with details of available support, including college open days and training opportunities:



[Post16 Canterbury and Thanet](#)

[Post16 UASC Canterbury and Thanet](#)

Who To Contact



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

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



Instagram [participation team](#)



Facebook [VSK Participation Team](#)



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[Home | Virtual School Kent \(lea.kent.sch.uk\)](http://lea.kent.sch.uk)

<http://kentcarestown.lea.kent.sch.uk>