



Norfolk County Council



VSSS leadership arrangement

I am writing to share that, following the decision by Kate Stocks to reduce her working commitment in September of this year, Delyth Crook has been appointed to work alongside Kate as Head of Virtual School Sensory Support. This secondment is initially for one year. We are very pleased to have a clear leadership arrangement in place and look forward to seeing VSSS develop under the new arrangement.

Andy Tovell, Assistant Director
Inclusion and Opportunity Service



Happy Easter

As the days are lengthening and becoming a little warmer, I'm pleased to let you know that VSSS staff are planning a range of activities to enable children and young people to meet and share time together. Staff will share any information about events which may be of interest to your particular child or young person.

As I have written previously, we are always keen to recruit parents/carers to our Governance Group. If you are interested in joining us, or if you want to contact me for any other reason, please email me at kate.stocks@norfolk.gov.uk.

I hope you all have a healthy and happy break between the end of the Spring Term and the start of the Summer Term.

Regards, Kate



Mental Health Corner

With more children nowadays having televisions in their bedrooms, one of the biggest risks to their mental health is catching snippets of information from news broadcasts. At this awful time when Russia and Ukraine are at war this is particularly pertinent. CBBC Newsround offer advice directed at children who are worried by what they have seen. Please follow this link to have a look for yourselves and share it with your children if you feel it is appropriate.

[Advice if you're upset by the news - CBBC Newsround](#)

Save the Children offer this advice to parents who may be talking to children and young people about what is happening in the world today.

1. Make time and listen when your child wants to talk

Give children the space to tell you what they know, how they feel, and to ask you questions. They may have formed a completely different picture of the situation than you have. Take the time to listen to what they think, and what they have seen or heard.

2. Tailor the conversation to the child

Be mindful of the child's age as you approach the conversation with them. Young children may not understand what conflict or war means and require an age-appropriate explanation. Be careful not to over-explain the situation or go into too much detail as this can make children unnecessarily anxious. Younger children may be satisfied just by understanding that sometimes

countries fight. Older children are more likely to understand what war means but may still benefit from talking with you about the situation. In fact, older children will often be more concerned by talk of war because they tend to understand the dangers better than younger children do.

3. Validate their feelings

It is important that children feel supported in the conversation. They should not feel judged or have their concerns dismissed. When children have the chance to have an open and honest conversation about things upsetting them, it can create a sense of relief and safety.

4. Reassure them that adults all over the world are working hard to resolve this

Remind children that this is not their problem to solve. They should not feel guilty about playing, seeing their friends, and doing the things that make them happy. Stay calm when you approach the conversation. Children often copy the sentiments of their caregivers—if you are uneasy about the situation, chances are your child will be uneasy as well.

5. Give them a practical way to help

Support children who want to help. Children who have the opportunity to help those affected by the conflict can feel like they are part of the solution. Children can create fundraisers, send letters to local decision-makers, or create drawings calling for peace.



Tactile paving and what it means

When we think about how our children and young people with vision impairments use touch to help them make sense of the world, we generally think about what they feel with their fingers and hands. However, what they feel under foot can help them understand where they are and identify hazards. Have you ever noticed different types of tactile paving? Well, here are the most common ones you'll find and what they mean:

Blister paving – is used at controlled crossings such as zebra and pelican crossings. It should be in the shape of an “L” which stretches across the pavement ensuring a child or young person with vision impairment can detect it. Blister paving can also be used where there is a dropped kerb. However, a dropped kerb with blister paving isn't always the safest place to cross!

Corduroy paving – tells us there is a hazard ahead and can be used for steps, ramps and level crossings. A thinner type of corduroy paving is found in front of bus stops next to the raised kerb edge.

Offset blister paving – is normally found on train platforms.

For further information, have a look at this video on the RNIB website:

<https://www.rnib.org.uk/rnibconnect/welfare-and-money/tom-scott-tactile-paving>

And next time you're out, see how many different types of tactile paving you can find and explore how it feels under foot!



Parent input re independent dressing skills

Following our previous newsletter in which we addressed how to promote independent dressing skills in vision impaired people, the parent of a young vision impaired adult contacted me to share her experience of encouraging her daughter to learn to dress independently. This is what she told us:

My daughter is severely visually impaired and has low fine motor skills as she also has autism. I always used to lay her clothes on the bed in the same order and position. Jumper, trousers and t-shirt to her left. Vest, pants and socks to her right. I always laid them upside down and upper edges to the edge of the bed so that as she picked them up, they were in the right position to put them on.

This was from a young age, and until she could work things out for herself, I only gave a minimal amount of help if asked. It's important to step back and let them work it out.

Clues for clothing: Ticket goes at the back of top or side of pants or trousers, bow at front of pants, I never interfere with how she wears socks! The right hand one is always worn inside out!

She dresses and undresses herself; I've never had to get things with bigger buttons or easy zips because she has determination and I encourage and have stepped back and watched her learn to overcome these hurdles for herself. We do sometimes try to make things too easy when they are more accomplished by having endeavoured and succeeded.

She puts on her own shoes and boots; laces were the only thing too hard to do but she does everything else.

The original article appeared in our February 2021 newsletter.



Parent/carer vision impaired toddler and baby group

Meeting on the second and last Wednesday of every month between 10:30am and 12:00pm.

Bradbury Activity Centre

Vision Norfolk

Beckham Place

Edward Street

Norwich

NR3 3DZ

For more info please contact Vision Norfolk on 01603 561242 or e-mail cypf@visionnorfolk.org.uk