



**Attachment Aware
Schools Award**



AfC Virtual School
'Together we can achieve!'

Project guide for Bronze, Silver and Gold Attachment Aware School's Award

'AASA was a whole school journey, All stakeholders were involved and AfC Staff were very supportive and knowledgeable.'

An introduction

Why Attachment Aware schools?

There is growing evidence in international research of the effectiveness of whole-school attachment-based strategies being effective for care-experienced children, and all children, in decreasing sanctions, exclusions and overall difficulties, whilst improving pupil and adult outcomes (Parker et al, 2016; Rose et al, 2019). AfC Virtual School believes that all schools should be attachment aware and trauma informed, to ensure they are well placed to support the needs of our most vulnerable children and young people. Our participant schools have noticed significant reduction in suspensions and absence and report that the school narrative has changed.

What is the AfC Virtual School's Attachment Aware School's Award (AASA)?

AfC Virtual School's Attachment Aware School's Award is designed to support schools to identify an area of attachment aware and trauma informed practice they would like to develop across their whole school throughout their time on the project.

The aim of the AfC Virtual School's Attachment Aware Schools' Award is for schools to go on an individual journey. Schools are supported by coaches from AfC educational psychology services and AfC Virtual School. Settings develop their practice as an attachment aware school, where change to whole school practice is observable and measurable.

The full programme of support offered by AfC Virtual School now spans across three years as we recognise that the culture shift to becoming an Attachment Aware school and community is gradual. The learning and embedding of strategies and practice is something that must continue to be worked on and kept high on the agenda for schools so that we provide an inclusive and trauma-informed education for all students.



Bronze Award AASA

Summary

In the first year of your involvement with the AASA you will notice that:

- through the support of an AfC Virtual School Coach, you lead your school in developing attachment aware and trauma informed practice in your school or education provision
- there will be improved outcomes for children with a social worker and all young people whose lives have been impacted by attachment and trauma based needs.

Autumn term

Course content

- Attend the launch event In October
- Attendance of up to three designated teacher (DT) or designated school lead (DSL) forums (six to be attended over the year)
- Staff undertake an audit on current trauma informed environments
- An internal audit of current whole school 'attachment aware' practice
- Use information from the audit to identify, alongside the senior leadership team and your coach, where there is 'room for development' or a current need in your school
- Identifying a whole school 'attachment aware' change project and a clear goal for what you hope to achieve
- Developing an action plan, alongside your coach, to support you to reach this goal
- Carrying out this action plan and embedding change across the school across the academic year
- Evaluation of impact

Spring term

Course content

- Attendance of up to three DT or DSL forums (six to be attended over the year)
- Attend coaching session 2: supporting the development of training.
- Delivering two whole school training sessions, alongside your coach: an introduction to attachment and trauma and an introduction emotion coaching

Summer term

Course content

- Attendance of up to three DT or DSL forums (six to be attended over the year)
- Coaching session 3: evidence of impact
- End of year audit with senior level teachers (SLT) and staff to measure impact
- Attendance (mandatory) of the Celebration of Achievement Event in July to share your progress with peers and receive the Bronze Award to celebrate achievement
- End of year evaluation of AASA project

Silver Award AASA - 'Embed and Empower'

Summary

In the second year of your involvement with the AASA you will notice that:

- the locus of control shifts from the local authority to within the school.
- staff understand that a trauma informed environment is the first step in achieving improved outcomes
- schools extend the skills of their staff so that emotion coaching becomes a common language throughout the community
- schools share their learning on the AASA with pupils
- the narrative of your school is around behaviour as communication
- wider staff are more confident in attachment aware style. This helps improve readiness for learning. A headteacher in Kingston stated:

*'The AASA fits in with quality first teaching.
It's about basic principles of how children learn'*

- staff are able to question and reflect on what 'fit for learning' means and understand that readiness to learn underpins everything

Autumn term

Course content

- Attend the launch event in October
- Attendance of up to three DT or DSL forums (six to be attended over the year)
- Coaching Session 1 - Planning the Whole school Change Project
- Whole School Development: Each school will have their own priorities based on their Summer Bronze AASA audit.

Schools will be embedding a range of the following:

- 'behaviour' policy becomes a 'relational' policy
- zones of regulation in all classrooms/playground
- governors training on trauma and attachment
- safe place to be on-site alternative provision
- therapeutic space to be developed
- student body - trained in attachment and emotion coaching
- establishing 'pupil attachment advocates' as a pupil leadership or voice initiative
- key person, adult or safe person to be with clearly identified for children and students

Spring term

Course content

- Attendance of up to three DT or DSL forums (six to be attended over the year)
- Coaching session 2: planning of DT or DSL led whole school training in attachment and emotion coaching
- DTs and DSLs deliver the staff training with any follow-on activities required

Schools will be embedding a range of the following:

- 'behaviour' policy becomes a 'relational' policy
- zones of regulation in all classrooms and playgrounds
- governors training on trauma and attachment
- safe place to be on-site alternative provision
- therapeutic space to be developed
- student body - trained in attachment and emotion coaching
- establishing 'pupil attachment advocates' as a pupil leadership or voice initiative
- key person, adult or safe person to be with clearly identified for children and students

Summer term

Course content

- Attendance of up to three DT or DSL forums (six to be attended over the year)
- Coaching session 3: evidence of impact
- End of year audit with SLT and staff to measure impact
- Completion of one page summary
- Attendance (mandatory) of the Celebration of Achievement Event in July to share your progress with peers and receive the Silver Award to celebrate achievement
- End of year evaluation of AASA project

**We are proud to be
an Attachment Aware School**

**“Putting relationships at
the heart of our community.”**



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Gold Award AASA - 'Rippling Out'

Summary

In this third year of your involvement with the AASA, you will notice that colleagues will be feeling confident and committed to the Attachment Aware Schools approach. The Gold Award offers an opportunity to ripple out your knowledge to other settings and to your parent community. You will notice that:

- staff can confidently state your school is an Attachment Aware School
- your school becomes a beacon for change in your community
- through interventions with families you are supporting attachment aware homes

Autumn term

Course content

- Attend the launch event In October
- Attendance of up to three DT or DSL forums (six to be attended over the year)
- Reflect on the audit from the summer term of the Silver Award and decide areas for development
- Coaching session: planning the whole school change project to ripple out to parents and become beacons on attachment to another identified local school or setting.
- Lead the identified whole school change project

Spring term

Course content

- Attendance of up to three DT or DSL forums (six to be attended over the year)
- Coaching session 2: discussion of community training
- Train an identified local school, club or setting as part of becoming an Attachment Beacon in your area
- Parenting programme is introduced and developed which may include...
 - training parents in emotion coaching and attachment
 - cook and eat 'parents and children' relationship building: modelling emotion coaching techniques as part of the session
 - gardening together club: building community and shared narrative through gardening together.
 - information technology workshops and navigating the digital world: skills development to support family employment opportunities.
 - creche facility during parent learning sessions to remove barriers to attendance
 - love of learning eg, ESOL or GCSE English and maths, interview skills club to support work related opportunities for families

- Co-creating approach with parents and children to develop AASA policies, such as relationship behaviour policy
- Developing a AASA resource bank for parents of the adopter hub for previously looked after children
- Careers, finance, legal advice workshop for parents
Eg, Saturday mornings supporting families to improve their stability
- International evening: children and families celebrate diversity through the arts
- Community support programme: JobCentre, housing, legal advice

Summer term

Course content

- Attendance of up to three DT or DSL forums
- End of year attachment audit to measure impact
- Coaching session 3: impact of whole school change project, stocktaking where we have travelled over the three years, including impact on attendance, suspensions, behaviour incidents, parental engagement, EHCPs, outcomes...
- Attendance (mandatory) of the Celebration of Achievement Event in July to share your progress with peers and receive the Gold Award to celebrate achievement
- End of Gold Award evaluation

AASA Platinum Project Board

Summary

The Platinum Project Board provides a network of school AASA leaders who are keeping attachment and trauma aware practice at the heart of their school culture and community.

Membership is a two year tenure for schools who have completed the AASA Gold Award. The aim of the board is to support colleagues in sustaining and maintaining relational practice, keeping attachment aware strategies high on the agenda.

There are three meetings a year, one a term. Members share research, initiatives and projects that promote the embedding and continued development of attachment aware and trauma informed communities.

The Platinum Project Board serves as a platform for networking, continued professional development and support across schools with the objective of ensuring that schools remain committed to the ongoing AAS journey.

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