

# Bexley Voice for Special Needs Children



## Newsletter ~ November / December 2015

Issue 24

### Inside this issue:

- Bexley Voice September AGM
- Membership Card Scheme & Offers for BV Members
- Free Workshops on Positive Outcomes for EHC Plans
- S.A.F.E School For Bexley
- Local Offer Event
- School Visit Programme
- Great Gadgets!
- Local Support

### BEXLEY VOICE WELCOME

#### FREE PARENT & CARER EHC PLAN WORKSHOPS

Bexley Voice are organising two 'EHC Plans and Positive Outcomes' workshops for parents and carers of children and young people with SEND. They take place on the 17th (First Timers) and the 24th (Conversions) of November at North Cray Community Centre. Thanks to all our members who pre-registered their interest, both workshops are now almost fully booked. We are also holding a waiting list in case of cancellations and are planning two more workshops in the New Year.

#### TO REGISTER YOUR INTEREST:

Visit the Bexley Voice website and complete the on-line enquiry form or email [rachel.bexleyvoice@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:rachel.bexleyvoice@hotmail.co.uk)

#### BEXLEY VOICE MEMBERSHIP

Are you a parent or carer of a child/young person (age 0-25) living in Bexley? Or are you a professional working with SEND in Bexley? If so, you can become a member and join our 'voice'. Let us keep you up to date on local and national issues, consultations and events. Membership is **free**, just complete the on-line form on our website today.

We are delighted to announce our new membership card scheme, with special offers and discounts from local organisations. Please see the back page for more details.



#### BEXLEY VOICE FACEBOOK GROUP

Come and join those who understand the issues that parents and carers may face whilst caring for a child with special needs. Our 'secret' group is growing fast and we now have 292 parent and carer only members sharing information, ideas and offering support on many issues.

To ensure confidentiality, you must be an existing member of Bexley Voice to join our very active group. Please call our helpline, send us an email request or complete the FB group request form on our website.



### BEXLEY VOICE AGM 2015

Bexley Voice held our AGM on the 24th of September. The meeting was an opportunity for to share what we have been doing over the last year, celebrate our achievements and outline our plans for the coming 12 months. Thanks go to our chair, Claire Watts who gave a wonderful speech and reminded us of all the support that we have given to parents and carers over the last year. She gave thanks to the Management Committee and volunteers who work hard behind the scenes to ensure the smooth running of the group.

We were delighted to welcome the Mayor of Bexley, Councillor Sybil Camsey who gave a speech about her work with special needs children and read an emotional poem which lead to a few tears! We introduced Yvonne Linton to our members who will be offering the new IASS support service for parents. The formal business of voting in the new Management Committee was completed and we welcomed our new trustee, Claire Brett. Thanks again to everyone who came. We all agree it was a very successful AGM.



### Shop online and raise money!



If you shop online there's now an easy and free way for you to help raise valuable funds for

**Bexley Voice**

and it won't cost you anything!

Visit our website for more details.



## LOCAL SUPPORT FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

### CARERS WELLBEING HUB

A group of local charities have formed a partnership, the Carers Wellbeing Hub, with support from the London Borough of Bexley, to try and ensure that Carers are supported in their caring role. Led by Carers Support (Bexley), the partnership would particularly like to hear from Carers of adults (aged 18+) who do not currently receive any outside help or support in looking after the person they care for. Please contact Carers' Support (Bexley) on 020 8302 8011 or email them at: [info@carerssupport.org](mailto:info@carerssupport.org).



### THE LIGHTHOUSE GROUP

holds a coffee morning at St Pauls Church in Northumberland Heath, to support parents and carers of disabled children and young people with special educational needs, in partnership with Bexley SNAP. Parents chat, support each other and exchange news and information on facilities and support available for their children and simply relax over a coffee and cake.



For information contact the Church Administrator on: 01322 336505 or email: [adminstpaulnh@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:adminstpaulnh@hotmail.co.uk)

### NEW ADHD SUPPORT GROUP FOR PARENTS & CARERS ~ ADHD AND ME

Due to the apparent lack of support for parents and carers of a child with ADHD in Bexley, a local mum, with initial support from Bexley NAS, has started a new support group to allow parents to get together, support each other and share ideas.

They meet at North Cray Community Centre, North Cray, Sidcup. Please call for dates.

Michelle Holloway  
Tel: 07576 884579

Email: [adhdandme@icloud.com](mailto:adhdandme@icloud.com)



## 'GADGETS' - Send us your top gadgets ideas!

We are continuously asked by members of our Facebook group for various gadgets and accessories to help our children and young people in different ways. Sometimes the simplest of things can make such a big difference. Please note that Bexley Voice does not endorse any product, but are simply passing on recommendations from our members. If you have any suggestions, please email us so we can share ideas with our members in future newsletters.

### Recommended by Claire W~

#### Safety Tracker Alarm

If you have a child who has a habit of wandering off, then a child tracker could be the ideal solution.

XuMarket GPS Child/Personal Tracker, has a real-time mini GPS and support SOS function.

It's 'Fast Call' feature reports its location to an authorised phone.

Available from XU Market™ via Amazon.



### Recommended by Rachel M~

#### Reading & Scanning Portable Pen

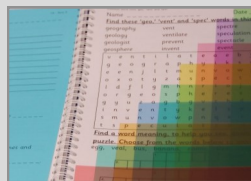
The Reading Pen enables the user to become an independent reader, by scanning over the typed word the reader instantly hears it aloud via the built in speaker or attached headphones. The portable pen is especially designed for people with reading difficulties such as Dyslexia.



#### Coloured Overlays

These A4 sized coloured overlays with a matt and gloss side, are suitable for those students with Dyslexia and visual stress issues.

10 different colours per pack to find what colour works best for your child.



Supplier: Dyslexia Action  
Tel: 01784 222339

Web: [www.dyslexiaactionshop.co.uk](http://www.dyslexiaactionshop.co.uk)

### Recommended by Jenny P~

#### Sit On Wedge

This works like an air cushion, but is particularly comfortable for floor sitting as it moves the pelvis into the natural position. For this reason, it is particularly good for children with rounded shoulders or lower muscle tone, as the seat helps the child's body sit in a good postural position and it has a flat and a bumpy side.



#### Grotto Pencil Grip

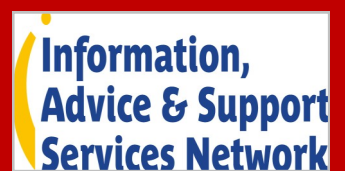
This excellent pencil grip makes it virtually impossible to use incorrectly with a partition and covered finger tips. Designed for use with either hand, it seems destined to become the favourite pencil grip of many.



Supplier: TTS Educational Resources  
Tel: 0800 138 1370

Web: [www.tts-group.co.uk/shops](http://www.tts-group.co.uk/shops)

The IASS (Information, Advice and Support Service) for Bexley has new contact information. If you need support and advice regarding education issues for your SEND Child or young person (age 0-25) and would like to book an appointment, please email [Yvonne.linton@bexley.gov.uk](mailto:Yvonne.linton@bexley.gov.uk). At the time of going to print, we do not yet have a new contact telephone number, so please visit our website for further updates!



## SCHOOL VISIT PROGRAMME

Bexley Voice Committee members and volunteers have recently visited many primary schools in Bexley. We are always made very welcome and enjoy meeting the staff and the parents of special needs children. We have supported many parents and carers, from providing information on many issues to being a 'listening ear'. The visits are an informal opportunity to chat to parents over a cup of tea, giving them information on issues such as the SEND Reforms and EHC Plans.

We also recommended other local groups such as Bexley NAS, Bexley SNAP, Bexley Beavers Swimming Club and Animal Days Out.

Our school visit programme is taking bookings for the New Year, so if your child's school has not yet had an informative visit from the Bexley Voice team, please get in touch, we would love to hear from you soon.

Encourage your SENCO or Head Teacher to book a BV visit soon!

Please complete the request form on our website or email Janet Peart, (BV school visit co-ordinator) at [janetpeart.bexleyvoice@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:janetpeart.bexleyvoice@hotmail.co.uk).

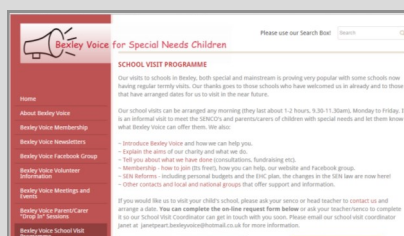
### School Visit feedback from parents and carers:

"It was really interesting and very informative. I was given lots of useful information about local clubs which I have followed up on".

"I think that there is not enough support for parents so these kinds of groups are important. There's a lot of information that parents don't know about for example certain legal rights for parents and educational issues".

"It was good to meet with some other mums having the same issues as me, we shared some ideas and hope to meet for coffee on a regular basis".

"Before today, I had no idea about the Emergency Carers Card, Radar Key or the Carers Cinema Card. I am so pleased about finding out and will be ordering them soon".



### SCHOOL STAFF VISIT

We are opening up our School Visit Programmes to go into schools but to speak to the staff. We believe school staff, as well as parents, would benefit from the information we provide which would enable them to advise parents in these areas and sign post them appropriately, strengthening the school and parent partnership.

This would be a free service and can either be part of an Inset Day or staff meeting. The presentation can be tailored to the needs of the school and time available (generally between 1-2 hours). The content of a Staff School Visit would be very similar to the information we share at our Parent's School Visit meetings. So find out if your school would like us to come in and speak to them or if they require any further information please ask them to contact me at [janetpeart.bexleyvoice@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:janetpeart.bexleyvoice@hotmail.co.uk).



## S.A.F.E SCHOOL FOR BEXLEY

### What is S.A.F.E?

Social Arts for Education (S.A.F.E. Bexley) is an alternative education study centre for vulnerable children who cannot cope in mainstream school due to bullying and/or autism and other related conditions.

S.A.F.E. teach children from the age of 8 up to 16, depending on tutor availability. Students often come to us with additional needs due to autism, anxiety disorders, fear of social situations and extreme shyness.

Our teaching methods and environment in which we teach reflect the SPELL framework constructed by the National Autistic Society. The framework, which stands for Structure, Positive Expectations and Attitudes,

Empathy, Low Arousal and Links, encourages an environment where children are at ease, understood by others and are open to a variation of life opportunities.

At present, S.A.F.E. supports children and their families by providing small group and 1:1 tutoring in a safe and specialised learning environment. Children attending S.A.F.E. follow a care plan that they, their families and staff at S.A.F.E. feel would enhance their academic, social, physical and communicative lives.



Our building in Eltham comprises of three main rooms. A back room which is used for art, drama, sensory circuits and yoga, a basement which is used for music tuition, code writing and general play, and a front room which is used for geography, literacy, maths and science. We also boast an adjoining laboratory, single wc's, utility room and large spacious kitchen.

### Contact Info:

Social Arts for Education  
253 Eltham High Street  
London, SE9 1TY  
Email: [info@safeschoolbexley.co.uk](mailto:info@safeschoolbexley.co.uk)  
Visit the website for more information:  
[www.safeschoolbexley.co.uk](http://www.safeschoolbexley.co.uk)  
S.A.F.E is a Registered Charity.

The Mellow Mondays Group have a new name and a new venue! Now known as 'Additional Needs Group', the group meets every Wednesday (term time only) at Church of the Cross, Lensbury Way, Erith. The play and support session for children under 5 with additional needs runs from 1.00 - 2.30pm. Siblings are very welcome.

For more information, please contact Greenmead Children's Centre on: Tel; 0208 320 1618

**Sure Start  
Children's  
Centres**



**Next Issue:**

School Visit Staff Programme

Meetings and Consultations

Free Workshops on Positive Outcomes for EHC Plans

Local News

Membership Card New Year Offers

Gadgets For Kids ~ Part 2

**NEW MEMBERSHIP CARD SCHEME**

Bexley Voice are delighted to introduce our new membership card scheme. The card enables Bexley Voice to share offers from local organisations.

Membership of BV is **FREE** of charge and is available for families living in Bexley, who have a child or young person (under 25) with special/additional needs or disabilities. Membership forms can be downloaded or completed online via our website, so if you are not yet a parent/carer member of BV complete a membership form today!

**How to apply:**

Complete the application form on our website to request your card. Please allow 14-21 days for processing.

**Membership Card Offers!**

Our introductory offers are from Michelle at Heart In Me Reiki Therapy and The Salt Cave Therapy Rooms in Bexleyheath. Please visit our website for more details and membership offers. (Bexley Voice does not endorse any product or service offering member discounts.)



Terms and Conditions will apply and can be found in full on the Bexley Voice website.

- ◆ Only one card will be issued per family.
- ◆ Your membership details must be up to date.
- ◆ The first card will be issued free of charge. A charge will be made for any replacement cards required.
- ◆ These offers are subject to availability and may be time/quantity limited.
- ◆ Cost implications mean that you will need to collect your card from a Bexley Voice meeting, event or committee member.

Please visit our website for more information and apply for your card today!

**CONTACT US**

**VOLUNTEER HELPLINE:**

**07512 409936**

**EMAIL:**

**bexleyvoice@hotmail.co.uk**

**WEBSITE:**

**www.bexleyvoice.org.uk**

**REGISTERED CHARITY**

**NUMBER: 1142306**

Printed by **Colour Creatives**

[www.colourcreatives.com](http://www.colourcreatives.com)

5 St Johns parade, High Street, Sidcup, Kent DA14 6ES

Tel: 020 8309 2909

**BEXLEYS LOCAL OFFER**

Bexley Voice committee members recently co-hosted with the Local Authority, a consultation feedback event to review the development of Bexley's Local Offer Website.

The Local Offer should provide a 'one stop shop' for information and services that support children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities aged 0-25 years old.

Thank you to over 50 parents, carers and their families who came along to the event and gave their valuable feedback on search terms, local information and layout. Parents also had the opportunity to gain information and advice from the 20 local service providers who came along to support the event.



The hope is that the new layout is more user friendly and the development team are keen to know if they have the right content in there. The site is very much a work in progress and changes can and will be made in response to our input – they will welcome good feedback as much as constructive criticism. It would be great if each Bexley Voice member could think of at least one question that you need the answer for, or may already know, and go into the Local Offer site and see if you can find an answer.

Whatever the outcome – if you could then use the feedback email to let the developers know what you think. Thank you!

