

Quick Guide to

The Virtual School

What is the Virtual School?

The Virtual School for children in care is not a teaching institution. It is “a model by which the local authority provides services, support and a constructive challenge to those providing the services for the education of children in care and advice and guidance to parents of children previously in care. It works closely and in partnership with Schools, Social Care and Health, to insure there is a holistic and comprehensive approach to the support of children in care in all areas of their lives.

What are the aims of the Virtual School?

Our overall aim is to help produce better educational outcomes, and enhanced personal and social development, so that our children in care have better life chances.

The work of the Virtual School includes:

- Ensuring all children in care have a good quality up to date Personal Education Plan (PEP)
- Ensuring that the Pupil Premium Plus is used effectively to improve educational outcome
- Ensuring children in care attend a good school
- Providing training to schools, social care staff, foster carers and other professionals in relation to the education of children in care
- Working closely with schools, social workers, foster carers and other professionals to ensure children in care are achieving academically, making at least expected progress, have good attendance and are not excluded
- Ensuring all our care leavers are in appropriate education, employment or training

What do we do?

We:

- Provide expert advice and guidance in relation to the education of children in care
- Track and monitor the attainment, progress, attendance and exclusions of children in care to identify and implement any support and interventions needed to ensure our children are reaching their full potential
- Provide access to enrichment projects to improve attainment and increase participation.
- Provide support to designated teachers to enhance their knowledge and understanding of the part they play in supporting children in care.
- Attend at the first PEP meeting of any child aged 2-18 both in and outside of Walsall to ensure early identification of needs
- Manage, distribute and monitor the pupil premium plus in partnership with schools
- Offer direct access to Educational Psychology, Speech and Language and CAMHS advice and support for children in care
- Support social workers and carers in identifying an appropriate school place

For more information:

Please contact Lorraine Thompson – (the Virtual School Lead) 01922 652837 lorraine.thompson@walsall.gov.uk

If you are working with a child in care or care leaver and would like to discuss their education, either to raise concerns or request additional support, please contact the Virtual School Team. (01922 6562816)