Cambridgeshire Virtual School Local Offer Information Report

Vision

All care-experienced children and young people (CYP) will have the opportunities, experience and support to enable them to learn, aspire, thrive and achieve their maximum potential.

Guiding Principles

- The voice of the CYP is of paramount importance
- All care-experienced CYP will receive high quality education which is inspiring and challenging, resulting in the best possible outcomes, thus closing the educational gap between these CYP and those who are not care experienced
- Every care-experienced CYP will have a positive educational experience which promotes social and emotional learning and wellbeing alongside academic success to ensure readiness for adulthood.
- Every school and setting will be empowered and able to lead the changes necessary to enable our children to thrive
- The Virtual School will meet the needs of care-experienced CYP through effective liaison and integrated work with all key partners

Context

Since April 2014, every local authority in England has had to appoint at least one person to fulfil the local authority's statutory duty to promote the educational achievement of its children in care, wherever they live or are educated. This person is called the Head of the Virtual School. Within Cambridgeshire we have a team of education professionals that supports the Virtual School Head in fulfilling these responsibilities.

Cambridgeshire Virtual School support children and young people between the ages of 2 and 18.

The statutory remit of the Virtual School expanded in September 2018 to include information and advice for children previously in care including those who have been adopted from care and those under special guardianship and child arrangement orders. Cambridgeshire Virtual School are responsible for previously looked after CYP attending a Cambridgeshire school or education setting.
Priorities

To promote high aspirations and raise achievement through challenge, support and targeted intervention. This is fulfilled by:

- Supporting care experienced CYP to access and achieve in education and training
- Promoting care experienced CYP’s need to access high quality support, which meets their needs in a timely way
- Working closely with all those involved in providing education to ensure they understand the issues and challenges facing our CYP and their role in working together to respond to and overcome them;
- Working to reduce the challenges resulting from changes of care placement or school
- Challenging barriers to engagement and good attendance
- Promoting equality and equity

Offer

1. Child-centred
   - To ensure the voice of the CYP is paramount within the Personal Education Plan (PEP) process
   - To monitor the attainment and progress of all CYP in care and provide challenge and support in order to maximise this
   - To manage and distribute the pupil premium grant and ensure that it is used effectively by schools and settings in order that CYP in care achieve specific outcomes as detailed in their PEPs
   - To advocate on behalf of the CYP where it is felt that the school is not fully meeting individual needs
   - To provide information and advice to ensure children previously in care achieve their maximum potential in education

2. School Improvement (including EY and post-16 settings)
   - To support schools, specifically designated teachers, to carry out statutory duties including completion of the Personal Education Plan (PEP)
   - To support EY and post-16 settings, specifically designated persons, to carry out statutory duties including completion of the Personal Education Plan (PEP)
   - To deliver training which addresses particular needs of care experienced CYP including children previously in care, attachment, trauma and foetal alcohol spectrum disorders
   - To promote aspirational attitudes when setting targets and outcomes for care experienced CYP
   - To promote culture, policy and practice within schools which take account of the specific vulnerabilities of care experienced CYP

3. Access and Inclusion
   - To hold a detailed knowledge of individual schools and settings in order to secure the best provision
   - To have knowledge of services within and beyond the LA in order to access additional support where appropriate
   - To support the admissions process in order to avoid drift
   - To challenge attendance issues and support interventions to improve outcomes
   - To monitor exclusions and CYP not accessing full time education to challenge and improve outcomes
4. Key Partners
   • To deliver training to social workers, foster carers and other key partners to promote the educational needs of care experienced CYP
   • To work in partnership with other key partners, within and beyond the LA, to secure the best possible educational outcomes

If you would like to find out more about the Virtual School or you have any questions or concerns please contact:

The Virtual School - 01223 699883

Email: virtualschool@Cambridgeshire.gov.uk or visit the Virtual School website:

https://www.cambslearntogether.co.uk/school-improvement/cambridgeshires-virtual-school-for-looked-after-children

This document is published by the Cambridgeshire Virtual School and includes information on the support available to all Cambridgeshire children in care, including those with SEND. It fulfils the requirements of the SEND Information Report.

To find out more about Cambridgeshire's local offer of services and provisions for children and young people with SEND visit:


How does the Virtual School know if children and young people need extra help and what should I do if I think the child I look after may have special educational needs (SEND)?

The Virtual School knows every child or young person well by:
   • Monitoring and quality assuring every Personal Education Plans (PEP)
   • Collecting and analysing attainment and progress data for every child and young person in school
   • Talking to children, schools, social care teams and carers
   • Monitoring attendance

Through our role we will support and challenge the school to take your concerns seriously and progress any additional support that may be required.
If you are concerned about the progress of the child you are looking after, or you think they may have SEND, you should talk to the designated teacher at your child/young person’s school or other education setting. You can also contact the Virtual School.

**How will the Virtual School support the child or young person I look after?**

The Virtual School will:

- Ensure the educational achievement of children in care in Cambridgeshire is seen as a priority by everyone who has responsibilities for promoting their welfare
- Create a culture of high aspirations
- Implement pupil premium plus arrangements *(A copy of the Cambridgeshire Pupil Premium Plus policy is available online at https://www.cambslearntogether.co.uk/school-improvement/cambridgeshires-virtual-school-for-looked-after-children/peps-and-pp)*
- Advise on appropriate additional provision or interventions by the school or other services to promote educational achievement
- Work with the designated teacher at the child or young person’s school or other education setting to make sure appropriate provision is in place
- Support transfer between phases of education or in preparation for adulthood and independence. Or simply support times of transition.
- Monitor the educational progress of the children and young people
- Deliver training

If a young person is Post 16, the Post 16 Personal Adviser will:

- Give direct support to young people to access further education, employment, training and university
- Provide advice and guidance to social care teams and young people on further education, employment, training and university

If a child is in Early Years, the Virtual School Early Years Adviser will:

- Undertake all the roles associated with advisers working in the compulsory school years.

If a child is Previously in Care, the Virtual School Adviser will:

- Provide advice and information to help the parent or guardian advocate for the child.

**How will I know how the child in my care is doing and be involved in discussions and planning for their education?**
In addition to school consultation evenings and normal reporting arrangements there will be other opportunities to discuss a child or young person’s progress at a termly PEP meeting. You, as the carer, should be invited to these meetings.

These may be linked to another education focused meeting such as a SEN review, EHC Plan or Child in Care review.

How will the educational provision be matched to the needs of the child I look after?

The Virtual School ensures that all termly PEPs are linked directly to the child/young persons’ education progress. Targets and interventions are discussed and agreed. Interventions are then reviewed at the next meeting and adjusted according to progress achieved.

Targets, interventions and progress are all taken into account when allocating the Pupil Premium Plus fund which supports school interventions.

What support will there be for the wellbeing of children in care?

We support the wellbeing of all our children and young people by:

- Listening to the views, wishes and feelings of children and young people through the pupil voice element of their PEP meetings.
- Reviewing the social and emotional overview section of the PEP, where schools are encouraged to use tools such as Boxall, FAGUS or SDQs.
- Tracking and monitoring attendance
- Monitoring children and young people who are in part time or alternative provision with a view to returning to full time education as soon as possible
- Including vulnerable groups in wider Local Authority meetings to ensure awareness of other services.
- Ensuring we have agreed plans to support children with disabilities and/or medical needs taking part in our interventions
- Working together with colleagues in social care and health
- Challenging exclusions

What training have the Virtual School had to support children with SEND?

- Virtual School staff have a regular training programme which includes SEND.
Most teachers in the Virtual School have a SENDCo accreditation.
Close liaison with CCC Statutory Assessment and Resources Team on a fortnightly basis to support CIC with an EHCP provision.

What specialist services and expertise does the Virtual School provide?

Virtual School teachers, Access and Inclusion Officers and Post 16 Advisers work directly with schools and settings and social care. They provide:

- Advice and guidance on the education of children in care and those previously in care
- Support and challenge around the education of children in care
- Training, which includes attachment, trauma, FASD
- Advisory work with schools / education settings

The Virtual School has an Educational Psychologist working within the team

How will the Virtual School help others to support the education of a child in care?

- We provide regular training for schools and other settings, social care teams and carers on a range of topics and in different locations in Cambridgeshire.
- Every year we publish information for designated teachers, social workers, carers, early year’s practitioners and post 16 providers. These provide up-to-date information on educational issues.
- The Virtual School works to ensure efficient challenge and monitoring of Cambridgeshire children placed in Cambridgeshire and in other counties.

Who is the main SEND co-ordinator?

- The Virtual School staff member who leads on SEND is Claire Stanyer. Claire has over 20 years teaching experience.
- All Virtual School staff will have pupils with SEND as part of their caseload and they all attend SEND training.
- CCC SAT Team support EHCP provision. They can be contacted through:
How is the voice of the Child and Young person part of (SEND) provision?

- Our children in care have their views gathered in a variety of ways, in preparation for each PEP meeting, SEN or EHC plan review and consultation with the young people through the Children in Care review.
- Independent visitors, advocates or children’s guardians can also be accessed to ensure the voice of the child being heard as part of the care plan or court proceedings.
- Children in care are offered access to the Mind of My Own app, where they can share their views.

How does the Virtual School Management Board support my child?

- The Virtual School Management Board consists of members representing: Social Care, Head Teachers, County Councillors, Carers, a national expert and a representative from the Learning Directorate of the Local Authority.
- The Virtual School Management Board meet termly and receives regular reports from the Head of the Virtual School.
- Members discuss a range of school issues including finance and staffing, pupil achievement and progress and pupil welfare.

The Virtual School also report to the Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee termly

Glossary:

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<th>Child in Need (CiN)</th>
<th>Children in need are defined in law as children who are aged under 18 and:-</th>
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<td>• need local authority services to achieve or maintain a reasonable standard of health or development</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• need local authority services to prevent significant or further harm to health or development or</td>
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<td>• are disabled.</td>
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<td>Designated Teacher</td>
<td>• a Designated Teacher is responsible for the educational achievement of any looked after children in their school</td>
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<td>electronic Personal Education Plan (ePEP)</td>
<td>• the Personal Education Plan is a legal part of the Care Plan</td>
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<td>• it must be written for children and young people from Reception to Year 13 (4-18)</td>
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<td>• it is good practice to complete an ePEP for a younger child in Early Years if in education</td>
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| **Pupil Premium Plus** | • the pupil premium plus is additional funding to raise the attainment of looked after children and close the gap between them and their peers. This takes two forms;  
  • the Early Years Pupil Premium for 3 to 4 year olds,  
  • the Pupil Premium Plus for young people in years Reception to Year 11 ( 5 -16 year olds) |
| **Special Education Needs or Disability (SEND)** | • a child or young person has SEND if they have a learning difficulty or disability which calls for special educational provision to be made for him or her. A child of compulsory school age or a young person has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she has a significant greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or has a disability which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of educational facilities of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream schools or mainstream post 16 institutions. |