

## Cambridgeshire County Council Virtual School Management Board (VSMB)

**Corporate Context; Vision Statement; Guiding Principles; Strategic Remit; Terms of Reference; Proposed Membership; Nature of Activity.**

### **Corporate Context:**

Local authorities have a duty under the Children Act 1989 to promote the educational achievement of those children looked after by them. The Management Board of the Virtual School is a key component of the “robust procedures” that the most recent DfE statutory guidance (Promoting the Education of Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children, February 2018) requires to improve the educational experiences and outcomes of the *authority’s children in care or previously in care*, including those placed out of county. Since 2021 this remit has extended to a non-statutory strategic leadership role who have a child in need or child protection plan (or have had in the last 6 years).

The Management Board will have no formal or legal power but it will provide a resource to ensure that Cambridgeshire Corporate Parenting Board can meet its specific duties relating to the educational achievement of children in care.

### **Vision Statement:**

*“To appropriately challenge, monitor, support and advocate for the officers of the Virtual School (VS). In doing so to help Cambridgeshire local authority meet its obligation to support Early Years settings, local schools, academy providers and Post 16 providers to meet the educational needs of all Cambridgeshire children who have or have had a social worker; this includes Children in Care and Children previously in Care alongside a non-statutory remit for children who are known to a social worker as either children in need or those under child protection plans. A core focus remains that of closing of the gap in educational outcomes between those children specified above and all other children in England, to enable them to learn, aspire, thrive and achieve to their maximum potential.”*

## **Guiding Principles:**

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

## **Strategic Remit**

In recent years the *Virtual School* has been developing new approaches to its work and has moved from a 'caseload-based model' to a 'school advisory model'. Where reference is made to 'Modernising the VS' it is this focus that is being undertaken.

The need for this developing model was confirmed by the joint *Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Virtual School External Review* (Summer 2018). This new way of working may include a closer working relationship with Peterborough Virtual School and the ILACS inspection (January 2019).

Four priorities have been identified to drive forward change with the ultimate aim of improving outcomes for all Cambridgeshire children who have or have had a social worker, these form the basis of a 5 year strategic plan, with data being a golden thread running through.

The priorities are:

1. PEPs are dynamic, live and relevant
2. Children and young people who have or have had a social worker have increased access to high quality education, leading to improved outcomes

3. Children and young people in care have increased inclusion within education, leading to improved outcomes
4. Aspirational education is seen by all as the key to enable children to learn, aspire, thrive and achieve their potential
5. There is a collective responsibility for the education of all children who have or have had a social worker, with all parties feeling empowered to support effectively

Within this document the term 'designated teacher' is used throughout. This also includes designated persons in Early Years and Post-16 settings and those responsible for children previously in care.

## **Terms of Reference**

### **Purpose:**

To raise educational outcomes and opportunities for Cambridgeshire's children who have or have had a social worker by;

- constructively and supportively holding to account, on behalf of the *Corporate Parenting Board and Children and Young People's Committee*, the Head of the *Virtual School* (or designated person thereof) and the head teachers of all schools and providers attended by Cambridgeshire's children;
- supporting the *Children in Care* team and *Corporate Parenting Board* to hold to account all stakeholders whose actions influence the outcomes for Cambridgeshire's *Children in care*;
- providing sound information so that the *Corporate Parenting Board and Children and Young People's Committee* can champion good outcomes for Cambridgeshire's *children in care*.

### **Responsible to:**

Cambridgeshire *Children and Young People's Committee* and *Corporate Parenting Board Sub-committee*. Reporting to the board following each meeting of the virtual school management board.

## Membership (14 including a clerk):

### Democratic Services:

- 1 member of the *Children and Young People's Committee*
  - **Andrew Read** (AR); (Chair of VS Board)
- 1 member of the *Corporate Parenting Board/ Corporate Parents* (Chair of CYP Committee)
  - **Bryony Goodliffe** (AG);

### Stakeholder Representation:

- 1 Sector Expert (drawn from virtual school community)
  - **June Sewell** (JS)
- 1 Foster Carer
  - **Tracey Stephenson** (TS);
- 1 Care Leaver
  - **Elle Johnson** (EJ);

### Educational Expertise:

- 1 head teacher representing early years and primary phase
  - **Susannah Connell** (SC);
- 1 head teacher representing secondary phase
  - **Alistair Day** (AD);
- 1 head teacher representing specialist provision
  - **Simon Bainbridge** (SB1);
- 1 person representing post 16 provision
  - **Vacant**
- 1 Standards and Excellence Officer (or equivalent) from Education Services
  - **Emma Fuller** (EF);

### Employed Officers:

- 1 Head of Virtual School
  - **Claire Hiorns** (CH);
- 1 Deputy Head of Virtual School
  - **Heather Edwards** (HE);
  - 1 Head of Service from Social Care (corporate parenting)
  - **Catherine Isaacs** (CI);
  - 1 Head of Service from Quality and Standards
  - **Olly Grant** (OI);

Business Support:

- Clerking and administrative support
  - **Anne Abineri** (AY);

A Chair will be nominated by the *Service Director of Education*, and approved by the *Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee* on behalf of the *Children and Young People's Committee*

### **Nature of Activity:**

To hold at least termly (i.e. 3 per academic year) meetings to enable core function to be exercised.

To:

- Interrogate a range of relevant data in the form of termly reports to understand progress and attainment of children in care, schools which are showing successful practice, and those that are doing less well, trends in data to indicate improvement or otherwise of outcomes across the authority.
- Interrogate data to understand trends, patterns and improvement work around attendance.
- Receive termly reports from the Virtual School Head to include (for example);
  - attainment data for key stages 2 and 4;
  - progress against priorities for action;
  - new priorities for the forthcoming year;
  - provision and quality of Personal Education Plans;
  - use of the Pupil Premium Grant.
- Establish targets for the Virtual School relating to progress and outcomes.
- Monitor progress towards targets.
- Monitor provision on the ground through officer-initiated visits to provision where relevant.
- Provide accurate and informative summary reports to the Corporate Parenting Board.
- Recommend formal intervention by the Local Authority where a school or academy is considered to be seriously failing it's children in care.