

*What is the
Virtual School for
Looked After Children?*

Many individual children in care do well at school.

However, as a group, children in care do not perform as well as their peers. The Virtual School for Looked After Children aim to work with schools, foster carers, social workers and other services to promote improved education outcomes for children and young people in the care of Dudley Council.

"Education can change lives. Together with good quality foster care it can transform fostered children's expectations by unlocking their potential."

(The Fostering Network website, May 2016).

Schools are central to the provision of a good education. Every school will have a named Looked After Children Governor and a Designated Teacher for LAC. These key roles together with the provision of pupil premium funding support children in care to achieve as well as they can.

Schools provide stability, continuity and normality and this helps vulnerable young people to have the best possible life chances.

The Virtual School team monitors the educational progress of looked after children. They have high aspirations for LAC and aim to ensure that appropriate measures are in place to support and raise educational progress. This multidisciplinary team also provide a comprehensive training programme, guidance and advice to schools, social workers, carers and other professionals.



Every school must identify a 'Designated Teacher' (DT)

who is responsible for the educational achievement of the LAC in their school.

A LAC must have a Personal Education Plan which is discussed at termly PEP meetings attended by the DT, the child's social worker, their carer(s) and anyone else who is involved in supporting the child with their education. Children are also encouraged to come to their meeting (or part of it) where they will have a chance to express their views.

At the PEP meeting the child's educational progress will be discussed and actions will be agreed to help them succeed. Targets set at the meeting are recorded on the PEP form which forms part of the child's Care Plan.

From September 2016 PEPs will be recorded on a new web based system, ePEP Online, which

will facilitate improved communication between professionals. The system will also enable the Virtual School to track a child's progress more effectively, ensure that resources are targeted appropriately and encourage children and young people to participate more actively in their PEPs.



*Schools and the
Personal Education Plan*

The named LAC Governor

Governing bodies of maintained schools and academies have a duty to elect a named LAC governor. The LAC governor holds a key position and is required to have a good understanding of their school's LAC policy and its application across the school.



Education4Me

The Virtual School hosts an education themed web site for LAC at <http://www.education4me.uk>. The site aims to provide an online information hub for children and care leavers looked after by Dudley Council. It also provides them with the opportunity to interact with the Virtual School team and to contribute to the site.

The Virtual School works closely with the Children in Care Council as they develop their own website and ensure that information and initiatives relating to both are shared effectively.

www.Education4Me.uk

The Virtual School Team:

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The Attachment Aware Schools Project (AA

Project) The AA Project aims to support schools to promote positive mental health and resilience in their pupils. The pilot, currently running in conjunction with colleagues from the Educational Psychology, Counselling and Clinical Psychology Services, has already made a positive impact on those schools taking part. The programme will continue to be offered as an ongoing support package for Dudley Schools.

Pupil Premium

The Pupil Premium for LAC and Early Years Pupil Premium is a grant paid by the government to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils and close the gap with their peers.

The VS sends most of the grant to children's educational settings, amounting to £500 per term (for ages 5-16) or £100 per term (for early years). The remaining money is held centrally to fund resources which meet the identified additional needs of individual children and to provide training for school staff and other colleagues who work with LAC.

