

Strategies to Promote Attendance

Supporting children struggling with school attendance



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Accountability



Integrity



Empowerment



Respect



Excellence



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Quick quiz

- Number of children in care in Gloucestershire? **787**
- Number of school age children in care in Gloucestershire? **475**
- Number of school age children on a school roll? **452**
- Number of children in care in schools out of county? **125**
- Average attendance – primary **94.96%**
- Average attendance – secondary **85.6%**

Who has accessed the Virtual School website.....?

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<https://www.goucestershire.gov.uk/vschool>

Search The Virtual School website

- About Us
- Personal Education Plan (PEP) and Pupil Premium Plus
- Training
- Policies, Procedures and Resources
- Targeted Intervention and Additional Support
- Further Information and Partnership Working
- Attendance Hub
- Virtual School Audit and Self Evaluation Tool 2025-26

<https://www.goucestershire.gov.uk/vschool/about-us/>

Who we are Latest News Events

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Supporting children struggling with school attendance

Supporting children struggling with school attendance
Top tips and advice in tackling practical and emotional barriers.

CREATE ROUTINES **STRENGTHEN SCHOOL RELATIONSHIPS** **FOSTER CARER STRATEGIES** **CONVERSATION PROMPTS** **RESOURCES**

Morning and evening routines
Routines reduce stress and lateness for example, consistent bedtimes and sleep, having breakfast and getting-ready habits.

Visual schedules
Young children benefit from colour-coded charts or checklists to support them. Each morning (e.g. wake up, brush hair) is ticked off for a sense of achievement. Praise offered for completing the routine.

Designated key adult
A teacher or mentor who greets the child daily can increase child's sense of belonging.

Regular communication
Professionals and carers to meet regularly to review attendance.

Positive feedback
Praise & rewards for improvements (certificates, positive notes/home) can help.

Safe space
Knowing who can check in with pastoral staff when feeling overwhelmed.

Safe space card
Child has a card/pass to go to named adult in school or at home if they are distressed. Reduces anxiety about 'being stuck' and gives them control, making them less likely to refuse school.

Therapeutic support
Access to mental health, nurture groups, or educational psychologists can help with anxiety and trauma that drives school refusal.

Transport support
Practical help with tasks and bus passes or car sharing on school mornings.

Extra-curricular activities
Clubs, sports or arts can motivate attendance.

Individual support
Catch up support reduces frustration if they've missed previous lessons.

Fostering Gloucestershire County Council **The Virtual School** **GCC**

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CREATE ROUTINES **STRENGTHEN SCHOOL RELATIONSHIPS** **FOSTER CARER STRATEGIES** **CONVERSATION PROMPTS** **RESOURCES**

To explore feelings

- Q. What part of school feels hardest for you right now?
- Q. If you could change one thing about the school day, what would it be?
- Q. When you think about school, what does your body feel like inside?

To strengthen belonging

- Q. Who helps you feel safe or happy at school?
- Q. Which lesson or activity do you most enjoy? Why?
- Q. Who would you like to spend more time with at school?

To problem solve

- Q. What could we do together to make mornings easier?
- Q. If it's a bad day at school, what could help you get through it?
- Q. Who would you like to spend more time with at school?

To build hope and motivation

- Q. What's something you'd love to get better at this year?
- Q. What do you want to be proud of when you finish this year?
- Q. If you keep going to school, what good things might happen?

Ideas condensed from articles on "Young Minds" and "The Playful Psychologist" websites.

Young Minds
The Playful Psychologist
Scan me!

Scan me!

The Virtual School

Thank you to Laura Brady GCC Fostering Govt support worker for all the tips and tips on page 1!

For more info about Fostering with GCC call 01242 522614 or visit gloucestershire.gov.uk/fostering

To access information and guidance from the Virtual School visit gloucestershire.gov.uk/vschool

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Top tips and advice – Steve C, Matt and Laura

Teamwork makes the dream work

- *Child / young person*
- *Foster carer*
- *Social Workers*
- *Family support worker*
- Teacher
- Teaching assistant
- SENCO
- CAMHS worker
- Virtual School mentor
- ETE worker



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Scenario for discussion in groups

Jenny is 5 years old and she has 2 brothers aged 3 and 8 years old. The 3 children live in a foster home. Jenny started school in September 2024 found the integration very difficult. Sadly, Jenny's dysregulated behaviour and emotional outbursts were such that following a period of school staff working with carers, Social Workers, pastoral team, CAMHS and Virtual School, the decision was made that the school could not fully meet her needs and her attendance ended in spring 2025.

Since the spring, Jenny has refused to go into school or take part in any offers of educational activities; her foster carers are supporting her at home. A family support worker has also supported Jenny with activities for 2 mornings per week in the community and at home. Jenny has recently stated that she wants to go back to school just like her older brother, but has significant anxiety about returning.

- You'll now be allocated a role in the team around Jenny.
- In your role, please discuss who you will speak to, how will you help to support Jenny, what needs to happen next, what tools or strategies could you use, manage expectations of Jenny (and others), contingency plans.....

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Voice of children and young people – JG, AS and MP

Years 10/11 – I just found it boring and exhausting, sitting still and concentrating was difficult and I didn't see the point in the subjects I was being taught. I wanted to learn about things I need in my life

I felt that I had a lot to say but was being told to be quiet and focus all the time.

I worry now that the way I am will mean I won't be able to hold down a job

I felt like I didn't belong and that I was different, it filled me with stress and anxiety and I felt misunderstood.

I knew that I had struggles with doing what I was told and having to conform, for me it was all about how I was being spoken to, if I was constantly being given sets of demands I would sometimes feel a strong urge to just do the opposite because I could.

I had no coping strategies built in and have just lived on feeling anxious

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What Happens after Year 11?

Youth Support Team (YST)

- **YST** has a statutory duty to monitor Education, Training & Employment (ETE) status of 16–18-year-olds and data is reported to the DfE.
- Cohort includes 14,700 young people and **640 care leavers** (18–25)
Support for NEET Young People
- Step-by-step ETE progression planning
- Multi-agency coordination
- Careers guidance, CV/application/interview support
- Information on education, training, and employment
- Engagement with providers and employers

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What can you expect for your young people?

ETE Workers will

- Contact the young person or key professional to provide a structured ETE progression plan.
- Arrange meetings in a suitable location and coordinate with other agencies.
- Explain the support available and complete a Work Star assessment with the young person and advocate on their behalf.
- Create and review a bespoke action plan and offer information, advice and guidance as needed.
- Engage with providers and employers.
- Ensure that all young people not in education, training or employment receive tailored guidance and planning.

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Points to remember

- There is no magic wand.
- Communication between foster carers and all professionals working with the child is key.
- Listen to the child / young person!
- Use resources available to you on the Virtual School website.
- Drop in sessions for older children in care and care leavers at Barbican and the Hideaway (Both Shire Hall) and Grosvenor Hall (Cheltenham).

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And remember.....



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Any questions?

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