

Attendance is the key – Attendance unlocks the future

Achieving their full potential conference
Wednesday November 12th 2025

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School Attendance

The Role of The Virtual School for

Children in Care

- The Virtual School has a statutory duty to promote and monitor education and progress for all children in care. This includes promoting good school attendance and monitoring and tracking attendance as part of the statutory PEP process.
- As a corporate parent, The Virtual School promotes good school attendance as this is vital to ensure children and young people achieve their full potential and have the best possible wider life chances.
- School attendance expectation for all children in care is 95% or above.

Statutory Guidance on school attendance

Working together to improve school attendance

- Attendance is '**everyone's business**'
- Advocates a 'support first' approach - [GCC Attendance guidance](#)
- 'Parent' has the responsibility to ensure every child receives an appropriate education (Section 7 of the Education Act 1996)
- Child's voice is vital to improving their attendance – **their** lived experience

Virtual School Attendance Updates

- We have updated our attendance policy and attendance processes document which have been adopted by the Virtual School Management Board (VSMB). These documents have been emailed to all designated teachers and can also be found on our website.
<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/vschool/policies-procedures-and-resources/virtual-school-policies-useful-guidance-and-documents/>
- Since September 2025, all children in care have an attendance target as part of their PEP document. Those with good attendance will receive a Pupil Premium Plus reward.
- Since September 2025, the PEP document has an updated attendance improvement plan for all students where attendance is below 90%. This plan includes consideration of push/pull factors as recommended by Gloucestershire EP service.

Roles and Responsibilities

Foster Carer/Residential Home- Key worker/Parent:

- Promote the child's educational progress and attendance (we all need to be education champions).
- **Be positive about the value of education and have high expectations. Be ambitious and aspirational for children in care.**
- Ensure children in their care attend school with all appropriate equipment and uniform. Carers support the children's learning which includes the travel to and from school.
- Contact the school and social worker if there are any attendance concerns and work with the school and other professionals to resolve them.
- Arrange any medical and other appointments outside school hours wherever possible and take family holidays outside of school term time.
- Follow the school's procedures on reporting all school absence.
- Listen to the child to find out why they are not attending (for example, friendship difficulties, gaps in learning) and share these with other professionals.
- Attend and raise any concerns at the Personal Education Plan (PEP) meeting and Child in Care (CiC) review meeting.

Attendance and academic achievement - a Gloucestershire School's perspective Whole cohort 2025

Category	% Attendance	% Cohort	A8	% 5+ EM	% 4+ EM
1	98%+	20%	54.90	69%	80%
2	95 – 97.9%	26%	50.70	54%	79%
3	90 – 94.9%	16%	51.92	71%	83%
4	50 – 89.9%	31%	34.79	20%	40%
5	0 – 49.9%	8%	9.71	5%	21%

Attendance and academic achievement - a Gloucestershire School's perspective

Disadvantaged cohort 2025

Category	% Attendance	% Cohort	A8	% 5+ EM	% 4+ EM
1	98%+	7% (24%)	59.80 (54.49)	100% (66%)	100% (79%)
2	95 – 97.9%	12% (29%)	47.21 (51.12)	43% (55%)	71% (79%)
3	90 – 94.9%	11% (18%)	49.50 (52.33)	50% (75%)	67% (86%)
4	50 – 89.9%	57% (23%)	30.88 (37.52)	19% (22%)	31% (46%)
5	0 – 49.9%	13% (6%)	4.04 (13.02)	0% (8%)	0% (33%)

Roles and Responsibilities

Social Worker and IRO:

- Social workers lead the co-ordination of, and attend, Personal Education Plan (PEP) meetings.
- **Be positive about the value of education and have high expectations. Be ambitious and aspirational for children in care.**
- Have primary responsibility for ensuring the child has an up-to-date Care Plan including the health arrangements and education in the form of an up-to-date PEP.
- Avoid school moves for all students and especially those in Years 10 and 11 in line with DfE guidance.
- If school moves are unavoidable, they must be authorised by the Virtual School Head via a School Move Protocol.
- Any school move and/or transition must be planned in consultation with the Virtual School and the EHCP Annual Review/SEND team as appropriate.
- Where possible, ensure that placement moves do not impact on school stability and inform the Virtual School of any placement instability. Ensure P1 and P2 commissioning forms include educational information.
- Where there are attendance concerns, listen to the child to find out why they are not attending and feedback to schools and the Virtual School so that an action plan can be developed within the PEP.
- Help carers to support the child's education and discuss any attendance concerns.
- Ensure transport is in place to support school attendance (if appropriate).
- If there are attendance concerns related to or thought to be related to health needs, the social worker must liaise with the named child in care nurse and invite them to the next PEP meeting.

Advice and Support

- Our website contains a range of information, support and training videos. www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/virtual-school/



- For advice about a specific pupil, please contact the virtual school education advisor linked to your school in the first instance.
- If you are unsure who this is, please contact virtualschooladmin@gloucestershire.gov.uk