

## Gloucestershire Virtual School-Attendance Improvement Plan

*Parents have a duty to ensure their children receive a suitable, full-time education. Most do this by sending their children to school. (Education Act 1996, section 7)*

The Virtual School Attendance Improvement Plan has been developed to ensure children in care of school age with significant school absence (attendance below 90%) are supported to achieve good school attendance (95% plus). Going to school is critical to ensure young people thrive and achieve their full potential.

This document asks the team around the young person to consider the bespoke reasons the young person is motivated to attend school (push factors) and the barriers to attending school (pull factors). It also outlines the responsibilities of all adults to support good attendance in line with the Virtual School's Attendance Policy.

**Please confirm the responsibilities below have been discussed as part of the PEP meeting.**

**Yes/No**

<b>Who</b>	<b>Overall Responsibilities</b>
Foster Carer/ Residential Home- Key worker/ Parent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Promote the child's educational progress and attendance (we all need to be education champions).</li><li>• <b>Be positive about the value of education and have high expectations. Be ambitious and aspirational for children in care.</b></li><li>• 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.</li><li>• Contact the school and social worker if there are any attendance concerns and work with the school and other professionals to resolve them.</li><li>• Arrange any medical and other appointments outside school hours wherever possible and take family holidays outside of school term time.</li><li>• Follow the school's procedures on reporting all school absence.</li><li>• 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.</li><li>• Attend and raise any concerns at the Personal Education Plan (PEP) meeting and Child in Care (CiC) review meeting.</li></ul>
Social Worker and IRO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Social workers lead the co-ordination of, and attend, Personal Education Plan (PEP) meetings.</li><li>• <b>Be positive about the value of education and have high expectations. Be ambitious and aspirational for children in care.</b></li><li>• 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.</li><li>• Avoid school moves for all students and especially those in Years 10 and 11 in line with DfE guidance.</li><li>• If school moves are unavoidable, they must be authorised by the Virtual School Head via a School Move Protocol.</li><li>• Any school move and/or transition must be planned in consultation with the Virtual School and the EHCP Annual Review/SEND team as appropriate.</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Help carers to support the child's education and discuss any attendance concerns.</li> <li>• Ensure transport is in place to support school attendance (if appropriate).</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>
Education Setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Follow the Virtual School's Attendance Policy for Children in Care</li> <li>• <b>Be positive about the value of education and have high expectations. Be ambitious and aspirational for children in care.</b></li> <li>• Ensure the pupil has a safe place at school and a key trusted adult.</li> <li>• Ensure that there is a system of first day calling for children in care so that carers are telephoned if the child fails to attend school.</li> <li>• Investigate and challenge the reasons for any unauthorised absence</li> <li>• Inform the social worker and the Virtual School as soon as attendance becomes a concern.</li> <li>• Add attendance targets to the PEP if school attendance falls below 95%.</li> <li>• Complete an attendance improvement plan, as part of the PEP, if school attendance falls below 90%</li> <li>• Work with the Virtual School to ensure early intervention to avoid the use of suspension and exclusion for a child in care.</li> <li>• Listen to the child to find out why attendance is an issue and what the barriers to good attendance are and share these with the social worker and the Virtual School.</li> <li>• Invite the foster carer, social worker, and Virtual School Education Advisor to discuss reasons for absence and strategies to improve attendance.</li> </ul>
Pupil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talk to a key adult at home about any difficulties at school.</li> <li>• Attend school regularly and on time, except where absence has been authorised. Register for the morning and afternoon sessions and attend all lessons.</li> <li>• Engage with all adults to support school attendance and use the Pupil Voice on their EPEP to communicate any concerns they have about attending school.</li> </ul>
Virtual School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work with children, schools, carers, social workers and IROs to monitor and improve attendance.</li> <li>• Attend PEP meetings, where possible, and quality assure the process ensuring that school attendance has a high profile.</li> <li>• Offer advice, guidance, and training regarding good school attendance for children in care.</li> <li>• Use Pupil Premium Plus funding, where appropriate, to support good school attendance.</li> <li>• Ensure, during the PEP Meeting, all school attendance concerns have been discussed and all adults are aware of their responsibilities.</li> <li>• Use Virtual School's Escalation policy if there are barriers that are not being addressed by the team around the child to support good education attendance in line with KCSIE.</li> </ul>

### **Push/Pull Factors**

Push Factors **INSIDE** school that may be a motivator to attending regularly (positive friendships in school, good relationships with key adults in school)

Push Factors **OUTSIDE** school that may be a motivator to attending regularly (significant adult outside of school supporting YP to attend, future aspirations)

Pull Factors **INSIDE** school that may be a barrier to attending regularly (difficulties with friendships in school, gaps in learning etc)

Pull Factors **OUTSIDE** school that may be a barrier to attending regularly (poor sleep, health issues)

### **Action Plan**

Please outline the actions identified to support and improve school attendance including who is responsible for each action and the timescale for completion. Please consider an incentive/reward for improved school attendance (if appropriate).