

## What is the Virtual School?

Gloucestershire Virtual School promotes and supports the educational attainment and progress of children and young people in care from nursery to 18 years old, through effective collaboration with schools, social care, and other agencies. It also offers support, guidance and advice for previous children in care and children with a social worker.

## What is the role of the Virtual School for Previous Children in Care (PCiC)?

The role of the Virtual School for previous children in care is to promote their educational achievement through the provision of information and advice to their parents, educators and other professionals where appropriate. This duty is discharged from the point at which the child becomes eligible for free early education, and concludes when s/he has completed the compulsory years of education. The local authority are no longer the corporate parent for previous children in care, and therefore the Virtual School do not monitor the educational progress of individual children, and do not casework or provide direct intervention.

In September 2024, the Virtual School duty was expanded to provide advice and guidance to kinship carers with a special guardianship or child arrangements order, regardless of whether their child had previously been in care.

The VS duty for previous children in care relates to children who are in an education setting in **Gloucestershire**, irrespective of where the child lives. We can support in signposting to the relevant Virtual School where required.

## Additional Information

Unfortunately, we cannot provide any funding support for children who were previously in care.

More information, including training materials, can be found on the Gloucestershire Virtual School website here:

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

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## How can the Virtual School support the education of Previous Children in Care?

- By responding to queries, and providing advice and information to parents and carers, education settings and other professionals on areas including:
  - School admission arrangements
  - Special Educational Needs
  - Attendance
  - Exclusions
  - Homework
  - Choosing GCSE options
  - Behaviour in relation to education settings
- Signposting to other services that can offer advice and support.
- Making information available to education settings to improve awareness of the needs of previous children in care. This may include:
  - Promoting good practice.
  - Supporting understanding of the impact that issues such as trauma and attachment difficulties and other mental health issues can have on previous children in care, and signpost schools to appropriate resources and tools where required.
  - Supporting children to be aspirational for their future education, training and employment.
  - Promoting positive educational and recreational activities.
  - Guidance on effective use of Pupil Premium. (Unlike Pupil Premium Plus for children in care, Pupil Premium for previous children in care is not a personal budget for individual pupils, and schools do not have to spend pupil premium so that it solely benefits pupils who meet the funding criteria.)
- Building and developing good working relationships with designated teachers for previously looked after children in Gloucestershire, and supporting these settings to have high expectations in helping previous children in care achieve their full potential in education.