

# Dorset Virtual School

for Children in Care Handbook



Dorset  
Council

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# Dorset's vision for Children in Care

“

I am thriving in the best school for me. I know I am thriving because I am included and listened to. I am achieving and I enjoy school.

”

Dorset Virtual School equips our children for success and happiness by delivering highly effective support for their education, including their academic outcomes and their engagement in experiences that will help them towards adulthood.

**Our young people are at the heart of every decision we make. They tell us that they would like:**

- Love and kindness
- For adults to acknowledge that not everything is a big problem
- Not to be judged
- Not to be left waiting for help
- Time
- Not to be treated differently
- For barriers to be removed
- To be involved

Therefore, we aim for our work to embody these wishes. We are relentless in making sure that every child is in the right educational setting for them and will support and challenge those settings to understand and help our children to achieve great educational outcomes that prepare them for their next stage in education and for independent adult life and the world of work.

- We want our children and young people to have everything that good parents want for their children.
- We want our Children in Care and Care Leavers to work with us, along with their parents and carers, in shaping how we manage and organise the planning, resources and services that support and care for them.
- We want our children and young people to be happy and healthy, both physically and emotionally, to be safe and protected from harm and exploitation, and to be supported each step of the way to adult life.
- We want them to achieve their potential, especially at school, to make the most of the learning opportunities they are offered and to participate in the decisions affecting their care and their lives. This includes support into adulthood with continuity of support, access to good jobs and higher education, while living in good housing and being financially secure.

# Who are Children in Care?

In most circumstances a Child in Care is a child under 18 years of age who has been provided with accommodation or cared for by the local authority for more than 24 hours because the parent(s) or guardian(s) for whatever reason are prevented from providing them with a suitable accommodation or care.

In the Children Act 1989, children in care are known as Looked After Children (LAC). Some people also refer to these children as Children Looked After (CLA).

## Children in care will have:

- An allocated social worker
- Regular Child in Care Reviews
- A Personal Education Plan (PEP)

Foster Carers or the staff in residential homes work closely with schools and educational settings, social workers and other professionals to make each of these work in support of the good progress and development of the child/ young person in care

Children in care are either the subject of a care order (an order made by the court) or are in care through a voluntary agreement with their parents.

## The Care Order

A Care Order is given as the result of a decision made by a court to protect the children from significant harm or other reasons which meet the threshold for coming in to care. When a child is subject to a Care Order the local authority shares Parental Responsibility (PR) with the parents.

The child may also be subject to an Interim Care Order (for up to eight weeks in the first instance) where, in an application for a Care Order, the proceedings are adjourned or where a court, in any proceedings, gives a direction for the investigation of a child's home circumstances.

## Voluntary agreement

A voluntary agreement is when a child is provided with accommodation by the local authority with the consent of those with Parental Responsibility. The arrangement is based on co-operative working between the local authority, the young person and his or her parents and the parents retain legal Parental Responsibility for the child or young person.

Any person who has parental responsibility for a child may, at any time, remove the child from accommodation provided by, or on behalf, of the local authority. If the young person is 16 or 17 years old, they can leave the accommodation without parental consent.

A voluntary agreement is often referred to as 'Accommodation under Section 20' as this relates to the section in the Children Act 1989 that applies in these circumstances.

## Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)

When a child is an unaccompanied asylum seeker they have come to this country to escape violence, genocide or hostile conditions in their country of origin. A social work assessment identifies their individual needs, they become a child in care and will be provided with accommodation in foster care or in a residential home. If they are over 16 years old they are provided with housing and subsistence support.

If an unaccompanied asylum-seeking child cannot be returned to their home country they are usually granted leave to remain in this country for three years or until they reach seventeen and a half, whichever is the shorter.

# Who are our children?

## Adopted Young People and those on Special Guardianship Orders (SGO)

Designated Teachers also have a responsibility to support the education of previously looked after children, including SGO and Adopted children.

The Virtual School offers educational advice and guidance for parents, schools and guardians of the above children.

This role, expanded to discharge the responsibilities within the Children and Social Work Act, (DfE, 2017), provides a signposting service for support around educational issues and pupil premium funding.

More intensive or bespoke support for adopted/ SGO children and families can be accessed, by referral, through Aspire Adoption, the regional adoption agency for Dorset.

There is a separate handbook for schools and settings specifically focused on children who were previously in care.

## Who are our children with a Social Worker?

The role of the Virtual School was expanded in 2021 to provide strategic responsibility for children with a social worker and who have been assessed as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989.

The Virtual School has responsibility to champion the educational attendance, attainment and progress of all children with a social worker. This means the Virtual School should be:

- making visible the disadvantages that children with a social worker can experience, enhancing partnerships between education settings and local authorities, including with children's social care, to help all agencies hold high aspirations for these children
- promoting practice that supports children's engagement in education, recognising that attending an education setting is an important factor in helping to keep children safe from harm
- levelling up children's outcomes to narrow the attainment gap so every child has the opportunity to reach their potential – including helping to ensure that children with a social worker benefit from support to recover educationally from the impact of the pandemic

The Virtual School Head role for children with a social worker is a strategic leadership responsibility.

Virtual School Heads are not expected to:

- work directly with individual children and their families - including tracking and monitoring of individual educational progress, providing academic or other interventions
- respond to requests from parents or carers to offer advice, intervention and support in relation to individual children with a social worker
- take responsibility for children with SEND who do not require or need a social worker, as defined above

## Children in kinship care arrangements

The role of the Virtual School expanded in December 2023 to

We know that children who grow up in kinship care have better outcomes than children who grow up in other types of non-parental care. However, their outcomes fall behind those children with no social worker involvement.

The kinship strategy adapted the role of virtual school heads to specifically include championing the attendance, attainment and progress of children in kinship care.

Virtual school heads should bring greater focus and visibility to the distinct needs of children in kinship care within their existing non-statutory responsibilities.

The strategic role adaptation does not require direct intervention with kinship children and their carers, but this system-wide approach has the potential to benefit children in all types of kinship placements, including those in informal arrangements.

There are activities that the adapted virtual school head strategic role should include.

- Raising awareness of the needs and disadvantage of children in different types of kinship care arrangements
- Promoting practice that supports attendance and engagement of kinship children in education
- Promoting practice that improves the educational attainment of children in kinship care

# Dorset Virtual School

## Purpose

The Virtual School provides distinct educational expertise around the issues that have an impact on Children in Care, children who are care experienced and children with a Social Worker.

The Virtual School and Virtual School Head has clear purposes and responsibilities that are outlined in statute in the Children and Families Act 2014, which the Dorset Virtual School then presents to schools annually in the form of the Virtual School Head annual report.

## Responsibilities of the Virtual School

The Virtual School is responsible for supporting schools and settings in monitoring and improving the performance of Children in Care (CIC) and will help promote contact between settings, carers and Social Workers. Each setting has an allocated member of the Virtual School Team who will be the first point of reference when advice or practical support is needed or there is any concern about a young person. The Virtual School Team will make sure that settings and Social Workers hold Personal Education Plan (PEP) meetings regularly and a member from the team will attend the PEP meeting, especially where there are issues which are proving particularly challenging in helping the young person to "narrow the gap" with peers. In some circumstances a member of the team will also attend Child in Care Reviews.

The Virtual School will ensure that all our children have a suitable education provision. In relation to the admission of Children in Care to schools and academies, the School Admissions Code of Practice 2021 affirms the continued top priority given to children in care, over and above any restrictions in relation to school Planned Admission Numbers (PAN). We will always endeavour to talk with schools about incoming children and provide support to enable a successful transition. Admission of Children in Care should be a priority for schools. Should a school refuse to admit a child, the Virtual School Head can direct the school to admit the child Under Section 97A to 97C of the Schools Standards & Framework Act 1998 as inserted by Section 50 of the Education & Inspections Act 2006.

Additionally, the Virtual School has extended its responsibilities to support all children with a social worker and children in kinship care arrangements. This work provides strategic oversight and support for children across educational settings to champion the educational attendance, attainment and progress of all our children.

## Holding the Virtual School to account

The Virtual School follows the guidance in the Dorset Virtual School Practice Standards to ensure that we provide the best possible service to our children and schools. If you would like to see a copy of our practice standards please ask.

The Virtual School is held to account by its Governing Body and the Corporate Parenting Board. Full details of the membership of the Governing Body are available by contacting Kerri-Ann Kemsley, Clerk to Governors:

E: [kerri-ann.kemsley@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:kerri-ann.kemsley@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk)

T: **01305 224765**

Any complaints in relation to the Dorset Virtual School, its work and/or team members should be addressed, in the first instance, to the Virtual School Head. Any complaints unresolved at this level, or about the Virtual School Head, should be addressed to Dorset County Council Complaints Team: [complaints@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk](mailto:complaints@dorsetcouncil.gov.uk)

# The Designated Teacher Role

## Key Responsibilities

<b>01</b> Promote a culture of high expectations and aspirations for how children looked after learn	<b>02</b> Make sure the young person has a voice in setting learning targets	<b>03</b> Be a source of advice for staff about teaching strategies appropriate for individual children and in making full use of assessment for learning	<b>04</b> Make sure that children looked after are prioritised in one-to-one tuition arrangements and that carers understand the importance of supporting learning at home	<b>05</b> Have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of the child's Personal Education Plan (PEP) within the school
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Statutory guidance for local-authority-maintained schools carrying out duties for looked-after and previously looked-after children can be found here: The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children (for a digital copy please [click here](#)). It is essential that Designated Teachers are very familiar with this guidance and ensure that it is followed.

The Designated Teacher role, alongside that of the Virtual School Team member, Social Worker and Foster Carers, is essential in supporting the good educational progress and development of children in care.

Training and development sessions for Designated Teachers and those new to the Designated Teacher role are run by the Virtual School and published on the Nexus course booking system.

Virtual School Team members are in regular communication with the Designated Teachers in the schools they link to and can be contacted at any time for advice and support.

There is a Virtual School Teams site for designated teachers, containing useful information and guidance. If you do not have access, please ask your Virtual School Lead.

## What are the responsibilities of Designated Teachers?

The Designated Teacher has a number of key roles and responsibilities:

- Keep and update a list of the looked after, adopted and Special Guardianship Order (SGO) pupils in school, with contact telephone numbers and details of who has parental responsibility.
- Know how children in care are progressing in terms of learning, attendance and behaviour and whether they are meeting their targets.
- Identify any special educational needs that a looked after young person may have and work out how to meet these needs, as well as know what external support is available for children looked after and how to access it.
- Ensure that all children in care have a good quality Personal Education Plan updated at the correct intervals in partnership with all other stakeholders involved, including the young person.
- Ensure that looked after children and those adopted and on SGO have another member of staff, as well as the Designated Teacher, in school who is a point of contact they can talk to.
- Ensure that the school has high expectations for children in care and that the young people are aware of these.
- Ensure that school staff have relevant information/training on looked after pupils and those adopted and on SGOs, so that they have an awareness and understanding of the specific needs of.

- Advocate for children in care in school, especially around issues such as special educational needs, fixed term exclusions and curriculum flexibility.
- When children in care start a new school, ensure the speedy transfer of educational information between different agencies and individuals and that pupils understand who will know they are looked after and what information about them will be shared with other staff.
- Attend relevant termly training on children in care and their needs.
- Act as an adviser for other staff in school and for the named Children In Care Governor on issues relevant to children looked after.
- Keep general circulars, legislation and information on children in care up to date.
- Liaise with pupil's (foster) carers, social worker and Virtual School team members as required.
- Celebrate achievement, for example, through nominating children to be recognised at the annual Virtual School Awards and through the PEP meetings.

## What to expect when a child in care joins your school

<b>01</b> The social worker will contact you and provide details of the child and carers	<b>02</b> They will provide you with specific safeguarding information if needed, e.g' adults who should not have contact with the child	<b>03</b> You will be requested to set a date for an initial PEP meeting within	<b>04</b> If already in care you should be provided with their most recent PEP
<b>05</b> Make sure that you have their SEND information if relevant, such as EHCP	<b>06</b> Ensure that school information Management Information Systems (MIS) hold the correct data: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying the child as in care, with the correct Caring Authority</li> <li>• Recording accurately carer details, including any mobile numbers for school text messaging</li> </ul>	<b>07</b> Carers receive funding to supply all meals, so the child or young person will NOT be identified as FSM in MIS	<b>08</b> Get to know the young person!

# PEPs

The Person Education Plan (PEP) is the statutory tool to ensure that everyone is actively prioritising the education of the Young Person, carefully tracking their progress and supporting them to achieve and to be aspirational.

All Children in Care have a statutory Care Plan, which is drawn up and reviewed by the Local Authority that looks after them. The PEP is a legal part of the Care Plan; which is a statutory requirement for CIC from a child of 3 years if in education provision up to the age of 18.

For a child new to care and of statutory school age, the first PEP meeting will be held within **20 days** of them coming into care

For a child placed in emergency care, the first PEP meeting will be held within 10 working days of them coming into care, wherever they are placed.

## Ongoing PEP meetings:

- Always book your next meeting at the previous meeting
- It is effective practice to hold three PEP meetings per year (one per term). Holding regular PEP meetings ensures that:
  - plans are always based on current information
  - plans continue to meet the child's educational needs
  - information from the PEP is available at the next statutory care plan review

## Who attends the PEP meeting?

Will attend	Might attend
Designated Teacher	Other relevant school staff
Social Worker	SEND Provision Lead (if holding EHCP annual review at the same time)
Virtual School Lead (Dorset child)	College / School Link staff (transition PEP)
Young person / advocate	Parent (the social worker will advise)
Carer	

## Key responsibilities

<b>01</b> Collect and check progress reports from all staff working with the young person. This should include progress from any interventions as well as in class progress	<b>02</b> Make sure you have collected evidence of progress against PEP targets	<b>03</b> Collect attendance, rewards, sanctions, exclusions information	<b>04</b> Ensure that the child's voice has been captured in advance of the meeting
<b>05</b> Complete all the information on EPEP (and upload additional info as needed)	<b>06</b> Make sure you schedule the meeting or a time that suites the young person	<b>07</b> Book a appropriate space for the meeting: is it warm and inviting?	<b>08</b> Is there anything that the child has done that they / you could bring to the meeting to celebrate?

## Personal Education Plan (PEP) meeting agenda

PEP meetings can be called by the Designated Teacher, Virtual School or Social Worker. They are normally organised by the Designated Teacher.

1. Introductions, apologies, housekeeping.
2. Ensure everyone who has attended the PEP meeting is recorded in the PEP Meeting tab on Welfare Call.
3. Discuss how the child/young person has been getting on at school. Take time to celebrate what they have done well, show a fantastic piece of work or certificate, or talk about their engagement in an extra-curricular activity. Discuss any areas of concern or where the young person may need additional help. Refer to the progress and attainment tab that has been completed prior to the meeting. Be sure to include the young person's voice in any discussion.
4. Discuss any concerns with the young person's mental health and wellbeing, referring to the SDQ score where there are concerns about scoring.
5. Make sure that there is time to talk about the young person's hopes and ambitions and how the PEP support will help them to reach these longer-term goals.
6. Review the targets set at the last meeting. Have they been met? How do you know? Were the interventions used helpful in meeting the target? How do you know?
7. Review any actions that were identified for professionals at the last PEP meeting to make sure that they were completed.
8. Based on the discussion so far, identify the next set of short-term targets. What does the young person need to improve or skill do they need to gain? How will you know if they are successful? What intervention or support needs to be put in place to enable them to achieve the target? Is PP+ funding required? Who will be responsible for any intervention, how often will it happen and over what timescale? This is all recorded in the tab 'Targets and Outcomes' on Welfare Call
9. Ideally during or if not then straight after the meeting, record a summary of the meeting highlighting key points – there is a box to write notes in in tab 2 'The PEP Meeting'
10. Set date for next PEP meeting and add it to the EPEP on Welfare Call.

## Good PEP Target Setting

The target is for the child

Written as positives and specifics

**Target:** For Chloe to feel she has an appropriate space to express her emotions and feel safe to do so appropriately within the school environment.

**Actions:** The actions are for the professionals

Learning Mentor support 1 x weekly for 12 weeks

Behaviour group sessions 1 x weekly for 4 weeks

Key person daily check in for the year

Clear frequency and length of provision

**Success Criteria:** Chloe's SDQ score's at school / home will be reflective of each other, illustrating she is expressing emotions appropriately in both settings. By the next PEP Chloe will be able to identify her 'helping hand' of key adults who she can access. By next PEP there will be a reduction in sanctions due to inappropriate expression of options.

So this PEP must record number of sanctions to date

The success criteria are for the child

Specific, positive and measurable

### Ongoing PEP meetings:

**Target:** C to be able to identify and understand simple number bonds.

**Actions:**

FirstClass@Number intervention on number bonds 1 x weekly for 6 weeks

Maths Shed home learning number bonds focus 1 x weekly for 6 weeks

Teacher focus on number bonds when checking in with C during lessons

Not all actions will require funding, but all actions should be written in PEP

**Success Criteria:** By the end of Year 1 Chloe will know by heart all number bonds to 10 and apply them effectively in her arithmetic work (seen in lessons and book work).

This time scale may be too long. Knowing the child and when is in the year is relevant here

## The ePEP on welfare call

The ePEP system is a secure website and only people authorised by Dorset Virtual School can use it. The system is available 24/7 on any device.

Each section of the PEP is colour coded to identify who should complete them. After the meeting, the PEP is quality assured by a member of our team.

One of the main benefits of the system is its capacity to hold information and generate reports. This allows us to assess the education and interventions in place for our children in care. It is also via this process that schools can access pupil premium plus to support their children. Further detail about Pupil Premium Plus is in the Pupil Premium Plus Policy.

### **Education settings will be able to view and add to:**

- Information relating to all children in care in your school setting.
- Details of the social worker and QARO (IRO) allocated to the child.
- Previous and current PEPs.
- Prior attainment and the information we hold on the child's current attendance.

The responsibility for the Pupil Premium Plus Grant (PP+) for children in care is with Dorset Virtual School. PP+ requests are made on the PEP within Welfare Call.

If you have forgotten your password , click on the 'forgotten username or password' link on the home screen and enter your username. An email for you to reset your password will be sent.

If the designated teacher details in your school have changed please contact your Virtual School Lead for guidance.

## **Navigating around the PEP on welfare call**

Once you are logged in you will find the full list of your caseload under EPEP > My Case Summary. This will show your cases with basic level details regarding other professionals linked to the young person, there is also a link which will take you directly to the PEP document:

### **Go To (Young Person's Name) PEP**

Alternatively, you can click on EPEP on the top menu bar which will bring up the EPEP homepage. You are able to view the status of your caseload which appears across 3 columns labelled 'overdue PEPs', 'No PEP dates', and 'Upcoming PEPs'.

### **How to complete the PEP**

Once you have accessed the PEP document, 1 of 2 colours will be shown across the tab headings which is to highlight which user is responsible for which sections of the PEP document:

- The Designated Teacher (DT) sections of the PEP are highlighted in **RED**
- Sections where the Social Worker will enter this information shows as **BLUE**

When all of the necessary information has been added to the PEP document you will need to press the 'click when completed' button situated at the top of the PEP.

(Please be aware that this will only appear from the date that the PEP meeting takes place). By clicking the **complete button** this will send a notification to the virtual school to notify them that you have completed your sections.

Once the PEP has been signed off by the DT, the virtual school will quality assure the document and rate this red, amber or green based on the quality of the information inputted. After this has happened the PEP will be fully completed and can be found in the previous PEPs section and the system will provide a new PEP form ready for the next meeting.

## ePEP notifications

Notifications will be sent as prompts to complete the PEP once a PEP date has been entered onto the document. If you receive an email from Welfare Call in regards to a meeting that may have been cancelled, it is important that once a new date has been arranged that this is entered onto the document. Please be aware that any notifications sent via email will not include the young person's name, you will need to log into the system and check your internal mails for further details.

## Saving information input into the PEP

Information input into the PEP must be saved per page. There is not an autosave function built into the ePEP and where the system does not detect any navigation or input for a period of 40 minutes, it will time you out. Once the system notices you are within your last 10 minutes, a small green box will appear in the bottom right of your screen which will countdown your last 10 minutes. We would recommend that you save your page at this point to reset the timer and ensure no work is lost.

## Support Helpline

01226 716333 or [epep@welfarecall.com](mailto:epep@welfarecall.com)

# Pupil Premium Plus Funding

## What is the Pupil Premium?

The Pupil Premium funding for Children in Care from the DfE is held by the Virtual School in Dorset, and Designated Teachers can apply for funding via the PEP process. Dorset Virtual School retains a small proportion of PP+ centrally for the benefit of all Dorset Children in Care. This is spent on areas such as the following (guidance about the funding is updated by the DfE annually)

- To provide the EPEP
- Attendance monitoring
- Dorset Virtual School Awards
- Professional development opportunities for Designated Teachers, Social Workers and Foster Carers
- Targeted resourcing for interventions
- Enrichment programmes

This is reviewed annually. For further details go to Pupil Premium - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)).

## What can Pupil Premium Plus be spent on?

PP+ funding can be spent on the following areas - **over and above the school/setting's normal core offer:**

- a) Academic provision for young people (to include peer mentoring, collaborative learning, resources and tuition.)
- b) Inclusion (By preventing or reducing suspensions and permanent exclusions)
- c) Reintegration
- d) Transition into next key stage or new learning provider
- e) Improving attendance
- f) Developing social, emotional and interpersonal skills where they are a barrier to learning and can be directly linked to under-performance (through mentor support, nurturing approach, rewards.)
- g) Alternative curriculum

### **PP+ funding cannot be spent on:**

- a) Anything a school would normally provide for **all** of its pupils or which have no additional cost to the school.
- b) Anything a carer would provide from their allowances given by the LA, for example: school uniform, sports clothing, school meals, transport to school, holidays and day trips.
- c) 100% of a school trip. (VS recommendation is 1/3 of cost of trip maximum but only if it reflects an area for development in the targets within the PEP (see further information below)).
- d) The support set out in an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
- e) Access to services e.g. speech and language or occupational therapy, statutory assessment or other support from health, CAMHS or education.
- f) Basic equipment that the child or young person needs to participate or for lessons including school uniform, stationery, school lunches, or equipment for physical education lessons.
- g) Internet access
- h) Before or after school childcare
- i) When the PEP Target does not match the discussion around the child's individual needs or criteria of the PP+ grant (Golden Thread).
- j) Alternative Provision (see further information below)
- k) 1:1 TA support in class
- l) Transport

Please refer to the Dorset Virtual School Pupil Premium Policy for details about what the funding can be spent on and how you go about applying. Your Virtual School Lead can email you a copy, and it is also available to download from the Welfare Call site (you will find it most easily on the 'Targets and Outcomes' tab).

# Appendix 1: Use of abbreviations and terms

CIC	Children in Care (term preferred by Dorset Virtual School)
CLA	Children Looked After
LAC	Looked After Children
UASC	Unaccompanied Asylum Seeker Children
PLAC	Children Previously Looked After
DfE	Department for Education
PAN	Planned Admission Numbers
PEP	Personal Education Plan
PO	Placement Order
PR	Parental Responsibility
RO	Residence Order
SGO	Special Guardianship Order

# Appendix 2: Dorset Model School Children in Care policy

## Introduction

School believes that in partnership with Dorset Council as Corporate Parents we have a special duty to safeguard and promote the education of Children In Care. This policy includes requirements set out in "Statutory guidance on the duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked after children under section 52 of the Children Act 2004" and associated guidance on the education of Looked after Children.

## Aims

- To provide a safe and secure environment, where education is valued and there is a belief in the abilities and potential of all children.
- To support our looked after children and give them access to every opportunity to achieve to their potential and enjoy learning.
- To fulfil our schools' role as corporate parents to promote and support the education of our Children In Care, by asking the question, 'Would this be good enough for my child?'

## In pursuit of this policy we will

- Nominate a Designated Teacher for Children In Care and those previously in care (PLAC) who will act as their advocate and co-ordinate support for them.
- Nominate a school governor to ensure that the needs of Children In Care in the school are taken into account at a school management level and to support the Designated Teacher.
- Support the Designated Teacher in carrying out their role by making time available and ensuring that they attend training on Children In Care.

### The Designated Teacher will:

- Be familiar with and follow the DfE guidance as presented in The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children ([publishing.service.gov.uk](http://publishing.service.gov.uk))
- Maintain an up to date record of all Children in Care who are on the school roll. **This will include:**
  - Status i.e. care order or accommodated.
  - Type of Placement i.e. Foster, respite, residential.
  - Name of Social Worker, area office, telephone number.
  - Daily contact and numbers e.g. name of parent or carer or key worker in children's home.
  - SEN Code of Practice
  - Child Protection information when appropriate.
  - Baseline information and all test results.
  - Attendance figures
  - Exclusions
- Ensure that there is a Personal Education Plan (PEP) for each child/young person to include appropriate targets and above information. This must be compatible with the child's/young person's Care Plan and where applicable include any other school plan, e.g. Education, Health and Care Plan, and associated plans, Transition Plan, Pastoral Support Programme. This plan will be reviewed at a termly PEP meeting.
- Liaise with the Virtual School for Children In Care on a regular basis with regard to the performance, attendance and attainment of Children In Care.

- Ensure that if/when the child transfers school all relevant information is forwarded to the receiving school as a matter of priority.
- Ensure that systems are in place to identify and prioritise when Children In Care are underachieving and have early interventions to improve this in line with existing school policy.
- Ensure that systems are in place to keep staff up to date and informed about Children In Care where and when appropriate.
- Ensure that Children In Care, along with all children are listened to and have equal opportunity to pastoral support in school.
- Ensure that they keep the school up to date with current legislation and its implication for the school in respect of Children In Care.
- Report to the Governing body annually on the performance of the looked after children who are on the roll of the school.

#### **All staff will:**

- Be aware of the CIC and PLAC in their classes and give them all possible support and encouragement as students who need special provision and positive discrimination whilst preserving confidentiality and showing sensitivity and understanding.

#### **All Governors will:**

- Support the Local Authority in its statutory duty to promote the educational achievement of Children In Care
- Appoint a Designated Teacher to promote the educational achievement of all CIC and PLAC on the school roll.
- Nominate a named governor for CIC and PLAC
- Ensure that the Designated Teacher is appropriately qualified for the role (in accordance with regulations
- Ensure that the Designated Teacher has the opportunity to acquire and keep up-to-date the necessary skills, knowledge and training to understand and respond to the specific needs of Children in Care.

#### **Admission Arrangements**

We recognise that due to care arrangements CIC may enter school mid-term and that it is important that they are given a positive welcome and where appropriate additional support and pre-entry visits to help them settle. The school recognises that looked after children are an 'excepted group' and will prioritise Children In Care in the school's oversubscription criteria following the DCSF Admissions Code (Admissions of Looked after Children (England) Regulations (2006).

#### **Exclusions**

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School recognises that Children In Care are particularly vulnerable to exclusions. Where a CIC is at risk of exclusion the school will try every practicable means to maintain the child in school. A multi-professional meeting will be arranged, bringing together all those involved with the young person to discuss strategies to minimise the risk of exclusion. The child or young person's Personal Education Plan will reflect strategies to support the child and where relevant those employed in the Pastoral Support Plan. All relevant measures and resources will be considered to provide support to prevent an exclusion from happening. Please refer to the school's Behaviour Policy for more information.

# Appendix 3: A quick guide to ePEP completion process

Remember to press save at the end of every page on Welfare Call.

## PEP must be reviewed every term

### Social Worker

1. When the child comes into care, ensure all details are correct on Mosaic
2. Log on to the system and check your caseload is on there. Check the date of the PEP meeting on the PEP record. Ensure the carer is able to attend as well.
3. Complete (or update if any changes) the 'About Me' and 'Other Information' tabs of the ePEP – ensure that safeguarding section about prohibited contacts is clear. Click when completed at the top of the EPEP
4. Attend the PEP meeting (Virtual School Leads are available to discuss the case prior to the meeting – liaise with them as appropriate).
5. If you feel it is appropriate, print a copy and send to birth parents.

### Designated Teacher

New CIC will be added to your existing ePEP pupils by Welfare Call.

1. Log on to the ePEP system and check the PEP meeting date is correct.
2. Contact class/subject teachers for information relating to previous or potential new targets.
3. Prior to the meeting arrange for completion of 'My views, wishes and feelings' tab (or upload separate document capturing the young person's views).
4. Prior to the meeting, complete 'Progress and attainment' tab and any information needed in 'My Education' and 'Careers Information' tabs
5. Attend / lead the PEP meeting (make sure that the room is booked and feels safe for the child)
6. Complete the discussion notes section and the target setting tab either during or straight after the meeting
7. Once all is completed, press 'Click when completed' button for DTs at the top of the PEP.

### Foster Carer

1. Prior to the PEP meeting, informs Child's Social Worker of any concerns they have regarding education
2. Attend the PEP meeting
3. Contribute to the target setting and the discussion
4. Maintain contact with the Designated Teacher and Social Worker

### Virtual School Lead

1. Book the first PEP meeting with the school within 20 days of the child coming into care
2. Book termly PEP meetings at the previous meeting, ensuring that the date is added to EPEP
3. Attend and where needed lead PEP meeting
4. Provide advice and guidance as needed
5. Quality assure and finalise the ePEP
6. Notify SW or DT if revisions are required

# Appendix 4: PEP Quality Assurance Criteria

	Good / Outstanding	Requires Improvement	Inadequate
Basic Information Recording *	<p>The following are recorded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• UPN and Mosaic number</li> <li>• Domestic and school contact details</li> <li>• Date when child came into care</li> <li>• Date of commencement of PEP</li> <li>• Details of all key personnel and Designated Teacher</li> <li>• A date for the next PEP review</li> </ul>		Any of the information is missing
PEP Professionals Attendance	All relevant professionals invited and attended	All relevant professionals invited but not all attended	<p>Designated Teacher not present</p> <p>Virtual School staff not present</p>
Student Attendance *	Comprehensive information on attendance, exclusion, and time spent out of school	Attendance recorded but other information missing.	Intermittent or no recording of attendance, exclusion and missing out on education data
SEND (If applicable) *	<p>Comprehensive information on child's SEN provided, including level and type of need</p> <p>Clear connection between PEP and annual review for those with an EHCP, or with IEP (or similar) for those on SEND Support</p> <p>Clear evidence of appropriate personalised provision in place as part of graduated response</p>	<p>Some SEND information provided, but does not provide the full picture / does not connect to SEND planning / does not fully evidence appropriate personalised provision</p>	No SEND information provided for a child with known SEND, or SEND information not up to date
SDQ	SDQ score is recorded and referenced, e.g. linked to support where needed, or evidence of improvement referenced positively in record of meeting	SDQ score is recorded but not referenced	SDQ score is not recorded
Initial PEP*	Initial PEP is completed within 20 days of young person becoming looked after and is in place by the first LAC Review	Initial PEP is completed but is up to 2 weeks late	No evidence that actions from previous PEP have been discussed or completed

	Good / Outstanding	Requires Improvement	Inadequate
Student progress	<p>Student progress is exceeding expectations and actions will maintain this</p> <p>If the student is not on track to meet their targets in literacy/English and numeracy/Maths s/he is being helped to make accelerated progress. The school/college takes effective action to enable the pupil to reach his/her potential</p>	<p>Student is making some progress but insufficient actions are in place to accelerate progress</p>	<p>Student is not making sufficient progress and actions are not in place to address this</p>
Aspirational assessment target setting	<p>Assessment target setting is aspirational and achievable, taking into account the young person's starting point at point of coming into care as well as considering potential progress from previous attainment points</p> <p>Information provided enables clear comparison between targets and current academic performance</p>	<p>Assessment target setting is not aspirational</p> <p>Information provided makes it hard to compare between targets and current academic progress</p>	<p>Assessment targets are not set or are set below national expectations</p> <p>There is no comparison between targets and current academic progress</p>
LAC Need / Academic Target Setting	<p>At least two targets are set that identify and address identified need</p> <p>Targets are written clearly and concisely</p> <p>Targets are specific</p>	<p>Targets are set but they are not specific enough</p>	<p>No targets are set</p> <p>Targets are set but they do not connect to other information on the PEP</p>
Actions From Target Setting	<p>Actions are clearly identified to achieve these targets</p> <p>All actions have a named owner</p> <p>All actions have a date for completion / frequency and length of action</p>	<p>Actions are recorded and link to targets, but it is not clear who is completing them or timescales are vague</p>	<p>Actions are not recorded</p> <p>Actions are recorded but do not link to targets</p>

	<b>Good / Outstanding</b>	<b>Requires Improvement</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>
Success Criteria From Target Setting	<p>Success criteria include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Timeframe for achievement</li> <li>• Measurable descriptors</li> </ul>	<p>Success criteria are linked to targets but are not precise enough / lack clear timeframes / descriptors are not measurable</p> <p>Success criteria are specific but are not challenging enough or equally are not realistic</p>	<p>Success criteria are not about the young person / are not recorded.</p> <p>Success criteria are not linked to targets</p> <p>Not all targets have success criteria</p>
Pupil Premium Plus Funding	<p>Where actions require PP Plus funding, the specific cost is recorded</p> <p>If a specific provider is being sought, reasons are clear</p> <p>Where an intervention previously used is being requested again (or a similar intervention being requested), there is clear evidence of previous impact and why a continuation is required</p>	Funding information is provided without consideration of previous spend and its impact	<p>No funding information is provided</p> <p>Inaccurate funding information is provided</p> <p>What the funding is for is not clear</p>
Transition preparation	The PEP evidences that the student is prepared for the next transition in his/her education, training or employment	Student is prepared for transition, but actions are not fully developed	Student is not adequately prepared for transition and no actions can be evidenced to address this

# Appendix 5: Model report to the governing body on Children In Care

## 1) General

Date of report:

Designated Teacher for Children in Care:

Number of Children in Care in this school by year group:

Number of Children Previously in Care in this school by year group:

## 2) Training

List of CIC training ATTENDED by DT		List of CIC training PROVIDED by DT	
Training	Date attended	Training	Date attended

## 3) Progress and achievement of Children in Care

UPN	Year Group	% Attendance	Exclusions	Special Needs	Total amount of funding used per child	Evidence of educational, social, emotional progress

## 4) Fulfilling the requirements of the role of designated teacher for Children in Care

Do you have the time and resources to carry out your responsibilities? **Consider the following:**

- The number of children in care on roll, both from Dorset and other local authorities.
- The need to produce and ensure the implementation of good quality PEPs for each child in care
- Extra work arising from more involved cases e.g. where a child in care has complex needs
- The need to liaise with a wide range of people in and out of the local authority.
- What training have you and other staff received on children in care?

## 5) Report on the progress of children in care

Report on the progress made by children in care who are currently on roll or who have been on roll within the past twelve months compared with other children at the school and national benchmarks.

**This should cover:**

- Academic progress – are children on track to meet age related expectations by the end of the key stage?
- Special Educational Needs - do any children in care fall into the category? Are their needs being met. Are any subject to an EHCP?
- Social and emotional development – how are these needs catered for?

## 6) Patterns of attendance and exclusions

**Consider the following:**

- Attendance – is it in line with or better than the attendance of other children in the school and nationally? If it is below, what steps are being taken to address this?
- Behaviour – have there been any fixed term exclusions and if so, what action has been taken to prevent a recurrence?

## 7) Planning Issues

**Consider the following:**

- Are all PEPs up to date and of good quality? How have you and other staff worked with colleagues outside of the school to support children in care for example; The Virtual School, SEND Team, Educational Psychologists
- Where are the needs of children in care reflected in the school's development planning, staff deployment etc?
- Do any school policies have any implications for children in care that need addressing e.g. charging for school trips, participation in extended school activities?