



Promoting the education of previously looked after children



All our advice to parents, guardians, educational settings, young people and other agencies is based around our 6 principles of nurture. Our nurturing culture enables us to support educational settings, to enhance their teaching and learning and promote healthy outcomes for children

and young people We encourage educational settings, parents and guardians to focus on the children and young people's emotional needs and development as well as their academic learning.

For more information contact:

VSKPLAC@kent.gov.uk

virtualschool.lea.kent.sch.uk



Contents

Contents	2
Who are Virtual School Kent?	3
Our services	4
How to support previously looked after children and their families.	5
Holding regular EPPLAC meetings.	5
Promote a whole setting culture	6
The 6 principles of Nurture	7



Who are Virtual School Kent?

The Virtual School Kent's previously looked after children team (PLAC) is an advisory service. It is our aim to advise and provide information to parents and guardians, educational settings and all other relevant professionals who are involved in supporting these children to promote their educational achievement and engagement.

Previously looked after children are those children who:

Are no longer looked after by a local authority in England and Wales because they are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order; or

Were adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales. 'State care' is care provided by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other organisation whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.

Designated Teachers have a responsibility to ensure that previously looked after children are given the support they need to reach their full educational potential and it is VSK's duty to advise schools, parents and guardians to enable them to support the child's needs effectively.

Previously looked after children (and looked after children) are highly likely to have had disrupted learning, may have missed extended periods of school and many of them have special educational needs (SEN). The gaps in their learning and, in many cases the emotional impact of their experiences, are likely to have become significant barriers to their progress.

Our services

Parents and guardians

We offer phone consultations with parents and guardians in the first instance to advise them of expectations around school, attainment, wellbeing and special educational needs and other services available to them.

We can attend Education Plan for Previously Looked After Children (EPPLAC) meetings only if families wish us to. We are not representing them but are purely there in an advisory role for parents, guardians and the school.

Education settings

Education settings can arrange phone consultations with us to discuss previously looked after children in general. If you wish to discuss a particular child, we ask that parents or guardians email their consent to us stating that they are happy for VSK to discuss their child with you.

Please email **VSKPLAC@kent.gov.uk** if you have a general enquiry or you wish to arrange a phone consultation with one of the team.

We offer online training from recognised training organisations, for key staff members working with previously looked after children. Please refer to our website for more details. We also offer Designated Teacher training and other initiatives throughout the year, to support the cohort of children within your school.

Website

VSK supports educational settings and families via the Virtual School website which is constantly being updated with relevant information and resources. The aim of this website is to be the 'go to' site for all Kent parents and educational settings for information and advice; so together, we can make a difference for previously looked after children and their families.

www.virtualschool.lea.kent.sch.uk/plac

How to support previously looked after children and their families.

VSK are here to guide you and the school to make a difference to the lives of these children. We are here for you, whenever you or the parents or guardians need us. We would always advise Designated Teachers from schools and educational settings to support children and families by:

Holding regular EPPLAC meetings.

Education Plan for Previously Looked After Children (EPPLAC) meetings are invaluable in terms of finding out the needs of previously looked after children, so that you can plan and support them in the most effective way. By understanding how they present at home, at school and what additional challenges they may face allows schools to support them to reach their full potential. By understanding your cohort of previously looked after children, as a Designated Teacher you can then discuss with your SENCO and SLT the areas of need and interventions needed and how best to use the Pupil Premium Grant for previously looked after children for this cohort within your school.

Please refer to our website for more guidance on EPPLAC Meetings www.virtualschool.lea.kent.sch.uk/plac/education-plan-for-plac



Promote a whole setting culture

A school that understands the personalised learning needs of every previously looked after child and prioritises their personal, emotional and academic needs, is a school that will ensure these children thrive.

To do this, as Designated Teacher, you take lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand the things that can affect how previously looked after children learn and achieve.

This involves making sure that all staff:







- Have high expectations of previously looked after children's learning and set targets to accelerate educational progress.
- Are aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation (attachment awareness) from birth families and understand that some children may find it difficult to build relationships of trust with adults because of their experiences, and how this might affect the child's behaviour;
- Understand how important it is to see previously looked after children as individuals rather than as a homogeneous group, not publicly treat them differently from their peers, and show sensitivity about who else knows about their previously looked after status;
- Understand the importance of involving the child's parents or guardians in decisions affecting their child's education, and be a contact for parents or guardians who want advice or have concerns about their child's progress at school.

The designated teacher for looked after and previously looked after children. Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities February 2018





The 6 principles of Nurture

-  **Whatever changes you face we are here to guide you**
-  **No matter what age, everyone is at a different stage**
-  **VSK can help you find your voice**
-  **How you behave tells us how you feel**
-  **VSK can be your safe space**
-  **Nurture helps you feel happy and healthy**

“As a SENCO I work with different organisations but I must say that Virtual School are exceptional; they are just a phone call or an email away. It is always useful to know that I can receive non judgemental friendly professional advice to help us support our students.”

SENCO/Designated Teacher from a West Kent Secondary School.

If you have a parent or guardian who is interested in contacting us or unsure of our service, please refer them to our virtualschool.lea.kent.sch.uk or email VSKPLAC@kent.gov.uk
You can also provide them with our Parent and Guardian leaflet (available on our website).