

To all Designated Teachers

I hope this email finds you all well in such difficult times. We have been overwhelmed with the work and support that schools have put in place so quickly for their school communities.

The Virtual School team is here to support you all during this challenging time, in any way we can. Through further consultation with social care colleagues in relation to our Shropshire looked after children and taking note of the advice set out within the guidance it is important that social workers and foster carers have been involved in the decisions that have been made with regards to whether or not a looked after child accesses their school provision. The DFE has stated that the impact of placement stability was the key driver for ensuring that each looked after child still had a school placement available to them. The disruption and impact of placement breakdown could be catastrophic and hence this provision has been made. Early indications are that a very small number of our children are accessing school. Overtime, this may change and the needs of the care placement may be that a child will have to access school. Schools are to provide educational resources which will support their learning at home.

In line with the DFE guidance <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people/coronavirus-covid-19-guidance-on-vulnerable-children-and-young-people> we would like to request a weekly feedback on the Attendance of the Shropshire Looked After children in your school and if pupils are not in attendance what your welfare / monitoring process is for them. (From point 15. **Schools should, however, ensure they have a process in place to check on the welfare of any child in need who does not attend on any day.**)

A number of school have shared their processes which you may find useful. This is also in line with the advice shared by Shropshire EIS service:

Ref'	9. Safeguarding Vulnerable Children	Tick / sign / time
SVC1	Identify all vulnerable children within your school community who: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are on a Child Protection Plan• Have a Children in Need Plan Are considered vulnerable because of home circumstance or poverty	
SVC2	If your school is closing identify a lead person (Teacher/TA) to make regular contact during the week with the child/ren during the school closure	
SVC3	If you have any concerns ring the Shropshire Council Social Care Team – add in the contact number	

A named staff member is responsible for keeping in contact with all LAC pupils.

This contact could be daily to the pupil via email. Maybe twice weekly to the foster carer to see if they are okay accessing work or if they need any additional support.

The DT/named staff member will then send details of their Shropshire LAC Attendance and monitoring contact to the Virtual School by the end of the day each Friday – virtualschool@shropshire.gov.uk

This ensures will ensure that schools are not being inundated with requests for individual team members and/or social workers. We can share the information with social care colleagues.

PEPS

In accordance with the latest government guidance, the Virtual School expects that PEPs already planned for the remainder of the Spring term 2020 will be completed by the Designated Teacher and signed off by the end of term. The Designated Teacher can telephone or email the Virtual School link worker for further advice and support if required. If there is no date set for the Summer term can we please suggested noting Friday 3rd July as the summer term meeting date.

Resources to support looked after learners

The Virtual School has collated a comprehensive bank of resources to share with foster carers and residential units. This will also be made available on the ePEP noticeboard.

Going forward, there will continue to be lots of issues to resolve and questions to answer as the situation evolves. The Virtual School team are here to support you with our looked after children and to also offer advice, guidance and information on any issues relating to previously looked after children.

Please do not hesitate to contact the Virtual School directly virtualschool@shropshire.gov.uk Tel: 01743 250124.

Yours sincerely

Rose Hooper

Shropshire Virtual School Head