The work of the Virtual School

What is a Virtual School?

The Virtual School is responsible for improving the educational attainment of all children and young people in the care of Waltham Forest, including those who live and attend schools in other Local Authorities.

Our 'pupils' will already be placed in a mainstream school, or sometimes a specialist provision, but additionally they will be on the roll of the Virtual School. The Virtual School has staff just like a 'real' school and it treats its pupils as though they were in one school by tracking their progress and providing support and interventions through a targeted approach. In this way, our children are provided with an additional layer of specialist support complementing what is already happening in school.

Our success comes through close working with our partners - schools, designated https://thehub.walthamforest.gov.uk/tags/teachers, social workers, carers, local authority staff, health and other professional organisations; the involvement of Councillors in their role as corporate parents and, of course, children and young people.

Who we are

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What we do

The Virtual School works to ensure that schools, social workers, carers and other professionals understand statutory responsibilities and are aware of best practice around the education of children in care. Communication about our children should be regular and constructive and demonstrate that we are all working together successfully to help them thrive.

Our priorities are to:

- Promote high aspirations and raise achievement through challenge, support and targeted intervention.

- Ensure that our young people access the right education and training, which leads them on to a long term education, training and employment pathway.
- Ensure that our young people are able to access high quality support, which meets their needs in a timely way.
- Work closely with all those involved in providing education so that they understand the issues and challenges facing our young people and their role in working together to respond to and overcome them.
- Reduce challenges resulting from changes of care placement or school
- Remove barriers to engagement and good attendance
- Promote equality/equity and diversity.
- Provide access to high quality training for school staff, social workers, and carers
- Plan for success now and in the future, based on a secure understanding of students' needs
- Give students access to an inspiring range of extended learning opportunities
- Ensure that the Pupil Premium Plus and other resources are used effectively and impact on educational progress
- Monitor Personal Education Plans to ensure that they are timely, of good quality and are regularly reviewed.
- Make sure that care leavers from 16-25 years receive appropriate guidance, are in employment, education, and training, and are making good progress.
- Put the voice of young people in care at the heart of their education planning
- Celebrate educational success of children and young people in care

Why we do it

Many individual children and young people in care enjoy and do well at school. However, as a group, children in care do not perform as well in their education as their peers. Since April 2014, every local authority in England has had to appoint at least one person to fulfil the local authority's statutory duty to promote the educational achievement of its children in care, wherever they live or are educated. Within the local authority, the Virtual School Head is the statutory lead with responsibility for ensuring that arrangements are in place to improve educational experiences and outcomes.

Further research on the impact being in care has on education was undertaken by the Rees Foundation in 2015. It examined:

- Educational outcomes and progress for different groups,
- Individual characteristics, educational outcomes and progress
- Care placement, educational outcomes and progress
- Schooling, educational outcomes and progress
- Other factors, educational outcomes and progress

Logged-in users can download this report below.
Download the statutory guidance **that local authorities follow to support looked-after children's aspirations to achieve in further and higher education.**

Remit: Schools
Support Services: Looked after Children Education
Last updated: Tuesday, 21 February, 2017
chair of governorsschool business managerhead https://thehub.walthamforest.gov.uk/tags/teacher governorhttps://thehub.walthamforest.gov.uk/tags/teacher

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