

DESIGNATED TEACHER FOR CHILDREN WE CARE FOR AND PREVIOUSLY CARED FOR CHILDREN UPDATE



Issue 43

Term 5
2023/24



Welcome to the 43rd edition of the Designated Teacher update which is published termly. The aim of this publication is to provide some information updates, contacts, useful strategies and ideas to support the work you do with our pupils. Watch out for each edition and do pass on, print and display. The more we can raise awareness, the better equipped schools are to do their best for our children. If you have any questions/requests for content of upcoming issues, contact laura.east@oxfordshire.gov.uk

CONTACT US

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Training Programme 2023/24

– BOOK HERE

Upcoming training:

Tuesday 23rd April

PACE for School Staff

Tuesday 7th May

Designated Teacher Network Meeting

Tuesday 18th June

PACE for School Staff

Thursday 27th June

Oxfordshire Virtual School Conference

Theme: *Nurturing a strong sense of identity
and belonging in care-experienced children*

**We will share our updated 2024-25 training
and support offer in next term's newsletter**

2024/25 Pupil Premium Plus for Children We Care For

The new 2024/25 financial year has started so you now have a full Pupil Premium Plus pot for your Children We Care For (CWCF). Summer Term funding can be useful to bridge the transition between year groups with interventions such as tutoring to boost confidence, key worker support, time with new teachers, etc. Are there trips, visits or other enrichment opportunities coming up in the Summer Term that your children would benefit from? You may also think about how you can use funding strategically to upskill new and existing staff in September.

The individual funding amounts for each pupil have increased from April 2024 to March 2025. For CWCF attending primary and secondary settings, their 2024/25 Pupil Premium Plus allocation is:

- Oxfordshire-based: £2000*
- Out of County: £2500*
- Early Years - £388

* N.B. Year 11s are only entitled to 1/3 of the above as Post-16 funding comes from a separate pot.

For more information, refer to our updated [Pupil Premium Plus Policy](#).

Children in kinship care

In September 2024, the role of Virtual Schools will expand further to specifically include championing the educational attendance, attainment and progress of children in kinship care.

The Virtual School's strategic role will include:

1. Raising the visibility of the distinct needs of children in different types of kinship care arrangements and the disadvantages that they can experience.
2. Promoting practice that supports attendance and engagement in education.
3. Promoting practice that improves children in kinship care's outcomes to narrow the attainment gap, so that every child has the opportunity to reach their full potential.

Furthermore, The Virtual School will extend to provision of advice and information, on request, to all kinship carers with Special Guardianship and Child Arrangements Orders as part of their non-statutory role. This will be an important step in helping more kinship carers to navigate the education system, in turn helping them to advocate for the educational achievement of their children. More children in kinship care will receive the help they need to thrive at school.

For more information and links to support, visit: [Children in kinship care | Oxfordshire County Council](#)

Kinship Together Podcast

Kinship Together is a new podcast that features real-life stories, experiences and advice from kinship carers. You can listen to episode using the player below, or find and subscribe to the podcase on Apply Podcasts or Spotify.

[Kinship Together Podcast - Kinship Compass](#)

Transition Planning for Terms 5 and 6

Summer Term is a key time for planning new beginnings and endings. Change is unsettling and for many children a move up a year or to another setting is tricky. The Designated Teacher plays an important role in helping our children prepare for their next steps. Designated Teachers will know the story of each child and will be able to notice changes in behaviour or motivation and recognise these as potential anxieties about the end of the school year.

Look out for tummy aches, attendance wobbles, lack of motivation, bravado or ambivalence. All these may be masking feelings a child may not be able to articulate. **Year 6s and Year 11s particularly will be realising that they are leaving.** It is a good time to hold a PEP and make sure there is good communication and planning between year groups and settings. Don't leave things to chance - invite the DT from the new school or college to the review, set-up extra visits and talk to staff in the next year group or setting so there so someone holding the case and keeping that pupil in mind. Talk to your Virtual School case workers for ideas about how best to support a smooth transition.

- Create a Transition Pupil Profile – see Virtual School [PEP Toolkit](#) for more guidance and templates.
- Keep carers or parents up-to-date and listen to their worries and hopes.
- Liaise with the SENCO for identification and sharing of SEND information.
- Booster groups and 1-1 tuition are great at transition times.
- Plan for endings – don't forget opportunities to say goodbye such as creating a memory book, signing a card, special goodbye sessions with key adults in school. This makes a huge difference to our children.

Care Leavers' Bursary

From 1st August 2023, the Care Leaver Bursary for Apprenticeships went up to £3,000. For more information, visit:

[Apprenticeships bursary for care leavers - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/apprenticeships-bursary-for-care-leavers)

Y6 and Y11 Transition Profiles

Transition profiles for Year 6s and Year 11s need to be written for all our young people moving on this September. The templates can be found [here](#). Once completed, the profiles need to be uploaded into the documents section of the PEP. Please contact your case holders for support (if needed) and feel free to share the profile by email with them. We need profiles in place by the end of this term.

PP+ for Previously Cared For Children

From April 2024, the Pupil Premium Plus allocation for children adopted from care, children who left care under a Special Guardianship Order (SGO) and children who left care under a Child Arrangement Order (CAO) will be £2570.

For more information on how to access and utilise this funding, visit our [Previously cared for children | Oxfordshire County Council](#) webpage.

Careers Education

The [Gatsby Benchmark](#) is the standard framework schools should be looking to achieve in terms of CEIAG (Careers Education, Information, Advice and Guidance) for ALL young people. Our young people may need a little more self-belief and handholding to encourage them to access careers advice. Please keep this in mind and remind your colleagues that our young people will need that extra bit of staff time and attention to support them to think about careers and future planning.

Upcoming Open Days

Please encourage your Year 11s to attend the next College Open Events, especially if they have not yet applied or chosen a course. Please let Isabel Crowther Isabel.Crowther@oxfordshire.gov.uk know if they would like someone to support them on the visit or with their applications. It is also a good time to encourage your Year 10s to attend Open Days to start getting some ideas for their Post-16 options. Any Year 10s with EHCPs should have their Annual Review in the Summer Term to start considering post 16 providers.

18th April, 5:30-8pm, The Henley College [Information Event 18th April | The Henley College](#)

24th April, 4:30-7:30pm, Banbury and Bicester College [Banbury and Bicester College Summer Open Event - Banbury and Bicester College \(activatelearning.ac.uk\)](#)

1st May, 4:40pm-7:30pm, Blackbird Leys Technology Campus [Blackbird Leys Technology Campus Summer Open Event - City of Oxford College \(activatelearning.ac.uk\)](#)

1st May, 4:30-7:30pm, Reading College [Reading College Summer Open Event - Reading College \(activatelearning.ac.uk\)](#)

1st May, 5:30-7pm, Sparsholt College [Experience Sparsholt - Sparsholt College Hampshire](#)

8th May, 4:30-7:30pm, City of Oxford College [City Centre Campus Summer Open Event - City of Oxford College \(activatelearning.ac.uk\)](#)

8th May, 4:30-7:30pm, Bracknell and Wokingham College [Bracknell and Wokingham College Summer Open Event - Bracknell and Wokingham College \(activatelearning.ac.uk\)](#)

19th June, 3:30-7pm, Abingdon and Witney College [Open Day June: Witney - Abingdon & Witney College \(abingdon-witney.ac.uk\)](#)



Oxfordshire Virtual School presents:

2024 Annual Conference

'Nurturing a strong sense of identity and belonging in care-experienced children'



Join Oxfordshire Virtual School and contributors for our 2024 Annual Conference - a day of connection, learning and sharing of best practice.

The day will consist of keynotes, a choice of 3 workshops, an opportunity to network and a panel Q&A.

For more information and to book your free place, [click here](#).

Instability is an issue for many Children We Care For – good attendance at school is important to create a sense of belonging

Children absent from school miss out on much more than learning. They miss social opportunities, clubs and events, feedback and play. Good attendance is a big focus in Oxfordshire and we know that **being in school is a huge protective factor** for our vulnerable pupils - not just our care experienced children but also all children with a social worker. Outcomes for these groups are typically significantly below that of their peers. **Good school attendance is critical if we are to improve outcomes for our children.**

**** In some cases, not attending school (including suspension from school) can risk a care placement breakdown for our children ****

Attendance is collected every day by Looked After Call for all CWCF, so **our cohort is very closely monitored.** Virtual School case workers will contact schools to follow up absences – such as a long-term illness or an unauthorised mark. **Designated Teachers should inform social workers about any request to take holidays in term time.** Attendance can be impacted by moves between schools. We aim to get our children into a new school as quickly as possible.

We know you will have systems and processes in place to support attendance. Examples of actions include: Calling home for all children who are absent, providing meet and greet check ins/providing key adult support, scheduling 1:1 time so issues are noticed before they escalate, working closely with the SENCo to identify SEN barriers, creating nurture spaces in school, giving responsibilities in school such as putting chairs up or looking after a class pet, **being aware of triggers** such as tests, trips. etc. For other ideas, please refer to [Improving attendance: good practice for schools and multi-academy trusts - Case study - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/improving-attendance-good-practice-for-schools-and-multi-academy-trusts)

Always get the social worker involved straight away if you sense an attendance issue might be bubbling and contact your Virtual School case worker who will be able to provide supportive ideas.