

School Aged CLA (Children aged 5 – 16)

Key Action points:

- All Somerset school aged CLA must have a Personal Education Plan (PEP) which is reviewed once each term. The PEP can be amended and reviewed more frequently but a meeting of the school, social worker, carers, parents if appropriate and above all, the child/young person must take place each term.
- It is the social worker's responsibility to initiate the meetings and the date for the next term's meetings should be agreed by all concerned and confirmed in the PEP document. Once a meeting date is confirmed, thevirtualschool@somerset.gov.uk should be notified at the earliest possible point so that paperwork can be sent out to school, social worker and Virtual School Advisory Teacher for checking and preparation ahead of the meeting.
- Somerset Virtual School cannot attend all PEP meetings. If a VS representative would be helpful for a particular meeting, please contact the advisory teacher or thevirtualschool@somerset.gov.uk to request this. The team will try to offer support.
- The PEP document and guidance can be downloaded from the VS website www.somersetvirtualschool.co.uk. Once the meeting has taken place the completed document must be returned to thevirtualschool@somerset.gov.uk within 10 school days. The document is only complete once the advisory teacher has approved it and the finalised version has been sent by the Virtual School to school and CSC for circulation and recording.
- Somerset Virtual School wants every CLA to be able to make good progress in school and achieve their best. This means different things for each learner. Rigorous target setting through school procedures and PEP meeting is particularly important for CLA with attention paid to reducing learning gaps resulting from the impact on education of complexities prior to becoming CLA, a focus on raising aspirations and widening horizons, thoughtful/detailed planning for the future and transitions, regular review of flight paths and examination options.
- There is a policy outlining how Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) for CLA is allocated. This can be found on our website www.somersetvirtualschool.co.uk. Money is allocated to all schools in the first half of each term for every CLA on their roll. At the PEP meeting use of the allocated money should be agreed and the impact of any previous expenditure reviewed. All monies allocated should be directly connected to activities that will increase rates of progress, maximise academic achievement and secure learning engagement. Where/if amounts in excess of the allocated sum are required, this must be negotiated with the Virtual School. No additional expenditure is acceptable until the Virtual School Head has approved it and this is recorded in the supporting PEP documentation. PPG is usually paid directly to schools who then pay invoices to other agencies/providers etc.
- The attendance of CLA should be closely monitored and support put in place if issues begin to arise that impact on regular attendance. Appointments including those for therapeutic intervention, contact and pre-adoption activities should not routinely be scheduled during the school day. Holidays should not be requested during term time.
- The Virtual School commissions an attendance monitoring service to monitor the attendance of all Somerset CLA. This service will make daily contact with schools to gather the attendance data for all children/young people on the roll of Somerset Virtual School. This data is used by the VS team to monitor and intervene as necessary.

Somerset Virtual School



- Part-time timetables should not be agreed without the involvement of the Virtual School. A clear plan for review, explicit intended outcomes and details of all safeguarding arrangements for time not on the school site should be discussed, shared and recorded.
- If a CLA is at risk of being excluded from school, a support plan should be agreed with the Virtual School. Any period of exclusion should be very carefully weighed up as the impact for CLA is significant and may be counter-productive. An alternative sanction may be possible through working in conjunction with the VS. After any period of exclusion, the VS should be invited to the reintegration meeting and the school will be required to contribute to a planning document intended to avoid further instances of exclusion.
- CLA should not be placed in schools that currently do not have an Ofsted grading of 'Good' or 'Outstanding'. If a child/young person is on roll at a school which becomes 'Requires Improvement' or 'Inadequate', or if they become a CLA whilst on roll in one of these schools, there will not necessarily be a school move required but the ability of the CLA to make progress will need to be considered alongside the benefits and risks of remaining at the school/moving school. The child/young person's wishes will be taken into account but professionals will need to steer the plan. At each PEP meeting for any CLA in an RI/I school, the situation will be revisited and opinions reviewed.
- If a child moves care placement for any reason there should not be an assumption that a change of school is required. The Virtual School should be alerted at the earliest possible point that the care placement is vulnerable, so conversations can take place regarding options and the new care plan. If a school move is needed, whenever possible this should be managed in a planned way allowing transition work with a new school and ensuring there is no period when a CLA is without an accessible school place.
- School admissions are requested by the social worker of the CLA but the Virtual School should be aware of any application and is able to offer advice and guidance regarding schools in a particular area. (see our 'What to Do If' document on In Year and Cyclical Admissions which includes links to Somerset Admissions on the VS website www.somersetvirtualschool.co.uk)
- If a CLA has an EHCP, the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Team (SEND) will determine the right school for a CLA. If a school move is needed for a CLA with an EHCP, it can take a considerable amount of time for the SEND team to consult and identify the right provision to meet the requirements of the EHCP. Particular care will, therefore, need to be taken in the planning of any move for a CLA with an EHCP.
- A CLA does not need an EHCP simply because they are a CLA but a request for assessment can be made by schools or by social workers where the LA has PR and there is evidence to suggest the CLA may have a special educational need. This should be done in consultation with the Virtual School. Submitting a request does not inevitably lead to a plan being issued. An EHCP does not necessarily mean a CLA will need to attend a special/specialist provision. Many children/young people with EHCPs are extremely successful in mainstream schools. (See our 'What to do if' document on CLA with SEND which includes links to Somerset Choices on the VS website www.somersetvirtualschool.co.uk)