



Somerset 's Virtual School for Children Looked After

Supporting the Attendance of Children Looked After

Designated Teachers Network Meeting in March 2016 were clear that the starting point for supporting excellent attendance for CLA is the same as that for any child or young in our schools but equally clear that with CLA there is a need to be even more vigilant and positive, anticipating potential problems and communicating effectively with all supporting adults. The following emerged as thoughts from the DTs.

Take an interest, listen

Make sure staff know enough about the CLA to be alert and responsive especially around potential 'hotspots' e.g. contact/change of placement/respite care

Where the child/young person is transported consider how best to address lateness due to this transport

Meet and greet – Who? When? Where? Something for all – avoid making a 'special case' unless that approach is appreciated

Manage school processes so as to respond to the individual not the cohort

Welcoming starts – Breakfast Club/key adult available/timetable re-jig to begin the day with something positive/enjoyable/kick start post the weekend

Communication with key adults – be sure to contact about the good as well as the tricky stuff/treat all carers as we would parents – be inclusive /make sure social worker's parental responsibility is remembered and they are included/don't be afraid to hold to account/appreciate the limitations and legal issues around the roles and responsibilities of all adults – agree expectations/build relationships and trust

Avoid supporting unhelpful sympathy that can lead to excusing poor attendance

Where possible allow a child or young person some autonomy or a role in decision making

Raise the profile of education at every opportunity and keep it high priority for all – a protective factor

Help children and young people to develop good habits around attendance – lots of change means this can be difficult or need practice

Plan carefully to manage changes and to prepare for transitions whenever possible