

How do we support carers?

We know that you are an invaluable support for children and young people to help them gain the best outcomes at school. For this reason, we offer online carer training and/or information sessions. These provide important information about education, such as school applications and trauma awareness, and practical help about how carers can support their young person(s) with learning and gaining better outcomes. We have also invested in a wide range of online learning modules via Anspear Publishing which you can complete at your own pace. Please see attached appendix a QR code.

Details of our offer for carers are advertised via communication from the fostering teams.

How can you find out more about us?

The Suffolk Virtual School has its own webpages on the Suffolk County Council website. We can be found:

<https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/children-families-and-learning/children-in-care-and-care-leavers/the-virtual-school-for-children-looked-after/>

Alternatively, type 'Suffolk Virtual School' into any search engine.

We have an X account [@SuffolkVirtual](#) which anyone can follow to find out more about our work.

Our office telephone number is 01473 260818.

Our office email address is suffolkvirtualschool@suffolk.gov.uk

You are always welcome to contact us if you have any queries.

Please see attached appendix about our advice to schools about the use of pupil premium funding as well as a summary of our advice regarding the roles and responsibilities within a PEP meeting.

Supporting Futures

The role of the Virtual School in
promoting the educational experiences
and outcomes of our children in care



Who are we?

Suffolk Virtual School is responsible for monitoring the educational experience and outcomes of each child in care.

We work with schools and education settings to put in place what each child needs to get the best outcomes and are as well prepared as possible for a happy, safe and successful adulthood.

We are part of Suffolk County Council and work closely with other services within the local authority, such as social care, school admissions and the teams that support children with special educational needs and disabilities. This means that we can work in partnership with these services to ensure that our children have the most appropriate education and most positive experience to meet their needs.

What do we do?

The main part of our work involves working with schools to make sure they are putting in place the most appropriate programme, support and staff to help each child to make progress. We do this by being in regular contact with every school's Designated Teacher and by monitoring each child's attendance and the termly online Personal Education Plan (ePEP).

Schools are responsible for each child's ePEP. This involves setting termly targets and putting in place support and interventions that help them to achieve the intended outcomes. Schools complete the ePEP across the course of a whole term. Planning meetings such as PEP meetings can be held at any point in the term, but should take place at least three times a year (one per term). The expectation is that the PEP meeting is organised by the child's social worker and you as the foster carer should be invited. Actions agreed during the PEP meeting (and other meetings) will be recorded on the ePEP in a section called Pupil Voice and Planning. Support and interventions will often be funded by pupil premium grant, which we issue directly to schools each term. Typically this will be up to £600 per term.

As carers, you can request a copy of your child's termly targets so that you can support them to achieve the planned outcomes. Of course, your views are invaluable in helping to shape the child's education plan each term.

We prefer our work to be behind the scenes. Although we work closely with each education setting and other partners such as social workers, we leave the nuts and bolts of every day to them.

We don't usually attend PEP meetings, CiC reviews or EHCP Annual Reviews, unless there is a specific need for our input. This is because we are committed to child-centred planning. We don't usually have direct contact with carers but we do work closely with your supervising social workers.

We do, however, regularly take part in wider planning meetings as required. The challenge and support nature of our work means that we are able to oversee the progress of all of the children on our roll.

There will however be occasions where a child or their school may need specific support with their education. For example, a school move may be required or there has been a request for the child to be assessed for an Education, Care and Health Plan (EHCP). We work collaboratively to provide advice, guidance and support.

We also work very closely with the Psychology and Therapeutic Services team at Suffolk County Council. For example, as part of this partnership schools and social workers can request an Assessment of Additional Needs Tool (AANT) <https://www.suffolk.gov.uk/children-families-and-learning/pts/>

What does our Post 16 offer look like?

Our Suffolk Virtual College has oversight of children in care and care leavers between 16-25 years. We are committed to ensuring that all care experienced young people can thrive, personally, socially and financially. We work in close partnership with colleagues in social care, settings and providers as well as external services to support each young person to have the opportunity to maximise their potential— from the end of Year 11 onwards. This means we:

- track and monitor the employment, education or training of each young person
- promote the engagement in employment, education or training of young people who are currently NEET (Not in employment, education or training)
- track the achievements of each young person and support the, and/or their setting or provider to maximise their outcomes