

Birmingham Virtual School Role – Education Support Advisor for Statutory School Aged Children 5-16years

As you will be aware from our letters and briefings in the Spring Term the Virtual School has changed the way it supports our children and our schools. We have a number of different roles supporting our children, families and schools.

This letter outlines the ways your Education Support Advisor will work with our children/young people and yourself as the designated teacher from September. Please note there is a separate letter outlining the support from your Area Education Officer.

The Virtual School Education Officer and Education Support Advisor for your school/education setting will use a range of pupil outcome indicators and your communication with us, to identify **which young people need intensive support** from the Virtual School via your Education Support Advisor.

All children supported by an Education Support Advisor will be identifiable through the ‘Virtual School Status’ classification on the at the Top of the Young Person’s Profile Page (as per email broadcast to you via EGOv in May 21). Any pupil showing as red in the Virtual School status will be supported by an Education Advisor. They will attend the PEP meetings for this child/young person but as per statutory guidance the designated teacher remains responsible for the PEP (or the social work for an initial PEPs); and they will lead and chair the PEP meeting, unless this has already been negotiated with the advisor (who will chair and lead if the DT is new to role; or if it has been agreed the PEP meeting will be complex). It is the Designated Teacher (DT) and Social Workers (SW) joint responsibility to confirm dates/times and send PEP meeting invites to all relevant parties.

In addition to attendance at PEP meeting your Education Support Advisor will:

- Discuss and agree with the designated teacher and other professional the coordination of other education meetings they believe should be set up and will attend. *See section of this letter titled ‘Other pupil focussed meetings outside of the PEP’*
- Provide specific advice and support related to interventions that will support the pupil to increase attainment, engagement and participation. This will include sharing the Virtual School’s [central offer](#) for our young people. Which will be expanding in Spring and Summer 2022 under a new commissioning framework.
- Consider any school additional PP+ request and will sign these off and submit these into their Virtual School for processing if they agree to the spend. They can also advise and share best practice around effective pupil premium spend.
- Quality Assure all PEP for the pupils assigned to them each term once the designated teacher has signed the PEP off as complete. It is a requirement that the DT must sign off PEPs within a working week of the PEP meeting. The quality and completion of all your children/young people’s PEPs will be discussed with your Virtual School Area Officer at your agreed annual corporate parent visit.

In addition, the Education Support Advisors have a wide range of skills and expertise. Based on the needs of the children they are working to support they may also offer to undertake the following:

- Bespoke school/staff training. Further details of courses and content will be advertised through the PEP notice board this year; or ask your Virtual School Officer or Advisor.
- Pupil observation of our Child(ren) in Care in the classroom to share ideas and strategies as a supportive external professional view
- Skill staff on using pupil assessment tools PEP Toolkit/ Strengths and Difficulties Assessment
- Working with key adults/pupil to capture strong pupil voice to inform future actions, interventions and support. Encourage/demonstrate use of Squiddle within the PEP.
- Write any commission request to develop pupil focussed activities/programmes that might benefit a child through a small-scale pilot.

Other Pupil focussed discussions outside of the PEP for pupils with a PEP status 'red'

1. PEP targets a follow up discussion - a DT can contact the Advisor via email/phone call to request further advice or support post PEP meeting; or your Advisor may in turn request to meet key teachers, school support staff and/or designated teacher to ensure that the targets agreed for the child/young person in the PEP are being actioned, known and understood. Your advisor from the Virtual School will communicate with you and negotiate the focus of the conversation with the professional(s) but it will typically involve:

- What assessment tools have been used to inform what the child's needs are and how the actions or interventions will support these needs?
- What child focussed outcomes are expected?
- What actions are needed and by whom and on what time scale?
- Has pupil premium been used effectively?
- Do the actions recorded in the child's PEP reflect this work and are they updated with robust evidence of impact and change for the child/young person?
- How often will pupil progress be reported and be shared with and where will it be recorded? It should be recorded within the PEP and if needed uploaded as a document in the child/young person documents area.

The advisor will record evidence of this dialogue/meeting back into section E of the PEP under section PEP meeting Professional Views with new date; and if requiring oversight for mid to long term actions this will also be copied into the next terms PEP section E.

2. **The Advisor should be invited to any professional meetings for any CIC to which they are working with. This includes:**
 - a. **individual pupil targeted support/intervention meetings called by other professionals** (such as those called by SENCO (such as EHCP review), HOY for return from exclusion, ELSA, LSA, family support worker for assessment or action planning) or an external agent (such as EP, Mentor, Evolve, Barnardo's staff).
 - b. **Formal Team Around Child /Professionals Meetings**

Where other professionals have called the meeting the advisor should automatically be extended an invite for any child in care to which they are working with. These meeting will be minuted and shared with social worker to be uploaded onto social care records in Eclipse; the minutes will also be uploaded into the document area of pupil profile page of PEP.

Advisors can signpost both during and after a child/young person's PEP meeting. They are able to offer educational advice, support and guidance to any professional working with a child in care and we do understand best practice for children in need, child protection or those open to a social worker.

The Education Support Advisor will also ensure that children/young people and their families know that we have a central offer (Therapeutic support/Arts/Music/Outdoor learning/Sports) that they may be interested in accessing

Finally, We look forward to working with you and our children and families through this academic year. In preparation for our return to face to face working please see the attached Appendices covering our Covid 19 Risk Assessment for school visits and information on safeguarding.

Please see Appendix 1 for Covid Risk Assessment for School Visits

Appendix 2 for Safeguarding Process for School Visits and Working with children/Young people

Best Wishes

Birmingham Virtual School Education Support Advisor Team

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Appendix 1: School/Setting Visit Risk Assessment during COVID-19, September 2021 onwards, for staff working in Virtual School

In response to Covid 19 the following actions and stapes have been approved by Birmingham City Council in agreement with trade unions to keep staff and families safe. These steps will be followed by Virtual School Staff arranging any face to face meetings work in an education setting.

N.B. All staff should read updated government guidance for schools, published July 19th 2021.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak>

Staff are encouraged to exercise caution and consider the risks. Staff who are clinically extremely vulnerable should continue to discuss their working arrangements with their line manager. While no situation is risk free, there are actions we can take to protect ourselves and others around us. Three visits per day to different schools/settings are now permitted. Employees have been instructed to follow latest Public Health England advice in relation to developing symptoms and Test and Trace. Staff are advised to follow Public Health guidance, which is to undertake twice weekly Lateral Flow Tests.

BEFORE THE VISIT

1. Following a request for involvement, or request to school/setting for a corporate parent/designated teacher visit (Virtual School), staff will confirm details and purpose of the visit via email or telephone call - including nature of visit and precautions in place with relevant staff member(s)/family or child/young person .
2. Gain permission from parent/carer (social worker for children in care) and setting/ school for visit to take place – ideally by email but if not by text and last resort verbal. Log consent on the contact form in the child/young person’s electronic file
3. If visiting an education setting, check school/ setting website for copy of its latest risk assessment, guidelines/policy/procedures for receiving visitors.
4. Agree protocol, as explained in school/setting Risk Assessment, for entering building, how to maintain integrity of social distancing (if required) particularly in relation to named child/young person/parent/carer/ school staff.
5. Agree arrangements for use of PPE if needed or requested by the school/setting, child/young person/family eg facemask, gloves and hand sanitiser.
Service staff to have a stock of PPE provided.
6. Staff to ensure that setting/ school understand that they must inform the EYIS/ SEND Inclusion/ BVS/ Children and YP’s OT/EPs staff member if the visit cannot go ahead that day because CYP/ school/setting staff are displaying any symptoms of COVID-19.
7. Wipe down all assessment kit cases, materials and resources before the visit.

DURING THE VISIT

8. If, on arrival, the school/setting has not implemented its risk assessment and/or the environment does not feel Covid safe, the visit will be rearranged.
9. On entering setting/ school/, wash hands/use hand sanitiser in accordance with current guidelines. The government expects and recommends that people wear face coverings in crowded areas.

10. Check that tissues are available for sneezes and coughs. Where possible ensure good ventilation by opening windows and doors. Wash hands with soap and water/ use hand sanitiser regularly throughout the day.
11. Individual assessment: Maintain an appropriate distance* away from child/young person and other adults in the room if possible. Do not sit face to face - sit side by side or at right angles Check child/young person has brought their own pen/pencil if appropriate to assessment. Wherever possible let the child/young person use resources/toys from their own environment. Services, where possible, use photocopied materials for reading/writing that can be disposed of after use. Equipment wiped down before and after use. Follow hand washing procedure before and after handling equipment handwashing procedure
12. Joint working with other visiting professionals: Maintain an appropriate distance* away from child/young person and other adults in the room if possible. Do not sit face to face - sit side by side or at right angles
13. Observation: Position self 2m/1m* away from children/young people or adults in the room, ideally staying on the edge of the room near a window/door and discouraging children from bringing items to show you if necessary. Ensure you use own resources for taking notes/observations and that you take them with you when you leave.
14. On leaving home/setting/ school wash hands or use hand sanitiser (as a precaution do not leave sanitiser in direct sunlight or near a heat source)
AFTER THE VISITS
15. Wash hands on arrival at home or base.
16. If needed contact line manager or a member of the team to debrief.
17. Resources and test equipment should be wiped down or washed as appropriate. Ideally resources/equipment should then be quarantined for a minimum of 72 hours as a further precaution.
18. If you develop Covid 19 symptoms, self -isolate immediately and get a PCR test, even if your symptoms are mild. You should self-isolate at home while you wait for the test results. Please inform your line manager who will discuss next steps with you. From August 16 th 2021, if you have been in close contact with a person with Covid and are fully vaccinated with no symptoms, you will not have to self-isolate.

* In accordance with government guidance on social distancing

Name : Lisa Marie Smith – Birmingham Virtual School Headteacher

Signed:

Date: 30th August 2021

Appendix 2 Safeguarding

Each school will have their own safeguarding policy for their school that includes visitors on school site and working with children. In line with the schools policy these will be shared with the Virtual School Advisor on arrival at the school.

All Virtual School staff have in date enhance DBS certificates and are all signed up for automatic renewal service. They are all up to date and complete BCC mandatory safeguarding training and are up to date on child protection procedures and process for reporting when visiting schools.

All will wear their county council name badge with photo ID and will wear school visitor badges in accordance with school policy

Virtual School Expected Safeguarding practice for one-to-one working

There are several measures that should be agreed between school DT and social worker before an Education Support Advisors works alone with a child or young person to ensure both protected.

- There must be an adult in school DT or DSL , who knows the time and place where the Education Support Advisor is meeting with a child/young person
- The meeting/work space must have a windows so people can see in, or the advisors must be able to leave the door open so the room is visible to staff in the school
- The child's social worker/parent/carer should be informed of the meeting and work and give consent this can be verbal, written or agreed within the PEP actions or minutes
- The young person should be briefed in advance so they know the purpose of the meeting and know they can stop the one-to-one contact at any time. They need to know how to complain or get help if they need it.
- The advisor will keep a record of the fact they were alone with a child or young person, the reason for the work and description of the work and outcomes will be recorded as a case note on the child./young person's PEP.