

Bury's Virtual School

Information for Newly Qualified Teachers

1. Children who are looked after (CLA)

Children who are looked after are those subject to a full or interim care order (as defined in section 22 of the Children Act 1989) or those accommodated by the local authority.

In Bury, looked after children are often referred to as Children & Young People in Care (CYPiC); this stems from a local agreement made at the request of looked after children and young people themselves.

Local authorities have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are looked after. This includes a particular duty to promote children's educational achievement.

2. The Virtual School

If you imagine that all of Bury's looked after children and young people went to the same school, that school would be the Virtual School. Of course in reality children who are looked after go to a range of schools both in and outside of Bury.

It is the responsibility of the Virtual School to track, monitor and promote the educational progress and attainment of children who are looked after. In Bury, the Virtual School (also known as the CYPiC Education Team) comprises of a Virtual School Head teacher (VSH) along with a team of teachers and learning mentors who outreach to schools to help them ensure that outcomes for CLA are the best they can be.

3. Schools' responsibility

Every school has a Designated Teacher (DT) for children who are looked after. It is a statutory role. The DT has to be a qualified teacher and is usually someone on the school's Senior Leadership Team. Their role is to support and monitor the child's education and provide a key liaison role between school and social care.

Every child who is looked after must have a Personal Education Plan (PEP). This document sets out information in respect of care, attendance and educational

attainment along with the child's views and their personal targets. PEPs must be reviewed termly.

4. Teachers' responsibility

Make sure you know which children you teach are looked after. You do not need to know details of why the child is in care but you do need to track the progress of these pupils with extra care and act immediately if they start to fall behind.

Make sure you know who your designated teacher is; if you teach CLA who do start to fall behind, your designated teacher is there to give you support and advice to help them to catch up.

Always be aware that certain aspects of the curriculum or specific times of the year can be difficult for looked after children e.g. when studying family trees, celebrating Christmas or Mothers Day.

As a result of trauma, neglect, abuse or disrupted education, you may notice gaps in learning or Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs, for example attention seeking or controlling behaviours, insecurity, attachment related needs or emotional outbursts. In the first instance, approach your special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCo) or Designated Teacher for advice. Your SENCo and Designated Teacher know that the Virtual School is here to give support and advice concerning any pupil who is looked after and who is not making adequate progress at school. Every council employee, including those based in schools, has a Corporate Parenting responsibility which means that any decisions they make regarding a child or young person in care must be made as if the child was their own.

5. Contact us

- General telephone: 0161 253 6416
- Mailbox address: cypiceducation@bury.gov.uk