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**Bath & North East  
Somerset Council**

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# Support for Carers

Bath and North East Somerset Virtual  
School

<https://Virtualschool.bathnes.gov.uk>

[Virtual\\_school@bathnes.gov.uk](mailto:Virtual_school@bathnes.gov.uk)

01225 39 6932

## What is a virtual school?

A virtual school works with the authority's Children in Care as if they were all in a single school but also acting as an advocate to ensure that each member of this vulnerable group receive the highest quality educational experience.

### **Why do we need one?**

Exam results are far lower than children not in care and this group are more likely to become NEET (Not in education, employment or training). However, attainment of Children in Care can be higher than Children in Need, suggesting settled care and stable education can make a difference

### **What we do:**

- Attend PEPS to offer advice and potential challenge to schools to ensure that every child achieves their academic potential
- Where possible attend Annual Reviews for children that have an EHC Plan
- Provide training for schools, governors, social care teams and carers
- Provide advice and guidance for schools and carers / families that support children that are post care in BANES
- Within the local authority ensure that the profile of looked after children remains current and that all parties working with our children have aspirational targets.
- Manage the pupil premium plus allocation

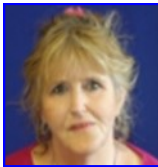
## The B&NES Team



Sarah Gunner—Senior  
Education Co-ordinator



Moyra Maxon—Education Co-  
ordinator 11-19



Trish Rolfe—Admin Officer



Tom Morrison—Team Manager

Soon to start: Lisa Pollard (11-  
19) and Julia Wallcroft (Early  
Years)

## Why is school and nursery so challenging for our children?

- ◆ Gaps in curriculum knowledge and understanding
- ◆ Moved schools several times, different schools have different teaching styles and often different content.
- ◆ Time without a school place
- ◆ Inflexible behaviour policies that don't take account for attachment needs
- ◆ Having to make new friends and trust different adults
- ◆ SEND needs not being met



## What should be in a PEP (Personal Education Plan)?

- Most recent care information and plans for the child – those in early years are often new to care and this may mean several moves
- Pupil Voice – really important!
- Current attainment levels. Is the child where we would expect them to be?
- Details about whether the child has any SEN – how are these being met? What is funding is being accessed (ISF, transition support, EHCP)
- Mental Health and general wellbeing – does the child have emotional needs? How are these being met?
- Views and concerns from the carers
- Previous PEP targets – have these been met? How has impact been measured? New PEP targets. What do we need to achieve? How are we going to measure the success of this?
- Pupil Premium Funding – how is this going to be spent to support these targets?

## Pupil Premium Plus - how is it used?

In 2019-2020, the amount of pupil premium plus that can be claimed is £2300 per child (Year R upwards). For Early Years EYPP+ is accessed in the first term after their third birthday – with the deprivation fund this amounts to about £240.00 per term.

The virtual school 'holds' pupil premium plus for children in care but post care funding goes straight to the school. As outlined in the statutory guidance this is not a personal fund but it is up to the Headteacher of each Virtual School to decide how best to use this funding in order to raise the achievements of looked after children. Our policy is clear on this and this is available on our website in full but the basics are:

- £1800.00 can be accessed directly to schools. This is paid in 2 sums of £900.00.
- 75% should be used on specific strategies to improve English and maths progress in general. This can include Speech and language / communication in the EYFS curriculum or support to meet the 3 prime early years goals. The other 25% can be used for enrichment or to meet emotional needs.

## How is the funding held by the virtual school used?

- Transition support and additional support to avoid exclusions
- Educational Psychologist rapid access and training
- Support for children not in education to avoid further gaps in learning
- Free training for Designated Teachers, Governors and other stakeholders
- Mental Health training
- Letterbox to support literacy and numeracy
- Additional funding for post 16
- High level funding pupils



## Supporting post looked after children:

Under the new statutory guidance published in September, designated teachers and the Virtual School have responsibility to provide advice and guidance for pupils that are previously looked after. This includes children that are on special guardianship orders, adopted or on a child arrangement order. To meet these duties we provide the following:

- Clear advice on the website for schools and carers
- Telephone advice—unfortunately we do not have capacity to attend meetings
- Identification of further support from within the local authority—SEN, parent partnership
- EP support for schools to offer free training
- Advice over how to access pupil premium funding and the most effective interventions on how to use it.

