

Virtual School Aberdeen Support Guide Covid-19

With the ever-changing situation with COVID-19, it is a challenging time for everyone but we at the Virtual School Aberdeen recognise that it may be particularly challenging for some of our children and young people who are care experienced. The Virtual school team continue to work closely with colleagues in Aberdeen City and other local authorities as well as National organisations to ensure the needs of our children and young people are met.

Our key responsibilities are:

- To make sure that there are systems at school and authority level to rigorously track and monitor the attendance/ attainment of children who are looked after
- To support multi-agency working to ensure effective plans are in place (including the consideration of a CSP for those children and young people who fulfil the statutory requirements) that support access to appropriate and timely support for children that are looked after and that are in line with the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014
- To champion the educational needs of looked after children across the authority and those living in another local authority (linking with schools, partnership working within the authority and across authorities / 3rd sector / Further Education and Higher Education / National Organisations and links with parents / carers)
- To provide support and advice to schools and services and to be an advocate for children and young people who are looked after.
- Ensure that school and Local Authority Education policies take account of the particular needs of Looked After Children and Young People

As schools and other partners move to working remotely, it is recognised that the support offered by the Virtual school will look different and we will endeavour to respond to the changing needs of our schools / parents / carers / social work at this time.

Examples of support may include:

- Working with schools and with children and young people to access an appropriate curriculum delivered by an appropriate range of partners
- Helping children, young people, families and schools to access resources to help them to overcome any potential barriers to their immediate and long term achievement
- Planning for transitions including admissions, moving schools and placements by considering the needs of the child/young person.
- Ensuring schools have accurate up to date information on the status of a Looked After Child / Young Person
- Promoting and supporting stable placements in care and education by ensuring that established systems and processes allow enough flexibility to put the child / young person at the centre.

The Virtual School Head Teacher is Supported by Elaine Law (Virtual School Education Support Officer)

For further information please contact:

Larissa Gordon (Virtual School Head Teacher)

lagordon@aberdeencity.gov.uk

(01224) 523580

<https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/services/education-and-childcare/virtual-school>

Signposting / Resources

Virtual School Helpline

Aberdeen City has set up an Education helpline on **01224 523322** which is supported by the Virtual school to answer queries relating specifically to Education provision in Aberdeen City for all families.

Digital Learning Hub

Aberdeen City Education Team have developed a digital learning hub to support learners, parents, carers and teachers to navigate their way around the virtual world. There are also different sections providing useful resources and links on such areas as wellbeing and activities for the holidays. The Digital Learning Hub has been made public enabling access for all, no matter which Local Authority the child or young person attends school in.

<https://sites.google.com/ab-ed.org/digitalllearninghub/home>

Children's Rights Service

Children's Rights Service continues to be available during this time. Children's Rights Officers can be contacted as follows:

Children's Rights Service e-mail address: ChildrensRights@aberdeencity.gov.uk

Forrest Templeton: FTEMPLETON@aberdeencity.gov.uk

Mobile: 07733179202

Donna Simpson: DSimpson@aberdeencity.gov.uk

Mobile: 07876780877

Line Manager -Carol Porter: CPorter@aberdeencity.gov.uk

Mobile: 07824432982

A child or young person can contact them if they want to know what their rights are or want to speak about something they are unhappy with or want people to know about.

Either Donna or Forrest will be able to talk by phone, Skype, WhatsApp or other methods such as e-mails, texts or even old-fashioned writing!

Who Cares? Scotland Helpline

Who Cares? Scotland have set up a dedicated hotline to support Care Experienced Young people.

From **Monday to Friday, 10am – 6pm and Saturday-Sunday 10am-4pm**. More information can be accessed online <https://www.whocaresScotland.org/coronavirus-support/>

Mind of My Own

It is a confusing time for many just now and so having a mechanism by which to send their social worker a statement to let them know how they are feeling, can support them to still feel connected. Our children and young people have access to the Mind of My Own app. They can download the app from the app store or create an account at <https://one.mindofmyown.org.uk/>. If they find this difficult, they can contact their social worker to provide guidance on how to do this.