

Job description

Job title:	Virtual School Lead
Grade:	Grade 11
Job evaluation reference:	ES661
Job family:	Education and Youth

Purpose and impact

- To work as part of Dorset's Virtual School team to promote the educational outcomes of children in care. To be achieved by managing and maintaining an effective and efficient system to ensure that the Council are fully compliant with Statutory Guidance under The Children Act 2004 and best practice relating to Personal Education Plans for children in care. To manage the Quality Assurance process relating to Personal Education Plans and to assist professionals in developing, promoting and implanting strategies to improve education attainment.
- To provide support in order to meet the educational, physical, emotional and wellbeing needs of children in care in a range of schools and settings across Dorset and out of county. By doing so, actively contribute to closing the educational gap for these young people against their non-looked after peers. This role is delivered against a clear set of national legislative and statutory frameworks under the Children Act 2004, Education Act 2005, The Equality Act 2010, Education and Adoption Act 2016, Children and Social Work Act 2017, Keeping Children Safe in Education 2021 and other relevant legislation.
- To provide effective and efficient advice, guidance and support to all children subject to adoption, special guardianship or child arrangement orders living within Dorset in accordance with The Children and Social Work Act 2017.

Key responsibilities

1. To manage a caseload of children and young people in care from 3-18 years. To ensure that each young person in care has access to a good quality education. Coordinate and lead the PEP process, including (but not limited to) meetings, setting and reviewing targets, supporting transitions, making funding requests and ensuring that all professionals fulfil their responsibilities.
2. To support Designated Teachers in finding positive solution focused strategies to narrow the gap in attainment and improve outcomes for children by removing barriers to learning and education. Furthermore, to monitor and use attendance data to identify patterns of absence to support and prevent exclusions and undertake appropriate casework action to improve their attendance.
3. Be first point of contact for and work in partnership with schools, social workers, carers and other LA professionals to provide advice, support and guidance. To escalate any unresolved differences and safeguarding concerns to the Virtual School Headteacher, Virtual School Service Manager or Line Manager as appropriate.



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4. To coordinate and collate submissions for monthly Virtual School Pupil Progress Panel Meetings and fortnightly Children Missing Out of Education Meetings. Working closely with the Virtual School Headteacher and Service Manager and panel members in reviewing educational outcomes.
5. Ensure pupils experience reduced time without a school place and close working partnerships are maintained with social workers during all planned and emergency placements moves that impact on education.
6. To promote and safeguard the welfare of children and young people in accordance with the LA's safeguarding policies and the policies and procedures of the DSCB
7. To provide agreed reports using performance data from the Personal Education Plans on a regular basis, including information relating to the voice of the child, attendance, exclusions, SEN, academic attainment and progress and PEP completion (compliance and quality). Maintain meticulous high-quality electronic records of case management for Childrens' Social Care.
8. To challenge schools and the team around the child on individual cases to improve attendance, attainment, reduce exclusions and improve outcomes for children in care. Contribute to the monitoring and evaluation of the compliance and quality of Personal Education Plans about how they meet the needs of the specific child or young person, irrespective of where the child receives their education.
9. Attend professional meetings such as reintegration, MACE, Child in Care Reviews and Permanence Planning Meetings as required.
10. To support the Virtual School Headteacher in ensuring that schools can appropriately account for their overall PP+ spend and have a clear policy in place. Support Designated Teachers to appropriately align SMART targets against pupil premium requests. Attend the weekly Pupil Premium Panel to give further evidence if requested. To liaise with external agencies to ensure requests through pupil premium panels are processed and arranged in a timely fashion.
11. To ensure that information is held on IT platforms is up to date whilst adhering to data protection protocol and individual rules on particularly high-profile children and young people.
12. To work with all relevant professionals to ensure that all reviews of EHCPs are attended by an appropriate professional. Ensure the Annual Review is held alongside a PEP. Through the PEP process, ensure that EHCP recommendations are being actioned by the school setting.
13. To support the transition process through the school phases for children in care. Support social workers with school applications and Care Leavers Team with Post-18 transition.



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14. To quality assure Personal Education Plans to increase the quality of PEPs to a good or better standard to ensure high aspirations and rigour for our children in care.
15. To be available to offer advice and guidance to all key stakeholders (child, parents, schools) in relation to children who are previously looked after, specifically those who are adopted and subject to Special Guardian Order.
16. To lead and co-ordinate the work of the Virtual School around a specific cohort, area of development or responsibility including but not limited to pupil voice, Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers, children who are previously looked after and Post 16.
17. To lead and contribute to training and development activities for the Virtual School Team, Designated Teachers, Social Workers, Carers and other groups and individuals.
18. Develop ways of sharing good practice including work with a core group of Designated Teachers and Social Workers to enhance PEP delivery/quality, collaborating with external providers.
19. To be involved in the maintenance and development of systems, processes and practices to support the work of the Virtual School.
20. Keep up to date with national and local legislation. Maintain continuous professional development.
21. To be accountable for their work within the team and support the whole team in the delivery of a consistent service in accordance with Dorset Council's policies and procedures within the range of agreed delegated duties

NB: The duties and responsibilities of this post are not restrictive, and the post holder may be required on occasion to undertake other duties. This will not substantially change the nature of the post.

Supervision and management

Reporting to:

Responsibility for:

[If profile needs to remain generic this section can be removed and this information provided on context statement]

Other factors

1. Work in partnership with colleagues as deemed practical and appropriate in relation to each other's different professional skills and meeting student needs.



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2. Use of allocated laptop and mobile phone.
3. Work peripatetically in schools, learning centres and other settings; from home and in Dorset Council hot desk areas across the council.
4. Take the education lead at meetings with foster carers, birth parents, Designated Teachers, multi-agency professionals and the students themselves in a variety of different and often challenging contexts.
5. Travel across different counties may be required.

Our behaviours

Dorset Council has developed and embedded a set of behaviours that will form part of everything you do, and you will need to be able to demonstrate them through the way you work, regardless of your role or grade within the organisation.

Full details can be found on the job website under [‘Working for Dorset Council’](#).



Person specification

Applicants will be shortlisted on the basis of demonstrating that they fulfil the following criteria in their application form and should include clear examples of how they meet these criteria. You will be assessed in some or all of the specific areas over the course of the selection process.

Essential

Essential criteria are the minimum requirement for the above post.

Qualifications/ training/registrations
Required by law, and/or essential to the performance of the role
1. A relevant degree or workplace qualification
2. Post qualification professional training or award
3. Significant demonstrable experience in the relevant role such as, work related accredited learning in children's services field (education/school or social care).
Experience
4. Recent successful experience in a support role in a school/learning centre and/or social care support setting.
5. Experience of supporting young people with social, emotional and behavioural difficulties.
Skills, abilities & knowledge
6. Detailed knowledge of the law and government guidance relating to children in care, school admissions and attendance.
7. Working knowledge of safeguarding practices and procedures.
8. Knowledge of resources appropriate for working with pupils with a range of learning difficulties, particularly emotional and behavioural difficulties.
9. Working knowledge of safeguarding practices and procedures.
10. Practical knowledge and understanding of how to build relationships with children and young people rapidly, but positively.
11. Knowledge of child development and psychology, family dynamics and parenting.
12. Very good support work to young people of all levels of ability specifically of those with emotions/behavioural difficulties.
13. Ability to help other professionals and carers understand challenging behaviour and develop behaviour management skills.
14. Ability to gain trust by rapidly building positive relationships, remain positive and motivate others.
15. Ability to operate within team structures and contribute to team and service developments.
16. Ability to communicate and negotiate effectively with young people and adults as individuals and in groups.
17. Ability to manage a varied workload and prioritise.
18. Ability to report information systemically and effectively to a variety of audiences.
19. Ability to risk assess effectively.
Behaviours
20. Responsibility
21. Respect
22. Recognition
23. One Team: Collaboration
Other
24. Full driving licence and ability to fulfil the travel requirements of the post.
25. Willingness to work flexibly to meet the needs of the services, including working outside normal working hours.



26. IT skills in Microsoft Outlook and other basic Office packages.

Desirable

Desirable criteria will be used in the event of a large number of applicants meeting the minimum essential requirements.

Qualifications/ training/registrations
27. Special Educational Needs (SEN) qualification
Experience
28. Training in a recognised approach to behaviour management and restraint such as Dorset STEPS.
29. Substantial experience of working in partnership with a range of professionals and carers.
30. Understanding the statutory and policy framework concerning children in care.
Skills, abilities & knowledge
31. Knowledge of behaviour management techniques.
32. Knowledge of the statutory and policy framework concerning children in care.
33. Special Educational Needs and the implementation of Individual Education Plans.
34. Knowledge of the effects of attachment disorders on young people.
35. Knowledge of legislation, policy and practice pertaining to the provision of fostering and fostering services.
36. Higher level IT skills to support teaching and data analysis work.

Approval			
Manager	Lisa Linscott Virtual School Head	Date	9/02/2022

