



Well here we are for another Autumn term and we hope that you have all had a wonderful summer break.

Since the last briefing we have welcomed Helen Belas to the Virtual School team. Helen is our new PEP Officer so I am sure some of you will meet her over the coming weeks and months.

Our website continues to be a place where you will find a wealth of information including our training offer for schools. If you are new to the borough or if you are new to the role of DT or DSL the universal training can be found on page 3 and also our website be found [here](#).



We are changing the way we offer training to ensure that all colleagues across the borough are able to benefit. If there is specific training you would like for your school/trust please get in touch so that we can support the needs of our cohorts.

If you would like to discuss the training needs of your setting please contact:

**Ruth.Blyth@wokingham.gov.uk**



On **Monday 15th September** we are running our September ePEP and Designated teacher training. If you are a Designated Teacher for STATUTORY AGED children we would strongly encourage you to attend this training. Post-16/UASC training will be running on other dates.

A PEP is a **statutory requirement** to ensure that a record is maintained regarding the child's educational progress and thus it forms an integral part of the child's overall care plan.

We have made many changes to ePEP over the summer to try to capture the child's voice in a more succinct way but also to try and make the process more slim lined for our Designated Teachers.

The training is virtual and we look forward to welcoming new and 'old' faces on Monday 15th September at 3.30pm. If you are unable to attend but would like to attend training please contact Jenny.

**Jenny.Lucas@wokingham.gov.uk**

**"EVERY MOMENT IS A  
FRESH BEGINNING."**

**T. S. ELIOT**



### **Extension to the virtual school role: Children in Kinship Care**

From September 2024 the non-statutory role of the virtual school was extended to include a strategic responsibility for children in kinship care. Research has shown that children who grow up in kinship care have better outcomes than children who grow up in other types of non-parental care, however their outcomes still fall behind those children with no social worker involvement. This is an exciting development to our work as it will allow us to support a wider group of young people to meet their full potential.

The types of activities that this extension to duty could include are:

- ◆ Raising awareness of the needs and disadvantage of children in different types of kinship care arrangements.
- ◆ Promoting practice that supports attendance and engagement of kinship children in education
- ◆ Promoting practice that improves the educational attainment of children in kinship care
- ◆ Providing advice and information to kinship carers with special guardianship orders and child arrangements orders

Colleagues who attended our Virtual School Conference will have heard from the charity Kinship.org who have a plethora of resources available on their website. Additionally, you will find resources on Wokingham Virtual School's website.

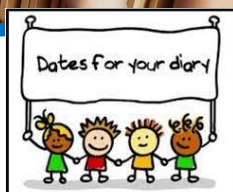
To support the development of our work in this area, if you were not at our Conference in July, I would be most grateful if you could take a few minutes to complete a survey on the work you are already doing with children in kinship care which can be found here: <https://forms.office.com/e/nHMfsKDPDe> or on the QR code below.

If you would like a further discussion about kinship care then please contact:

[Jessica.mcginley@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:Jessica.mcginley@wokingham.gov.uk)







### VIRTUAL SCHOOL CALENDAR: ACADEMIC YEAR 25-26

When	What	Who
September: 2025		
3rd	Term starts (WBC)INSET	Designated Safeguarding Lead, Designated Teachers, Virtual School
4th	Term starts	Foster Carers & Social Worker
15th	DT & ePEP Training	Designated Safeguarding Lead, Designated Teachers, Virtual School
18th	Designated Person for Child Protection in Education Refresher Training	Designated Leads & Deputies for child protection who are experienced in the role
October: 2025		
9th	SENCO Induction Programme	A programme to support new or nearly new SENCOs
14th	Wokingham DSL Meeting	Designated Safeguarding Lead, Designated Teachers, Virtual School
21st	Designated Person for Child Protection in Education Training	Designated Teachers, Designated Safeguarding Leads, Nursery Designated Teachers
31st	Secondary School application deadline	Foster Carers, Social Workers & Virtual School
27th - 31st	Half term (WBC)	
November: 2025		
13th	Racial Equity Conference 2025	Headteacher and racial equity leader
December: 2025		
1st	PEP/PP+ Deadline	Virtual School & Designated Teachers
19th	Last Day of Term (WBC)	Designated Teachers, Foster Carers, Virtual School & Social Workers
January: 2026		
5th	Term starts (WBC)	Designated Teachers, Foster Carers, Virtual School & Social Workers
15th	Primary/Junior School Application Deadline	Foster Carers, Social Workers & Virtual School
February: 2026		
3rd	Wokingham DSL Meeting	Designated Safeguarding Lead, Designated Teachers, Virtual School
23rd-27th	Half term (WBC)	
24th	Designated Person for Child Protection in Education Refresher Training	Designated Safeguarding Lead, Designated Teachers, Virtual School
March: 2026		
1st	National Offer Day (Secondary)	Designated Teachers, Foster Carers, Virtual School & Social Workers
16th	PP+ deadline	Designated Teachers & Virtual School
23rd	PEP Deadline	Designated Teachers, Foster Carers, Virtual School & Social Workers
25th	Designated Person for Child Protection in Education Training	Designated Safeguarding Lead, Designated Teachers, Virtual School
April: 2026		
30th-10th	Easter Holiday (WBC)	
13th	Summer Term Begins	Designated Teachers, Foster Carers, Virtual School & Social Workers
16th	National Offer Day (Primary/Junior)	Foster Carers, Social Workers, Virtual School
May: 2026		
21st	Designated Person for Child Protection in Education Refresher Training	Designated Safeguarding Leads
25th-29th	Half term (WBC)	
June: 2026		
23rd	Wokingham DSL Meeting	Designated Safeguarding Lead, Designated Teachers, Virtual School
July: 2026		
7th	Annual Conference	Designated Teachers, Foster Carers, Virtual School & Social Workers
10th	PEP/PP+ deadline	Designated Teachers & Virtual School
22nd	Last day of term (WBC)	Designated Teachers, Foster Carers, Virtual School & Social Workers



**Don't forget the virtual school are here to assist you should you require any support. You can email us at the following addresses and we promise we will respond within 24 hours.**

**Jane Everton Head of Virtual School and Vulnerable Learner Support**

[Jane.Everton@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:Jane.Everton@wokingham.gov.uk)

**Ruth Blyt Deputy Headteacher**

[Ruth.Blyth@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:Ruth.Blyth@wokingham.gov.uk)

**Helen Belas PEP Officer**

[Helen.Belas@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:Helen.Belas@wokingham.gov.uk)

**Kat Johnston Post 16 PEP Officer**

[Kat.Johnston@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:Kat.Johnston@wokingham.gov.uk)

**Emma Griffith Early Years Officer**

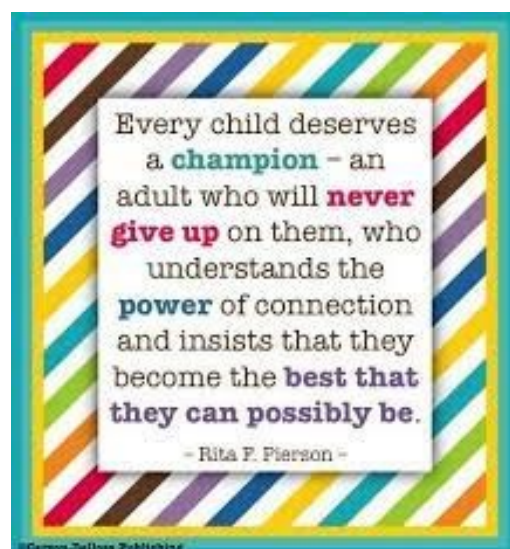
[Emma.Griffith@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:Emma.Griffith@wokingham.gov.uk)

**Jessica McGinley UASC & PEP Officer**

[Jessica.McGinley@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:Jessica.McGinley@wokingham.gov.uk)

**Jenny Lucas Education Coordinator**

[Jenny.Lucas@wokingham.gov.uk](mailto:Jenny.Lucas@wokingham.gov.uk)



**OUR WORK  
CHANGES  
LIVES**