

Promoting the Education of Children in Care **Attendance**



For:

Designated Teachers
for Children in Care

Education Welfare
Officers

Virtual School
Consultants

West Berkshire
Council
January 2023



WestBerkshire
C O U N C I L

This guidance is intended to provide a brief summary of activity to promote the attendance of children and young people in care. The information is divided between proactive and responsive action.

ACTION to improve attendance (Proactive)

PEP Meetings

Attendance is discussed at every meeting and actions put in place where attendance might be a concern. Improvements in attendance are noticed and acknowledged in a way that is beneficial to the child or young person.

Monitoring

Attendance marks are checked on a weekly basis. Any concerns are communicated to the child's social worker and virtual school consultant. Concerns include: exclusions; unauthorised absence; holidays in term time; consecutive absence of 3 days or more.

Holidays in term time

Term time leave can only be agreed in exceptional circumstances and only with written consent of the Head of Children's Services. If a foster carer or connected person plans to take holiday in term time, this is discussed with the child's social worker and supervising social worker first and approval sought before the school is approached.

Medical appointments

Where possible, appointments are made in a way that limits the impact on education.

Emotion based school avoidance

Children and young people whose attendance rates are compromised as a result of their wellbeing are supported to improve their attendance. Children are assessed using the following 4 levels.

Level one	Level two	Level three	Level four
The CYP has been attending school but shows occasional reluctance to attend and/or is anxious about attending school.	The CYP has been attending school but they are experiencing high levels of anxiety. Parents express that they can appear reluctant to attend school. Occasional absences may occur.	The CYP displays periods of sporadic absence which are increasing. Patterns may be found within these periods of non-attendance. Reluctance to attend school is noted by parents.	The CYP is absent from school over an extended period of time. They are reluctant to attend school and their negative feelings about school can feel strong and intense.

Thambirajah et al. (2008); adapted from Derbyshire Educational Psychology Service (2020)

Suspension and Permanent Exclusion

Central to inclusion is a therapeutic approach to children and young people.

Therapeutic thinking, coupled with critical reflection ensure that children's needs are understood and responded to.

The virtual school's Education Psychologist supports the team around the child in its understanding of and approach to children at risk of suspension and permanent exclusion. Referrals are made by either virtual school consultants or social workers and then discussed with Children's Services, EPS and Virtual School on a 6 weekly basis, using a 'plan, do, review' model

School moves

Any changes in plans that result in a change in school are discussed as part of the PEP.

The local authority expects no child to miss any days of education when transferring in a planned way. When a change is made in an emergency and limited planning is possible, the expectation is that no more than 20 school days are missed.

To support planned school moves, the Virtual School offers a school recommendation service, which identifies the local options. Having spoken with schools, admissions team, the local virtual school and carers, formal written advice is shared with the social worker and saved to the child's record.

ACTION to improve attendance (responsive)

In some circumstances, the local authority has to respond to situations when attendance is at risk. This may be as a result of unauthorised or consecutive absence, holidays in term time, suspension or permanent exclusion.

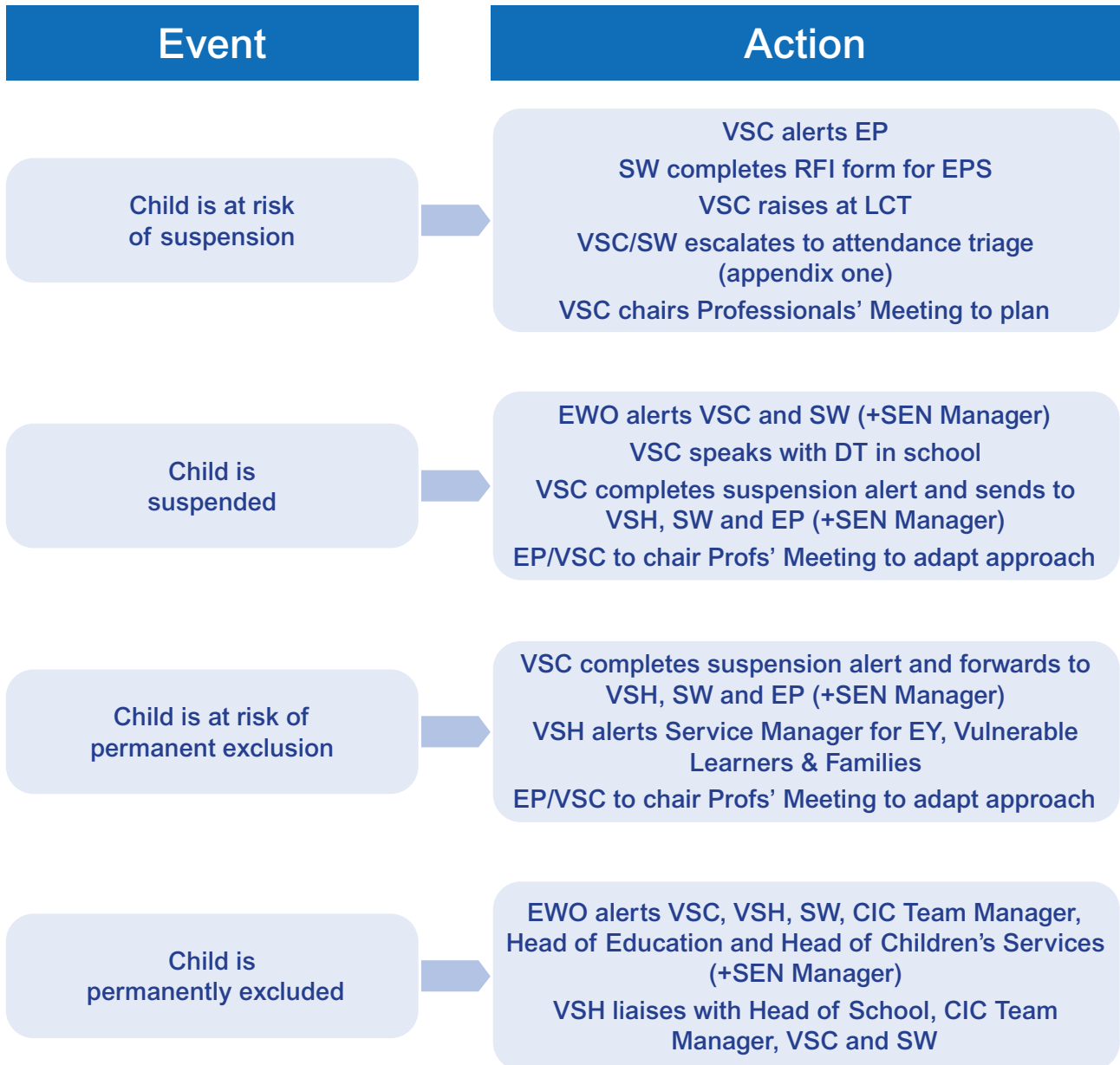
The table below outlines key tasks and escalation points.

Event	Action
Child is at risk of EBSA	VSC/SW escalates to attendance triage (appendix one) Attendance Triage allocates resources
Child has Persistent Absence (below 90%)	EWO sends weekly attendance alert to SW and VSC EWO raises at LCT VSC/SW escalates to attendance triage Attendance Triage allocates resources
Foster Carer requests Term Time Leave	SSW shares policy with foster carers Foster carers complete application SSW sends application to HoS SSW communicates outcome to Head Teacher of children's school + SW, VSH/VSC
Foster Carer takes Term Time Leave without consent	SSW reports to HoS FPT Manager liaises with Foster Carer to determine reasons SSW shares policy

EP = Educational Psychologist
RFI = Request for Involvement
EWO = Educational Welfare Officer
VSC = Virtual School Consultant
FPT = Family Placement Team

SSW = Supervising Social Worker
SW = Social Worker
TAC = Team around the Child meeting
SEN = Special Educational Needs
CIC = Children in Care

Suspension and Permanent Exclusion



Appendix 1: Referral to Attendance Triage

The Attendance Triage meets monthly during term time to coordinate our response to the attendance of children in care. Interventions are agreed that include support from the Educational Psychology Service, Emotional Health Academy, Children's Services and the Virtual School.

Child Name

Date of Birth

School

Year Group

Social Worker

Virtual School Consultant

Reason for escalation

Contextual Information

Support in Place

Would you like a consultation with the
Virtual School's Educational Psychologist?

What would you hope to gain from the above?

Appendix 2: Suspension Alert

Please complete and forward with any accompanying information to VSH, SW and EP

Child Name

Date of Birth

School

Year Group

Social Worker

Virtual School Consultant

Date of Suspension

Reason for Suspension

Does the child have a therapeutic plan / pastoral support plan, or alternative? (please attach)

When was this last reviewed?

Professional support network (who is involved?)

Attendance Marks Explained

Authorised absence means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

This still counts as absence.

Absence codes are as follows:

- Code C Leave of absence authorised by the school
- Code E Excluded but no alternative provision made (Alternative provision must be arranged for each excluded pupil from the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period or permanent exclusion)
- Code H Holiday authorised by the school
- Code I Illness (not medical or dental appointments)
- Code M Medical or dental appointments
- Code R Religious observance
- Code S Study leave
- Code T Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

Unauthorised Absence from School

Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence.

Absence codes are as follows:

- Code G Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the head teacher. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval.
- Code N Reason for absence not yet provided
- Code O Absent from school without authorisation
- Code U Arrived in school after registration closed

We are committed to being accessible to everyone.
If you require this document in an alternative format or translation, please contact the Virtual School on
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