

Enfield Virtual School for Looked after Children and Previously Looked after Children

Transitions in the context of Covid 19

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The world changed very suddenly when school closed for most of our children and young people. For all children, families and school staff, the Covid 19 'lockdown' has presented a variety of challenges. For Looked after Children, and Previously Looked after Children and their parents and carers, these challenges will be likely to have been even greater given their children's experiences of loss in their early lives. At the Virtual School we have also heard about some gains: children feeling less pressured, settling at home and gaining new skills and experiences.

As we begin to contemplate the easing of "lockdown", it is going to be important to create a strong bridge back to school life – drawing on any gains and acknowledging the losses and challenges of the last weeks. We have gathered here some ideas and examples of support for this next change/transition our children and young people will experience in conjunction with the feedback we got from the PEP about Enfield LAC experience of lockdown.

Planning Transitional Support for Schools, Foster Carers and Social Workers

- Explain that arriving times may be different.
- New hygiene practices (i.e. pupils at secondary schools may be required to wear masks when unable to social distance).
- Lunch and break times will be different so different routines.
- Area of school out of bounds.
- New behaviour policies.
- Social distancing.
- Different teachers, or the same teacher all day.

Schools will of course explain this to pupils on their return. It would be helpful if foster carers and social workers talked this through with young people and where possible in the first few weeks complete a transition plan. We in the virtual school have given a few examples of what a school might want to use (please see attached) and an example of social story that could be used for your children as well as those with SEN. The Virtual School is aware that schools will also have their own transition plans.

Recent research from the EFF states that it is plausible that the attainment gap between disadvantaged children and their peers could be between 11% to 75%. Further research cites there could be a possible increase in exclusion and a decrease in attendance, especially with children who have experienced early life adversity. It will be important to continue to support all staff in their knowledge and understanding of trauma and attachment aware practice, however the level of support required on return to school may well have changed due to the effects of “lockdown”, children and young people may have disengaged and need more support. A transition plan will be helpful and taking an ongoing assess, plan, do, review process is the best way forward. Enfield’s Virtual School are here to support as well. We have attached some transition plan examples as well as a blog from a young person who has experienced trauma and how they feel about school to help inform practise.

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