

Devon Virtual School
for Children in Care

School Admissions



Championing Children: Guidance for
Foster Parents, Carers & Social Workers

October 2015

Aims of the Virtual School

The Devon Virtual School are committed to achieving the best possible educational outcomes for its Children in Care as we are their 'Corporate Parent'.

The Virtual School supports all Children in Care who are living in Devon or who are looked after by Devon but living in another part of the country.

We aim to:

Promote

High Aspirations and excellent educational outcomes

Support

Children and Young People, Carers, Schools and Settings

Challenge

Anyone who does not deliver on our aspirations

Celebrate

All our successes

School Admissions

Q1: How do I get my child into school?

You must make a formal application for admission – through the School Admissions Service, please see their website for further information and application forms www.devon.gov.uk/admissions. You should not approach a school directly except to visit or make enquiries as a part of your decision-making process regarding which school you would like your child to attend.

To start in Reception (Primary) or Year 3 (Junior School) in the normal round of admissions, applications should be submitted by 15 January. For Year 7 (Secondary) or Year 10 (UTC and Studio School*) applications should be submitted by 31 October in the academic year previous to admission. To start in-year, applications can be made at any time, though as much notice as possible would be welcomed. All applications for sixth form or FE College should go direct to the establishment. **the normal entry into The Atrium School is Year 9.*

Children in Care (and those who were formerly in Care) have the highest priority for admission, so an application submitted on time for the normal round of admissions effectively secures a place at the school of your choice. There are circumstances when a Child in Care must be admitted in-year to any school.

A Child in Care should be placed in a good or outstanding school. You should assess the education quality of the provider before Joint Agency placements are made, even if the provider has a good track record for Social Care. You should also consider the distance the Child in Care would be expected to travel and whether this would be an obstacle to learning.

If the child has Special Educational Needs & Disabilities, please refer to question 6. If

there are concerns about your child's current education placement, you should contact your child's Social Worker or the Virtual School Manager alison.withnell@devon.gov.uk

Q2: When can a Child in Care start their education?

All Children in Care from the age of two are entitled to a free education place for up to 15 hours per week. To find out how to access local provision for your child see: www.devon.gov.uk/disc-2gether

Q3: When does my child start Primary school?

You will need to apply online for a Reception place to start in the September after your child's fourth birthday. The Admissions booklet can guide you through the process and is available online via this link:

www.devon.gov.uk/admissions-firststep.pdf.

You should apply at

www.devon.gov.uk/admissiononline

between 15 November and 15 January in the academic year of your child's fourth birthday. Meeting this deadline isn't always going to be possible but you should try to avoid late applications as your preferred school may already be full. Even though a place may still be allocated, this could overcrowd the school. You cannot make an application or arrangement direct with a school.

The School Admissions Service will be able to advise you about the application process and the Virtual School Headteacher (contactable via educationofchildrenincare-mailbox@devon.gov.uk can help parents and Social Workers if the nearest school is not the most appropriate. You will have many questions about how your local school will respond and support your child, these are explored in the Admissions booklet available via this link: www.devon.gov.uk/admissions-firststep.pdf

Q4: When does my child start Secondary School?

The same points apply for the normal intake into Year 7. Applications for Secondary School places should be submitted between 1 September to 31 October and the Admissions booklet at www.devon.gov.uk/admissions-nextstep.pdf provides further information and application forms.

Education stability and attendance are key to educational success for all Children in Care. Exploring how the school supports Children in Care will be at the heart of any decision.

The Social Worker, Virtual School Headteacher and foster parents should, where possible, involve the child in the choice of Secondary School. Schools offer open evenings and 'taster' events to assist parents and students in their decision.

The School Admissions Service will advise you about the process and timings.

Q5: What other education choices does my child have once they reach 14 or 16?

There are a number of new opportunities available once a student turns 13 or 14 years of age. They are able to attend a University Technical College (UTC), Studio School, take up a vocational place in a College or an apprenticeship; this is in addition to the more traditional options available within Secondary School. More information is available at: www.devon.gov.uk/admissions-stepahead.pdf. Please bear in mind that some Secondary Schools ask students to make their Option choices at 13 because they run a three year GCSE course.

Q6: What is in place for my child who has Special Educational Needs & Disabilities?

If your child has a disability or a complex Special Educational Need they will be assessed by an Educational Psychologist and this assessment will form part of their Education, Health & Care Plan. Special school placements will be identified either in a mainstream or Special School.

The views of the child's parents and Social Worker are at the heart of this process so that the needs of the whole child can be considered. Special Schools operate an assessment period when they undertake a detailed analysis of your child's needs and the resources required to support them. Additional resources are allocated to the school where needs are complex or the child requires highly individualised support. It is important to access the Local Offer via this link www.new.devon.gov.uk/send to find out what support and options are available. Devon Information, Advice and Support (DIAS) are able to provide information, support and training for parents and Carers of children with Special Educational Needs, for more information please visit www.devonias.org.uk

Q7: My child has found mainstream schooling difficult and is now placed in alternative provision – what are our options?

Following a Statutory Assessment your child may have been placed in alternative provision such as a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) or with a specialist provider to help with their social and emotional issues. Sometimes these are temporary measures providing support until they can be integrated back into mainstream schooling, though a longer term placement may be considered more suitable. Your child is entitled to a full timetable and curriculum even if placed in alternative provision. Your child should not be offered part-time schooling as a matter of course, please contact the Virtual School if this happens.



Key Contacts:

Title	Name	Tel No.	Email
Devon Virtual School			
Virtual School Headteacher	Dawn Stabb	01392 383000	educationofchildrenincare-mailbox@devon.gov.uk
Virtual School Manager	Alison Withnell	01392 383000	alison.withnell@devon.gov.uk
Virtual School Administrator	Kate Clarke	01392 384786	kate.clarke@devon.gov.uk
Children in Care Data Coordinator	Sarah Short	01392 385353	sarah.short@devon.gov.uk
Area Learning Advocates:			
East Devon	Deborah Booth	01392 384566	deborah.j.booth@devon.gov.uk
North Devon	Kim Piper	01392 383000	kim.piper@devon.gov.uk
South & West Devon	Ian Hemelik	01392 383000	ian.hemelik@devon.gov.uk
Mid Devon	Danny Mead	01392 383000	danny.mead@devon.gov.uk
Inclusion Officers: (for all children at risk of Exclusion)			
Torridge, Mid & North Devon	David Archer	01271 388559	david.archer@devon.gov.uk
Exeter & East Devon	Marc Kastner	01392 383000	marc.kastner@devon.gov.uk
South & West Devon	Keith Crawford	01392 383000	keith.crawford@devon.gov.uk
School Admissions:			
Schools Planning & Admissions Manager	Simon Niles	01392 383000	Simon.niles@devon.gov.uk schooladmissions-mailbox@devon.gov.uk
School Admissions Manager	Karen Howes	01392 383000	karen.howes@devon.gov.uk
School Transport			
Access Manager	Steve Roberts	01392 383000	schooltransportservicequeries-mailbox@devon.gov.uk
Special Educational Needs & Disability:			
0-25 SEN Team Manager	Velda Woodruff	01392 383000	specialeducation0-25-mailbox@devon.gov.uk
Early Years & Childcare Service:			
Senior Manager	Claire Rockliffe	01392 385520	claire.rockliffe@devon.gov.uk

Key Contacts:

Title	Name	Tel No.	Email
Babcock LDP			
Penalty Notice Education Welfare Officer	Ria Pleass	01392 880713	ria.pleass@devon.gov.uk
Education Welfare (attendance)	Colin Mitchell Linda Page	01392 287223	colin.mitchell2@babcockinternational.com linda.page@babcockinternational.com www.devonldp.org/edwelfare
Educational Psychology	Catherine Dunnett Angie Mudge	01392 287319	catherine.dunnett@babcockinternational.com angie.mudge@babcockinternational.com
School Improvement: Primary Adviser	Gill Winston	01392 287376	gillian.winston@babcockinternational.com
SEND & Inclusion Strategic Lead	Alison Hurley	01392 287239	alison.hurley@babcockinternational.com
Joint Professional Leads for Behaviour Support Team	Anthony Boulton Will Pritchard	01392 287239	anthony.boulton@babcockinternational.com will.pritchard@babcockinternational.com
Others:			
EFA: Regional Schools Commissioner SW	Sir David Carter	-	rsc.sw@education.gsi.gov.uk
Devon Information, Advice & Support (DIAS) DIAS Liaison Officer	Sue Brealey	01392 383080 01392 383957	www.devonias.org.uk/ sue.brealey@devon.gov.uk
Careers South West	-	0800 975 5111	exeter@careerssw.org www.cswgroup.co.uk/

If you are not sure who to contact please email:
educationofchildrenincare-mailbox@devon.gov.uk

