



Virtual School News

News and key info
for Designated Teachers

MKCC Virtual School

As we enter the final term of the academic year, we would like to take a moment to recognise the dedication, resilience, and care you have shown to the children and young people you support. This term offers an important opportunity to celebrate progress, consolidate learning, and prepare pupils for their next steps - whether that is transition to a new setting, year group, or stage of education. It is also a time to reflect on the impact of your work and the difference you continue to make every day. Thank you, as always, for your ongoing commitment and collaboration.

GCSE Results Day

Our Virtual School Officers have been speaking with Designated Teachers to confirm arrangements for collecting GCSE results day on 20th August 2026. Thank you to everyone who has provided exam officer information or supported via your school's internal processes to ensure we are made aware of outcomes as soon as possible on the day. As you will be keenly aware, there is often a very small window of opportunity to confirm or explore post-16 offers and the Virtual School will be working on the day to liaise with young people, as well as their carers and social workers, to provide support as needed. We know that our children's schools will be doing the same and thank you in advance for going above and beyond in your summer break. The Virtual School will be operating a GCSE Results Day 'Hub' and we invite schools to reach out to us if there is anything we can support with via their allocated Virtual School Officer or Jenny Cooledge – Jenny.Cooledge@milton-keynes.gov.uk.

Destination Checks

Do you know where your Year 11's are going in September? All of your young people in Year 11, including our looked after children, should have a confirmed destination for September 2026 by now. If one of your Year 11 looked after children is still unsure about their destination or hasn't had a formal offer, please get in touch with their Virtual School Officer or the Post 16 Specialist (Jennifer.Appleby@milton-keynes.gov.uk) - we are ready to support!

New to role of Designated Teacher

If you have an incoming member of staff who will be undertaking the role of Designated Teacher from September 2026, or indeed would just appreciate a refresher, we will be offering a 'New to Role of Designated Teacher' training session at 4-5pm on Wednesday 15th July 2026. This will be a virtual session delivered on Teams. Please complete this MS Form to sign up to this session - [New to the role of Designated Teacher training session - July 2026 – Fill in form](#). A Teams invite will be sent closer to the date.

Royal Assent - Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act

The Children's Wellbeing and Schools Act has now received Royal Assent, marking a significant milestone in the government's reform programme. Whilst this signals that the legislation is now law, most provisions are not yet in force and will be implemented through phased secondary legislation.

The key measures which relate to the Virtual School and the children and young people we support include the following:

- The Act strengthens and clarifies the role of virtual schools in promoting the educational outcomes of children with a social worker.
- Strengthens expectations on fair and timely school admissions aiming to reduce drift and delay for children with vulnerabilities (including the children we care for and children with social workers). The intention of this is to avoid inappropriate or prolonged periods without suitable provision.
- The introduction of stronger national levers to address challenges in the children's social care placement market, particularly residential care, with the intent of reducing placement instability for children in care.
- Increased support for kinship carers.

Royal Assent doesn't mean that the reforms are operational as of now, but the Act provides the legal framework for the next steps of implementation. The government will provide further information about when specific sections come into force (called commencement regulations which often have staged delivery) and secondary legislation to define how the duties will operate in practice. We are expecting that there will be a review of statutory guidance for Designated Teachers and Promoting the Education of Children With a Social Worker and Children Looked After but obviously further information on this will follow.

In practice, there is no immediate change to statutory duties for either the Virtual School or designated teachers but we wanted to give you a steer on the direction of travel especially in the context of ongoing children's social care and SEND reforms.

Updated Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Guidance July 2026

We have previously shared reminders about suspensions and permanent exclusions and you are aware that where a child who is looked after is likely to be subject to a suspension or permanent exclusion, that the designated teacher should contact the virtual school as soon as possible - broadly speaking this is happening - thank you for your ongoing support with this.

This contact is intended to afford the opportunity to consider the circumstances and any support which may be required to help the school to address the factors which might be affecting the child's presenting behaviours. This should include how the school is using Pupil Premium Plus and consideration of how effectively the current Personal Education Plan is being implemented (and whether an interim PEP review should be called). Where appropriate, concerns regarding behavioural presentation should be noted on the termly PEP as well as how the child is being supported to improve this and reduce likelihood of suspension. Designated teachers can also contact the virtual school for advice for children who are previously looked after.

There has been an update to the statutory guidance which comes into force from 26th July 2026 - [Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement](#). This reflects the government's ambition to create high standards of behaviour and the changes refer to:

- Off-site directions
- Managed moves
- Safeguarding separation which is not a suspension or exclusion and can be used in exceptional circumstances
- Strengthened guidance that SEND considerations are embedded at every stage of exclusion decision-making

We will continue to work alongside schools to formulate individual plans for the children we care for and changes to the guidance will be reflected in these discussions as we go forward next academic year.

PEPs

Summer Term PEP Deadline: 29th June 2026

Please ensure that any information and Part 2 sections if undertaking Core PEPs are submitted by this date. This allows Virtual School Officers time before the summer holidays to follow up any queries before we undertake the quality assurance and funding requests process. Please reach out to your child's Virtual School Officer if you have any concerns regarding this.

Training Opportunities

We are currently reviewing our offer with regards to the funded e-learning opportunities available through a third-party provider and therefore these are not all available currently. We are keen to continue to provide an e-learning offer as we appreciate the flexibility that this affords for you as designated teachers to choose training that is appropriate for the specific children you support, your settings and the individual ways you work. We will provide you with an update as soon as we can.

In the meantime, the in-person training opportunities as outlined on the website remain in place: [Training and support | Milton Keynes City Council \(milton-keynes.gov.uk\)](#). Please do not hesitate to contact Katy Enser – Katy.Enser@Milton-Keynes.gov.uk or Jenny Cooledge – Jenny.Cooledge@milton-keynes.gov.uk – for further information if you would like to explore a training request and we will work together to explore what might be possible.

DT Forum

Our last DT Forum of the Academic Year is scheduled for:

Date: Thursday 18th June 2026

Time: 0800-0930

Location: Oakgrove School

The last Forum of the year will provide an opportunity to review the EP process, contribute to planning for next year, celebrate successes and receive updates from Virtual School. We will be sending out an agenda shortly.

‘We Live Here’ Event

We wanted to highlight this event for any of the children and families that you are supporting who might enjoy an art and nature-based weekend activity. The ‘We Live Here’ event is being delivered at Woughton Community Garden on Saturday 13th June. There are two sessions 11am-1pm and 2pm-4pm. Sessions can be booked via the QR code on the flyer below. The event is free and this year’s theme ‘Beneath the Surface’ explores what lives within the soil through a variety of creative activities.



FREE

Milton Keynes Arts Centre present

We Live Here
**Beneath
the Surface**

**WOUGHTON COMMUNITY
GARDEN, COFFEE HALL**

SATURDAY 13 JUNE

11AM-1PM & 2PM-4PM

Fun for the whole family

**A NATURE AND ART EVENT EXPLORING WOUGHTON COMMUNITY
GARDEN WITH LOADS OF ACTIVITIES INCLUDING:
INTERACTIVE ARTWORKS, BUG HUNTS, MAKING ACTIVITIES, COMPOST
AND GARDEN DEMOS, SEED PLANTING AND MORE!**

**miltonkeynesartscentre.org
or call 01908 608108**

Book Here



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