Halton Virtual School & College

Tuition Commissioning & Quality Assurance Process

2026-2027

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Introduction

This policy has been developed to outline the role of Halton Virtual School in commissioning tuition for children in care (CIC). In line with the "*Promoting the education of looked after children and previously looked after children (2018)*" policy published by the Department of Education (DfE), virtual schools have a responsibility in ensuring all CIC have access to high quality education provision and maximise their opportunities in reaching their full academic potential.

Halton Virtual School will commission tuition as a temporary measure for CIC who are unable to access an education provision (whether they reside in or outside of the Halton area) following an emergency placement move where they can no longer attend their usual school provision due to distance of travel and are going through an application process for a new school provision.

The virtual school team will provide advice and guidance as well as support to liaise with relevant services/teams where necessary around education provision for CIC with:

- an EHCP requiring a new specialist provision to be identified, or
- significant emotional health, wellbeing and mental health needs.

Halton Virtual School will also commission after-school tuition for CIC to support closing the gap in education and supporting academic progress. After-school tuition is put in place for those who have been identified through a PEP to benefit from extra support or on request from the child and their parent/carer.

Tuition Agency Contact

Halton Virtual School will hold a virtual meeting or phone call with any new identified or recommended agency to gather baseline information including:

- Referral process
- Availability of face-to-face tuition in the local and surrounding area
- Rates of tuition
- Reporting process
- Invoicing process
- Main contact details
- Services on offer (i.e. subjects covered, ESOL support, exam/assessment packages)
- Minimum session requirements

Following on from this where it is deemed the agency is suitable to explore tuition with then a request is made for a supply agency declaration form (appendix 1) to be completed to gather information on their vetting and safeguarding procedures.

Referral Process

Where an agency does not have their own referral form for completion, Halton Virtual School have a blank referral form (appendix 2) for gathering relevant information to ensure a suitable tutor is matched to the child.

Where possible, school designated teacher contact details are provided so they can liaise directly with the tutor for subject specific information.

Parent/carer is spoken to so relevant information about the referral process is shared with them and consent is obtained for their contact details to be recorded on the referral form and that they are happy to be contacted directly by the agency.

Once the referral form is submitted to the agency, an email should be received to confirm receipt of this and the expectation is for the agency to confirm availability of tutor(s) and liaise directly with parent/carer around days and times of sessions. Halton Virtual School will share booking confirmation information with the child's social worker and the tuition referral form along with outcome of referral is uploaded onto the child's Eclipse case notes.

Tuition Venue & Expectations

Halton Virtual School recognises that face-to-face tuition has the most positive impact on attendance and engagement in sessions from our children and young people. Initial tuition requests will always be for a face-to-face tutor unless online tuition is requested by the child from the beginning or face to face sessions are unavailable.

The location for where tuition takes place is decided through discussions with parent/carer and social worker but would usually be in the home or local community venue such as a library.

For tuition taking place at home the expectation is that:

- A designated space that is suitable for tuition to be provided.
- The child has access to relevant equipment such as a laptop and stationery.
- Parent/carer to act as an appropriate adult throughout the session so they can be called on by the tutor/child if needed. If there is no parent/carer in the home then the tuition session will not take place and the tutor will report this to the agency and Halton Virtual School.

It is expected that where tuition cannot take place at home then parent/carer will support their child to attend a suitable local venue and agreement is made with tutor as to whether the parent/carer is required to stay with their child and confirm arrangements for how the child returns home at the end of the session.

Online tuition is agreed to when:

- Face-to-face tuition cannot be fulfilled by agencies and tuition is needed to prevent further missed education input.
- Face-to-face tuition has been tried and has had to end due to challenges in the home or community setting.
- This has been requested by the child and parent/carer.

If a child/young person is unwell, running late or not available for a session, the parent/carer should contact the tutor, tuition agency or virtual school at the earliest opportunity.

Tuition Monitoring & Weekly Reports

Tuition reports are provided on a weekly basis however the format differs from one agency to another. Basic attendance information is the minimum requirement for reporting as are any safeguarding concerns or SEN enquiries.

Reports are read by the Virtual School team and any enquiries or concerns are followed up with relevant professionals. All reports are uploaded onto the child's Eclipse case notes and Virtual School SharePoint for reference and as information to feed into PEPs or other meetings. Where an agency does not have a report template, the virtual school reporting document (appendix 3) can be used.

Tuition that is in place as a temporary measure will be reviewed on a 6 weekly basis and any after-school tuition arrangements will be reviewed on a termly basis to monitor impact and engagement.

If attendance is an issue, discussions will be held with the child's social worker, parent/carer and the child/young person to identify and address the barriers to attending sessions or to explore more appropriate offers of support.

Safeguarding Concerns

If a tutor has a safeguarding concern they are to report this to their appointed person at their agency and information is shared with Halton Virtual School promptly via telephone/email. It is also expected that concerns are recorded within the weekly tuition reports and sent to Halton Virtual School.

Information will be shared with the child's social worker and any other relevant professionals. Appropriate actions are agreed and relayed to all relevant parties. Tuition is expected to continue unless the concerns prevent this from occurring.

If a parent/carer has a safeguarding concern relating to the tutor they would be expected to raise this with the child's social worker, their supervising social worker or directly with Halton Virtual school promptly via telephone/email. Halton Virtual School would log the concern and make contact with the tuition agency to share the concerns so that an investigation into the concerns can be initiated. Tuition with the tutor would be paused whilst concerns are investigated. Tuition may resume with the same tutor if deemed suitable following conclusion of investigations or it may be that a new tutor is identified with agreement from the child and parent/carer.

Appendix 1 – Supply Agency Declaration Form

Supply Agency Declaration

Name of Agency: …….

Name of person completing the form: …….

Role of person completing the form: …….

If the answer to any of the questions below is 'No', please provide further details in the box at the end of this checklist.

1.	Have representatives of the Agency that are involved in the recruitment and selection of agency workers undertaken appropriate Safer Recruitment & Selection training that covers all sections of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), within the last 5 years?	Yes	No
2.	Is the content of the training referred to in 1. above cascaded to all staff within the Agency that are involved in the recruitment and selection of agency workers?	Yes	No
3.	Is every recruitment and selection process conducted in accordance with KCSIE?	Yes	No
4.	Does recruitment documentation, including (where used) the advert, person specification and job description, make reference to the individual's responsibility for safeguarding and protecting the welfare of children and young people?	Yes	No
5.	Are candidates made aware of the duties of all roles (either through a job description or similar document)?	Yes	No
6.	Where used, does the person specification include 'Commitment to safeguarding' as an Essential Criteria?	Yes	No
7.	Do all publicity materials used to attract candidates (e.g. adverts, internet content etc.) include reference to the fact that the individual will be required to undergo a DBS check?	Yes	No
8.	Are application forms used, which require all candidates to submit standard information about their personal details, employment history, referee details and disclosure of current/previous convictions?	Yes	No
9.	If accepted, are CVs only used to supplement the information contained within the application form (and not accepted instead of an application form)?	Yes	No
10.	Does the application form contain a signed declaration to confirm that the information presented is true and warns the candidate about the consequences of providing false information?	Yes	No
11.	When the completed application form is received, are concerns or issues noted that need to be raised with the candidate/ previous employer prior to/during interview such as gaps in employment, frequent changes in employment, anomalies/ inconsistencies, moves from permanent to temporary employment etc?	Yes	No
12.	Are professional references sought from the **Head of the establishment** (even where an alternative name has been provided) and checked **prior to** the interview process?	Yes	No

13.	Are checks made to ensure that the candidate has named the most recent employer as a referee and the Employer with whom the applicant most recently worked with children and/or young people?	Yes	No
14.	As part of the shortlisting process prior to interview, do you carry out an online search as part of your due diligence on the shortlisted candidates?	Yes	No
15.	Are queries/concerns on references raised with the referee and/or applicant prior to/during interview?	Yes	No
16.	On references, are past employers asked to provide detail of any past substantiated allegations?	Yes	No
17.	On references, are past employers asked to confirm that in their view the candidate is suitable to work with children and there are no safeguarding concerns.	Yes	No
18.	Is there a policy in place that prevents the acceptance of standard references that are marked 'to whom it may concern' (i.e. those references provided directly by the candidate that are not specifically addressed to the Agency)?	Yes	No
19.	Are all electronic references verified in line with KCSIE?	Yes	No
20.	Is only a conditional offer of employment made prior to the relevant checks being undertaken (including DBS checks, references, identity, teacher prohibition, eligibility to work in the UK etc.)?	Yes	No
21.	When the candidate's identity documentation is checked, does this always include the appropriate photographic identification and the full birth certificate?	Yes	No
22.	Are DBS checks always carried out prior to placement, unless there is a specific written request from the School that there will be no unsupervised access to children and young people until the DBS clearance is received?	Yes	No
23.	In the circumstances outlined at 22 above, is the School notified in writing of the fact that the DBS check has not been carried out prior to placement?	Yes	No
24.	In the circumstances outlined at 22 and 23 above, is a barred list check undertaken prior to placement?	Yes	No
25.	If any information is received as a result of a DBS check or reference, is that information shared immediately with the school so that they can make a decision regarding that person's suitability to be employed in their school?	Yes	No
26.	Are safeguarding concerns for employees/past employees shared with future employers in references that are provided by the Agency?	Yes	No
27.	At interview, are questions posed that assess a candidate's suitability to work with children and young people?	Yes	No
28.	At interview, are gaps in employment/vagueness on the application form/frequent changes in employment explored?	Yes	No
29.	At interview, are hypothetical “what would you do if…” questions avoided?	Yes	No
30.	In relation to DBS, do Agency staff involved in the recruitment of Agency workers have a clear understanding of the definitions of Regulated Activity and how these are applied when determining the type of DBS check to be undertaken?	Yes	No
31.	Are the appropriate checks undertaken in relation to the Childcare (Disqualification) Regulations 2009 for any member of staff that is assigned to work as a member of staff in a relevant setting?	Yes	No
32.	Are clear records kept and retained throughout/following the recruitment process?	Yes	No
33.	Is a confirmation of booking and of the candidate's identity passed to the School for each assignment?	Yes	No
34.	Does the Agency provide child protection and/or safeguarding training, including Online Safety to all newly appointed supply staff before **any** placements are completed?	Yes	No

35.	Does the agency ensure that all supply staff have read and understood Part 1 of the latest version of Keeping Children Safe in Education, prior to placement?	Yes	No
36.	Does the Agency contact the School after the first day of assignment to follow up the appointment and ascertain whether there are any concerns about the individual?	Yes	No
37.	If the Agency worker has a break of more than 3 months, are they required to undergo a new DBS check and re-register with the Agency?	Yes	No

Please provide further details in relation to any question to which you answered 'No', including the question number that your comment refers to.

I confirm that the answers provided above are correct to the best of my knowledge.

Signed: ……

Date: ……

Appendix 2 – Tuition Request Form

Tuition Request

STUDENT NAME:	**NC YEAR:**
SUBJECT(S):	
NUMBER OF HOURS REQUIRED PER WEEK (if more than 1 hr per week please specify how the sessions are to be allocated, i.e. if 2 hrs per week will it be one session or split into two 1hr sessions)**:**	
START DATE & DURATION TUITION IS NEEDED FOR:	
DAYS & TIMES AVAILABLE FOR TUITION SESSIONS:	
FACE-TO-FACE OR ONLINE SESSIONS?	
IF FACE-TO-FACE TUITION REQUESTED BUT NOT AVAILABLE, CAN ONLINE OPTION BE EXPLORED? Yes ☐ No ☐ N/A ☐	
VENUE FOR SESSIONS:	
CURRENT SUBJECT ATTAINMENT / TARGETS:	
ANY OTHER INFO (REASON FOR TUITION, ANY SEN, EFFECTIVE SUPPORT STRATEGIES ETC.):	
CONTACT PERSON AT SCHOOL FOR MORE INFORMATION (IF APPLICABLE):	

PARENT/CARER/PLACEMENT NAME, CONTACT NUMBER & EMAIL:
TUITION REPORTS TO BE EMAILED TO HALTON VIRTUAL SCHOOL & COLLEGE (virtual.school@halton.gov.uk**) AS WELL AS (please tick all relevant):** School ☐ Parent/carer ☐ Other ☐ (Please specify contact details below)

Outcome of tuition request (to be completed by Halton Virtual School):

AGENCY:
AGENCY CONTACT:
TUTOR NAME:
SESSION DAY/TIME:
TUITION START DATE: Click or tap to enter a date.

Appendix 3 – Tuition Monitoring and Recording Form

1-1 Tuition Monitoring and Recording

Name of tutor		Student Initials	
Subject(s)		YR Group	
Dates covered by this report	From:	To:	
Time of session	From:	To:	
Number of sessions planned in this period		Number of sessions attended by student	
Summary of topic areas covered during this period			
Areas of progress demonstrated during this period (with examples or outcomes of any assessments if possible)			
Overview of student's engagement in the session(s)			
Areas needing improvement – targets for next session			
Areas of concern including safeguarding or any SEN identified			