



**Moore House
Education**
Virtual Academy



MOORE HOUSE EDUCATION - VIRTUAL ACADEMY

Prospectus for Professionals and Parents

2021-2022



Keeping the promise to children and young people in Scotland





Why choose Moore House Virtual Academy?

Moore House Virtual Academy has been developed to take account of children and young people who are significantly school averse for a variety of reasons and find attending a physical building that is a school, challenging if not impossible. Our Virtual Academy provides virtual specialist education, including virtual therapeutic support, for children and young people aged 5 to 18 years, who require significant additional support for their learning and/or social or emotional needs. Children and young people can access this support on a day basis from their own homes. They can also access this support if they live in one of Moore House Group's homes but are unable to attend one of the Moore House Group's three schools.

The children and young people attending the Virtual Academy benefit, where appropriate, from seamless access to the continuum of services within the wider Moore House Group that includes, residential care, psychological support and fostering services. Children and young people can access the curriculum from specialists in one of our three schools, using our virtual classrooms. They can also access specialist emotional support from our Psychological Services and Intervention (PSI) Team. We believe flexible

approaches are essential for children and young people who find physical attendance at school challenging.

Our education team use Google Classroom to meet the curricular needs for young people who are missing out on education.

Our philosophy and our nurturing approach is promoted through training for all staff in Dyadic Developmental Practice (DDP) – a therapeutic approach that prioritises a child's need to develop relationships – with its underpinning principles of Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy (PACE).

Irrespective of whether or not our children and young people are physically present at school, our staff team is skilled in providing support in a way that recognises the principles of DDP. Indeed these principles and skills are even more essential in motivating anxious or disengaged children and young people when using a virtual platform. Our team knows how to create a happy, friendly and stimulating virtual environment where our children and young people feel safe, secure and valued.

We are proud that our Mission, Vision and Values statements were developed in collaboration with young people and staff and we believe they capture exactly who we are, and what we are here for.

Our Mission

To achieve the best personalised outcomes for children and young people through positive, nurturing relationships developed across our education, fostering, residential and psychological services.

Our Vision

Every child and young person enjoys positive health and wellbeing; and the best opportunities for learning, life and work.

Our Values

- ✓ Innovation
- ✓ Acceptance
- ✓ Empowerment
- ✓ Resilience
- ✓ Responsiveness

How do our Mission, Vision and Values support our children and young people?

The ethos we create in Moore House Virtual Academy provides our children and young people with a happy, friendly and stimulating learning experience where they feel safe, secure and valued. Our calm, purposeful and supportive environment is built on mutual respect with staff who understand the importance of supporting our young people to develop resilience and to grow in confidence in order to re-engage in their learning.



Which young people would benefit from access to Moore House Virtual Academy?

There are many reasons children and young people refuse to attend school. School averse young people must not be confused with school truancy. School refusal can occur as a result of:

- High level anxiety;
- Extreme shyness/ inhibition;
- Fear of leaving the physical environment of their home;
- Fear of travelling to a school;
- Fear of failing in learning;
- Previous bullying in school or the community or online;
- Inability to make and maintain relationships with peers or adults;
- Social communication difficulties;
- Inability to manage behaviour; and
- Poor experience and/or exclusion from previous schools

Why is our Virtual Academy necessary?

Emotional issues including high levels of anxiety result in inability to concentrate and consequent lack of self esteem which in turn adversely affects success in learning. A child or young person suffering in this way becomes school averse and misses out on social interaction and learning. Irrespective of the balance of a virtual placement – full-time or part-time - our approach has a strong focus on identifying and supporting each child's emotional vulnerability as this is regularly identified as a prime cause of non-attendance at school.

The recent lockdown and the positive way in which many of our residential and day young people responded to online learning has convinced us that for some young people delivering learning virtually on a full or part-time basis can meet their needs more effectively, build confidence in their ability to learn and promote opportunities for greater attainment and achievement. In this way a well planned reintroduction to the physical school becomes possible. Gradual and smooth transition back to the physical school community supports fearful young people for life beyond school and creates better opportunities for a positive destination. It promotes the possibility of improved overall outcomes for vulnerable children and young people.

What are the skills of our staff team?

Our staff have relevant experience and have undergone high quality training to work effectively with young people who have suffered multiple challenges in their lives. Some of our young people may have a specific diagnosis and almost all our young people have failed in previous educational placements, many as a result of suffering from high levels of anxiety or trauma and loss resulting in their inability to trust adults or to form and maintain relationships. Many of our young people have been out of education for very considerable periods of time. The prime aim of our teachers is to establish a positive relationship with each young person and by so doing gain their trust so that learning can ensue in the right place at the right time.

Using Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) wellbeing indicators and through the use of Google Meet, we carefully assess and identify the emotional needs of our young people and plan careful strategies and responses involving, as appropriate, members of the Moore House PSI Team and where needed other external agencies.

Initial assessments of each young person's emotional and learning needs, undertaken by our skilled practitioners, clarify the most appropriate attendance at the Virtual Academy which can vary from fulltime to a hybrid learning approach whereby the young person attends one of our schools on a part-time basis and accesses the remainder of their curriculum online. Ongoing monitoring and tracking ensures that each young person's curriculum and balance of placement remains appropriate to their needs and is sufficiently challenging to broaden the scope of their development.



What is our curriculum?

Our Virtual Academy uses the same national context as our three other schools and takes full account of the National Improvement Framework (NIF) which sets out the vision and priorities for Scottish education. This complements the implementation of Curriculum for Excellence (CfE), GIRFEC, and Developing the Young Workforce (DYW), which are the three supporting pillars of the Scottish education system.

“My son is enjoying it so much.
Everyone (teachers) are excellent.”
Virtual Academy pupil parent



Using Google Classroom and other creative digital approaches, our substantial in-house virtual staff team draws from the teaching expertise of our three schools and can deliver English, Maths, Art, Music, Social Subjects, Health and Wellbeing, Technology and Science at the BGE stage and offers a wide variety of accredited subjects at the Senior Phase from National 2 to Higher Grade.



We personalise curriculum pathways to meet the individual needs of our children and young people by taking account of strengths and interests so that we can narrow gaps in their learning in creative ways. Regular monitoring ensures we track progress and quickly respond to concerns.

Individualised curriculum planning ensures the school sets sufficiently challenging learning and wellbeing targets that are assessed, monitored and tracked so that progress can be reported regularly and accurately. Ongoing monitoring ensures that each young person's curriculum remains appropriate to their needs.



Who are our partners?

Partnership and collaboration are at the heart of what we do. The needs of our young people are supported more effectively through joint working with other agencies and services.

Our Key Partners include:

- Parents and Carers of our children and young people, who provide us with the most valuable insight into their children and help us understand their anxieties and fears, their strengths and interests, their likes and dislikes. Regular contact is encouraged, whenever needed and regular review meetings which can be virtual, provide the opportunity for parents and carers to know how their child is progressing and can help us decide the most appropriate balance of virtual or physical placement.
- Moore House Care Staff who look after and support the children who live in our residential homes. Close partnership with these colleagues is essential in order to ensure consistency of approach and support for virtual learning for each child along with a shared understanding of the 24 hour curriculum.
- Local Authority representatives who place their children and young people in our schools and homes and who have invested their trust in us as providers of care and education for their most vulnerable children and young people. In undertaking this responsibility we ensure the progress of each young person's 'attendance', engagement, learning and health and wellbeing needs are tracked and reported to them on a regular basis.
- Health colleagues including Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) who provide us with essential specialist advice, particularly in respect of the emotional wellbeing of our young people;
- JMT Fostering services who provide support, such as respite care, for some of our young people and families;
- Local Community services such as leisure facilities and specialist support groups who provide our children and young people with wider opportunities.





How do we ensure we listen to the voices of our children and young people?

As part of our ethos of openness, acceptance and mutual respect, we work in ways that encourage our young people to develop trust in us so that they feel sufficiently confident to express their views. Many will have found it very difficult to express their emotions or voice their opinions in a considered way previously. The safe environment of the Virtual Academy helps to ease tension and promote confidence to confide and converse and make their voices heard.

How do we safeguard our children and young people?

The children and young people who 'attend' the Virtual Academy, may live at home with parents or carers, including foster carers, or in Moore House residential homes. Their isolation and vulnerability means that they can be potentially at greater risk than young people who physically attend school. All staff receive significant initial training and updated training in safeguarding, including child protection and are experienced in identifying signs that highlight a young person is in crisis. Risk assessments in conjunction with parents and involved professionals are put in place.

How can Children and Young People access Moore House Virtual Academy?

When a local authority considers they are unable to meet the learning needs of a child or young person, they can approach Moore House Virtual Academy.

Examples of the use of our Virtual Academy include providing an online curriculum for:

- young people residing withing local authority children's homes;
- young people in foster care;
- young people living at home with their family.

Our service has been used as a temporary bridging for young people who have had a breakdown in their school attendance.

Referrals can also be made directly from parents who are willing to self fund.

The Director of Children's Services and others will work closely with authorities so that any subsequently agreed transition may be undertaken smoothly.

“I like using virtual learning as I still get to see my teachers and everyone at assemblies. Google Classroom is good as it corrects my spelling and I don't get embarrassed.”

Virtual Academy pupil.

What happens when a child or young person is placed in Moore House Virtual Academy?

The Headteachers of Moore House Virtual Academy collate all the information from prior placements and set in motion a range of initial assessments in order to clarify the starting point for curriculum pathways and wellbeing planning. Other assessments may be carried out by a member of the PSI team. From this baseline, the school will commence the development of a comprehensive record that will follow the child or young person throughout their placement. An individualised Curriculum Plan which clarifies learning and teaching objectives across literacy, numeracy, health and wellbeing and other areas of the curriculum. Regular review meetings provide opportunities to report progress and ensure continuous challenge and appropriate support, including from other agencies when needed.



What happens when a child or young person moves on from Moore House Virtual Academy?

The school invites all relevant professionals who support the child or young person, along with the child or young person and their parents or carers, to ensure a smooth transition to full-time attendance at one of the Moore House Group's schools, or to another school and/or residence, or to a suitable post school destination.



“During lockdown it was my saviour, it was great to keep in touch with my teachers and they were able to help me when I was struggling as I could message and do video calls with them.”

Ethan - Virtual pupil.

The Moore House Group

- ✓ Residential care
- ✓ Specialist primary education
- ✓ Specialist secondary education
- ✓ Virtual learning
- ✓ Fostering
- ✓ Social enterprise
- ✓ Psychological services
- ✓ Family support work
- ✓ Continuing care
- ✓ Throughcare & Aftercare
- ✓ Social housing

www.moorehousegroup.org.uk

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