



**Comberton  
Primary School**

*A caring community  
for all to shine*

# **Comberton Primary School**

## **Looked After and Previously Looked After Children Policy**

Date Policy Last reviewed: Sep 2025

Signed by: Deena Frost Headteacher

Date: Sep 2025

Signed by: Stephen Deakin Chair of Governors

Date: Sep 2025

# Looked After and Previously Looked After Children Policy

This policy is based on the WCC model policy “*Previously Looked After and Looked After Children Policy*” and adapted for our setting.

This Policy applies to all Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children. It must be read in conjunction with the following government guidance documents:

- Promoting the Education of Looked After and Previously Looked After Children, Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities (DfE, February 2018)
- The Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children, Statutory Guidance on their roles and responsibilities (DfE, February 2018)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (DfE, 2025)
- Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years: Statutory Guidance for Organisations who work with and Support Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (DfE, 2015)
- Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement (DfE, 2024)
- Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs (DfE, 2023)
- Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions: Statutory Guidance for Governing Bodies of Maintained Schools and Proprietors of Academies in England (DfE, 2015)
- Children missing education Statutory guidance for local authorities (2024)
- Elective Home Education; Guidelines for Local Authorities (2019)
- Alternative Provision (DfE, 2013) 1 S22 Children's Act 1989 4 1.

## Definitions

### Looked After Children (LAC)

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is looked after if s/he is in the care of, or is provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by, a local authority. The term 'Looked after children' refers to:

- (i) Children accommodated by the Local Authority under a voluntary agreement with their parents (section 20)
- (ii) Children subject to a care order (section 31.1) or interim care order (section 38)
- (iii) Children who are subject to emergency orders for the protection of the child (section 44)

It is important not to confuse a young person's legal status with their living arrangements. A child on a care order, for example, could be living:

- with foster carers.
- in a children's home.
- with relatives or friends.
- with one or both parents under supervision by social care.
- with prospective adoptive parents (but still retain Looked After legal status until final adoption order is made by the courts)

## Previously Looked After Children (PLAC)

Children who immediately after being in care (as defined above) became subject to an adoption order, child arrangements order or special guardianship order.

- Special guardianship order – This order appoints one or more individuals to be a child's special guardian(s). Refer to [Section 14A of the Children Act 1989](#).
- Child arrangements order – This order settles the arrangements of the person the child is to live with. Refer to [Section 8 of the Children Act 1989](#), as amended by [Section 12 of the Children and Families Act 2014](#). Child arrangements orders replace residence orders and any residence order in force prior to 22 April 2014 is deemed to be a child arrangements order.
- Adoption order – Refer to [Section 46 of the Adoption and Children act 2002](#) or [Section 12 of the 1976 Adoption Act](#).

## **Our Aims**

We recognise and understand that looked after and previously looked after children are likely to have suffered significant loss and trauma and may have experienced abuse and/or neglect. The emotional impact of their experiences could therefore become significant barriers to their learning behaviours and progress. In such cases, the complexity of any fragmented educational experience needs careful assessment and planning.

Comberton Primary School is committed to providing quality education for all its pupils, based on equality of access, opportunity and outcomes.

We aim:

- To provide a safe and secure environment where education is valued and there is a belief in the abilities and potential of all children.
- To support our looked after and previously looked after children and give them access to every opportunity to continually achieve and enjoy their learning.
- To recognise and support the specific challenges faced by looked after and previously looked after children, while continuing to foster a culture of high expectations of learning, behaviour and progress.
- To fulfil our school's role as corporate parents in promoting and supporting the educational achievement of all Looked After Children by asking the question 'Would this be good enough for my child?'

## **Key Responsibilities**

### **Duty to Promote the Educational Achievement of Looked After Children - The Local Authority**

1. Under section 22 (3A) of the Children Act 1989, local authorities have a duty to promote the educational achievement of Looked After Children. Section 22 of the Children and Families Act 2014 imposes a requirement for a named officer within the Local Authority to be appointed to discharge this duty; this Officer will be referred to as a 'Virtual School Head ('VSH)'. This duty also extends to 'eligible ' children.
2. For looked-after children, as part of a local authority's corporate parent role, the VSH needs to be the educational advocate that parents are for others.
3. Local authorities have a duty under the Children Act 1989 to safeguard and promote the welfare of a child looked after by them. This includes a specific duty to promote the child's educational achievement, wherever they live or are educated. The authority must, therefore, give particular attention to the educational implications of any decision about the welfare of those children.
4. Social workers, VSHs, Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs), school admission officers, and Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) departments should work together to ensure that,

except in an emergency, appropriate education provision for a child is arranged at the same time as a care placement.

5. All looked-after children should have a Personal Education Plan (PEP) which is part of the child's care plan or detention placement plan. The broad areas of information that must be covered in the PEP are specified in Schedule 1 (paragraph 2) of the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 as amended. The PEP must include the contact details of the VSH for the authority that looks after the child.

### **Duty to Promote the Educational Achievement of Previously looked-after children - The Local Authority**

1. Local authorities have a duty under section 23ZZA of the Children Act 1989 (inserted by section 4 of the Children and Social Work Act 2017) to promote the educational achievement of previously looked-after children in their area by providing information and advice to any person that has parental responsibility for the child;
2. For previously looked-after children, the VSH and Senior Education Adviser for Vulnerable Learners will be a source of advice and information to help their parents to advocate for them as effectively as possible. VSHs are not acting as part of the corporate parent role in these circumstances, but are there to promote the educational achievement of these children through the provision of advice and information to relevant parties listed in previously looked after-children.
3. The duty applies to children who are in early year's provision (secured by the local authority under section 7(1) of the Childcare Act 2006) and continues throughout the compulsory years of education where the child is in provision funded in part or in full by the state.
4. VSHs are integral to ensuring that local authorities discharge their duty to provide suitable advice and information for the purpose of promoting the educational achievement of previously looked-after children. They can also undertake any activity they consider appropriate where that activity will promote the educational achievement of such children in their area.

### **The key responsibilities of the Virtual School Head**

1. The Virtual School Head must ensure that there are effective systems in place to:
  - Ensure every school has a Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked Children, who is a qualified teacher;
  - Maintain an up-to-date roll of its Looked After Children and monitor their education placement, attendance and educational progress;
  - Inform Head Teachers and Designated Teachers in schools if they have a child on roll who is Looked After by the VSH's local authority;
  - Ensure that social workers, Designated Teachers and schools, carers and IROs understand their role and responsibilities in initiating, developing, reviewing and updating the child's PEP and how they help meet the needs identified in that PEP;
  - Ensure up-to-date, effective and high quality PEPs that focus on educational outcomes and that all Looked After children, wherever they are placed, have such a PEP;
  - Ensure the educational achievement of children Looked After by the authority is seen as a priority by everyone who has responsibilities for promoting their welfare;
  - VSH reports regularly on the attainment of Looked After children through the authority's corporate parenting yearly structures and VS Governing Body on a termly basis;
  - Ensure children are in receipt of suitable, full-time education unless there are exceptional circumstances which have been agreed in conjunction with the (VSH);
  - VSH promotes safeguarding awareness in schools for LAC and PLAC

## The role of the Governing Board

1. Governing Boards must be made aware of their statutory duties in relation to making available appropriate and relevant information with staff in school having regard to the child's Wider Care Plan, General Data Protection Regulations and Confidentiality. This must include:
  - Identified contact arrangements with birth parents and/or those with Parental Responsibility;
  - Levels of authority delegated to the carer;
  - Having a named Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked Children who acts as the first point of contact with the Virtual School and Social Workers.
2. Governing boards should, through the designated teacher, hold the school to account on how it supports its looked-after and previously looked-after children (including how the PP+ is used) and their level of progress.
3. Comberton governing body will:
  - Ensure that the admission criteria and practice prioritises children looked after and previously looked after according to the DfE Admissions Code of Practice.
  - Ensure that the designated governor/s is fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for looked after and previously looked after children.
  - Ensure there is a designated teacher for looked after and previously looked after children.
  - Liaise with the head teacher, designated teacher, and all other staff to ensure the needs of looked after and previously looked after children are met.
  - Receive reports from the designated teacher which should include;
    - a) the number of looked after and previously looked after children on roll and the confirmation that LAC have a Personal Education Plan.
    - b) their attendance, compared to other pupils.
    - c) their attainment compared to other pupils, including any SEN.
    - d) the number of fixed term and permanent exclusions (if any).
    - e) the destinations of pupils who leave the school.
  - Ensure that the school's policies and procedures give looked after and previously looked after children equal access in respect of;
    - a) Admission to school.
    - b) National Curriculum and examinations both academic and vocational.
    - c) Out of school learning and extra-curricular activities.
  - Annually, review the effective implementation of the school policy for looked after and previously looked after children

## The Role of the Designated Teacher

1. The designated teacher should be a named senior member and qualified teacher of the school to act as central point of contact. [At Comberton, this is our DSL](#). This helps to make sure that the school plays its role to the full in making sure arrangements are joined up and minimise any disruption to a child's learning. This involves working with VSHs to promote the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children and promoting a whole school culture where the personalised learning needs of every looked-after and previously looked-after child matters and their personal, emotional and academic needs are prioritised.
2. The designated teacher takes a lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand the things which can affect how looked-after and previously looked-after children learn and achieve and how the whole school supports the educational achievement of these pupils. This means making sure that all staff:
  - have high expectations of looked-after and previously looked-after children's learning and set targets to accelerate educational progress;
  - are aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation (attachment awareness) from birth families and that some children may find it difficult to build

relationships of trust with adults because of their experiences, and how this might affect the child's behaviour;

- understand how important it is to see looked-after and previously looked-after children as individuals rather than as a homogeneous group, not publicly treat them differently from their peers, and show sensitivity about who else knows about their looked-after or previously looked-after status;
- appreciate the central importance of the looked-after child's PEP in helping to create a shared understanding between teachers, carers, social workers and, most importantly, the child's own understanding of how they are being supported;
- have the level of understanding they need of the role of social workers, VSHs and carers, and how the function of the PEP fits into the wider care planning duties of the authority which looks after the child; and for previously looked-after children
- understand the importance of involving the child's parents or guardians in decisions affecting their child's education, and be a contact for parents or guardians who want advice or have concerns about their child's progress at school.

3. The designated teacher will also have a more direct and day-to-day role in promoting the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children, either directly or through appropriate delegation. This can be achieved by:

- having lead responsibility for the development and implementation of looked-after children's PEP within school in partnership with others as necessary;
- Contributing to the development and review of whole school policies and procedures to ensure that: they do not unintentionally put looked-after and previously looked-after children at a disadvantage;
- Ensuring there is effective induction for looked-after and previously looked-after children starting school, new to the school and new to care;
- Ensuring there are effective procedures in place to support a looked-after child's learning - particular account is taken of the child's needs when joining the school and of the importance of promoting an ethos of high expectations about what s/he can achieve;
- Ensuring the transition to the next phase of a child's education are supported effectively to avoid children losing ground – e.g. moving schools from primary to secondary school or because of a change in placement or exclusion;
- Ensuring that when enrolling at the school, parents and guardians of previously looked-after children are reminded that they need to inform the school if their child is eligible to attract Pupil Premium Plus (PP+);
- Monitoring to ensure there are no barriers to looked-after children accessing the general activities and experiences the school offers to all its pupils (e.g. taking into account possible transport difficulties and the arrangements for looked-after children to attend meetings)

4. The designated teacher must adopt a culture where the educational achievement of children looked after and previously looked-after is promoted. This will be achieved by;

- Enabling pupils to discuss their progress and be involved in setting their own targets, have their views taken seriously, and are supported to take responsibility for their own learning;
- Prioritising in any selection of pupils who would benefit from one-to-one tuition, and that they have access to academic focused study support;
- Ensuring pupils are encouraged to participate in school activities and in decision making within the school and the care system;
- Ensuring pupils believe they can succeed and aspire to further and higher education or highly skilled jobs; and
- Creating an environment where pupils feel confident to discuss difficult issues (such as SEN, bullying, attendance)

5. The designated teacher should ensure they are the 'expert' within the school to provide information, advice and guidance to staff about:
  - differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual pupils who are looked-after or previously looked-after children; and
  - the use of Assessment for Learning (AfL) approaches to improve the short and medium term progress of looked-after and previously looked-after children, and help them and their teachers understand where they are in their learning (including any knowledge gaps), where they need to go, and how to get there.
  - promoting good home-school links;
  - supporting progress by paying particular attention to effective communication with carers, parents or guardians;
  - ensuring carers, parents or guardians understand the potential value of one-to-one tuition and are equipped to engage with it at home;
  - ensuring carers, parents or guardians are aware of how the school teaches key skills such as reading and numeracy; and
  - safeguarding concerns regarding looked-after and previously looked-after children and ensuring these are quickly and effectively responded to by the Designated Safeguarding lead;
6. When supporting previously looked-after children, designated teachers should be aware that the Previously Looked After Advisor is available to provide information and advice to parents, carers and designated teachers on how to meet the needs of these children. This may be general information, including training opportunities or advice that is child specific. The designated teacher should fully involve parents and guardians in decisions affecting their child's education.

## **The Personal Education Plan (PEP)**

### Looked After Children

1. The Personal Education Plan must be initiated by the Education Coordinator and PEP Coordinator in Worcestershire Children's First (in County) and Area Learning Advocate (Out of County) within 10 days of the child becoming Looked After or, if subject to a Care Order, it must be completed prior to the child being placed by Worcestershire County Council.
2. The Personal Education Plan (PEP), which must form part of the child's wider care plan, is a legal requirement for every child of compulsory school age and must set out clearly what the child's circumstances and needs are in the short, medium and longer term to ensure appropriate arrangements are in place for the child to promote their educational achievement at every stage of their life.
3. The quality of the PEP is the joint responsibility of the local authority that looks after the child and the school. Social workers, carers, VSHs, VST, designated teachers and, as appropriate, other relevant professionals will need to work closely together. All of those involved in the PEP process at all stages should involve the child (according to understanding and ability) and, where appropriate, the child's parent and/or relevant family member.
4. Worcestershire Local Authority uses Liquid Logic to ensure every service including, PEP Coordinators, Area Learning Advocates, Designated Teachers within School, Social Care and carers understand and can contribute to the PEP by having immediate access to appropriate/up to date information and to intervene at the earliest opportunity where there are concerns or changes required.
5. The overall responsibility of the PEP is that of the Social Worker; however, the school Designated Teacher leads on how the PEP is developed and used in school to make sure the child's progress towards education targets is monitored. This is monitored by Wider Virtual School Team on behalf of the VSH.

6. The views of the child are imperative and therefore services working with the child must ensure that opportunities for the child's voice are encouraged throughout the process. Consideration should also be given to the impact of involving the child's birth parents and/or any other family member. Consideration must be given different ways of obtaining the views of the child appropriate to the child's communication skills for example, in writing, storyboards, separate meetings etc.
7. The PEP is an evolving record, and arrangements for the flow of information to develop, review and update the PEP must be in place to ensure the Virtual School, Designated Teacher, carer and, where appropriate, child and parent have a copy of the latest version of the document. The Virtual School Head, in conjunction with Worcestershire Children's First and Area Learning Advocates must make arrangements for PEPs to be reviewed each school term.
8. The PEP must include details of any actions and arrangements should a child's educational and/or residential placement need to change either in an emergency or planned circumstances. This must include: Arrangements for applying for a new school place; Interim educational arrangements to ensure the child does not lose days to education such as education offsite, dual registration and alternative provision or any support that the child may need for education, health and care.
9. In order for the PEP to be purposeful and have a positive impact on the child it must set clear objectives and SMART targets for the child which have due regard to the following:
  - Chronology of education and training history which provides a record of the child's educational experience, progress and attainment, including information about educational institutions attended and the reasons for leaving, attendance and conduct record, academic and other achievements, any special educational needs, an indication of the extent to which the child's education has been disrupted before entering care or accommodation;
  - Existing arrangements and assessment of impact for education and training - this must outline details of any special educational provision and any other provision in place;
  - How the PEP relates to other plans such as, Education Health and Care Plan, Individual Education Plan, Pastoral Support Plan etc.
  - Any planned changes to existing arrangements and provision to minimise disruption;
  - The child's leisure interests;
  - Role of the appropriate person and any other person who cares for the child in promoting the child's educational achievements and leisure interests;
  - The effective use of the Pupil Premium Plus and application for any bursary must be discussed as part of PEP Meetings;
  - Identify developmental and educational needs (short and longer term) in relation to skills, knowledge, subject areas and experiences. This must have regard to health or educational assessments that have been completed or are may be required in the future;
  - Include SMART short-term targets, including progress monitoring of each of the areas identified against development and educational needs;
  - Identify actions, with time scales, for specific individuals intended to support the achievement of agreed targets and use of any additional resources (e.g. the pupil premium) specifically designated to support the attainment of looked after children;
  - Identify access to effective intervention strategies and how this will make/has made a difference to achievement levels.
  - Details of who will take the plan forward, with timescales for action and review;
  - The PEP must also include the contact details of the Virtual School Head for the authority that looks after the child.
10. The completed PEP must be distributed to the child, parents, staff/carers and all others invited to the meeting. A copy must also be sent to the child's Independent Reviewing Officer.

## **Reviewing the PEP, identifying recommendations and agreeing actions**

1. The PEP must be reviewed after 3 months of the child coming into care then every term thereafter. This will be coordinated by the Virtual School Education Coordinator for children in Worcestershire Schools. Those children placed Out of County will be coordinated by ALA.
2. Second and subsequent PEP's must correspond with the Looked After Review cycle and PEP decisions and recommendations must be available to the child's Independent Reviewing Officer at the Looked After Review.
3. Where there is an imminent need to change the child's educational provision or arrangements the PEP must be reviewed as soon as the change is known.
4. Progress against the targets and impact of Pupil Premium Plus must be clearly evidenced.
5. The participants must agree what action they will each undertake to achieve the improvements in the child's education that they have identified through the consultation/preparation process.
6. Proposals that would lead to significant changes in arrangements (e.g. a change of school, a request for an Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment) and/or to increases in expenditure (private tuition, a jointly-funded placement) must be made in the form of recommendations to the Looked After Review.
7. The child's social worker must work with the child's school between Looked After Reviews (involving the Virtual School if necessary) to ensure that up-to-date PEP information is fed into those reviews, and ensure that all relevant information about the child's educational progress and support needs is up-to-date and evidenced before the Looked After Child Review.
8. IROs must ensure that the PEP's effectiveness is scrutinised in sufficient detail as part of the Looked After Review and at other times if necessary. Where a child has Special Educational Needs, the IRO must ensure that the PEP review is linked with any review of those needs.
9. The first PEP in a new school must:
  - Identify the child's immediate and priority needs (e.g. English as an additional language, literacy support, behaviour management);
  - Establish contact between residential staff/carer, school staff and social worker - the basis of a working partnership;
  - Identify a named person for the day to day management of the PEP and agree who contacts whom about what;
  - Establish boundaries of confidentiality;
  - Share important information - perhaps including the Placement Information Record;
  - Ensure records are forwarded from the previous school and/or carer;
  - Agree a date for the next PEP review meeting and how and when the next full PEP is going to be drawn up (this needs to take account of the Looked After Review cycle because the PEP has to be ready before or at the Review; but also term dates, parents' evenings, school target setting days, Individual Education Plan reviews, annual reviews of Education, Health and Care Plans etc.)

## **Previously Looked After Children**

There is no requirement for previously looked after children to have a PEP; however, schools and the Local Authority must be able to demonstrate how they promote the outcomes of vulnerable groups through use of the Pupil Premium. It would therefore be strongly recommended that the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children routinely monitors the progress of these children in line with the children who are currently looked after.

## **Pupil Premium Plus (PP+)**

1. PP+ funding is additional funding provided to help improve the attainment of looked after children and close the attainment gap between them and their peers. Both VSH and schools manage their PP+ allocation for the benefit of their cohort of looked after or previously looked after children and according to children's needs. This is additional funding is provided to help improve the attainment of looked-after children and close the attainment gap between them and their peers.
2. The PP+ can be used to facilitate a wide range of educational support for looked after children. It is important that interventions supported by pupil premium should be evidence-based and in the best interests of the child.
3. The VSH retains the allocation of PP+ for Looked After Children and will allocate directly to school on receipt of a completed PEP which clearly evidences SMART targets and assessment of impact.
4. The VSH also has considerable flexibility in the use of PP+ funding in order to maximise its impact for individual looked-after children as well as the whole looked after cohort.
5. The PP+ can be used to facilitate a wide range of educational support for looked after children. VSH should seek the input of the school's designated teacher and carers when deciding on how to use PP+ to support a child. It is important that interventions supported by pupil premium should be evidence-based and in the best interests of the child.
6. PP+ funding for previously looked after children is allocated directly to and managed by their school.

## **Securing Appropriate Education**

1. Every child residing in Worcestershire is entitled to free, good quality education.
2. Every child in the care of the Local Authority is expected to have a school place applied for at the normal point of entry (the academic year in which the child reaches 5). The choice of school requires skilled working between relevant people. It must be based on a discussion between the child's social worker, schools, the Virtual School, their carers and, if appropriate, birth parents.
3. In circumstances where a child's educational placement needs to change the Local Authority must ascertain the views of the parent, and where appropriate those of the child.
4. Where a child has an Education, Health and Care Plan the Local Authority's SEND Services, who maintains the EHCP is responsible for securing appropriate provision. A review of the EHCP must be completed.
5. For children who have been permanently excluded; have medical needs preventing from attending school or there are other circumstances where the child will not receive a suitable education the Senior Education Adviser for Vulnerable Learners is responsible for making suitable arrangements.
6. Any change to a child's educational placement must trigger a review of the arrangements set out in the PEP within 24 hours of making the decision to change a child's placement.
7. The Virtual School must conform to the interim arrangements identified in the PEP and wider care plan to minimise days lost to education prior to changing placement where practicably possible to so. A decision must be made as to whether the child can attend or access education arranged by the school they are currently registered. If not, then the VSH and Senior Education Adviser for Vulnerable Learners must be immediately notified.
8. Looked After and previously Looked After children have been given the highest priority within school admission arrangements. It is therefore expected that all options regarding the child's education have

been considered, so that the school being applied to, can confidently meet the child's 'assessed' needs. The Virtual School Headteacher will not tolerate drift or delay as a result of protracted negotiations and will initiate the direction process where the school being applied to is considered to best meet the child's needs but refuses to admit.

9. School's details and agreed start date must be immediately amended on the electronic record and the PEP.
10. The new school must be provided with all the relevant information to enable the school to make an informed decision as to whether it can offer the child a place in accordance with their Admissions Policy and to ensure the child's welfare is safeguarded. However the transfer of the child's file should only occur once a place has been offered and a start date has been agreed.

### **Avoidance of Disruption in Educating Looked After Children**

1. It is imperative, regardless whether the child is on roll or not at the time of initiating the first PEP, that the educational arrangements are set out clearly where a child's educational placement needs to change, usually in case of an emergency for example exclusion, change of care placement, illness or in other circumstance.
2. Such arrangements must be reviewed at every PEP. Where a change of educational placement and/or arrangements are required an emergency review of the PEP is required and the Local Authority's Admission's Protocol for Looked After Children (2018) must be followed.
3. Other than in Key Stage 4, in which instance consent from the Virtual School Head is required, where the Local Authority proposes making any change to the child's placement that would have the effect of disrupting the arrangements made for education and training, they must ensure that other arrangements are made for education or training that meet the child's needs and are consistent with the PEP.
4. Where a child's needs have changed that suggest a reduction in the child's education is required and or Alternative Provision is to be arranged the Virtual School Headteacher must be consulted prior to making any changes. There must be a suitable Pastoral Support Plan in place which must be reviewed in conjunction with the PEP.

### **Previously Looked After Children**

1. Parents who are seeking to change schools do not need to follow the process for Looked After Children; however, where a school place is required the Children Missing Education Officer will assist the parent in applying for a school place and refer the matter to the Senior Education Adviser for Vulnerable Learner, if a school place has not been secured within 7 days. The Children Missing Education Officer will be responsible for ensuring the Looked After Child Education Transfer Form is completed.

### **Pupils with Education, Health and Care Plans**

1. A change of school at any time needs the agreement of the relevant local education service maintaining the Education, Health and Care Plan. This needs to be planned for as early as possible as it can cause long delays.
2. The child's social worker must ensure that they are aware of the current position with regard to the Plan, including any additional support provided and by who is going to provide the support.
3. Any change to the child's provision must be authorised by the SEND Services for the area in which the child is resident. This also includes any placements subject to dual registration.

4. The completed PEP must be distributed by the Social Worker to those invited to the meeting; the child's Independent Reviewing Officer and the VSH responsible for the child.

### **School Exclusions**

1. Where the school has concerns about a Looked After child's behaviour, the VS Education Coordinator must be informed and, where necessary, involved at the earliest opportunity. This is to enable the Virtual School Education Coordinator and VSH, working with other professionals to help the school decide how to support the child to improve their behaviour and avoid suspension or exclusion being necessary. Schools cannot informally send children home if they are presenting challenging behaviour. VSHs should be proactive in building relationships with head teachers, designated teachers, school's pastoral and behaviour leads, the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) and carers to enable this.
2. Consideration must be given to any additional assessment and support (such as additional help for the classroom teacher, one-to-one therapeutic work or a suitable alternative placement) to meet the needs of the child.
3. Additional arrangements must be identified within the child's PEP actions taken if the child is at risk of exclusion to minimise any disruption to the child's provision and to ensure it remains suitable.
4. Where a looked after child is suspended from school, the child's social worker must inform the child's Independent Reviewing Officer.

### **Fixed term suspensions**

1. Head Teachers must, as far as possible, avoid suspending any looked-after child. Suspension from school must be a last resort for children who are looked after; therefore it is important to work with the school and carers to intervene as soon as a child's behaviour becomes a cause for concern.
2. Where a child is suspended from school for a fixed period, the school will provide work for the child for the first five days of the suspension. The social worker must liaise with the residential staff/carers about suitable arrangements for supervising the child doing the schoolwork during the day and ensuring the child does not go out during school hours. With effect from the sixth day the school must provide a place for the child to be educated.
3. The school will communicate the reasons for the suspension to the residential staff/carer and the social worker. Whoever is the most appropriate one to do so, will discuss this with the child. The social worker must inform the parents, if appropriate.
4. The social worker, in consultation with the child and parents, must seek advice as to whether to appeal against the decision to suspend the child.
5. If the child is in primary school and receives a fixed term suspension or is in secondary school and is suspended for more than five days, the social worker must ensure a reintegration meeting is held within the five days to discuss his/her return and how best this can be supported.

### **Permanent exclusions**

1. When a child is permanently excluded but is remaining in the same foster or residential placement, the social worker will liaise urgently with the local education service in which the child is living to find an alternative school placement. Again, for the first five days of the exclusion, the school will provide work and the child must not be out unaccompanied in public during school hours. From the sixth day the local authority will arrange for a place for the child to be educated.

2. In the case of permanent exclusion or where a fixed term suspension exceeds 15 days or more per term, the Governing Board of the school must hold a meeting within fifteen days to review the decision made by the Head Teacher to exclude the child. If the Governing Board decides to uphold the decision to permanently exclude, an Independent Review can be made within fifteen school days. The request for review can be completed by a foster carer or anyone who has Parental Responsibility for the child as determined in the Children's Act 1989 and Education Act 1996.
3. *Further information, advice and guidance about exclusions can be sought from Worcestershire County Council.*

### **Alternative provision**

1. The use of alternative provision must only be used in the following circumstances;
  - to improve behaviour (Direction to off-site provision to modify behaviour does not require consent of parents/carers under s29A Education Act 2002 or in the case of an academy their general powers in their Articles of Association).
  - to add value to the child's existing provision (in such cases it is expected that the child will be attending their home school for a set subjects).
2. In each case there must be effective monitoring arrangements in place by schools to ensure attendance is regular and the child is progressing as well, or better than expected to be. Reviews of the provision must be no less than 30 school days.
3. The objectives of the provision, days/times of attendance and duration of provision must be clearly set out from the start as part of the PEP review.
4. Those persons responsible for arranging the provision must ensure that the provision is compliant with regulations underpinning 'illegal schools' and that there are appropriate safeguards in place.

### **Part-Time Educational Arrangements**

1. Part-time education as a whole is illegal, as children are expected to be in full-time (25 hours per week); however, there are exceptional circumstances where a short-term reduction may be appropriate. When the school plans to reduce a child's timetable an immediate review of the PEP is required, and as corporate parent consent from the Virtual School must be sought prior to initiating the arrangement.

### **Confidentiality and Information Sharing (please also refer to our Data Protection Policy)**

1. The designated teacher will decide the extent to which information will be shared, and with which staff, including Teaching Assistants, on a case-by-case basis. It may not be necessary to share details of the child's traumatic past, where an understanding can be reached about the child's current needs and strategies to support these. Some cases may require selected staff to understand how specific previous experiences are impacting on current behaviour.
2. Where information is shared with selected staff, the young person is made aware of this, although how this is shared with them will depend on their age and understanding. (The explanation should emphasise that the school, social worker and carers are working together to promote the young person's education). For a child who is newly looked after, it is likely to be important to establish his/her view of their changed circumstances, and to monitor how this influences their behaviour, attendance and performance.
3. Looked after children may need adult support to prepare for when they are asked about home by other students or staff. We aim to plan for this by discussing this with the child, on their entry to the school. This may also need to be considered when their care status changes, as needed.

4. Arrangements for sharing reliable data must be in place, particularly in relation to the tracking and monitoring of attainment data and notifications of where children, including those placed out-of-authority, are being educated, and must set out:
- Who has access to what information and how the security of data will be ensured;
  - How children and parents are informed of, and allowed to challenge, information that is kept about them;
  - How carers contribute to and receive information;
  - Mechanisms for sharing information between relevant local authority departments and schools;
  - How relevant information about individual children is passed promptly between authorities, departments and schools when young people move. Relevant information includes the PEP, which as part of the looked after child's educational record must be transferred with them to the new school.

### **Monitoring and Reviewing Procedures**

The Designated Teacher (or through delegation to the head teacher) will provide staff and governors with necessary information and summaries of the impact of the policy on the practice of the school. The Governing Body reviews this policy annually and considers any amendments in light of the annual review findings.

## Annex A:

Virtual School: <https://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/council-services/schools-education-and-learning/virtual-school>

Virtual School Head Teacher: Matthew Stiles

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- telephone: 01905 643262

Virtual School Co-ordinator: **Anne Griffin**

- email: [agriffin@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk](mailto:agriffin@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk)
- telephone: [01905 845405](tel:01905845405)

Virtual School Administrator: **Crystal Laurentus-George**

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- telephone: [01905 844913](tel:01905844913)

Key Stages 1-4 Learning Advocates (CLA attending Worcestershire Schools)

- Fiona Eades, email: [feades@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk](mailto:feades@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk)
- Paula Hemming, email: [phebbing@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk](mailto:phebbing@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk)
- Sam Purser, email: [spurser@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk](mailto:spurser@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk)
- Mary Williams, email: [Mwilliams2@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk](mailto:Mwilliams2@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk)
- Becky James, email: [bjames@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk](mailto:bjames@worcschildrenfirst.org.uk)

Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) Adviser

**Jade Busby**

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- telephone: [01905 846125](tel:01905846125)

## **Annex B: Useful Resources and Further Reading**

### **Useful resources and external organisations**

- *A good practice guide for parents: meeting the needs of adopted and permanently placed children (Adoption UK)*
- *A good practice guide for schools: understanding and meeting the needs of children who are looked-after, fostered, adopted or otherwise permanently placed (PAC, 2013)*
- *Become (formerly The Who Cares Trust)*
- *Framework and evaluation schedule: children in need of help and protection and care leavers and Local Safeguarding Children Boards (Ofsted 2017)*
- *National Association of Virtual School Heads*
- *National Network for the Education of Care Leavers - Higher education activities and resources for care leavers, children in care and those who support them*
- *The National Children's Bureau*

### **Research**

- *The impact of virtual schools on the educational progress of looked after children (Ofsted, 2012)*
- *Education Matters in Care: A report by the independent cross-party inquiry into the educational attainment of looked-after children in England.*
- *Information on attachment awareness for schools – Bath Spa University*
- *The Educational Progress of Looked After Children in England: Linking Care and Educational Data – Rees Centre*
- *Looked after children: good practice in schools (Ofsted report 2008)*

### **Practice Tools**

- *Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) teaching-learning-toolkit*

This provides useful information and evidence on effectiveness of types of support which can be facilitated by pupil premium funding.

National Consortium for Examination Results (NCER): VSH management information tool. The NCER NOVA CLA Reports is a new national system to measure the educational performance and progress of children and young people whilst in care at Key Stages 1, 2 and 4. The system matches social care and educational data from the 2016 SSSDA903 national database and National Pupil Database; and reports on some of the factors that are shown to make the most difference in improving the outcomes of children in care. The tool operates across local authority boundaries to ensure that children placed in one local authority and educated in another are included in the reporting functionality.

### **Mental Health**

- *Adoption Support Fund (ASF)*

The ASF was established to help pay for essential therapeutic services for adoptive families as and when they need it. It is available for children up to, and including, the age of 21 (or 25 with an EHC Plan) who have been adopted from local authority care in England or adopted from Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland but living in England. From 1 April 2016, the Fund became available for intercountry adoptions (once the placement has been made and the child is in England) and for Special Guardians who care for children who were looked-after immediately prior to the Special Guardianship Order.

- *Children's attachment: attachment in children and young people who are adopted from care, in care or at high risk of going into care (NICE guideline, 2015)*

This guideline covers the identification, assessment and treatment of attachment difficulties in children and young people up to age 18 who are adopted from care, in special guardianship, looked after by local authorities in foster homes (including kinship foster care), residential settings and other accommodation, or on the edge of care.

- *Mental health and behaviour in schools guidance (Department for Education, 2016)*
- *Strength and Difficulties Questionnaire Information for researchers and professionals about SDQs.*
- *MindEd - Online training materials on mental health for families and professionals working*
- *Transforming Children and Young People's Mental Health: a Green Paper A green paper setting out measures to improve mental health support for children and young people.*