

**Barnet Virtual School –
children in care**

**A Guide for Designated Teachers
and Schools**

Contents

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1. What is the Virtual School?

Welcome!

Barnet Virtual School supports the education of all young people who are looked after by the borough of Barnet and all those who have been previously looked after up to the age of 25.

Virtual Schools are not teaching institutions in the traditional sense – there is no building and children do not attend. Rather they act as local authority champions to promote the progress and educational attainment of children and young people who are or who have been looked after (also known as in care) so that they achieve the best educational outcomes possible. Ensuring that these young people receive a high-quality education is the foundation for improving their lives.

1.1 What does the Virtual School do?

- Champion the educational needs of children and young people who are looked after by Barnet
- Promote aspiration for educational achievement by demanding it is a priority within the lives of looked after young people to improve outcomes and life chances.
- Ensure our children and young people have access to the best possible education and every chance to progress and realise their individual potential.
- Monitor the educational progress of all Barnet young people in care whether they attend schools in or out of borough, as if they were attending a single school
- Assess and review Personal Education Plans (PEPs) to raise attainment for those in care to Barnet - providing advice, guidance and support for intervention where this is needed.
- Provide additional opportunities for out of school learning and leisure through enrichment activities.
- Has strategic oversight for all children with a social worker
- Provide advice around education and children who were previously looked after.

We are keen to support schools and understand that sometimes situations can be challenging. For Designated Teachers (D.T.) in schools, it is sometimes hard to know where to get support. As well as being at the end of a phone, we offer 'New to Designated Teacher training' as well as termly training sessions for D.T.s and a regular newsletter. Whether you are in borough, or in one of our many schools far away from Barnet, we are very keen to see you at training and you will be given a warm welcome, information and support. We encourage D.T.s to get in touch with us at the earliest sign of any difficulties so we can work together to minimise exclusions. We can also organise training for schools to support the education of looked after children.

We provide support and training for our Foster Carers too and urge them to get in touch for advice if they need any help with understanding the school system or about their young person's educational progress. We have specific interventions and training for Foster Carers which we encourage them to attend. We have close working relationships with Social Workers and are here to inform on any educational matters. Our Social Workers contact us as soon as a young person comes into care so that we can minimise the time out of education and ensure a high quality, well-matched school is in place. We work together with Social Workers to minimise moving schools and disrupting education as far as we possibly can.

Lastly, and most importantly, our young people. As well as supporting and championing the education of all our young people who are looked after, we provide a range of enrichment activities in a variety of areas. We also have two dedicated Post 16 caseworkers who are there to offer support and advice on the next steps after school.

1.2 What does the Virtual School provide?

- support and advice to **children, social workers and carers** right from Early Years to FE on a whole range of issues, ranging from which school to attendance to planning for 14-19 and Higher Education.
- training sessions for Designated Teachers and regular newsletters
- trained Caseworkers who promote positive outcomes
- support for the creation of effective Personal Education Plans clearly focussed on learning outcomes and well being
- monitoring of the quality of Personal Education Plans (PEPs)
- effective links between Schools and Carers
- advice from Educational Psychologists and/or Inclusion Advisory Team if needed
- the provision of laptops usually allocated to Year 6 and above
- alternative strategies to prevent exclusions
- the services of Welfare Call to monitor attendance and provide an EPEP
- access to a range of enrichment opportunities
- support to ensure that school placements continue wherever possible, even when care placements change
- support transition when school placements do change and access to services/charities that provide support around transitions and readiness for adulthood
- Pupil Premium funding, where, required, to support education

We are here to support schools so do get in contact if you have questions. Email is the best way to contact us. With well over 300 children in care in the authority, we are unable to attend every meeting for every child. However, we always want to be involved in initial PEP meetings, those which are complex cases or where the social worker or designated teacher would like our support.

1.3 How do I know if a child is in care?

Check with the MASH social services duty desk

Check with the Virtual School

Some children in care will be in the care of other LAs and will be supported by other Virtual Schools.

1.4 What are the responsibilities of different professionals?

Responsibilities of the designated teacher for children in care

- Promote a culture of high expectation
- Make sure the young person has a voice in setting learning targets
- Be a source of advice for staff
- Prioritise children in care for 1:1 tuition
- Support and communicate with carers
- Lead on the development, writing and implementation of the PEP
- Monitor progress of children if they leave care.
- Produce a report for governors at least once a year

Responsibilities of the social worker

- Ensure the school is informed about the care situation and needs of the child
- Support the carers to meet the educational needs of the child at home
- Make sure the young person has a voice in planning
- Liaise between carers, parents and schools

Responsibilities of the Virtual School for children from Reception to Year 11

- Provide support to children, social workers and carers for children age 5-16 on all issues relating to their education.
- Support the creation and monitor the quality of Personal Education Plans to ensure they are strongly focused on learning outcomes.
- Allocate Pupil Premium Plus to schools to support education where needed (statutory age only)
- Ensure that school placements continue wherever possible, and support transition when school placements do change.
- Provide training and networking for designated teachers, social workers and carers
- Get involved quickly when things go wrong.
- Help speed up decision making where several agencies and teams are involved with a child.
- Listen and respond to the voice of our children in care.

Responsibilities of the Virtual School for Early Years

As above plus:

- Provide support to children, social workers and carers right aged 3-5 on all issues relating to their education.
- Support the creation and monitor the quality of Early Years Personal Education Plans to ensure they are strongly focused on learning outcomes.

Responsibilities of the Virtual School for Post 16s

As above plus:

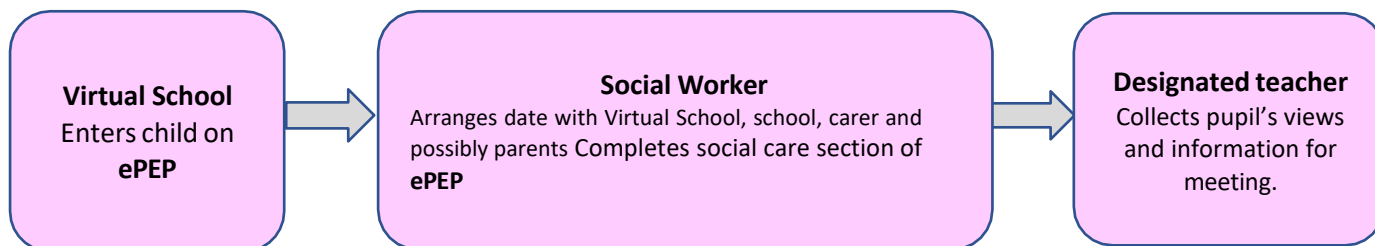
- Provide support and advice to young people, social workers and carers for young people aged 16 to 18 years on all issues relating to their education
- Support the creation and monitor the quality of Post 16 Personal Education Plans to ensure they are strongly focused on learning outcomes. These will be for young people in care in Years 12 and 13
- Provide or commission advice and guidance on request from the young person or social care
- Consider funding requests to support education – there is a small budget available

2. PERSONAL EDUCATIONAL PLANS

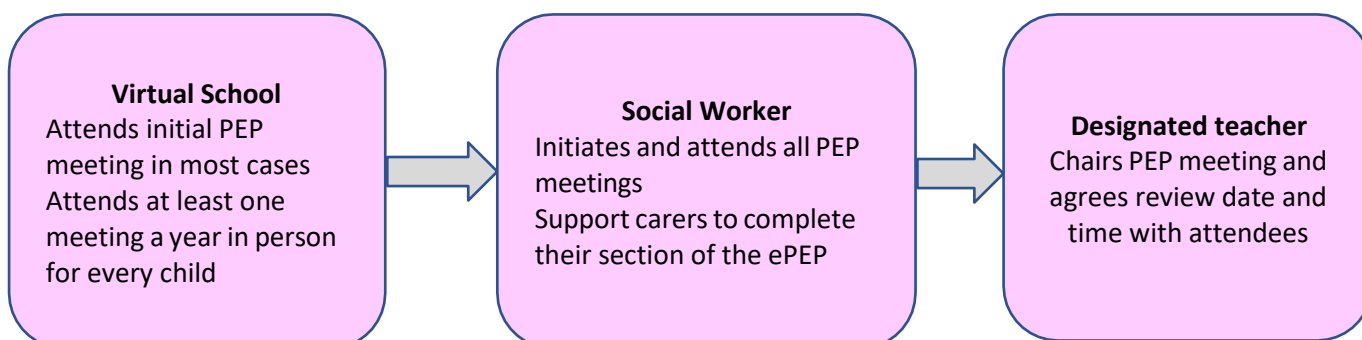
2.1 THE PERSONAL EDUCATION PLAN PROCESS

CHILD IS TAKEN INTO CARE

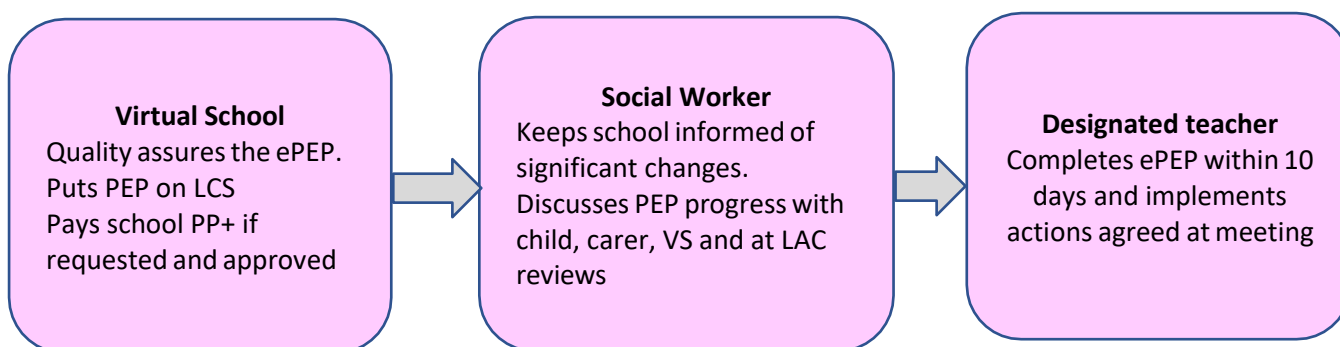
1. PLANNING THE INITIAL PEP



2. THE PEP MEETING



3. THE PEP MEETING



REPEAT STEPS 2 AND 3 EVERY TERM

2.2 WHY PEPS ARE IMPORTANT

Personal Education Plans are part of the statutory care plans for children in care – they are a legal requirement. They need to set out the aspirations, priorities and support for each child in care clearly and concisely. PEPs should be clear and concise and use formal, jargon free language. They will be read by a wide range of professionals, some of whom may not know the child, and some of whom will not have a background in education. This will include foster carers; parents; social workers; other school staff; independent reviewing officers; Ofsted inspectors; lawyers. Above all, the PEP is the child's education plan, and every effort should be made to ensure that the child understands the plan and has a key role in its formulation.

PEPs must be initiated within 10 days of a child going into care so that it is ready for the first statutory care review (20 days after going into care). Where PEP cannot take place within 10 days, as a minimum the social worker and school should be clear who needs to contribute to the PEP, when and where the PEP meeting will take place and that there has been some initial analysis of the child's educational needs.

Delegating work for Personal Education Plans and the Pupil Premium Plus

Some designated teachers delegate their work to other staff including teaching assistants. Designated teachers still retain their statutory responsibilities and should at the very least quality assure PEPs before they are signed off as completed on the ePEP.

Where teaching assistants carry out the work, designated teachers should be satisfied that they have the skills, knowledge and authority to lead on all aspects of the PEP including target setting, identifying educational priorities, recruiting and deploying tutors and managing the Pupil Premium Plus.

Frequency of PEP review meetings and updating of PEPs

PEP meetings should be held at least every term and should be attended by the designated teacher (chair), the child, the social worker and the carer. A representative of the Virtual School may attend PEP meetings.

Welfare Call

We use Welfare Call for the completion of PEPs. This is an online system. There is a separate guide to about PEPs and the Virtual School can provide training and support for designated teachers on using the system.

Writing a good Personal Education Plan

Once a child has gone into care their educational needs should be assessed immediately. The PEP should set high expectations of rapid progress and put in place the additional support the child needs in order to succeed.

A good PEP will need to:

- be written with a wide audience in mind, most of whom will not be familiar with social work and education terminology. It may also be read in court as it is part of the child's care plan.
- identify developmental and educational needs in relation to skills, knowledge, subject areas and experiences.
- set short- and long-term educational attainment targets agreed in partnership with the child and the carer where appropriate; ***the expectation is that children in care will make as least as good progress as their peers. Targets should be set with this in mind.***
- be a record of planned actions, e.g., on homework, extra tuition, study support (including the date by which these should be done), that the school and others will take to promote the educational achievement of the child based on an assessment of his or her educational needs.
- include information on how the progress of the child is to be rigorously monitored.
- record details of specific interventions and targeted support that will be used to make sure.

- say what will happen or is already happening to put in place any additional support which may be required – e.g., possible action to support special educational needs involving the SENCO, educational psychologist, CAMHS or local authority education services.
- have a focus on ensuring good attendance and put in place strategies where there are concerns. Where attendance is below 90% a SMART target should be put in place to address this (unless there are extenuating circumstances e.g. hospitalisation).
- set out how a child’s aspirations and self-confidence and ambition is being nurtured, especially in consideration of longer-term goals towards further and higher education, work experience and career plans.
- be a record of the child’s academic achievements and participation in the wider activities of the school and other out of school learning activities (e.g., sporting, personal development, community).
- provide information which helps all who are supporting the child’s educational achievement to understand what works for them.
- have clear accountability in terms of who within the school is responsible for making the actions identified in the plan happen.

Please see the separate booklet about PEPs for more information.

3. PUPIL PREMIUM PLUS (PP+)

Our policy is informed by a key Department for Education (DfE) document - Pupil Premium Conditions of Grant (published annually).

Key points about Pupil Premium Plus from the DfE

- PP+ funding to support children and young people in care at school is £2,570 per child.
- Children and young people of statutory school age will be eligible as soon as they enter care
- The overall grant allocated to each LA is calculated on a per capita basis. However, it does not have to be distributed on a per capita basis, given that children and young people in care have differing levels of need at different stages of being in care
- The grant must be managed by the Virtual School head and used to improve outcomes and “narrow the gap” as identified in the PEP in consultation with the designated teacher.
- As a result, PEPs need to be monitored even more closely by designated teachers, the Virtual School team, social workers team leaders and Independent Reviewing Officers.

In addition, children who have ceased to be looked after by a local authority in England and Wales because of adoption, Special Guardianship Orders and Child Arrangement Orders are entitled to £2,570. This money is given directly to the school following the school census and is not within the remit of the Virtual School.

Allocation of Pupil Premium Plus by Barnet Virtual School

Schools can also request funding through the PEP which identifies the learning needs of the child. The PEP should be rated amber, green or gold and should:

- Identify the learning need of the child
- Has a clear action plan to address the needs with SMART targets
- Demonstrates how the Pupil Premium Plus will be used to support the child’s learning/wellbeing and have a breakdown of the cost
- Is clear and comprehensive, especially for readers who are not education specialists

The Pupil Premium Plus must be used to improve outcomes for children in the following areas:

- Academic achievement and progress
- Wider achievement e.g., in an area in which the child is gifted and talented
- Attendance
- Inclusion [by reducing internal and external exclusion]
- Social Skills
- Transition into the next key stage and/or a new learning provider

Funding requests are discussed by a panel, funding level agreed, and the school notified. There is no set amount as children have differing needs at different points in time. On average, funding is unlikely to exceed £600 a term as some funding is retained by the Virtual School to provide additional support, for example:

- Transition support for children and young people moving to new schools in line with long-term care plans or foster placement changes.
- Support for children in care not in education and in need of additional support to return to full time education.
- Tuition to support learning, especially for GCSEs.
- Training for designated teachers and other staff who work in schools, especially on attachment and trauma.
- Provision of laptops to support learning, usually for Year 6 and above

Pupil Premium Plus will be prioritized for state schools as independent schools or residential providers are already funded at a high level by central budgets. The Virtual School also holds Recovery Funding for children in care and this is allocated through the PEP.

Circumstances in which Pupil Premium Plus will not be provided

PP+ will not be used to double fund or replace funding which should already have been allocated to the school to support the child and specifically will not:

- fund services that should be provided via an EHC plan
- carry out other statutory work e.g. statutory assessment or support from health
- to fund interventions put in place do not require any funding (e.g. class teacher, SENCo)
- provide fund when school's own funding covers the cost of the interventions
- to fund support when the PEP is rag rated red or does not outline a clear case for funding

Recoupment policy

We will not recoup Pupil Premium Plus where a child moves during the term, unless the termly amount is greater than £600. We reserve the right to recoup the funding if there is evidence that the funding is not being used to address the LAC's needs

Pupil Premium Plus for Children and Young People from other Local Authorities

- Different approaches will be adopted by different LAs, as the contexts vary so much, in terms of number of school-aged LAC, the size of Virtual School team and the existing operational budget for the Virtual School team (both vary enormously between LAs)
- Barnet schools who have children and young people in care from other Local Authorities on their roll must contact the headteacher of the relevant Virtual School to request their Pupil Premium Plus

funding, as nationally, all headteachers of Virtual schools are responsible for the allocation of Pupil Premium Plus for all school aged Children and Young People in care within their authorities, even though the child/young person is educated in a Barnet school.

4. ATTENDANCE

Attendance is important for all children but particularly so for children who are looked after as they may have missed schooling or have had multiple changes of placement. Attendance should be discussed at all PEP meetings and targets put in place if it is a concern. Schools should follow up on all absences to prevent a pupil's attendance dropping and particularly from 'persistently absent' i.e., attendance of below 90%.

It is important to bear in mind that:

- holidays must be taken in school holidays unless in exceptional circumstances. Please contact the Virtual School to discuss if this is requested
- that Doctor or medical appointments, unless in the case of an emergency, should be made outside of the school day as far as possible
- if appointments cannot be avoided (i.e. with the Home Office) a pupil should be absent for the duration of the appointment and not for the whole day
- if a pupil has an illness which prevents them from attending school, they should be taken to their GP. Most common illnesses do not require absence from school
- pupils should be at school on time. Issues with punctuality should be discussed at the PEP
- days of religious observance to be honoured in line with Barnet guidance (or other Local Authority guidance if residing elsewhere). Only recognised days are taken off school and absence should not be extended beyond these days.

5. EXCLUSIONS

The government guidance on exclusions makes it clear that exclusions for children in care should only be used as a last resort. There is a disproportionately high rate of exclusions for LAC and schools should, as far as possible, avoid permanently excluding any LAC. Exclusion will have a negative impact on educational outcomes, reinforce feelings of rejection and low self-esteem and in some cases lead to placement breakdown. Such serious long-term consequences are not proportionate to minor infringements of a school behaviour code. Consequently, differentiation in behaviour management is essential for LAC.

Actions to support avoiding exclusions

- early identification of behaviour concerns and prompt communication with the Virtual School to prevent behaviour escalating
- robust behaviour management plans and pastoral support plans written, actioned and reviewed by the school
- schools to seek advice and guidance from the Virtual School to discuss support and alternatives, before considering a fixed-term exclusion for a looked after child. It might be appropriate to organise a professionals meeting to discuss what might help
- assessing and screening pupils for Special Educational Needs to ensure an appropriate match of curriculum and provision

If a child is excluded:

The school must put in place educational provision from day 1 provision. This might be to put tuition in place or attending a partner school.

6. WHY IS LEARNING SOMETIMES A CHALLENGE FOR CHILDREN IN CARE AND WHAT STRATEGIES WORK WELL?

Psychologists often refer to attachment theory to explain why children in care can find learning and school difficult. Attachment refers to the bonds children form with their primary carer (e.g. their mother) from infancy – when this is not secure, longer term problems can set in for the child.



Children who have developed secure attachments will have:

- A capacity to tolerate frustration and uncertainty
- A sense of self as worthy of affection and respect
- A capacity to relate to others with sensitivity and respect
- A sense of personal agency – they believe can make a positive difference by what they do for themselves and for others

These will be reduced or missing in children with attachment difficulties. These children can find learning and school life difficult for many reasons, for example they may experience some or all of the following:

- Fall behind with learning due to family break up, absence, change of school.
- Have an overwhelming fear of failure and limited capacity to tolerate frustration or uncertainty. Low self-esteem.
- Harbour intense feelings towards others – hyper-vigilance in the classroom
- Be preoccupied and harbour unresolved hostility e.g., over family problems leading to difficulties in concentrating. Traumas can freeze learning for a long time.
- Be confused about numbers, and be inhibited about reading

Children with deep attachment difficulties may behave in ways that are very challenging to the school community:

- The child may need help with a challenging task which triggers anxiety but will reject it when offered (the child has learned that adults always let you down; accepting help is an admission of failure and a letting go of control).
- They can seek to provoke feelings in adults and children they find unbearable in themselves e.g., anxiety, fear, humiliation, for example: ○ Humiliation of others, for example for being successful.
- Bullying
- Heap insults on those perceived as having slight but recognisable differences from other children in the class.
- Where a child has managed to get control over the primary carer and gets everything from them, they will try to gain control over other adults and other children.

These behaviours can provoke strong feelings in adults in schools who are busy trying to balance the needs of other children. They often need considerable emotional resilience to cope with these feelings. Adults can react in the same way that caused child to have attachment problems in the first place e.g., criticism and punishment. This is a reaction the child with attachment difficulties is familiar with – anything else such as praise is alien and threatening.

Adults in schools need to try to respond to the meaning of behaviour and objectify it, rather than react to their own difficult feelings. This helps diagnose the problems and come up with ways forward. Support groups in schools can help adults share their feelings and ideas when working with such challenging children. **So what works?** Research suggests that the following strategies can help children with attachment difficulties learn and behave in school.

→ Improving learning:

- 1:1 tuition – research shows that many children in care really value this as a way of catching up with work and getting help. Lesson should have clear plans with concrete tasks which can be completed with little help from the teacher. Needs to have choice too.
- Structuring writing can help rather than giving them a blank page.
- Think carefully about the impact of lessons involving family issues (for example autobiographies, family trees, bringing in baby photographs) on children in care and how these might be circumvented,
- Pair or small groups can moderate intensity of feelings such as fear of failure
- Differentiate tasks and do turn taking. A timer can moderate anxiety and board games can help with learning about turn taking.



→ Improving behaviour:

- Focus on the positive and give specific praise for managing behaviour well
- Help them recognise feelings – name and describe them if possible. Accept not all children can talk about their feelings
- Tell them well in advance about any changes
- Agree on safe place to go to calm down when necessary
- Accept they can get angry and that they know that this is OK so long as they don't hurt themselves or others
- Don't insist they look at you – it may be hard for them to do this, but it doesn't mean they are ignoring you
- It may be easier at times to draw or write a story than talk about it
- Older pupils such as sixth formers can act as very effective mentors



→ Planning for transitions

- Get them familiar with physical environment – maps; photos; buddy up; lunch in canteen; visits (3-4 with familiar adult from previous school)
- Make transition as gradual and planned as possible
- Create a secure base they can go to with familiar staff
- Identify a key adult - needs to be a relationship, not a name on paper
- Exchange transitional objects between child and key adult in new school during long break (e.g. summer) such as a photo. Highly significant in providing a secure base.
- Provide check in cards with key adult instead of being on report. Good systems should allow both adult and child to relax into relationship
- Paperwork must arrive well ahead of pupil. It is not helpful for schools to say “we don't want to prejudge”.
- Provide opportunities for 'second chance learning' e.g., 1:1 tuition
- Endings need to be handled well too i.e., when they leave. Create opportunity for growth.
- Key adult to meet & greet in the morning to make sure they are ready for the day
- Key adult to absorb pressure from them to remember e.g., use of mobile phones

- Help them be organised e.g., pens, diary etc.
- Key adult to be key link person with home and social workers

7. YOUNG PEOPLE IN CARE OVER THE AGE OF 16

This is a particularly vulnerable age group who are over-represented in NEET (not in education, employment or training) figures. These young people may:

- Have underachieved at 16
- Have low self esteem
- Be wanting to move into independent living without having the necessary skills
- Want much less contact with social services



The Virtual School will:

- Provide support and advice to young people, social workers and carers for young people aged 16 -18 on all issues relating to their education.
- Support the creation and monitor the quality of Personal Education Plans to ensure they are strongly focused on learning outcomes. These will be for young people in care aged 16 up to the end of the academic year in which they turn 18.
- Provide some funding on a case-by-case basis to support young people in their education. N.B. Post 16 young people are not eligible for Pupil Premium Plus funding, but a limited amount of money is provided by Barnet.

The 16-19 bursary

A post 16 bursary is paid for those in full time education and training. The bursary:

- Is paid directly to schools and college and is administered differently by different settings
- Is to be used to support education e.g., books, equipment, transport, food
- Can be paid in instalments dependent on attendance work rate etc.

For more information, please refer to the DfE website.

Support for Higher Education

A grant of £2000 may be available to care leavers entering Higher Education. This is outside the remit of the Virtual School.

8. CHILDREN PLACED FOR ADOPTION

Until the final adoption order is granted, the Virtual School supports all children placed for adoption, wherever they are placed, as Children in Care. This means that all children placed for adoption will continue to have Personal Education Plans (PEPs) and support for their education in-line with statutory requirements for Children in Care. During this period the Virtual School will continue to work closely with parents, social workers, schools and other professionals to promote the educational progress of the child. The support of the Virtual School also includes children in the Early Years.

Following the conclusion of the adoption process, when the child is no longer in Care, the Virtual School is able to offer advice and guidance for social workers and parents on educational issues e.g., school admission, transitions, Pupil Premium, Special Educational Needs and Education Health and Care Plans. The Virtual

School aims to support parents in advocating for their children's education and in accessing appropriate support and resources in their child's school and the local area.

9. FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT CARE, PEPs AND THE PUPIL PREMIUM PLUS

The Department for Education and Skills guidance document for designated teachers also has some frequently asked question and a useful glossary

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/683561/The_designated_teacher_for_looked-after_and_previously_looked-after_children.pdf

9.1 Questions about care

What is the role foster carers in education?

Foster carers are generally expected to play the day-to-day role parents would play including ensuring the child's attendance at school and coming to parents' evenings and other events in order to support the child. Foster carers are expected to be ambitious for children in their care, help with homework and to play a full part in drawing up and acting on the PEP. If the child is in short term care and/or by voluntary agreement (referred to as Section 20 of the Children Act 1989) the parents may also play a significant continuing role in the child's education alongside the foster carer. This should be made clear in the child's PEP.



Who gives permission for school trips, both locally and abroad?

Foster carers are usually empowered to give permission for local school trips although if a child is in care short term and/or by voluntary agreement (s.20) the carer may need to consult the social worker and/or parents first. The social worker will advise. For trips abroad the foster carer will always need to consult the social worker. Parents will also usually need to be consulted. The social care Service Manager can consent to a trip abroad for a child on a care order, the court will need to agree if the child is still subject to care proceedings, and parents' consent must be sought if the child is in care by voluntary agreement (s.20).

If a child is living with relatives such as their grandparents, does this mean they are 'looked after'?

They are not necessarily 'looked after'. The child is only in care or 'looked after' either if there is an order to this effect – usually a care order or interim care order – or if they are in care by voluntary agreement under Section 20. A child in care may be placed with relatives, who will be assessed and approved as foster carers. Foster carers including relatives are paid fostering allowances and provided with support through the fostering service. If the child is in care and placed with relatives acting as foster carers, the school has all the responsibilities it has to any other child in care. The school should be informed by the child's social worker when a child comes into care and is placed with relatives. The child's social worker will advise on the child's care status and care arrangements in order to avoid any misunderstandings.

If a child is living with family friends, does this mean they are 'looked after'?

Again, they are not necessarily 'looked after'. The same as a child living with relatives (see above) the child may be in care and placed with family friends as foster carers – in which case the school should be informed by the child's social worker and has the same responsibilities as for any other child in care.

Families may make their own arrangements for children to be cared for by family friends. Parents may pay the family friends, or they may claim the child benefit and tax credits in their own right. If this is for 28 days or more in a year, then it is defined as private fostering. Parents, private foster carers and other agencies including

schools have a duty to notify Children's Service of private fostering arrangements. Social workers have a duty to assess private fostering arrangements to ensure children are safe and their needs are met. This assessment will also ensure that any support needs are identified.

What is the school's responsibility if a parent of a child known to be in care turns up at the school and wants to see the child?

If in doubt about the plan for a child's contact with the parent, the school should always check with the social worker before allowing the parent to have contact with the child. If contact with the child involves a parent collecting a child at the end of the school day and is part of the contact plan, this should have been discussed and agreed with the school. Contact information should be made available by the social worker and carers at PEP meetings. The social worker should inform the school of any changes to the contact arrangements, preferably in writing or recorded on PEPs. Contact should not happen in school time.

What if the foster placement changes?

The social worker will keep the school informed and arrange a PEP Review if needed. The social worker should inform the school of all essential information e.g., contact details etc. The new foster carer should contact the school to agree day-to-day contact arrangements and attend the next PEP Review.

How can a school find out who has parental responsibility (PR) for a child?

If a child is in care the social worker can advise who has PR. If the child is in care on an order the Local Authority has PR as well as the parents and anyone else who had PR before the child came into care.

9.2 Questions about PEPs and the Pupil Premium Plus

Does the child have to be present throughout the PEP meeting?

The child should be involved in all decisions made about them, but it may not always be practical or desirable that they are present for the whole of the meeting. Schools should arrange for the pupil to have a discussion with an adult a few days before a PEP so that their views are heard at the meeting.

What if the designated teacher changes?

The designated teacher informs the social worker and the Virtual School Caseworker.

Where can I find out more about best uses of the Pupil Premium Plus?

The Education Endowment Fund has published a very useful summary of the interventions that work most effectively to raise standards. This can be found at: <http://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/toolkit/> This report suggests that one to one tuition is high cost for medium impact. In fact, Department for Education research indicates that one to one tuition for children in care can be very effective in raising their standards of achievement.

Does the local authority provide laptops for looked after children?

The Virtual School provides laptops for children with priority given to children in Years 6 and above.

Can Pupil Premium Plus be used for school trips?

Carers receive payments for activities such as school trips. If there are any concerns or queries, please contact the social worker or Virtual School for advice.

How are schools held to account for the use of the Pupil Premium Plus?

Ofsted will ask how the Pupil Premium Plus has been used and may well wish to read PEP forms. School governors also ought to ask about the progress of children in care and should receive a report at least one a year from the designated teacher.

10. HOW TO CONTACT BARNET VIRTUAL SCHOOL

Tel: 020 8359 4534 email: Barnet.virtualschool@barnet.gov.uk

Find out more about the Virtual School by following this link: [Home](#) | [Barnet Virtual School](#) | [London Borough of Barnet](#) | [England \(barnetvs.org\)](#)

Follow us on Twitter - @barnetvs

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[Barnet Virtual School \(@barnet_vs\)](#) • [Instagram photos and videos](#)



APPENDIX 1 : FURTHER READING

Attachment in the Classroom Heather Geddes 2006 Worth Publishing

<http://the-arc.org.uk/> - specialist support to embed best attachment practice

Teenagers and Attachment: Helping Adolescents Engage with Life and Learning Ed A Parry 2009 Worth Publishing

<https://afaeducation.org/free-dt-resources/explore-our-resources/10-things-children-looked-after-want-you-to-know/>

What About Me? Louise Bomber Worth Publishing 2011

My Name is Why Lemn Sissay Canongate Books Ltd

Kate Cairns and Chris Stanway Learn the Child – Helping looked after children to learn. A good practice guide for social workers, carers and teachers. British Association for Adoption and Fostering Tel 020 7421 2604

Email: pub.sales@baaf.org.uk

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/683556/Promoting_the_education_of_looked-after_children_and_previously_looked-after_children.pdf

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/683561/The_designated_teacher_for_looked-after_and_previously_looked-after_children.pdf

APPENDIX 2: THE REPORT TO GOVERNORS ON CHILDREN IN CARE

What must go in the report to governors?

- Workload implications of being the designated teacher
- Levels of progress made by children in care
- Patterns of attendance and exclusions
- Any process or planning issues arising from the Personal Education Plans
- Progress of gifted & talented or special needs children in care
- Whole school planning – does it cover children in care?
- Training undertaken by the designated teacher
- Work with the LA
- Impact of school policies on children in care

This report should be made at least once a year and should be written so that children in care cannot be identified. The following prompts will help you fulfil the requirements of the report to governors as set out in the guidance *The role and responsibilities of the designated teacher for Looked After Children: statutory guidance for school governing bodies*.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/683561/The_designated_teacher_for_looked-after_and_previously_looked-after_children.pdf

THE REPORT TO GOVERNORS ON CHILDREN IN CARE	
Name of school:	
Date of report:	
Designated teacher for children in care:	
Number of children in care by year group:	

1. Fulfilling the requirements of the role of designated teacher for children in care

Do you have the time and resources to carry out your responsibilities?

Bear in mind:

- The number of children in care on role, both from Barnet and other local authorities.
- The need to produce and ensure the implementation of good quality PEPs for each child in care
- Extra work arising from more involved cases e.g. where a children in care has complex needs
- The need to liaise with a wide range of people in and out of the local authority.
-

What training have you and other staff received on children in care?

It is completely acceptable to delegate tasks to other members of staff but it is the designated teacher who is ultimately accountable for children in care.

2. Levels of progress made by children in care

Report on the progress made by children in care who are currently on role or who have been on role within the past twelve months compared with other children at the school and national benchmarks. This needs to cover:

- Academic progress – have they made or are they on course to make at least expected progress?
- Gifted and talented – do any children in care fall into the category? What actions is the school taking to support them?
- Special Educational Needs - do any children in care fall into the category? Are their needs being met through EHCPs and SEN Support?
- Support – are they prioritised for 1:1 tuition?
- Social and emotional development – how are these needs catered for? Are they involved with activities outside of lessons?

3. Patterns of attendance and exclusions

- Attendance – is it in line with or better than the attendance of other children in the school? If it is below, what steps are being taken to address this?
- Behaviour – have there been any fixed term exclusions and if so, what action has been taken to prevent a recurrence?

4. Planning issues

- Are all the PEPs up to date?
- How have you and other staff worked with colleagues outside of the school to support children in care for example:
 - The Virtual School
 - Health professionals
 - Educational Psychologists
- Where are the needs of children in care reflected in the school's development planning, staff deployment etc?

Do any school policies have any implications for children in care that need addressing e.g. charging for school trips, participation in extended school activities?

APPENDIX 3 – GLOSSARY

Term	Description
Adoption	Some looked-after children are placed for adoption and will live with their prospective new parents prior to the final Adoption Order. Before the final Adoption Order is made by the courts, the child will retain their looked-after legal status. That means that, for example, although placed for adoption, they will have an adoption plan and a PEP. They should continue to be treated in the same way as any other looked-after child in relation to the designated teacher's role. Once the final Adoption Order is made, the child will no longer be looked-after. However, his/her educational, social and emotional needs will not change overnight. This is why in 2014, previously looked-after children who left care through an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order retained many of the educational entitlements they had whilst they were in care, such as priority admission and the PP+, and why, through the Children and Social Work Act 2017, schools and local authorities continue to have a duty to promote their educational achievement
'Care Leaver'	Local authorities often talk about 'care leavers'. When they do, they are talking about children who fall within one of the following categories as defined by the Children Act 1989: 'eligible child', 'relevant child' or 'former relevant child'. An "eligible child" is a young person aged 16-17 who has been looked-after for the prescribed period (13 weeks since the age of 14), and is then eligible for services under the Children Act 1989, and who remains looked-after by the local authority. A "relevant child" is a young person aged 16-17 who has been looked-after for the prescribed period (13 weeks since the age of 14) and is then eligible for services under the Children Act 1989, and who is no longer looked after by the local authority. A "former relevant child" is a young person aged 18-21 (i.e. legally adult) who was either an eligible or relevant child. They are also eligible for services under the Children Act 1989. Designated teachers have responsibility to promote the educational achievement of relevant children and former relevant children
Care Plan	Every child in care should have a care plan which will include details of their needs and how these will be met and contain information about their placement and the longer-term planning for their care.
Children's Social Worker	A social worker who is provided by the responsible authority to work with a child and to plan for their care. They are also responsible for meeting with the child to ensure that their needs are being met.
Children in Care	Children in care are subject to a care order, an emergency protection order or are compulsorily accommodated.
Children Looked After (CLA) OR Looked after child (LAC)	Anyone under age 18 who is looked after by the Local Authority, either because they are on a care order or they are accommodated through a voluntary agreement with their parents.
CIN	Abbreviation used for Child in Need. A child will be <i>in need</i> if they are disabled, or they are assessed by Children's Services to be <i>in need</i> of extra support for their safety, health and/or development. If a child is assessed as a child <i>in need</i> , Children's Services may provide the child and other people in the family, with extra help to look after the child, but it is not an absolute requirement.
Delegated authority	This is where the responsibility for making day to day decisions about a child has been delegated to the Foster Carer. This can include decisions on health, education, leisure (including permission slips for school trips and activities)
Designated Teacher (DT)	The DT is responsible for prompting the educational achievement of CLA in their school. The DT has lead responsibility for helping school staff understand how CLA can learn and achieve.

Family and friends carer	When a child is living full time with someone who is a family member, friend or was previously known to them. The majority of family and friends care is made up of informal arrangements between parents and relatives, but there are other situations and sometimes legal orders too. Where the child is looked after by a Local Authority and the family and friends carer is approved as the Foster Carer, this is known as family and friends foster care.
Family and friends foster care	Where a child was previously known to their Foster Carer and their Foster Carer was approved to look after them, this is known as family and friends foster care. More comprehensive guidance on family and friends foster care in England is given in Family and Friends Care: statutory guidance for local authorities.
Foster care agreement	An agreement between the fostering service and the Foster Carer which sets out matters such as terms of approval, the obligations of the Foster Carer, and what training and support the fostering service will provide for them. More information on what should be included in the Foster Care Agreement can be found In Schedule 5 of the Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011.
Independent Fostering Provider (IFP)	An IFP is an organisation that places children into foster placements on behalf of the Local Authority. Some are profit making companies while other are charities or not for profit companies. A listing of IFP's that are members of the Fostering Network is available on Find a Fostering Service.
Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO)	The IRO is a social worker who is responsible for the review of children looked cases. They chair the review for each individual child and monitor implementation of the care plan, as well as ensuring that the child's voice is heard and that their wishes are taken into account. You can find out more about the work of the IRO on the Department for Education's website.
Out of Authority Placements	Up to 37% of looked-after children do not live in the authority which looks after them. Schools may, therefore, have contact with authorities other than the one in which the school is located. It may also be the case that a school will have more than one looked after child on roll, and that those young people will be looked after by different local authorities. Schools may, therefore, find themselves dealing with a number of local authorities.
Parental responsibility	All the rights, duties, responsibilities and powers which the law gives a parent in relation to their child. Mothers automatically have parental responsibility as do fathers if married to the mother when or after the child was born or by other legal agreements. Parental responsibility can also be given by the courts to others under orders such as special guardianship or adoption.
Pathway plan	The pathway plan is completed as part of the leaving care process for each young person and includes any actions that have to be carried out by the responsible authority, Foster Carer, the young person themselves and any others involved.
Personal Education Plan (PEP)	The PEP is part of the child's care plan and gives information about the arrangements that have been made for their educational and/or training needs by the responsible authority.
Placement Plan	The placement plan forms part of the child's overall care plan and lays out how the placement will meet the particular child's needs.
Previously Looked After Children	Children who are no longer looked after in England and Wales because they are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order, or were adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales
Private fostering	An arrangement whereby a parent arranges for their child under 16 (or under 18 if they are disabled) to live with someone who is not a relative for more than 28 days. Private fostering arrangements must be notified to the Local Authority, who will visit periodically to ensure the welfare of the child. This is not the same as being a foster carer for a CLA, as the LA has not assessed the child as needing to be looked after.
Child Arrangement Order	An order granted by the court which gives the holder parental responsibility for a child, although they share this with anyone else who has parental responsibility.
Short breaks	These are a series of placements made for a limited amount of time where the child then returns to their parents. These children are not necessarily CLA, but might be.

**Special
Guardianship
Order (SGO)**

When the court makes a Special Guardianship order it gives parental responsibility to the special guardian, which they share with anyone else who has this. The order lasts until the child is 18, unless the court discharges it earlier.