



Cheshire West
and Chester



5 Boroughs

Guide to Previously

Looked After

Children for Parents



ST HELENS
BOROUGH COUNCIL



WARRINGTON
Borough Council

This guide has been produced collectively by the Virtual Schools in Area 5, Cheshire West and Chester, Halton, St Helens, Wigan and Warrington. It has been developed to provide clarity to parents of previously looked after children and their educational entitlement

This will include:

- What is a Virtual School?
- Keeping children safe in Education
- Roles and responsibilities
- What does PCLA mean?
- Who are the PCLA Team?
- What is a Designated Teacher?
- Practical support available
- Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) funding
- Adoption Support Fund
- Education providers – e-learning
- Questions to ask Primary Schools
- Frequently asked questions for Parents
- Meeting the needs of PCLA – a guide for schools

The information contained within this guide is correct as of September 2024 and will be regularly updated to reflect ongoing changes as they come through the government.

PCLA is used for previously looked after children who have been in care for at least 24 hours.

What is a Virtual School?

Virtual Schools act as a Local Authority champion to promote the progress and educational attainment of children in care (and those who have previously been in care). Virtual Schools have excellent working relationships with schools across all the 5 boroughs and many of you will already have regular contact with us. Virtual School staff have expertise in educational issues, Special Educational Needs, and a good understanding of the emotional and developmental impact and the associated trauma with being taken into care.

In regard to previously looked-after children, the role of the Virtual School is to promote the educational achievement of previously looked after children (PCLA) through the provision of information and advice to their parents, educators and others where necessary.

Virtual Schools offer for PCLA:

- Advice to parents and schools via phone consultation, meeting or email
- Support schools through consultations and Designated Teacher training
- Attachment training and other training opportunities where necessary
- Support schools and parents via the Virtual School website which is constantly being updated with relevant information and resources. The aim of this website is to be the 'Go To' site for all parents and schools for information and advice for previously looked after children

What might providing information, advice and guidance look like?

- Providing advice and information to frequently asked questions online
- Providing advice to individual parents/carers and schools where they have a query
- Advising schools on how they can support previously looked after children
- Advising schools on how to best use pupil premium plus (PP+) funding to support previously looked after children
- Providing advice and guidance to school as part of Designated Teacher updates
- Providing CPD opportunities to schools to support PCLA

What this means:

High Quality School places – we will offer you information and advice for you to seek the best school place to meet your child's needs

Please note we cannot recommend a school

Professional Development and Support – we will support, advise and train designated teachers in school; we will support school staff to be attachment and trauma aware. We will provide information and advice to schools to support and develop effective practice

Partnerships – we will work with a number of key professional partners to ensure your child's needs are met



Keeping children safe in education

This is the main safeguarding document that schools need to be familiar with, **in terms of previously looked-after children** the guidance states:

“A previously looked after child potentially remains vulnerable and all staff should have the skills, knowledge and understanding to keep previously looked after children safe. When dealing with looked after children and previously looked after children, it is important that all agencies work together and prompt action is taken when necessary to safeguard these children, who are a particularly vulnerable group.” (Point 95).

Roles and Responsibilities

According to statutory guidance, it is the shared responsibility of several partners to produce and monitor the Personal Education Plan for children in care. The key question **‘would this be good enough for my child?’** is a central one in making decisions and evaluating the effectiveness of the Personal Education Plan. The roles and responsibilities of these partners are outlined below.

 <p>Virtual School (VS)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a statutory responsibility to ensure the quality of PEPs and oversee the spending of Pupil Premium Plus funds (PP+). • The VS will quality assure the PEPs before funds are given to schools. • PEP Coordinators will monitor the progress of Children We Look After and work together to ensure that PEPs are fit for purpose reflecting children’s needs. • The VS Head shares with the VS Team the progress of the Children We Look After and the quality of their PEPs
 <p>Designated teachers (DT)</p>	<p>The Designated Teacher MUST be a qualified teacher. They have responsibility for looked after and previously looked after children within their school.</p> <p>DT Roles for previously looked after children include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation and that some children may find it difficult to build relationships. • Have lead responsibility for helping all school staff understand the experiences of previously looked-after children • Ensures colleagues have the information and understanding about the child’s needs to provide an education that supports, inspires, and challenges • Promote a culture of high expectations and aspirations • Ensure the young person has a voice in their own learning • Be a source of advice for staff about differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual children. • To engage well and encourage good communication with other agencies and develop a joined-up process. • Help parents/carers to understand how to support learning at home. • Ensures the PP+ money allocated to school is used to benefit previously looked after child, either in terms of their social and emotional wellbeing or their education. This could be part of a wider group of children.

What does PCLA mean?

PCLA or previously looked after children are those children who: Are no longer looked after by a local authority 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. 'State care' is care provided by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other organisation whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society.

Special guardianship orders	Child Arrangement Order	Previously looked-after
An SGO is an order appointing an adult to be a child's 'special guardian'. It is a private law order and is intended for those children who cannot live with their birth parents and who would benefit from a legally secure placement.	A Child Arrangement Order is in the UK an agreement concerning where a child lives and who a child can have contact with. They are usually sought following the breakdown of a relationship. Their legal basis is section 8 of the Children Act 1989.	Those who are no longer looked after by a local authority because they are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order; or were adopted from 'state care'. 'State care' is care provided by a public authority, whose main purpose is to benefit society.

Pupil Premium Plus (PP+)

The Pupil Premium Plus will include pupils recorded in the October school census, who were looked after by an English or Welsh local council immediately before being adopted, or who left local council care on a special guardianship order or child arrangements order. These are collectively referred to as post-LAC in these conditions of grant.

The grant is currently dependent on the authority your child resides in from Reception to Year 11....

Local authority	PP+ Amount	How often
Cheshire West & Chester	£2,570	annually
Halton	£2,570	annually
St Helens	£2,570	annually
Wigan	£2,570	annually
Warrington	£2,570	annually

In order for schools to access the funding, **parents and guardians must declare their child's adoptive, SGO or CAO status directly to the school before the school completes the October census.** Parents and guardians must provide evidence, for example, a copy of the legal order, or a confirmation letter from the local council which placed their child. Parents should not need to declare their child's status again until the child changes school. **Parents are not obliged to declare this information.**

For the purposes of these conditions of grant, mainstream school means infant, junior, primary, middle, secondary, high schools, special school and pupil referral units.

Unlike the Pupil Premium Plus that was accessed through the Virtual School when the child was still legally in care, **Pupil Premium Plus money for previously looked after children comes directly from the DfE to the school and is not ring-fenced for the individual child.** This is additional funding provided to **help improve the attainment of PCLA and help close the attainment gap between them and their peers.**

All pupil premium + spending should take account of the **specific needs of previously looked after pupils.** The extra funding provided by the PP+ reflects the significant additional barriers faced by previously looked-after children.

It is good practice for schools to include parents in discussions around the most effective use of Pupil Premium Plus and it is important that interventions supported by pupil premium plus should be evidence based and in the best interests of the child.

For further clarification, click here to see the guidance:

[Pupil Premium: allocations and conditions of grant 2024 to 2025](#)

Please note this is a grant for schools in England only and is for Dof E funded schools therefore independent schools are not eligible for PP+ The grant is drawn down from the October census return each year and goes straight to the school to support PCLA young people and NOT to The Virtual School.

Who are the Virtual School PCLA Team?

Each authority has an agreement to have a member of their Virtual School Team who is responsible for previously looked after children in their own authority. These leads will often collaborate to ensure a fair and consistent offer is being delivered in their collective authorities. They will also liaise with each other when a child moves from one authority to the other to share their knowledge of the local area and schools that are suitable.

The team in the Area 5 network are....

Local authority	PLAC lead	Contact email
Cheshire West & Chester	Alison Ismail	Alison.Ismail@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk
Halton	David Bradshaw	David.Bradshaw@halton.gov.uk
St Helens	Les Moon	LesleyMoon@sthelens.gov.uk
Wigan	Andrea Hurst	Andrea.Hurst@wigan.gov.uk
Warrington	Liz McEntee	emcentee@warrington.gov.uk

Step parents:

If you want to contact us because you are a step-parent looking to adopt your partners child/children, there is a slightly different process which is dealt with by your local council.

Adopt abroad:

If you want to contact us because you are exploring intercountry adoption - the process by which you adopt a child from a country other than your own and bring that child to your country of residence - there is a different process which is dealt with by your local council or the IAC.

Local authority	Step Parent	Adoption abroad
Cheshire West & Chester	steppartneradoption@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk	0300 123 7047 or i-ART @cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk
Halton	0151 907 8305 or contactandreferralteam@halton.gov.uk	0151 907 8305 or contactandreferralteam@halton.gov.uk
St Helens	07717 868558	01744 671203
Wigan	01925 443322	020 8449 2562 info@icacentre.org.uk
Warrington	Step-parent adoption page	

What is a Designated Teacher?

Each school in England must have a ‘**Designated Teacher**’ who is an experienced teacher. They have the responsibility to ensure that previously looked after children are given the support they need to reach their full educational potential. It is the Virtual School’s duty to advise schools, parents and guardians to enable them to support the child’s needs effectively. Previously looked after children (and looked after children) are highly likely to have had disrupted learning, may have missed extended periods of school and many of them have special educational needs (SEN). The gaps in their learning and, in many cases the emotional impact of their experiences, are likely to have become significant barriers to their progress.

A designated teacher is typically associated with one school. They are responsible for the children who attend their school who are CLA (looked after) or PCLA (Previously looked after). Under the Children and Young Persons Act 2008, schools are required to appoint a Designated Teacher, to support the learning of Children We Look After (CWLA) and manage the process of how the school works with the Virtual School and social workers to promote the child’s education.

The Designated Teacher should:

- help school staff to understand things that affect the way Children We Look After learn and achieve, and to advise staff about teaching strategies.
- promote high expectations and aspirations for Children We Look After.
- record attainment and progress and ensure that this is tracked on the PEP.
- ensure the child has a voice in setting targets and throughout the document.
- ensure that carers understand the importance of supporting learning at home.
- have the lead responsibility for the child’s Personal Education Plan (PEP) at school.
- help Children We Look After to make a smooth transition if they change schools.
- manage the way school engages with others (e.g. social workers, Virtual School) focusing on

the way everyone contributes to the child's educational achievement.

- ensure relevant school policies and expectations are shared with SW and carers.

DT Roles for previously looked after children (PCLA) include:

- To be aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation and that due to this some children may find it difficult to build relations of trust with others
- Have lead responsibility for helping all school staff understand how the experiences of previously looked-after children can affect how they learn and achieve
- Ensures colleagues have the information and understanding about the child's needs to provide an education that supports, inspires, and challenges
- Promote a culture of high expectations and aspirations for how previously looked-after children learn.
- Ensure the young person has a voice in their own learning and setting learning targets
- Be a source of advice for staff about differentiated strategies appropriate for individual children
- To engage well and encourage good communication with other agencies, develop a joined-up process
- Help parents/carers to understand the importance of supporting learning at home
- Ensures the PP+ money allocated to the school is used to benefit the previously looked after child, either in terms of their social and emotional wellbeing or their education this can be as part of a wider group of children, and is not necessarily personal to the PCLA child.



DfE Guidance for DTs:

This guidance follows the statutory guidance from the DfE, issued under sections 20(4) and 20A(4) of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008

The designated teacher (DT) at school must be aware of the guidance when promoting the educational attainment of looked-after and previously looked-after children.

Previously Looked After Child (PCLA):

A previously looked-after child (PCLA) is a child who was in care to an English or Welsh local authority at the point at which they were adopted, made subject to a Special Guardianship Order (SGO), or a Child Arrangements Order (previously Residency Order). (See roles and responsibilities above for a DT's specific roles with regards to PLAC)

Why do schools need a Designated Teacher?

We know that children we look after may have had disrupted learning and may have missed extended periods of school. These children may also have special educational needs (SEN). Their gaps in learning and the emotional impact of their experiences may lead to significant barriers to making progress. The designated teacher's role is statutory to help ensure that effective practice becomes universal.

Together for adoption:

together for adoption



Together for Adoption is the regional adoption agency for our 5 authorities.

This allows them to share best practice making their trusted service even better.

They work regionally which means they recruit new families more effectively and can support adoption across all five authorities and the surrounding areas.

They provide support to all their adopters from the initial enquiry through to each stage of the process. They will also be there once your adoption is complete to offer support and advice on the next chapter of your journey.

Click the logo above to access their contact details and submit an enquiry or click the booklet opposite to read 'Together for Adoption' information pack.

'Together for Adoption please ring **01942 487272**. Office hours: **9am - 5pm**.

Practical support available for adoptive families in England

Examples of practical adoption support that may be available to you: [Click here to access the site to provide more information on each of the following suggestions....](#)

- 'Settling-in grant' for Adopters
- Adoption Allowance
- Disability Living Allowance (DLA)
- Housing Support
- Carer's Assessments
- Respite Care
- Educational Support
- Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund (ASGSF)



There is more information about the Adoption Support Fund below. To find out more about Adoption England, click on the Logo above.

It is good practice for schools to include parents in discussions around the most effective use of Pupil Premium Plus and it is important that interventions supported by pupil premium plus should be evidence based and in the best interests of the child.

For further clarification, [click here to see the guidance:](#)

[Pupil Premium: allocations and conditions of grant 2024 to 2025](#)

Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund (ASF)

Every adoptive and special guardianship order family has the right to request an assessment of their support needs from the [local authority's Special Guardianship Support Team or the adoption service](#). In the [first three years after the adoption order is granted](#), this responsibility lies with the [local authority which placed the child](#); this may not be local to the family. After this, it becomes the responsibility of the local authority in which the adoptive family resides.

[Parents will have to apply themselves](#), but schools can provide support in doing so if you grant permission. The therapies funded by the ASF can supplement or possibly replace the therapeutic support that the school is currently funding.

Availability:

The ASF is available for young people aged 21 and below who:

- Are living with a family in England while waiting for adoption
- Have been adopted from LA Care in England, Wales, Scotland, or NI
- Have been adopted from overseas and live in England
- Are under a Care Arrangement Order (CAO) while a potential SG is being assessed
- Are subject to a Special Guardianship Order (SGO) and were previously in care

[Local Authorities are able to apply for the ASF before the Adoption Order has been made](#). This means that support that adoptive children received while in care can be continued without a break when adopted.

The ASF can be used for 2 things: therapy, and specialist assessments including:

- Psychotherapy (or a talking therapy) for the child
- Family therapy to improve the relationship between the child and adoptive parents
- Therapeutic life story work, to help the young person understand/overcome past trauma
- Creative therapies (e.g. art, music, drama, or play therapy) for the child
- Therapeutic parenting training for Special Guardians
- Therapeutic short breaks

The ASF will also support [specialist assessments that will lead to a therapeutic support plan](#) for the adoptive family. The assessment must be in depth, focus on trauma and attachment, and be carried out by a qualified clinician. Unless they are part of a broader assessment, assessments for single conditions like ASD or ADHD are not covered by the ASF. – It's for the child to improve their relationship with others, engagement with learning, behaviour, emotional management and confidence.

The Local Authority that placed the child with the family is responsible for this assessment **for 3 years after the Adoption Order**. After that, it is the responsibility of the Local Authority where they live (if they live in the same Local Authority, there is no change).

If the assessment shows that therapeutic support would be beneficial to the family, then the Local Authority will apply directly to the ASF, who will release the funding to the Local Authority directly.

A school cannot directly apply to the ASF, you need to rely on the Local Authority's assessment. Who the parents will need to contact will vary between Local Authorities, however if you reside within our 5 boroughs the adoption service would be 'Together for Adoption'

Generally, it will be the **Permanence Team or SGO Team**, but adoptive parents without a social worker will need to go through the duty line who will be allocate a case coordinator. If the parents are unsure and have a social worker, they should be able to provide guidance on who to contact.

To apply on the Gov website:

Contact the **ASF fund manager or your adoption support service adviser** if you:

- need a new account
- need to register someone new on the system
- want to inform the ASF of any new staff or other changes

[This is the link on the government website to apply once you have an account.](#)

To be eligible for funding, local authorities and RAAs must apply to the ASF within 3 months of assessing a family's support needs.

You should make a funding application before therapy starts. The government will only consider retrospective applications in exceptional circumstances.

Maximum funding allocations for each child

Until the end of March 2025, the ASF will have 2 fair access limits:

- **£2,500 per child per year** for specialist assessment
- **£5,000 per child per year** for therapy

How families access ASF support:

The local authority or RAA that places a child with a family is responsible for assessing that family's support needs for 3 years after the order is made. After 3 years, the responsibility lies with the local authority or RAA where the family lives, if they have moved. **Families apply to the relevant local authority or RAA, which will assess their needs.**

Local authorities and RAAs will:

- assess the family and consider if therapeutic support is needed
- decide on the type required and if it is eligible for payments from the ASF
- apply directly to the ASF
- purchase the support from their own list of suppliers when the ASF approves funding

Adoption support fund team Email asf@mottmac.com

Telephone: 01223 463 517

[5 boroughs RAA 'Together for adoption' Enquiry](#)

Telephone: 01942 487272



Key Questions and information to consider:

- Is the child within three years of being adopted?
 - *To be eligible for funding, local authorities and RAAs must apply to the ASF within 3 months of assessing a family's support needs*
- Who was the local authority that placed the child?
 - *LA is responsible for providing the assessment (Under 3 years of adoption LA who placed the child is responsible, after 3 years LA where the child lives is responsible)*

LA's can apply before the adoption order has been made

- You should make a funding application before therapy starts.



Practical support available for Special Guardianship Families

Each authority has a team that can support you if your child was placed with you by the authority after at least 24 hours in care.

Authority	Email contact	Phone number
Cheshire West and Chester	SGOsupportteam@cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk	0151 337 4577
Wigan	sgoteam@wigan.gov.uk	01942 487200
St Helens Shelley Crompton	ShelleyCrompton@sthelens.gov.uk	01744673352

In Cheshire West and Chester team also run drop ins each term in Winsford and Chester – contact the team for details.

Special guardians and Kinship Carers whose children have not been in care can still access education advice and guidance from The Virtual School.

Previously Looked after Children in the Early Years (birth to 5)

Previously looked after children (PCLA) have several entitlements in early years, including:

Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP)

Children aged 3–4 who were previously looked after are eligible for the EYPP, which provides extra funding for early education. To qualify, the child must be living in England, and the parent or guardian must meet certain benefit requirements. Evidence of the court order that proves the child was in local authority care is required.

Free early education

Children aged 2 who were adopted from care are entitled to a free early education place.

Funded early education

All children aged 3–4 are entitled to 15 hours of funded early education per week for 38 weeks of the year. Working parents may also be eligible for an additional 15 hours of childcare.

Education Providers e-Learning

The online training for education professionals on attachment: [becoming an adoption friendly school from PAC-UK.](http://www.pac-uk.org/education)

Whilst PAC-UK's training is centred on the needs of previously looked after children, the e-Learning is relevant in supporting and meeting the needs of all vulnerable children – a key focus area for Ofsted. The training is relevant for everyone who works in or alongside schools.

Prices start at £35 plus VAT per licence with discounts available for purchases of over 10 group licences. Once payment is made you will receive instant access to e-Learning content.

Developed with funding from the Department for Education, the e-Learning has three modules:

- **Module 1** - *Understanding attachment and trauma;*
- **Module 2** - *Creating adoption friendly classrooms and schools;*
- **Module 3** - *Becoming an adoption friendly school.*

The videos and specialist trainers will guide you through each module, culminating in quizzes to consolidate your learning. Upon successful completion of the final quiz. For more information please visit our website or contact us via phone [0113 264 6837](tel:01132646837), email education@pac-uk.org or visit www.pac-uk.org/education

PAC-UK e-Learning
The online training for education professionals on attachment: a self-guided route to becoming an adoption friendly school
www.pac-uk.org/education

Written by an Educational Psychologist specialising in developmental trauma and adoption, PAC-UK's e-Learning is delivered by teachers and therapists to provide a comprehensive guide on how you can support vulnerable children who have experienced a difficult start in life.

Comprising of three modules:

- **Module 1** Understanding attachment and trauma: Explores the needs of children that have experienced a difficult start in life
- **Module 2** Creating adoption friendly classrooms and schools: Provides strategies to support vulnerable children in the classroom
- **Module 3** Becoming an adoption friendly school: Delivers ideas on how to make whole school systems suitable for children that have experienced early life trauma

Our engaging videos and specialist trainers will guide you through each module, culminating in quizzes to consolidate your learning.

Upon successful completion of the final quiz for each module, this training counts as 3 hours of CPD.

Prices start at £35 plus VAT per licence with discounts available for purchases of over 10 group licences.

Once payment is made you will receive instant access to e-Learning content. If you are unable to make instant payment, you can select our 'invoice and purchase order payments' option.

For more information please visit our website or contact us via phone [0113 264 6837](tel:01132646837), email education@pac-uk.org or visit www.pac-uk.org/education

PAC-UK was rated Outstanding by Ofsted in 2017, and was selected as overall winner in the King's Fund/GSK Impact Awards 2017, for 'Supporting Excellence in Community Health Care'.

2017 Overall Winner
Ofsted Outstanding Provider

Key Questions for Primary Schools

Parents often tell us that they don't know what to look for when choosing a school. In consultations with experienced adoptive parents and guardians, we've identified some key questions for parents/ guardians/ carers and schools to consider. Not all will be relevant for every child. It's unlikely that any school will be doing all of these; look for flexible schools who are willing to listen and are proactive about developing support to meet each child's needs.

- **Have staff received training on attachment, the impact of early trauma and loss?**

Who was involved in the training? E.g. Did senior leadership attend? Were Teaching Assistants included? Was it cascaded to playground supervisors? What has been the impact in school?

- **How does the school provide consistent key relationships for children with attachment needs?**

Primary: E.g. named members of staff as key workers for children, with quality 1:1 time scheduled into the child's day or week, with particular attention to the times when the child is most vulnerable? Staff who are aware of how to let the child know that they are held in mind? Ways to help children stay connected e.g. a postcard in the holidays?

Secondary: Vertical form tutors, nurture time/group, non-teaching pastoral staff available throughout day, learning mentors, check in and check out time etc. For children who receive 1:1 support, is support organised by child (i.e. consistent TA) or by subject (i.e. up to 10 TAs)?

- **Where is the safe base for children when they need to calm down or regulate?**

Primary: Is there a nurture group, and how do they prioritise children to be part of this? Is it used as a planned daily intervention? Is there a nurture space or calming zone which children can access as and when needed with a key member of staff?

Secondary: How does this work? Drop-in basis? Does the child need specific permission to attend? How is it staffed?

- **What is the behaviour management policy? Has the school adopted a relational approach?**

Primary: Does the school apply the policy flexibly to best meet the needs of each child e.g. if they use a yellow/red card system or a sunshine - storm clouds system for moving children 'up' and 'down' based on their behaviour or have they adopted a different non-shaming strategy? Does the school see behaviour as communication and focus on those needs? What is the school's approach to exclusion?

Secondary: Does the school recognise that cause-and-effect consequences may not be effective for children with histories of trauma and loss? Does the school apply the policy flexibly to best meet the needs of each child? How does the school moderate its use of detention or isolation for children who may be re-traumatised by these approaches?

- **What support is in place for children who find unstructured times difficult?**

Primary: E.g. Is there an indoor lunch club for more vulnerable children, where they can develop their social skills, or calm down and relax? Do the midday supervisors organise structured games on the playground? Are there systems for children who want to play with friends e.g. a buddy system or a friendship bench?

Secondary: E.g. year 7 in permanent base, lockers for children's belongings, vertical form tutor, approach to staff sickness and supply teachers, advance warning of timetable changes, timetable on website so parents can prepare child at home etc.

- How does the school provide structure and consistency?**
Primary: E.g. sticking to timetable at Christmas and ends of terms, letting parents and children know as soon as possible about staff changes and supply teachers, use of a One Page Profile to share with ALL staff, providing a timetable for parents to prepare the child at home; using visual timetables to let children know about upcoming change.
- How does the school support the Year 6 to Year 7 transition?**
Secondary: E.g. extra visits for vulnerable children; use of a One Page Profile to share with ALL staff opportunities to see the school both empty and busy, maps and photographs, summer club to get used to the school and key staff?
- How does the school share the information you give them about your child's background and needs?**
 E.g. systems, meetings, policies... If 'need to know' basis, how is this decided and clarified with everyone including parents? How does the school share information with parents? E.g. does the class teacher speak to parents at the end of the day, or call home? Are staff able to email parents if needed? Is there a text message system e.g. to notify parents about snow days? use of a One Page Profile to share with ALL staff
- How does the school connect adoptive parents and special guardians together?**
 Do they provide a coffee morning? Are they willing to have a standing item in their newsletter letting everyone know about any meetings convened by parents themselves?
- How does the school share information with parents?**
 E.g. what equipment/kit is needed; homework timetable. Is there a web-based supported learning environment? Is this used by all staff? Do parents have log-ins?
- How has the school used its PP+ for adopted and special guardianship pupils?**
 Social and emotional interventions or only learning?
- Is the PP+ clearly differentiated from the overall pupil premium pot for children entitled to free school meals?**
 Does the school meet with parents to identify children's needs (e.g. personal education plan meetings), or consult adoptive parents as a group about use of the grant?
- How does the school support children who find it difficult to manage feelings?**
 E.g. nurture group, calm boxes, a calming zone within the school, emotion regulation skills teaching and coaching, anger management training, empathy from all staff, social skills groups
- How does the school manage curriculum hotspots? i.e. issues which might trigger your child**
Primary: E.g. liaise with parents about baby photos and family trees; cards for mothers' and fathers' day; subjects such as evacuees in WW2 in English and History; NSPCC and Children in Needs assemblies
Secondary: E.g. liaise with parents about sex, alcohol, drugs education; pass on information about any particular triggers to members of teaching staff

Frequently Asked Questions for Parents

What are the VS's statutory duties towards children previously looked after?

Virtual Schools have a statutory duty (from September 2018) to provide advice, guidance and information to schools, parents and a range of professionals around improving the educational outcomes of children previously looked after. They are not corporate parents for this group of children.

My school doesn't seem to understand the needs of my Post CLA child. What can I do?

School staff are very welcome to contact the Virtual School for advice and support. There are various training opportunities available to them through our DT Network meetings. Parents are also welcome to email the Virtual School if they need advice or guidance on school matters.

How do I support my child with transition to primary or secondary school?

We would recommend that parents discuss their child's specific needs with the school staff before they start a new school. There should be a good transition plan in place with plenty of opportunity for the child to make visits and connections with staff in the new school.

Pre-school staff and school staff should liaise with parents around supporting the transition. Most primary and secondary schools have transition arrangements in place to support the move from primary school to secondary school. This will usually include opportunities during the summer term for the child to spend time at the secondary school and have additional visits to get to know other students, and be introduced to key members of staff.

If you feel further support is needed, speak to the child's primary school about how they can help and also make contact with the secondary school to explain your concerns and how to make the transition as smooth as possible.

Some parts of the curriculum can be very traumatic for my child- how can I work with the school to ensure this does not happen?

If you feel a child may be affected by particular areas of the school curriculum, it may be useful at the beginning of each academic year to talk to the class teacher or Head of Year to discuss any potentially difficult areas of the curriculum. Some common areas that adopters highlight include topic work on families, family trees, WW2 evacuation, writing personal biographies, and any subject that includes an element of grief or loss.

I have heard of the PEP, where do I get a copy?

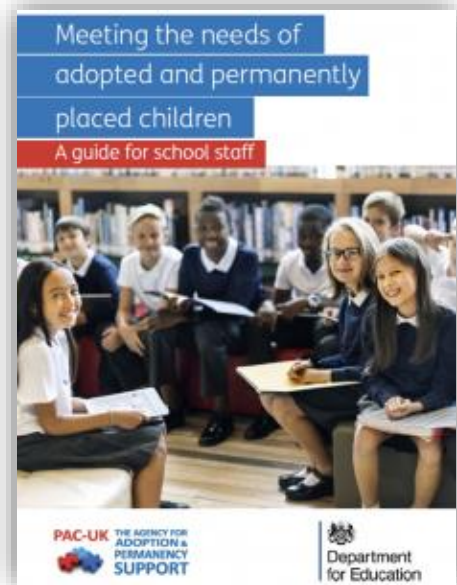
The PEP document or Personal Education Plan, are statutory for children in care. However, for children who are 'previously looked after' it is up to the school if they decide to continue with PEP style meetings. The school should, however, be able to provide you with a verbal record of how PP+ is being spent and targets your child may have and what they are doing to support them with this.

Meeting the needs of adopted and permanently placed children - A guide for school staff

PAC-UK and Adoption UK have published two complementary education guides, for school staff and adoptive parents respectively, to help ensure adopted children get the best possible educational start in life.

The guides explain why these vulnerable children may need additional support in school, what educational entitlements they can attract and what support is available for them.

PAC-UK's guide for school staff '[Meeting the needs of adopted and permanently placed children: A guide for school staff](#)' covers a range of topics including: what we know about our children in education, a background to early developmental trauma, whole school approaches, and support for schools and families.



Adoption UK's [guide 'Meeting the needs of adopted and permanently placed children - A guide for adoptive parents'](#) includes information about Virtual School Heads (VSHs), Designated Teachers (DTs), Priority School Admission, Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) and dedicates two pages to Intercountry Adoption and Schools.

- [PAC-UK: Meeting the needs of adopted and permanently placed children - A guide for school](#)
- [PAC-UK Cards - 4 up](#)
- [PAC-UK Case Studies](#)
- [PAC-UK Flyer - Supporting adopted and permanently placed children in school](#)
- [PAC-UK Poster - We want you to know](#)
- [Adoption UK: Meeting the needs of adopted and permanently placed children - A guide for adoptive parents](#)

These guides and resources were published on 19 October 2017. You can read the joint PAC-UK & AUK press release in full [here](#).

September 2024