



Essex County Council
Education



Essex  irtual School
Aspire to Achieve

Education information for parents/ carers of Previously Looked After Children

This leaflet provides a summary
of educational support available for
Previously Looked After Children

What is a Previously Looked After Child (PLAC)?

A previously looked after child is one who is no longer looked after in England and Wales because s/he is the subject of an adoption, special guardianship, or child arrangements order. The child must have been in local authority care and left immediately as a result of an order. If a child returns to their birth parent(s) (outside of these three conditions), they are not considered to be previously looked after.

Your child may also benefit from support from the local authority post-adoption or Special Guardianship teams. For adoption, the responsible authority is the placing authority for three years after the adoption, then it is where the child resides.



Who in the school is responsible for supporting my child's education?

The Designated Teacher (DT) has responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of previously looked after pupils. Sometimes, especially in secondary schools, they might delegate the day-to-day work, but they should know your child, be monitoring their progress and attainment and have an oversight of provision for them.

Why we need a Designated Teacher for Previously Looked After Children

Many PLAC have suffered disrupted learning, missed extended periods of school and have SEND. Gaps in learning have often resulted in significant barriers to learning. We need the DT to ensure that effective practice is in place in schools to address achievement needs of PLAC. There is statutory guidance around the role of the Designated Teacher for promoting the education of previously looked after children and what schools must and should do.



What financial support is available for my child's education?

Pupil Premium Plus: The Pupil Premium Plus of £2,530 (2023/24) is paid to your school directly once parents/carers notify the school of their child's status and provide evidence. This should be done as soon as possible, as schools must declare it in October. Early Years providers can claim Early Years Pupil Premium and previously looked after 2-year-olds are entitled to 15 hours free childcare per week.

The school must use the funding to reduce barriers to learning and improve educational outcomes of the cohort of previously looked after children, but it is important to understand that the money is not ring-fenced for individual children. This allows schools to use it in the most effective way for their particular setting. For example, it could go towards learning mentors or support assistants, counselling, small group or individual intervention, extra-curricular activities or mental health support. They should be transparent about how the funding is being used and you can ask your designated teacher about this.



What should I consider when thinking about my child's education and time in school?

In Essex, schools are offered Trauma Perceptive Practice, a whole-school relationship-based approach to working with young people. We strongly support this approach, particularly for children who have experienced a difficult start in life.

Work together with the school to plan for any transitions, including around holidays and between year groups. The Virtual School website offers helpful questions when choosing a primary or secondary school, as well as helpful tips for your child's transitions between year groups and primary to secondary school.

We encourage schools and parents to have regular meetings to review how a child is getting on, even when everything is going well. Early intervention and pro-active planning are key. Schools may consider it 'best practice' to complete a social, emotional and mental health assessment, such as the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire, 6 Core Strengths, or Boxall Profile. There should be careful consideration given to completing a One Plan, where appropriate, to keep track of the impact of interventions and follow up actions.

Your child should build strong relationships with three key adults in school who work together to support them. They may benefit from regular check-ins, being told they are being kept in mind, structured play times, having one person in school who contacts the parent, a personal timetable, a safe space, scripts that all staff use when your child feels dysregulated and targeted support in understanding and expressing their emotions. They may also need support around developing social skills with peers.

Who can help?

The Virtual School

If you are worried about your child's education, please have a look at our FAQs and information on our website:

schools.essex.gov.uk/pupils/Essex_Virtual_School/Pages/From-care-to-adoption.aspx



You may wish to explore extra support. You can complete a student profile form and we will be in touch as soon as possible to offer advice and guidance to you, the school and any professionals you work with:

schools.essex.gov.uk/pupils/Essex_Virtual_School/Achievement_Inclusion/Pages/default.aspx



We also offer a range of opportunities and projects, such as:

- Music tuition
- Sports and mental health workshops

You can find out more on our website:

schools.essex.gov.uk/pupils/Essex_Virtual_School







SEND

The Essex Local Offer has a wealth of information about navigating the SEND system:

send.essex.gov.uk/



You can get free independent advice from SEND IASS:

send.essex.gov.uk/search-support-groups-and-activities/send-information-advice-and-support-service-sendiass



Attendance: All schools and partners in Essex follow the Let's Talk... We Miss You guidance where there are concerns about attendance. If you need further support in this area, please do get in touch with the Virtual School. Schools can also consult the Attendance Specialist Team in the Local Authority.

Post-Adoption Team: Following an assessment, the team can provide a range of services to address adoption-related challenges. The team can also provide signposting to other support services and access to the Talking Education and Adoption group.

School Admissions: Previously looked after children are entitled to the highest priority admission to state-funded schools. There is an Admissions Code that governs admissions and oversubscription criteria.

Useful links

Essex Virtual School for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children

schools.essex.gov.uk/pupils/Essex_Virtual_School



The Role of the Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children February 2018

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



Promoting the Education of Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children

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



Pupil Premium Overview December 2022

www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium/pupil-premium



Coram UK

www.coram.org.uk/what-we-do/education



Child Law Advice provides free specialist legal advice and information on child, family and education law for parents, carers and young people in England. It contains How-to guides and lots of free-to-access content.

childlawadvice.org.uk



PAC UK For adoptive parents, special guardians, school staff and social workers, to talk through any school or educational concerns regarding adopted or special guardianship children and receive advice and support.

Tel: **020 7284 5879**

(Thursdays in term time, 12pm to 2pm)

www.pac-uk.org/our-services/education/education-resources



SGO Support

www.sgosupport.co.uk



Essex County Council SGO support

www.essex.gov.uk/children-young-people-and-families/special-guardianship/support-special-guardians



This information is issued by:
Education Services

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