

# Enfield Virtual School

## Attendance Policy, Practice and Procedure 2022-2023

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It is essential that children and young people attend school or education/training provision regularly so that they can achieve their full potential. Enfield Virtual School is fully committed to ensuring all their looked after children and young people attend school and education/training provision regularly and will work with social workers, foster carer's, key workers, parents, schools and education/training providers to improve attendance. The Virtual School will endeavour to work towards achieving the goal of 100% attendance for all Enfield's looked after children and young people attending in borough and out of borough schools and education/training providers.

This policy covers children and young people looked after by the London Borough of Enfield and previously looked after children (attending an Enfield School) aged 3-18 years.

1. The aim of Enfield's Virtual School's attendance policy is to enable the school to provide consistent practice which encourages and facilitates the regular attendance of all Enfield's looked after children and young people whether they are attending in borough or out of borough schools or education/training provision.

### **1.1 Parents and foster carers for children;**

As part of our whole school approach to maintaining excellent attendance, we request that parents/foster carers;

- Engage with their children's education by supporting the child's learning and taking an interest in what they have been doing at school.
- Promote the value of a good education and the importance of regular, punctual school attendance.
- Encourage and support their children's aspirations.
- Follow the child's school procedure for reporting the absence of their child from school.
- Prevent unnecessary school absences, for example by making medical and dental appointments outside of school hours where possible.
- Ensure that the child's holidays are taken during school holiday periods and where leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances is likely to occur, that authorisation is sought from the Virtual School Headteacher, the Head of Service and the child's school in advance.

- Contact the child's school for support when they or their child are having difficulties, and to work to form positive relationships with school staff to enable both supportive and difficult conversations to take place (if a problem arises).
- Keep the child's school informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance.
- Implement regular routines at home in terms of homework, bedtime etc, so that the child is used to consistency and the school day becomes part of that routine. It is vital that the child receives the same message at home as they do at school about attendance.

### **1.2 Parents/foster carer's (for young people) 16+**

- Support young people's learning by taking an interest in what they are studying at college or training provider;
- Encourage and support young people's goals and aspirations;
- Promote the value of education and training and the importance of attending all lessons/sessions at college/training provider punctually to achieve and fulfil their potential.

The Virtual School have introduced an attendance checklist to provide foster carers with strategies to encourage excellent attendance (Appendix 1). Attendance letters are sent home termly to inform foster carers of their child's attendance percentage and notifying them if there are any concerns (Appendix 3), and letters/postcards and vouchers for excellent attendance are also used (Appendix 2).

### **1.3 Social Workers**

**As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that social workers:**

- Work with foster carers/parents/key workers and the Virtual School to promote excellent attendance and punctuality;
- Provide support to foster carers/parents/key workers when problems with attendance and punctuality arise;
- Inform the Virtual School without delay, if there are any problems with attendance or punctuality in order for them to provide support to the child/foster carer and school;
- Inform the child's school or young person's education/training provider, as well as the Virtual School without delay, if there are changes to care plans or if there are any difficulties with the care placement.
- work together with the school, foster carer and the child to complete an attendance support plan if there are issues around attendance (Appendix 5)
- Will not authorise any holidays during term time and will forward requests for term time leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances to the Virtual School Headteacher and Head of Service for consideration.

### **1.4 Designated Teachers**

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that Designated Teachers:

- Work with foster carers/parents, social workers and the Virtual School to support looked after children who are struggling with regular attendance and punctuality;
- Provide reports on attendance and punctuality of looked after children at school PEP meetings, as well as when requested by Enfield Virtual School;

### **1.5 Looked after/previously looked after child's School**

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we expect that the school governing board/academy trust ensures that staff at the child's school.

- Ensure that the school's attendance policy accounts for specific needs of certain pupil cohorts (LAC, PLAC, children with social worker) and that it is applied fairly and consistently, and in doing so school's always consider the individual needs of pupils and families who have specific barriers to attendance. (*Working together to improve school attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities, DfE September 2022*)
- Are aware that all schools are expected to provide "more frequent and comprehensive sharing of data than the statutory minimum where it's essential to fulfilling their obligations under the Education Acts" (*Working together to improve school attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities, DfE September 2022*)
- Schools are required to provide updated attendance data for all LAC to the welfare cloud on at least a weekly basis, if not more frequent.
- **Inform the child's social workers and carers immediately if the child has an unexplained absence from school so that actions can be taken promptly.**
- Be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to pupils and their parents/carers, which includes forming positive relationships with families and the Virtual School.
- Ensure that teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils are taught the high value of attendance and punctuality for their own personal progression and achievement;
- Ensure that they are fully aware and up to date with their school's attendance policy and government legislation and that they will speak to another member of staff or seek support if they are unsure about how to deal with an attendance issue;
- Ensure that they follow the correct systems for recording attendance and that attendance is recorded daily;
- hold regular meetings with foster carers and social workers of looked after children, previously looked after children and children with a social worker that the school (and/or local authority) consider to be vulnerable or are persistently or severely absent to discuss

attendance and engagement at school (and ensure that the designated teacher for LAC & PLAC) is aware).

- Work with and make referrals to external agencies to support pupils and their families who are struggling with regular attendance, as quickly as possible.
- Regularly scrutinise the attendance and punctuality of the school's cohort of looked after children, previously looked after children and children with a social worker to monitor, identify and address any needs swiftly and accordingly.
- Will ensure that part time timetables are agreed by the Virtual School Headteacher (for looked after children) and social workers (for children with a social worker), and are not used as a means to 'manage a pupil's behaviour', are only considered in 'very exceptional circumstances' to 'meet the child's individual need,' are 'only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution.' All agreed time outside of school will be marked as C. (*Working together to improve school attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities, DfE September 2022*)
- Will ensure that the B code is not used for 'unsupervised educational activity' and understand that in using the B code the school is satisfied that 'education is supervised, and measures have been taken to safeguard the pupil'
- Will notify the Local Authority (and child's social worker and Virtual School) if school are considering removing the child's name from the school register.

### **1.6 Young person's (post-16) education/training provider**

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that the young person's education/training provider:

- Be active in their approach to promoting good attendance and punctuality;
- Ensure that teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance;
- Ensure that all staff are up to date with the education/training provider's attendance policy;
- Ensure that systems to record and report attendance are working effectively;
- Inform the young person's foster carer/keyworker, social worker and Enfield Virtual School when the young person is at risk of 'dropping out' of his/her course/training due to poor attendance;
- Provide support for the young person who is having difficulties with their attendance and punctuality. Support could be through one to one tutorials, meeting with the education/training provider's student adviser, counsellor or support staff.

### **1.7 Pupils (children)**

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that pupils:

- Be aware of their school's attendance policy and when and what they are required to attend;
- Speak to their classroom teacher/form tutor or another member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance;
- Attend all lessons ready to learn, with the appropriate learning tools requested and on time for the class;
- Bring a note of explanation from carers to explain an absence that has happened or is foreseen;
- Follow their school's procedure if they arrive late in order that their school can monitor attendance and keep accurate records for individual attendance which is also vital for health and safety in the event of a school evacuation.

### **1.8 Young person (post-16)**

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that young people:

- Be aware of their education/training provider's attendance policy;
- Understand when, where and what lessons/classes they are required to attend;
- Provide their social worker/young person's adviser with a copy of their timetable;
- Attend all lessons/sessions on time, ready to learn and with the appropriate learning materials;
- Inform their tutor/trainer if they are having difficulties which have an impact on their attendance and when referred for support, attend support sessions put in place;
- Inform their tutor/trainer on the day if they are unable to attend college/training.

### **1.9 Virtual School on behalf of the London Borough of Enfield**

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining excellent attendance for all of our looked after children, the Virtual School will:

- Use opportunities as they arise, to remind parents/carers/keyworkers that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children/young people receive their education or training;
- Ensure that the importance of attendance is made clear by promoting the relevant schools and education/training provider's policies and guidance directed at parents/foster carers/keyworkers and staff;
- Work with young people, their social worker, foster carer/keyworker and education/training provider when issues of attendance and punctuality arise;
- Monitor the attendance of looked after children and young people through Welfare Cloud on a daily, weekly and monthly basis;
- Monitor the authorised and unauthorised absence of looked after children via the CEO brief, Headteachers report and Annual report to identify and monitor any attendance trends of looked after children (with particular reference to those at risk of becoming persistently

absent) to ensure that relevant support and interventions are put into place in a timely fashion.

- Use the attendance data gathered to highlight problems and feedback issues/patterns of absences to the appropriate social worker teams and foster carers;
- Where the attendance of a looked after child is 95% or below the Virtual School Attendance Caseworker will implement the attendance support strategy (see Appendix 4)
- Where attendance of a looked after child is 90% or below the Virtual School Attendance Caseworker will implement the Attendance Support Plan (see Appendix 5)
- Attend an action plan meeting where necessary for a looked after child who has received a suspension or any unauthorised absences to ensure that a plan is put in place for re-integration;
- Support the young person at disciplinary meetings and/or at risk of 'dropping out' of their course or training
- Inform Heads of Service, Social Workers and Supervising Social Workers on a monthly basis about attendance concerns in the CEO brief.
- Provide a 12 weekly report highlighting any children missing education (CME) see point 6
- Send postcards and vouchers home for excellent attendance and improved attendance.
- Send the Attendance caseworker to visit home and/or school.

## **2. Categories of absences**

Absences are treated as unauthorised unless there is a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's/young person's absence. Parents/foster carers or social workers cannot authorise absences.

### **2.1 Illness**

Most cases of absence due to illness are short term, but parents/foster carers will need to make a phone call to alert the child's school on the first day, as well as for each subsequent day of absence. When the child returns to school, they should bring a note from their parent/foster carer explaining the absence, if they have failed to call the school daily.

For prolonged absence due to illness, parents/foster carers may be asked to provide the child's school with medical evidence, such as a note from the child's doctor, an appointment card or a prescription paper.

### **2.2 Medical or dental appointments**

Parents/foster carers should make every effort to ensure that these appointments are made outside of school hours. Where it cannot be avoided, children should attend school for as

much of that day as possible. Foster carers/parents must present a proof of any medical appointments.

### **2.3 Authorised absences**

The Virtual School requests from the child's school and the young person's education/training provider that they consider the following as authorised absences:

- Family bereavement
- Unplanned emergency contact arrangements
- Attendance at case conferences
- Home Office appointments
- Meetings with solicitors
- Others – with consultation on a case-by-case basis

### **2.4 Unauthorised absences**

The Virtual School requests from the child's school and young person's education/training provider that they consider the following as unauthorised absence;

- shopping visits
- care for family members
- days out to theme parks or to attend concerts/shows
- Parents/carers' work commitments or business trips
- holidays taken in term time (including long weekends taken on Fridays and/or Mondays) unless approved in advance by the Virtual School Headteacher, Head of Service and the School.
- Supporting parents/family with translation.

### **2.5 Reduced timetables**

All children of compulsory school age are entitled to a 'full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have.' In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs." (*Working together to improve school attendance" DfE September 2022*)

Reduced timetables for looked after children are only agreed by the Virtual School Headteacher in exceptional circumstances and are reviewed regularly to ensure that they are in place for the shortest possible period with a clear end date. Looked after children with reduced timetables are monitored monthly via the CEO brief.

### **3. Suspensions or Permanent Exclusion from school (*Please see Virtual School Preventing the suspension and permanent exclusion of children in care Policy, Practice and Procedure 2022 – 2023*)**

Suspensions or permanent exclusion from school means that a pupil is not allowed in school for disciplinary reasons. Only Headteachers can make the decision to suspend or permanently exclude pupils.

- Suspension means that the child is not allowed on school site for a defined period. Most suspensions are usually for short periods of fewer than 5 days;
- Permanent exclusion means that the child is no longer allowed to attend the school and his/her name will be removed from roll;
- Permanent exclusion should only be used as a last resort and as a response to a serious breach, or persistent breaches of the school's behaviour policy. The Virtual School should be kept informed and updated of any proposed exclusions of looked after children (and Social Workers and parents/carers in the case of children with a Social Worker) to enable support processes to be considered to avoid any such exclusion. (*Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, Academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement – DfE September 2022 publication*)

#### **3.1 The Virtual School requests that when suspending a looked after child or child with a Social Worker for a fixed period, the child's school:**

- Informs the child's foster carer, social worker and Virtual School immediately;
- Ensure work is provided for the suspended child;
- Will work with the local authority to arrange alternative provision from the first day following the suspension or permanent exclusion.
- Ensure that there is a re-integration programme on the first morning back at school with a plan for managing future behaviour in place if appropriate.

#### **3.2 Suspension from college/training provider**

Further education colleges and training providers will normally have a code of conduct which all students or trainees sign at enrolment. The code of conduct includes standards of behaviour, as well as acceptable levels of attendance and punctuality.

- Misconduct can be for unacceptable behaviour, poor attendance or being regularly late for classes;
- If a young person breaches the college or training providers code of conduct through misbehaviour or poor attendance, he or she will be given an oral or written warning;
- Disciplinary procedure normally comprises of three warnings; first oral or written warning, second written warning and a third and final warning;



- For gross misconduct, the young person may be issued with a third and final warning or asked to leave the college/training provider's premises;
- If behaviour or attendance and punctuality do not improve after the third and final warning, the young person may be asked to leave or may be suspended by the college/training provider.
- Individual college/training providers will have their own disciplinary and appeals procedures which can be requested if needed when supporting young people who are experiencing difficulties with their training provision.

#### **4. School Admissions process for looked after children (See Appendix 6)**

Enfield Virtual School only places looked after children at schools which are rated by Ofsted as 'Good' or 'Outstanding'. Where this is unavoidable (i.e. to avoid school placement moves/parent preference/or due to no other appropriate educational provision being available) *'Enfield Virtual School Quality Assurance Policy for LAC attending RI and Inadequate Schools'* outlines the Virtual Schools approach to monitoring and quality assuring the educational placement.

##### **4.1 School Admission of a looked after children without an EHCP**

The looked after child's Social Worker will make an online admissions application identifying the most appropriate school for the child to attend. As outlined within the *Schools Admission Code (DfE September 2021)* looked after children have the highest priority school admission status and as such there should be no delay in a looked after child's admission to a new school. Should school not agree to the child's admission the Head of the Virtual School will consult with the relevant admission authority who must reply within 7 days. Should the admissions authority not agree to admit the child, the Virtual School will direct (see appendix 8) or make an application to the Secretary of State for direction of an Academy (see appendix 7 & 9).

##### **4.2 School admission of a looked after child with an EHCP**

The looked after child's Social Worker will contact the Local Authority Special Educational Needs (SEN) department for the receiving authority (the LA where child's placement is) to request that that the plan is transferred (if moving boroughs), copying in Enfield SEN (as they continue to have financial responsibility) outlining which schools would best meet the child's needs. SEN will consult with identified schools and schools have 15 days from receipt of the consultation to reply.

#### **5. Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) Attendance & Admissions**

The attendance of PLAC children is not monitored by the Virtual School. Enfield Schools are expected to monitor the attendance of PLAC as a cohort within their own school and put in targeted interventions (possibly using the schools PP+ for PLAC), referring to appropriate support organisations in addition to working with carers for this vulnerable group (see

Paragraph 1.5). Schools and families can contact the Virtual Schools Previously Looked After officer for advice and guidance.

### **5.1 PLAC Admissions**

PLAC share the highest priority admission status (alongside LAC), if they have left care with a Special Guardianship Order, Adoption Order or Child Arrangement Order. In September 2021 this was extended to previously looked after children who “have been in state care outside of England and ceased to be in state care as a result of being adopted.” As Looked after children and previously looked after children have the highest priority school admission status, there should be no delay in a looked after child or previously looked after child’s admission to a new school.

### **5.2 Admission of a PLAC without a EHCP**

Carers/Guardians must complete an online admissions application for the Local Authority where they reside, identifying which schools they would like their child to attend. We recommend that carers only identify schools which have been rated by Ofsted as ‘Good’ or ‘Outstanding’. As outlined within the *Schools Admission Code (DfE September 2021)* should school not agree to the child’s admission the Head of the Virtual School will consult with the relevant admission authority who must reply within 7 days. Should the admissions authority not agree to admit the child, the Virtual School will direct (see appendix 8) or make an application to the Secretary of State for direction of an Academy (see appendix 7 & Appendix 9).

## **6. Children Missing Education (CME)**

A child is classed as CME if they are not on a school roll for any amount of time

- This may be because of a permanent exclusion
- May have moved foster placement or home to another Borough
- May be an Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Child (UASC)

**All children should have a new school placement if needed within 20 days**

### **Conclusion**

It is the intention of this policy to support young people and children looked after by the London Borough of Enfield through a whole school approach so that children and young people may receive their full entitlement to education and training and eventually fulfil their potential.

## Appendix 1 Foster Carer Attendance Checklist

### CHECK LIST FOR CARERS

- Encourage the child/young person in your care to be positive about school life and work. Praise the child's achievements frequently
- Ensure the child/young person attends school regularly and on time.
- Define the rights of the child/young person but support the school as much as possible
- Work in partnership with the school when trying to sort out problems.
- Make regular contact with teachers and support workers to discuss the child/young person's progress
- Attend parents' evenings, reviews and meetings about the child/young person. Ensure their educational progress and achievements are discussed. Before each meeting, check that the information you have is still accurate. Make sure you update it at the meeting.
- Try and attend less formal occasions like plays, concerts, social evenings, exhibitions, fairs and sporting events.
- Be available.
- Inform school of any issues, which might affect progress or behaviour, just as a school would expect of any parent.
- Tell the school when you know in advance about an absence or as soon as possible on the day if it is unexpected.
- Do not make appointments in school time unless it is essential
- Do not book holidays in school time.
- Make sure all communications from the school are dealt with promptly
- Provide lunch and a uniform.
- Arrange transport to and from school when appropriate, although be aware when you need to escort young people to school. This may not always be age related; it might be to make sure that they arrive!
- Be prepared to give time to them at the end of the school day by supporting learning tasks or just be available to listen to their views and opinions.
- Without being too obvious look for changes in mood or behaviour that might

suggest problems in school

- Be ready for the more stressful times in school e.g. exams/problems with teachers or work, conflict with friends and other students. Work out tactics and ideas about how best to cope.
- Provide somewhere quiet and essential materials for homework; check homework and sign diaries or planners
- Encourage the child/young person to use the local facilities for sport and leisure
- Make sure there is plenty of access to reading and study materials; provide a place to study; provide finance for after-school activities and educational trips in line with the school's charging policy.
- Encourage involvement in school activities outside school hours such as visits, outdoor activities, sports, drama, art or any other club that might interest the young person.

## Appendix 2 Over 95% attendance letter

«Carer»  
«Placement\_Address»  
«Placement\_Postcode»

Contact:  
  
E-mail:  
Phone:  
Address:  
Fax:  
My Ref:  
Your Ref:  
Date:

Dear «Carer»

### School Attendance

One of the responsibilities of the Virtual School, is to monitor school attendance for all our looked after children.

We would like to congratulate «Forename» for achieving over 95% attendance for this academic year.

I have enclosed a card congratulating «Gender» for this, which I would be grateful if you could pass on.

I wish «Forename» good luck for the new academic year in September.

If you have any queries or require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Attendance Caseworker  
Virtual School for Looked After Children

### Appendix 3 Termly Attendance Letter

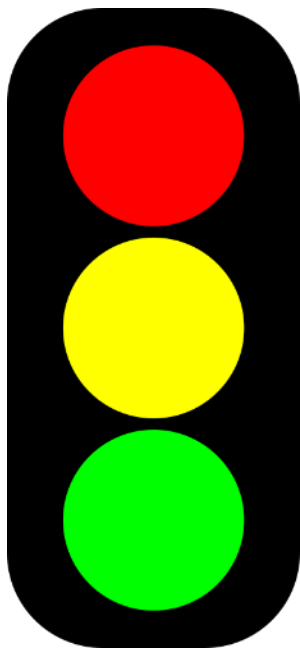
Dear Carers,

#### RE Autumn Term school attendance

This letter is to inform you of **[NAME's]** attendance percentage for Autumn term 1 and the possible outcomes should your child remain at this level for the rest of the academic year.

There can be many complicated factors that can impact on a child's school attendance. The Virtual School's role is to support and work with all those who care for Enfield's looked after children to ensure that they secure the best possible attendance, school experience and educational outcomes. Therefore, it is important that we make you aware of **[NAME's]** school attendance percentage and bring any concerns to your attention.

**[NAME's ] Attendance for Autumn Term 1 is**



**90% or less.** Your child is classed as a 'persistent absentee' and is missing a significant amount of school which could affect their learning, life chances and their ability to establish and maintain friendships in school. If your child's attendance stays at this level, they will have missed at least 4 weeks of lessons by the end of the school year

**91-96%** Quick, take action! Your child is at risk of missing important parts of the curriculum which could significantly affect their learning. If your child's attendance stays at this level, they could have missed between 1-4 weeks of lessons by the end of the school year.

**97% - 100%.** Your attendance is fantastic! Keep this up! Your child has the best opportunity to reach their full potential in school

Absences due to the following reasons will not be agreed/authorised:

- shopping visits
- care for family members
- days out to theme parks or to attend concerts/shows
- Foster carers' work commitments or business trips

- holidays taken in term time (including long weekends taken on Fridays and/or Mondays)

I have enclosed a copy of the Virtual School's carer checklist to outline supportive ways to encourage excellent school attendance. Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions, concerns or queries regarding **[NAME's]** school attendance, or for advice to support their school attendance to improve.

Kind regards,

**Attendance Caseworker for LAC**

**Enfield Virtual School**

## Appendix 4 Attendance Support Strategy

### Step 1

Attendance caseworker monitors attendance of LAC every two days via welfare call.

It is essential that children and young people attend school or education/training provision regularly so they can achieve their full potential. Enfield Virtual School is fully committed to ensuring all their children looked after and young people attend school and education/training provision regularly and will work with social workers, foster carer's, key workers, parents, schools and education/training providers to improve attendance. The Virtual School will endeavour to work towards achieving the goal of 100% attendance for all Enfield's looked after children and young people attending in borough and out of borough schools and education/training providers.

### Step 2

LAC with attendance below 90% require action.

#### Below 95

Email to YP's Social worker/ School to highlight low attendance.

#### Below 90%

Email to YP's Social worker/ School and carer to arrange a meeting to implement attendance support plan.

### Step 3

Attendance caseworker will monitor low attendance daily to ensure it improves. Offering rewards for improved attendance.

### Step 3

Attendance support plan will be reviewed termly. Rewards are offered for improved attendance. OR incentives are offered to encourage attendance.

### Step 4

The virtual school collates a list of children with attendance below 90% with a detailed explanation of work carried out, this is sent out to Heads of Service, Social Workers and Supervising Social Workers on a monthly basis. Attendance is also published in a 12 weekly report highlighting any children missing education (CME).



Appendix 5 Attendance Action Plan



ATTENDANCE ACTION PLAN

Name:	Year Group:	School type:
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In  borough Out of  borough %  Attendance YTDNo. of   exclusions  
EHCP

Action taken by school:

Action taken by virtual school:

Action taken by social worker:

Action taken by foster carer:

Action taken by supervising social worker and/or foster carer social worker:

Young persons views:

Signed by

Attendance caseworker

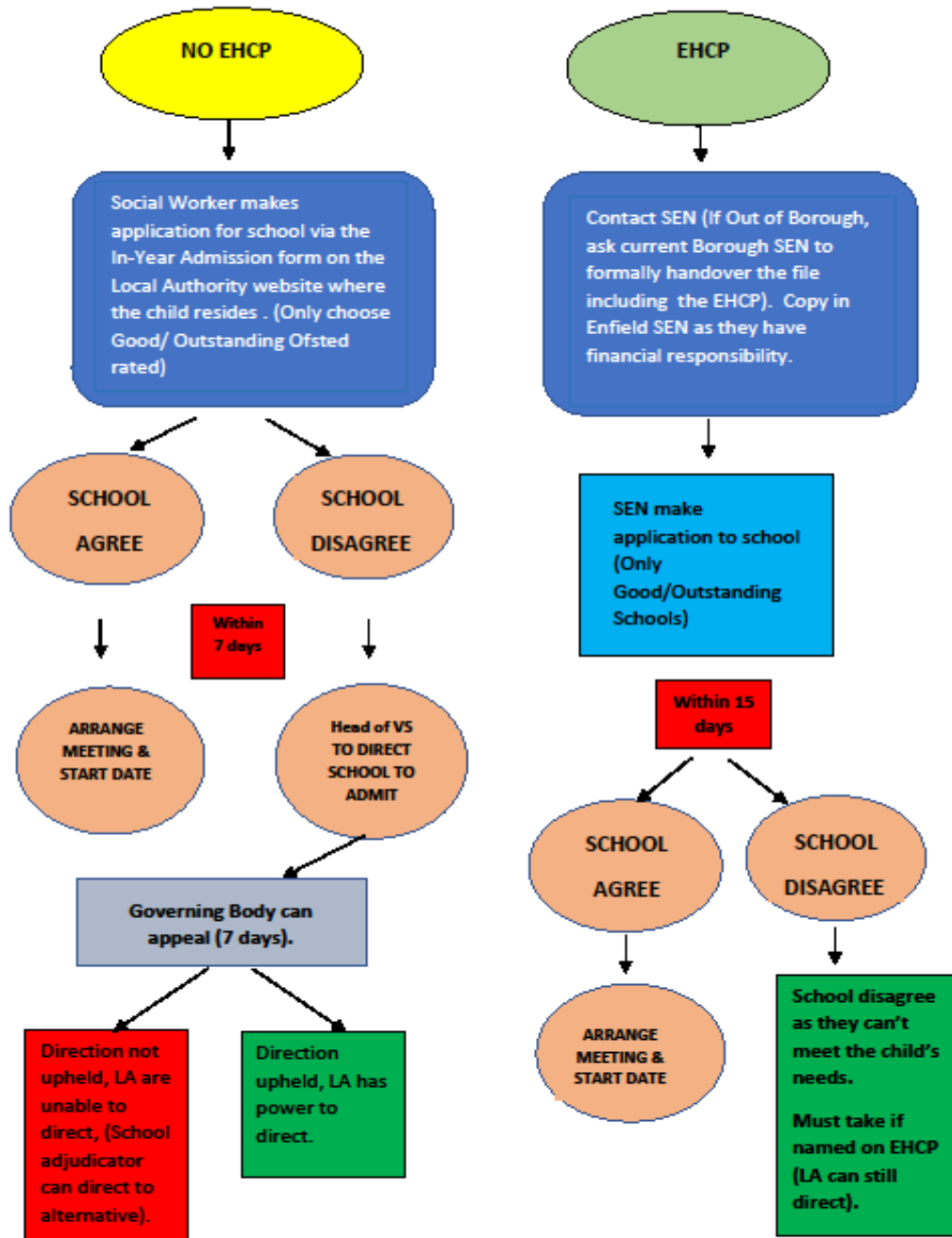
Foster carer

Young person

Date

Review date

Appendix 6 Admissions flow chart



*Belonging regulation means that if a child who has an EHCP moves out of Borough, the new Borough are responsible for maintaining the EHCP although Enfield pay. In the rare case where a residential/educational placement has been chosen out of Borough by Enfield LA, Enfield would maintain the plan.*



**Appendix 7 – Intention to direct and Academy**

Please reply to: Suzanne Rowson  
Headteacher of Virtual School  
Enfield Council  
39 London Road  
Enfield EN2 6EF

E-mail : Suzanne.rowson@enfield.gov.uk  
Phone : 07957 449239

Date :

Dear Chair of Governor's

Re: [REDACTED]

As the Headteacher of the Virtual School for the London Borough of Enfield, I am writing to advise you of the intention of the local authority to ask the Secretary of State to direct the Governing body as the admissions authority for [REDACTED], to admit [REDACTED] who is a looked after child. [REDACTED] is a vulnerable child for whom the London Borough of Enfield has a statutory responsibility to promote the best possible educational outcomes. It is on that basis that I propose to ask the Secretary of State to give direction to the school under powers given to them under s97B School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

Under s97B of the School Standards and Framework Act, this authority is obliged to consult the admissions authority for the school we propose to specify in the direction. In accordance with 3.19 and 3.20 of the School Admissions Code, we are consulting with you and you have seven days beginning on the day on which you are consulted to inform the London Borough of Enfield whether you are willing to admit the child without being directed to do so by the Education Funding Agency. The school admissions code states: "Academies should respond to the local authority within seven days and must only refuse to admit if they consider that admitting the child would seriously prejudice the provision of efficient education or efficient use of resources".

If I do not hear from you during the seven-day period, I will serve a written notice of my decision to submit a request to the Secretary of State to intervene.

I am posting this letter to you and I am also copying it to the Headteacher, so that they are fully aware of the position. I have also included a link to the DFE guidance <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/academy-admission-request-form-for-looked-after-children>, which clearly states that a request to the EFA should be a last resort. It would be helpful if you could telephone me to confirm safe receipt so that we are clear as to the date when the seven days start to run.

I look forward to hearing from you,

Yours sincerely

Suzanne Rowson  
Headteacher, Virtual School, London Borough of Enfield

**Appendix 8 – Direction Letter**

Please reply to: Suzanne Rowson  
Headteacher of Virtual School  
Enfield Council  
39 London Road  
Enfield EN2 6EF

E-mail : Suzanne.rowson@enfield.gov.uk  
Phone : 07957 449239

Date :

Dear (Chair of Governors, Headteacher)

**RE: [CHILD NAME]**

As the designated officer for the London Borough of Enfield, I am writing to advise you of the intention of the local authority to direct the Governing body as the admissions authority for [SCHOOL NAME], to admit [CHILD NAME].

[CHILD NAME] is a looked after child. He is a vulnerable child for whom the London Borough of Enfield has a statutory responsibility to promote the best educational outcomes. It is on that basis that I propose to give direction to the school under powers given to the local authority under s97A School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

Under s97B of the School Standards and Framework Act, this authority is obliged to consult the admissions authority for the school we propose to specify in the direction. You have seven days beginning on the day on which you are consulted to inform the London Borough of Enfield whether you are willing to admit the child without being directed to do so by the authority.

If I do not hear from you during the seven day period, I will serve a written notice of my decision to give a direction under s97A SSFA. The direction cannot take effect for another seven days. During those seven days beginning with the day on which the notice was served, the governing body as the admissions authority can refer the matter to the Schools Adjudicator on the ground that the admission of [CHILD NAME] would seriously prejudice the provision of efficient education or the efficient use of resources. If you decide to do this, you need to inform this authority.

The effect of such a referral is to prevent the local authority from giving a direction until the Schools Adjudicator has determined whether [CHILD NAME] should be admitted or not.

I am copying it to the Chairman of Governors so that they are fully aware of the position.

Yours sincerely

Suzanne Rowson  
Headteacher, Virtual School, London Borough of Enfield

## Request to direct admission of a child to an academy – looked-after and previously looked-after children

When placing a looked-after or previously looked-after child, we would expect the local authority to apply the principles set out in paragraphs 3.26 and 3.27 of the School Admissions Code 2021 (the Code). This means:

- the local authority may request a direction for an academy which is full (including a school whose infant classes are already at the maximum size)
- The local authority should consult the academy and allow 7 days for the academy to respond to the request to admit the child before requesting a direction from the Secretary of State
- The local authority should inform the governing body and head teacher if it submits a request to the Secretary of State to direct admission
- academies should respond to the local authority within 7 days and must only refuse if they consider that admitting the child would seriously prejudice the provision of efficient education or efficient use of resources
- local authorities must not choose a school from which the child is permanently excluded

### The direction process

We would expect the local authority to aim to secure a school place quickly and for the admissions authorities to cooperate with this. The local authorities and academy should work together to reach an agreement and ensure successful admission of the child.

A Secretary of State's direction should only be used if both parties cannot come to an agreement. It is not necessary for the child to have been considered by a fair access protocol in order for the local authority to make a request for direction.

Where the local authority and academy cannot agree:

- the local authority and the academy must document the case for and against admission
- the local authority must provide evidence that the academy has been consulted setting out the academy's reasons for refusal and the local authority's response

When we are asked to consider the direction of a looked-after or previously looked-after child, we will decide on the basis of the information provided, taking into account:

- the arguments of the academy and local authority
- whether the local authority has considered the arguments for refusal and why it still considers the academy to be the appropriate provision for the child
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- whether the academy has demonstrated that the admission would cause significant prejudice to the provision of efficient education or efficient use of resources

We can seek advice from the Schools Adjudicator in reaching its decision. This is set out at paragraph 3.29 of the School Admissions Code and Section 25 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. The Office of the Schools Adjudicator (OSA) may contact the local authority and the academy regarding this referral.

ESFA's decision is final and binding.

## Requestion a direction

The local authority should complete this form and submit it using the [ESFA online enquiry form](#). Please select "Some other academy related query" and put "Request for a Secretary of State direction" at the start of your query.

## Background of child named in the proposed direction

Full name	
Address	
Date of birth (DD/MM/YYYY):	Click or tap to enter a date.
Academy to which the direction is being sought	
Year group for which a place is required	
Local authority looking after the child (if relevant)	
Details of child's current care placement	

## Please indicate which of the following best describes the child's circumstances

Looked-after child.	
Adopted from care.	
Child arrangements order from care.	
Special guardianship order from care.	

## Details of the child's circumstances

Details of any alternative education currently being received as arranged by the	
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<p>local authority and including details of when this provision commenced. If no such provision is made, please state the reasons and detail what had been offered.</p>	
<p>Names of schools the child has been permanently excluded from (if applicable) – details including dates of all permanent exclusions, reasons and the name of the schools.</p>	
<p>Name of previous school – please provide details of each school the child has attended from the start of the relevant phase of education (i.e. Year Reception class for a primary child and Year 7 for a secondary child) – please provide reasons for leaving in each case.</p>	
<p>Address of previous school.</p>	
<p>Length of time out of education (include relevant dates).</p>	
<p>Personal information relevant to a school placement.</p>	
<p>Family circumstances relevant to a school placement.</p>	
<p>Any assessment to identify child's special educational needs; and/or details of child's behaviour, medical record, any involvement with other</p>	



agencies such as social services and the police.	
Details of the child's educational attainment.	

## Consultation with the child and parent/guardian

Has a place been sought using the fair access protocol?	
Please provide details on the provision of the Schools Admissions Code that has been applied.	

## Process followed

Please confirm that the academy has been consulted and attach evidence of consultation including relevant correspondence.	
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## Local authority's case for choosing the school named in the direction request

Please provide a summary of the consultation.	
The reasons why the academy is considered the appropriate placement.	
The reasons the academy have given for refusing admission.	
The local authority's response to the academy's reasons for	



refusal.	
If applicable, what re-integration package has been offered to the child/school?	
Other information the local authority considers to be relevant.	

## Your details

Name:	
Position:	
Local authority:	
Email address:	
Telephone number:	
Are you the primary contact for this application?	Yes/No
Further local authority contact:	