

Enfield Virtual School Promoting the Education of Previously Looked After Children 2022-2023

Introduction

This policy is in line with guidance from the DfE, with particular reference to

- Promoting the education of looked after and previously looked after children (Feb 2018):
[DfE Guidance Promoting the Education of LAC and PLAC, advice to LAs](#)
- The designated teacher guidance for looked-after and previously looked-after children (Feb 2018)
[DfE Designated teacher guidance for LAC and PLAC](#)
- Keeping children safe in education (September 2022)
[DfE Keeping children safe in education](#)
- Admissions Priority for children adopted from state care outside of England
[DfE Admissions priority for children adopted from state care outside of England](#)
- Working together to Improve School Attendance
[Working together to improve School Attendance](#)
- Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions Guidance for Schools
[Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

In February 2018 the DfE extended the responsibilities of Virtual School Headteachers to include the promotion of the educational achievement of Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) through the provision of information and advice to their parents, educators and other professionals.

For the purposes of this document the term PLAC refers to children who are

- *“no longer looked after by a local authority in England and Wales (as defined by the Children Act 1989 or Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014) because they are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order;*
- *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”*

Promoting the education of looked after and previously looked after children, DfE (Feb 2018)

The Previously Looked After Children Officer

The Previously Looked After Children Officer is placed within Enfield Virtual School to deliver the Virtual School Headteachers responsibility to promote the education of PLAC. In line with DfE guidance, information and advice on PLAC is provided

- To parents, guardians, educators and other professionals.
- In relation to PLAC in education within the London Borough of Enfield.
- In regard to children once they are eligible to their free early year entitlement (term after their second birthday if eligible) until they have completed compulsory education (usually once they are 18 years of age).

The role of the Previously Looked After Children Officer is to

- Respond to parental requests for information and advice, signposting to appropriate departments and agencies where appropriate e.g. SGO Team, Admissions, Behaviour Support Services, Adopt London North, Enfield Parents and Children, PAC UK, SENDIASS etc
- Respond to requests for advice and guidance from education providers within the borough (early, years, mainstream, specialist, PRU’s, independent) supporting individual children and promoting academic achievement of the PLAC cohort.
- Provide general advice and information on promoting the achievement of PLAC and improving the understanding of all schools to identify and address the specific needs of PLAC within the borough through the provision of training, signposting and provision of high quality informative materials, for instance on the effective use of Pupil Premium Plus, promotion of Trauma Informed Practice etc, while continuing to encourage educators and professionals to maintain high expectations in regards to PLAC attainment.

Consent

Enfield Virtual School is not the corporate parent for PLAC and as such will only conduct work in regard to individual pupils with parent/guardian's consent. Enfield Virtual School does not work directly with individual PLAC, however will work with professionals and families to support the network around the child.

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." This includes previously looked after children from Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland as well as overseas "if they were in the care of or were accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation, or any other provider of care whose sole or main purpose is to benefit society".

The guidance emphasises that "When applying oversubscription criteria, IAPLAC must be treated in the same way as children previously looked after in England (PLAC)"

When necessary (and with parental consent) Enfield Virtual School will work with Enfield Admissions authority to evidence the IAPLAC & PLAC eligibility.

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.

Exclusions and Suspensions

Data reflects that post-LAC are suspended and permanently excluded at disproportionately higher rates than non-care experienced children. We recognise that Post-LAC previous experiences may result in more challenging behaviours which children may require additional support with. As such we encourage schools and families to contact the Previously Looked After Children Officer at the earliest opportunity, if they become concerned about a PLAC's behaviour in school. This will enable the Virtual School to provide advice and guidance to professionals and families and assist with identifying any further support needs.

Enfield Virtual School expects Designated Teachers to contact the Virtual School (with parental consent) prior to considering the permanent exclusion of any post LAC attending an Enfield school to ensure that all alternatives to permanent exclusion have been thoroughly explored to avoid the Permanent Exclusion of this cohort.

Some post-LAC may have a social worker, e.g., because they are the subject of a Child in Need Plan or a Child Protection Plan, or receiving support from the SG Social Work Team. If they are at risk of suspension or permanent exclusion, the headteacher should inform their social worker, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and the pupil's parents / carers to involve them all as early as possible. Schools should refer to the Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions Guidance for Schools (above)

The Virtual School will support schools to avoid suspensions and/or exclusions by:

- Responding promptly to requests from schools for advice and support.
- Providing training to Designated Members of staff in schools on issues affecting the lives of children looked after, including attachment, trauma, ADHD and CAMHS.
- Promoting understanding of PLAC experiences from a trauma informed perspective. This can often strengthen the schools' understanding of the behaviour and inform them as to what strategies to put in place to best support their pupils and staff. The Virtual School provides training on wellbeing and mental health (including attachment, trauma and ADHD) to social workers and designated teachers.
- Using the Pupil Premium grant effectively to support those at risk of suspension and/or exclusion
- Supporting schools to consider and implement alternatives to permanent exclusion by sharing the guidance laid out in the Ofsted inspection framework.

See Enfield Virtual School: Preventing the Suspension of Children in Care and Previously Looked After Children Policy, Practice and Procedure 2022-2023

Attendance

Previously LAC are more likely to be Persistent Absentees or be Electively Home Educated and the PLAC Officer can provide support and advice on these matters. If the child has a Social Worker, the Social Worker should be informed of unauthorised absences. The Virtual School would encourage parents and carers who are considering home education to contact the PLAC Officer. See Working together to improve school attendance document (above).

Pupil Premium Plus

Schools are encouraged to claim the PP+ for post-LAC pupils who meet the following criteria

'...[children]who were looked after by an English or Welsh local authority immediately before being adopted, or who left local authority care on a special guardianship order or child arrangements order (previously known as a residence order).'

Schools are encouraged to request that parents and carers of PLAC (reception – Year 11) identify themselves to schools to enable schools to claim the £2410 pupil premium plus (2022-23 , or £2530 for 2023 -24) for post-LAC during the **October census**. It is the responsibility of schools to confirm children's eligibility, however if necessary, Enfield Virtual School may be able to assist (with parental consent).

All schools should publish their Pupil Premium Strategy Statement online outlining how the school uses their Pupil Premium funding. While the Pupil Premium Plus is not a personal budget, schools

should ‘... manage their PP+ allocation for the benefit of their cohort of looked-after or previously looked-after children and according to children’s needs.’ DfE guidance also outlines the following

“...previously looked-after children’s needs can be very different to others eligible for Pupil Premium. The extra funding provided by the PP+ reflects the significant additional barriers faced by looked-after and previously looked-after children.... The designated teacher has an important role in ensuring the specific needs of looked-after and previously looked-after children are understood by the school’s staff and reflected in how the school uses PP+ to support these children’

Enfield Virtual School also recognises that Designated Teachers should encourage parents and guardians to be involved in ‘...deciding how the PP+ is used to support their child...’ Enfield Virtual School can provide advice and guidance to both schools and families on the appropriate use of the Pupil Premium Plus to meet the needs of Previously LAC.

The Adoption Support Fund

The Adoption Support Fund provides funding to LA’s and RAA’s to provide additional therapeutic support to eligible children who have left care with an Adoption Order or Special Guardianship Order.

Eligible children can access up to £2500 for specialist assessment and £5000 for therapy. The ASF is available for children up to and including the age of 21, or 25 with an education, health and care (EHC) plan, who:

- are living (placed) with a family in England while waiting for adoption
- were adopted from local authority care in England, Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland and live in England
- were adopted from abroad and live in England with a recognised adoption status
- were in care immediately before a SGO was made
- left care under a special guardianship order which subsequently was changed to an adoption order, or vice versa
- left care under a child arrangement order (CAO) to enable the assessment of a potential special guardian, while the CAO is in force. They remain eligible if a SGO is subsequently made
- temporarily left their adoptive family or special guardian’s home under a [section 20 arrangement](#) and have a care plan that includes an intention to return back to the adoptive family or special guardian’s home, or if 16 or over, into independent living arrangements

Families of eligible children can access support funded by the ASF (in addition to other support tailored to the child’s needs) by contacting:

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- The SGO duty Team – For those Enfield resident children who have left Care with an SGO which was agreed more than 3 years ago
- Adopt London North – For those Enfield resident children who have left Care with an Adoption Order which was agreed more than 3 years ago.
- Eligible children who have left care with SGO's or Adoption Orders less than 3 years old should seek support from the Local Authority/RAA which initially agreed the order.

Families of eligible children will be provided with a Social Worker who will undertake an assessment of the child's needs and following this make recommendations (where appropriate) and applications to the ASF.

Both the SGO Team and Adopt London North can also provide additional support on a wide range of issues/concerns for families of children who have left care with an Adoption Order or SGO.

Attendance

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

SEND

Children who are previously looked-after are more likely to have special educational needs or disabilities than children who have never been looked-after. If parents or guardians require support in navigating SEND processes they should be encouraged to contact the PLAC Officer for advice and guidance.

Contact:

Jane Manning, PLAC Officer

Tel: 0204 526 7039

Email: Jane.Manning@enfield.gov.uk

Suzanne Rowson, Headteacher of the Virtual School, London Borough of Enfield

Tel: 020 8132 0336

Email: Suzanne.rowson@enfield.gov.uk

Useful Information / Contacts:

Enfield Special Guardianship Duty Team

The Special Guardianship Team can provide a range of support to Special Guardians including access to other services. The SG Team welcome referrals at an early stage regarding any concerns (e.g contact, finances, mental health etc)

Tel: 020 8379 8490

Email: specialguardians@enfield.gov.uk

Adopt London North

Adoptive families in Enfield can access support from Adopt London North. They

Provide a variety of support, including access to the Adoption Support Fund (see above) which helps to financially enable families to access a variety of therapeutic support.

Tel: 020 7527 4777 (select option 2)

Website: adoptlondon.org.uk/adopt-london-north-support

Kinship

Kinship provides emotional, practical support and advice for any friend or family member raising a child full-time because their parents are unable to look after them – kinship carers – regardless of their legal order.

Website: kinship.org.uk

PAC-UK London Education Advice Line

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

Reviewed and updated December 2022 by Enfield Virtual School