



Education Plans for Adopted Children

Rationale and Purpose

- For those in education to be fully aware of the needs and issues faced by adopted children and their parents.
- To encourage further positive collaboration across home and school.

The following points are emphasized throughout the process:

- *An Education Plan for Adopted Children (EPAC) will only be initiated when parents choose to identify their children as adopted.*
- *Maintaining confidentiality of information is essential.*

The majority of children and young people adopted today were neglected and/or suffered trauma in their birth families and became Children in Care (CiC) before their final move to join an adoptive family. Parents emphasise the need to make schools fully aware that adopted children continue to have the same needs as they had as a Child in Care. Indeed, these issues may have been exacerbated as adoption is yet another move in their journey. There is also a need to make lasting relationships within their family. This can cause anxieties for children who have had difficulties with relationships and attachments in the past.

Kent has introduced an Education Plan for Adoptive Children (EPAC). The EPAC's main function is as an awareness raising document that ensures that relevant information is available to those who need to know and that effective communication routes are established. It draws on the pro-active nature of the Children in Care Personal Education Plan (PEP). The intention of the PEP process is to ensure collaborative planning and support across home, school and other agencies. The EPAC is not intended to replace other (more reactive) education based plans such as IEPs (Individual Education Plans) or PSPs (Pastoral Support Programmes). One benefit for schools is that EPACs can provide evidence of how the school meets the needs of vulnerable pupils, eg for OFSTED, Governor Reports.

The PEP process is statutory and is initiated by Specialist Childrens Services.

EPACs can be initiated by either school or parents. The process will establish ongoing reviews. The review date will be set by those attending the meeting-according to the child's circumstances, e.g. 3 months/6months/1 year.

It is intended that the EPAC process is initiated when:

- A school aged child becomes adopted, i.e. at the last Children in Care Personal Education Plan (PEP) meeting before an Adoption Order is in place
- An adopted child starts at a new school.

It is recommended that the EPAC is also used for Kent pupils being adopted in other Authorities.

The EPAC was developed in collaboration with adoptive parents.

“This is like a light bulb being switched on... we needed something like this in Primary School. There was nothing proactive in place like this; we had to repeat our story every year” Parent of an adopted secondary pupil

“It’s a time to sit down, reflect and think” Parent of an adopted primary pupil.

Guidance for Completion of the Education Plan for Adopted Children (EPAC).

Prior to the EPAC meeting.

Copies of the (blank) EPAC form and guidance documentation to be distributed to all those attending. Information available at the meeting should include:

- Curriculum planning and proposed topics and visits to ensure any sensitive areas are discussed.
- available assessment and attainment data,
- Information on SEN including any additional funding.

During the EPAC meeting

The meeting should be chaired by an appropriate member of school staff. The staff member will be determined by their role in school, their knowledge of the pupil, and previous involvement with the pupil or parents. Parents may choose to invite others (e.g. Adoption Support Worker) to the meeting in discussion with the school. School should discuss any other issues of potential concern such as using photos on the school website.

The chair should go through the Rationale and Purpose at the start of each meeting.

Page1.

Please ensure all sections are completed.

Page2.

Please record all previous and current professional involvement.

Page3.

Significant information: this summary, determined by the parents, may include significant details of pre-adoptive history, or views on how experiences in the birth family have impacted on the young person’s learning and development.

Further information: all parents have a confidential file which they may choose to share with school (in part or in full). There is an assumption of confidentiality on the part of the school and an awareness of which other people information can be shared with.

Areas of Pupil Strength/Need (in and outside of school): Strengths may include maths, sports, music etc. evidenced by specific achievements. Needs may be identified through assessment, observation or discussion and include

opportunities to develop particular social skills, eat appropriate food at lunch, complete homework and so on.

Other relevant information: this includes looking ahead at proposed curriculum topics/aspects/activities that may need to be treated with additional sensitivity e.g. family trees, sex education, World War 2 evacuees, genetics – eye colour.

There may also be issues about staff changes or changes at home that are relevant.

Page 4.

Actions: the actions are for the adults to carry out to support the pupil either in or out of school. They should not duplicate actions already identified in IEPs/PSPs etc. (If these plans are already in place they should be attached to the EPAC and be part of the discussion) Actions might include: setting up a playtime observation, organising a more appropriate space for homework, instigating an IEP, monitoring lunchtime eating, opportunities to share out of school interests and achievements, arranging summer holiday activities, requesting additional assessments or funding, and so on.

It might be especially useful to consider upcoming transitions and any means by which resources and communication can be shared between school and home.

Other information: This can include social/emotional/educational/medical information. Examples might include: finding out how a pupil feels about breaktimes and what might make them more successful times; which member of staff do they think helps them manage their feelings; in which areas do they feel they would benefit from additional support, etc. The EPAC meeting is for adults but it is crucial that pupil views are sought and represented.

Copies: School will give copies of the completed EPAC to parents who will decide who else should receive copies, e.g. other school staff, Adoption Support Team, other agencies. It is important to agree where in school the EPAC will be kept and who will have access to it.

Review: those attending the meeting will decide when the EPAC needs to be reviewed. This will depend on individual circumstances and needs.

Guidance for Completion of the Education Plan Review for Adopted Children (EPAC Review).

The Review is an opportunity to discuss progress, developments or additional information available since the last meeting and to consider what other actions need to be identified.

Prior to the EPAC Review meeting: As for initial meeting but with Review paperwork.

Page 1:

Please ensure all sections are completed.

Page 2.

Review of Actions: identify the numbered actions from the initial plan and comment on the outcomes

Significant changes: these may include a new sibling, house move, contact with birth family, change of Year Group, staff changes, other agency involvement, shifts in peer relationships, etc.

New EPAC: A new EPAC is recommended for when a pupil changes school or there have been significant changes or developments over a period of time.

Other sections are referred to above.

Transition Arrangements

Transition is often an anxious time for children and it is important that moves between schools are planned carefully and that effective communication routes are established between the current and receiving schools, along with the parents and staff. The Transition Arrangements sheet should be completed near the start of the year in which the pupil is transferring to give sufficient time for parents to visit school(s) and for school staff to ensure appropriate information is exchanged promptly.