



Promoting the education of previously looked after children in the early years



All our advice to parents, guardians, educational settings, young people and other agencies is based around our 6 principles of nurture. Our nurturing culture enables us to support educational settings, to enhance their teaching and learning and promote healthy outcomes for children

and young people We encourage educational settings, parents and guardians to focus on the children and young people's emotional needs and development as well as their academic learning.

For more information contact:

VSKPLAC@kent.gov.uk

virtualschool.lea.kent.sch.uk



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Who are Virtual School Kent?

The Virtual School Kent's previously looked after children team (PLAC) is an advisory service. It is our aim to advise and provide information to parents and guardians, educational settings and all other relevant professionals who are involved in supporting these children to promote their educational achievement and engagement.

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.

Providers of Early Years education have a key role in supporting previously looked after children. Whilst it is your responsibility to ensure that previously looked after children are given the support they need to reach their full educational potential, it is our duty to advise you, parents and guardians to ensure that their needs are met effectively.

Previously looked after children (and children in care) are highly likely to have had disrupted learning. They may have missed extended periods of early years education and many of them may have special educational needs (SEN). For some children, the gaps in their learning, and in many cases the emotional impact of their experiences, may mean they have significant barriers to their progress.

Our services

Parents and guardians

We arrange phone consultations with parents and guardians in the first instance to obtain a clear understanding their child's current situation and advise accordingly.

Parents and guardians can request an Education Plan for Previously Looked After Children (EPPLAC) meeting. We can attend EPPLAC meetings, but only if the family wishes. We are not representing them in these instances, but are there purely in an advisory role for parents, guardians and the education setting.

Education settings

Education settings can arrange phone consultations with us to discuss previously looked after children in general. If you wish to discuss a particular child, we ask that parents or guardians email their consent to us to confirm that they are happy for VSK to discuss their child with you.

Please email VSKPLAC@kent.gov.uk if you have a general enquiry or you wish to arrange a phone consultation with one of the team.

We offer online training from recognised training organisations, for key staff members working with previously looked after children. Please refer to our website for more details.

Website

VSK supports educational settings and families 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 Kent parents and educational settings for information and advice; so together, we can make a difference for previously looked after children and their families.

www.virtualschool.lea.kent.sch.uk/plac

How to support previously looked after children and their families.

VSK are here to guide you and your setting to make a difference to the lives of these children. We would recommend that all settings with PLAC on roll to:

- Ensure you have all the relevant information to fully inform the PEP meetings if the child is still in the care to a local authority.
- Contact The Education People for advice on SENIF funding applications or general support for the setting.
EYInclusion@theeducationpeople.org
- Any child aged 3 and 4 that has disability living allowance is eligible for Disability Access Funding (DAF). Settings can claim funding each year to specifically support the child in the most appropriate way.
- Discuss with parents and guardians the benefits of holding an EPPLAC meeting (Education Plan for Previously Looked After Children).
- Develop a high quality key person relationship with the child. Contact VSK regarding any training needed.
- Ensure families are aware that they can access free education for 2 years olds and provide advice and guidance around the additional childcare hours (up to 30 hours) for 3-4 year olds with working parents or guardians.

Access additional funding, Early Years Pupil Premium Funding (EYPP):

All children who are either in care or who have been previously looked after by a local authority from England or Wales are entitled to the full amount of EYPP. To access the funding, please email:

CIC - VSKearlyyears@kent.gov.uk

PLAC - miearlyyears@kent.gov.uk

Promote a whole setting culture

A setting that understands the personalised learning needs of every previously looked after child and prioritises their social and emotional needs as well as the academic areas, is a setting which will ensure the children thrive.

This involves making sure that all staff:

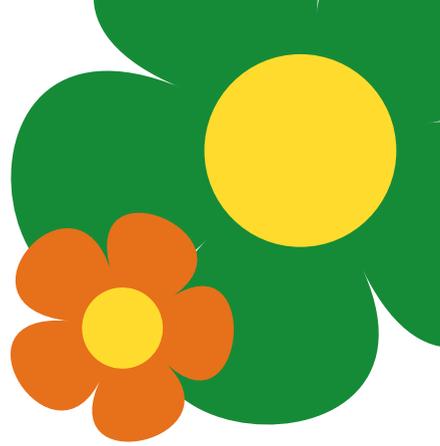
- Have high expectations of previously looked after children's progress in learning and plan effectively to accelerate this.
- Are aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation (attachment awareness) from birth families and understand that some children may find it difficult to build relationships of trust with adults because of their experiences, and how this might affect the child's behaviour;
- Understand how important it is to see previously looked after children as individuals rather than as a homogeneous group, not publicly treat them differently from their peers, and show sensitivity about who else knows about their previously looked after status;
- Understand the importance of involving the child's parents or guardians in decisions affecting their child's education.

The designated teacher for looked after and previously looked after children. Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities February 2018

EPPLAC Meetings

These meetings encourage positive collaboration and communication between home and the education provision. They are invaluable in terms of finding out the child's needs, so that you can plan and support them effectively. As the child reaches primary school age, these meetings are essential to ensure a smooth transition. Inviting the Designated Teacher from the Primary School to the EPPLAC meeting will ensure that the school can have the support in place and support you with the planned transition.

Please refer to our website for more guidance on EPPLAC Meetings
www.virtualschool.lea.kent.sch.uk/plac/education-plan-for-plac



The 6 principles of Nurture

-  Whatever changes you face we are here to guide you
-  No matter what age, everyone is at a different stage
-  VSK can help you find your voice
-  How you behave tells us how you feel
-  VSK can be your safe space
-  Nurture helps you feel happy and healthy

“EPPLAC meetings with VSK have been an amazing support for us, sharing ideas on how to support previously looked after children, and supporting us to make connections with local schools and other sectors which will benefit the nursery. VSK have been a massive support and are always there if you have any questions.”

Nursery Manager, West Kent

If you have a parent or guardian who is interested in contacting us or unsure of our service, please refer them to our virtualschool.lea.kent.sch.uk or email VSKPLAC@kent.gov.uk. You can also provide them with our Parent and Guardian leaflet (available on our website).