



## Previously Looked After Children

### Frequently Asked Questions

In response to requests from parents, carers, school staff and other professionals, VSK have put together a collection of advice to answer any frequently asked questions regarding the educational support around Previously Looked After Children. If you have a question which is not answered here, please email VSK on [VSKPLAC.gov.uk](mailto:VSKPLAC.gov.uk).

### Frequently Asked Questions regarding Previously Looked After Children.

#### Who are Previously Looked After Children?

The Department of Education define Previously Looked After Children as those 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 Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014) 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.”*

#### What can VSK do to help Previously Looked After Child?

The role of Virtual School for previously looked-after children is to promote their educational achievement through the provision of information and advice to their parents and carers, educators and others where necessary. VSK will:

- Offer advice and information to parents and carers and signpost them to other services for advice and support if necessary.
- Offer advice and information to providers of early education, designated teachers in schools and providers of alternative provision in respect of individual previously looked after children.

- Make general advice and information available to early years settings, schools and education settings to improve awareness of the vulnerability and needs of previously looked after children. This includes promoting good practice on identifying and meeting children's needs and guidance on effective use of the PP+ funds.
- Work closely with Adoption Partnership South East, KCC Kinship Team and other services supporting these children and their schools to ensure that they are mindful of the additional vulnerabilities faced by this cohort.

## Frequently Asked Questions regarding EPPLAC (Education Plan for Previously Looked After Children) Meetings

*"This is like a like 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 time to sit down, reflect and think"* Parent of an adopted primary pupil.

### What is an EPPLAC Meeting?

Kent's Virtual School recommends the use of the EPPLAC meeting to help the adults supporting previously looked after children, to achieve the best that they can. The EPPLAC form is completed at the EPPLAC meeting with the education provider, parents/carers and others that they choose to invite.

The purpose of the EPPLAC is to encourage positive collaboration and communication between home and school/education provision, and to raise awareness of the needs and issues faced by children and their carers. It has been designed to ensure that the child/young person's voice is central to all discussions and decisions made, ensuring a strength based, solution focused framework for the meeting and education plan. The meetings help the education provider to be aware of how the child's past experiences are impacting their learning and how the family are supporting them to repair from these experiences and what support is needed to overcome barriers to their academic, social and wellbeing development.

There may be certain times of the year, certain topics or events, or contact with birth parents that may be unsettling for the child. These meetings allow time to discuss preventative and supportive strategies to ensure that the child feels safe and contained within the school hours. The meetings can also ensure that the school and carers are working together in support of the child as they move through their school life receiving consistent messages from all adults around them.

The majority of Previously Looked After Children were neglected and/or suffered trauma in their birth families. It helps schools and other education settings to be aware that these children have additional needs.

### How can I ask for an EPLAC/EPAC meeting with my child's school/early year provision?

The EPPLAC meeting can be initiated by either school/early year provision or parents. The EPPLAC forms explain how to structure the meeting. After the first meeting, parents/carers and school/early year provision set a review date to see how the plans made at the EPPLAC meeting are going.

The first EPPLAC meeting after the Adoption/Special Guardianship/Child Arrangement Order has been granted will normally be arranged at the last PEP review (when the child is still in Local Authority Care) and will normally be attended by a member of Virtual School Kent.

### **Who organises the EPAC meeting?**

- **Early Years Provision** – The meeting will be chaired and minuted by the Early Years Advisor who is linked to the setting.
- **Schools** – Parents and school decide together who will chair the meeting and who else to invite.

### **How do school/early year provision or I get the EPLAC/EPAC Forms?**

Parents/Carers and the education setting decide together who will chair the meeting and who else to invite.

### **How do school/early year provision or I get the EPPLAC Form?**

They are available from Virtual School Kent at [Education Plan for Previously Looked After Children | Virtual School Kent \(lea.kent.sch.uk\)](https://www.lea.kent.sch.uk/education-plan-for-previously-looked-after-children)

### **Does my child have to have an EPPLAC? Their school/early year provision don't know that they are adopted.**

EPPLAC and associated meetings are a useful way to information share, problem solve and set targets for the future. If this is being achieved through other meetings, or you are happy with the support that your child is getting, then there is no need for further meetings. Alternatively, there may be other meetings already arranged that could be used as the EPPLAC meeting. In this case, it would be best practice to complete the EPPLAC form so that outcomes can then be reviewed in the future.

Parents have emphasised that confidentiality is vital. The EPPLAC will only be used:

- If parents/carers choose to identify their children as previously looked after.
- And if parents/carers wish an EPPLAC to be implemented.

The Adoptive Parents Consultation Group's experience is that it is extremely beneficial for schools/early year provisions to be aware.

### **I'm worried about having an EPPLAC because information may be shared unnecessarily – What can I do?**

Please discuss your concerns with the education setting Confidentiality regarding where records are kept will be discussed as part of the EPPLAC meeting.

### **Does the school/early years provision have to arrange an EPPLAC meeting if I ask them to?**

It is not statutory; however current evaluations indicate that it is good practice and that schools/early years provisions value them. The EPPLAC draws from the pro-active nature of the CiC Personal Education Plan, to ensure relevant information is available and effective communication routes are established.

## **My child already has a Provision Plan, Individual Education Plan or a Pastoral Support Programme. Do we still have to have an EPPLAC?**

This is for you and the school/early years provision to decide in discussion. Parents and schools/early years provisions have found that EPPLACs provide different information which is valuable in understanding the pupil's strengths and needs. There is no reason why the EPPLAC meeting cannot coincide with the Support Review meetings as information will be relevant for both. By completing the EPPLAC forms, schools and parents/carers have additional flexibility to review outcomes outside of the timescales of the other meetings.

## **Do Virtual School Kent need to be present at the EPLAC/EPAC Meeting?**

No. VSK are an advisory service for previously looked after children's families. Often parents/carers and schools do not require additional support during the meeting and prefer a phone consultation prior and post the meeting to discuss issues and outcomes. If you would like to discuss your child's schooling and issues you may be facing, please complete the [Initial Contact Form](#).

## **Frequently Asked Questions regarding Pupil Premium Plus Funding.**

### **Is my child eligible for Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) Funding?**

The Pupil Premium: Conditions of Grant 2024 to 2025 updated in June 2024 outlines the eligibility for pupil premium for previously looked after children:

*“previously looked-after children (PLAC): pupils who were looked after by a local authority or other state care immediately before being adapted, or who left local authority or other state care on a special guardianship order or child arrangements order (previously known as a residence order). This includes children adopted from state care or equivalent from outside England and Wales.”*  
[Pupil premium 2024 to 2025: conditions of grant for local authorities - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

### **How can I make sure my child's school is receiving Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) Funding?**

In order for your child's school to receive the PP+ funding, you need to provide evidence that they have previously been looked after (for example Adoption, Special Guardianship or Child Arrangements Order Certificate). The school will then receive funding in quarterly instalments in respect of each eligible pupil on their School Census.

### **How can I make sure that my child is receiving the Pupil Premium Plus Funding?**

Pupil Premium for Previously Looked After Children is not a personal budget for individual children as it is not ring-fenced. The government allows schools the flexibility to group all children's pupil premium funding in order to provide interventions, staff training or whatever the school deems appropriate use of funding in order to support the children *‘... emotionally, socially and educationally by providing specific support to raise their attainment and address their wider needs.’* (PAC-UK).

Information on how the school plans to use its Pupil Premium Grant should be available on their website or ask the school's DT for further information.

Designated teachers have a responsibility to encourage parents and guardian's involvement in deciding how the funding is used to support their child.

### **As a school, how can I ensure the best use of Pupil Premium Plus Funding for Previously Looked After Children?**

The Department of Education guidance on the effective use of Pupil Premium Plus funding is an excellent source of information. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings> It recommends schools refer to The Education Endowment Foundation Teaching and Learning Toolkit, their Schools Database and Evaluation Tools to ensure that maximum impact of support and read school case studies for good practice.

Virtual School Kent regularly send out information to Designated Teachers regarding VSK's training, updates on legislation and initiatives around the county. Please refer to our website [Home | Virtual School Kent \(lea.kent.sch.uk\)](https://www.lea.kent.sch.uk) or email [vskadvisoryteam@kent.gov.uk](mailto:vskadvisoryteam@kent.gov.uk) for more information.

## **Frequently Asked Questions regarding Education**

### **My child is struggling to attend school, what can I do?**

School attendance is a priority for all schools and local authorities across the country.

There are many reasons why young people do not attend school. Although these existed before the pandemic; issues have now become more widespread and are affecting large proportions of pupils and their families. School attendance is everybody's responsibility.

If you are concerned about your child's attendance, please speak to the school about working together to support your child. Access the information regarding Emotional Based School Avoidance (EBSA) available here [Educational psychology interventions - KELS](#) and work together with the school using the resources available. It can be helpful to ask for a Breakthrough Meeting, which is a strength-based meeting designed to formalise plans around support of your child's attendance.

If your child is still struggling to attend school, or you have further concerns, please contact us for further advice [Initial Contact Form](#).

### **I am worried about how my child will manage with a change of school. What can I do?**

When children move to a different school, this is known as a school transition. It can be hard for children, particularly those who may have suffered Adverse Childhood Experiences and find saying goodbye difficult. VSK have put together a useful guide to support you the discussions with school around school transitions [Useful Information | Virtual School Kent \(lea.kent.sch.uk\)](#)

## **Who is the best person in school to speak to about my child?**

### **Designated Teachers**

Every school has a Designated Teacher for looked after and previously looked after children. If your child was in care, prior to the special guardianship or child arrangements order, then they are known as Previously Looked After Children and as such will be the responsibility of the Designated Teacher in the school. If you are unsure who this person is in school, please ask in the school office, the Family Liaison Officer or Class Teacher.

More information regarding the role of the Designated Teacher can be found here [The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/611112/2020-07-20-looked-after-children-designated-teacher-role.pdf)

### **SENCO – Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Co-ordinator**

A SENCO is a qualified teacher who is responsible for leading the school's provision for special educational needs. They work with teachers and support staff to make sure that the right support is put in place for each individual child. This includes monitoring and reviewing provision, working with parents and carers and asking for additional support from other teams (Specialist Teaching and Learning Service, KCC SEN Inclusion Advisors, Health teams etc) when needed.

### **Pastoral Teams**

If you are worried about your child's behaviour in school, you should speak with the class teacher or pastoral team in the first instance. Ensuring that they fully understand the needs of your child and how these may be impacting their behaviour will help them to put the right support in place. We would also recommend that you ask them to consider any impact on past experiences that your child may have been through. Confirm that they are working with the SENCo and Designated Teacher to ensure that they are making reasonable adjustments and working in a trauma informed way in their support of your child.

### **Designated Safeguarding Leads**

Every school has a Designated Safeguarding Lead. It is their job to make sure that the school are adhering to their statutory safeguarding policies and duties. This is a senior role within a school, and they are often supported by a Designated Safeguarding team. If you are unsure who this is, please refer to the school's website or ask in the school office.

## **How can I get extra help for my child at school?**

If you are worried that your child is struggling at school and may need extra help with their learning (sometimes known as Special Educational Needs), please see this useful guide [I think my child might need some help at nursery, school or post 16 - Kent County Council](https://www.kent.gov.uk/parents/extra-help-for-my-child-at-school/).

All schools in Kent use the Mainstream Core Standards in their support of children who have special educational needs. For further information, please refer to the Parent's guide at the bottom of this webpage [SEND Mainstream Core Standards - Kent County Council](https://www.kent.gov.uk/parents/extra-help-for-my-child-at-school/)

## **Do I have to tell the school that my child is a previously looked after child?**

No. Although you do not have to tell schools, it is advisable that you are able to share with them information that you are comfortable with, so that the school can put the necessary support in for your child.

There are exceptional reasons why a child does not live with their birth parents. The journey to you, may have been due to experiences known as an Adverse Childhood Experiences. The associated trauma that this had on them does not simply go away because they are living in your safe and loving home. Contact with birth parents, school topics such as family, genetics or PHSE lessons covering aspects that remind them of the time when they were living with their birth parents can all be triggering for the child. You also need support at times, if the school understand your personal situation and journey to becoming a carer, they are better placed to signpost you to the right support if needed.

By working with the school to support your child to repair from these experiences, and by being in regular contact with them regarding home and school life can allow the school to put in place additional support during potentially difficult moments in school and ensure that your child reaches their academic potential.

VSK continually review this document. If you have any further questions regarding Previously Looked After Children, please email [VSKAdvisoryTeam@kent.gov.uk](mailto:VSKAdvisoryTeam@kent.gov.uk).