

## Children & Young People

# Promoting the Education of Children and Young People in Care

**Purpose: This protocol sets out the statutory duty of all agencies working with children and young people in care to promote the education of children and young people in care.**

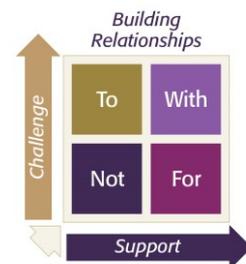
Approved by – Cabinet  
(20.03.20)

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### RESTORATIVE PRACTICE

All contact and work received by families from the City of Wolverhampton Council within the City will be based around restorative practice principles. This is to ensure we improve the life outcomes for all children, young people and families we work with. In Wolverhampton we intend to use restorative principles and behaviours with colleagues as well as children and families, to help develop positive working relationships.



<b>REVIEW LOG</b>			
<b>Date</b>	<b>Version</b>	<b>Comments</b>	<b>Approved by</b>
Sept 2019	1.0	New Protocol produced to amalgamate all Children and Young People in Care Education Policies.	Children and Young People Leadership Team (25 <sup>th</sup> June 2019) and Joint Leadership Children and Education Team (9 <sup>th</sup> Sept 2019)
Dec 2019	1.1	Amended to align with mileage rate in the Fees and Allowance Procedure	Head of Inclusion 17 <sup>th</sup> November 2019 and Head of Children and Young People in Care 6 <sup>th</sup> December 2019
March 2020	1.2	Amended school transport-mileage entitlement to reflect 45p.	Cabinet 18.03.20
This system of recording review dates is designed to ensure staff at all times use the correct version of the up to date Policy. This system is used on all Wolverhampton City Council – Children, Young People and Families Policies and Procedures.			

<b>CONSULTATION</b>
<p>The following people have been consulted on this policy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Head of Inclusion Service</li> <li>- Head of Children and Young People in Care</li> <li>- Virtual School Head</li> <li>- Children and Young People Leadership Team</li> <li>- Joint Children and Education Leadership Team</li> </ul>

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## 1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this protocol is to ensure that all agencies working with a child and young person in care understand their statutory duty to promote the education of children in this cohort. The protocol aims to help parents, carers and other professionals to understand each other's roles and to encourage joint working between all parties to ensure that the above duty is effectively discharged.

## 2.0 LEGISLATIVE/GUIDANCE FRAMEWORK

- **Children Act 2008**  
Sets out the steps that we will make, together with local delivery partners, to improve the outcomes of children and young people under corporate parenting responsibilities.
- **Promoting the Education of Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities, DFE 2018**  
“This guidance sets the framework through which local authorities discharge their statutory duty under 22(3A) of the Children Act 1989 to promote the educational achievement of looked after children.” This policy references, and frequently paraphrases, this guidance and all children's social workers and Independent Reviewing Officers should familiarise themselves with it.
- **Children & Social Work Act 2017**  
Introduces an extension to the role of the Virtual School Head (VSH) – to promote the education of children who have left care via an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order ('previously looked after' children) via the provision of advice and information.
- Children and Families Act 2014 – requirement of local authorities to appoint a lead officer (VSH) to promote education of looked after children.
- Fostering regulations / Fostering National Minimum Standard 8: Promoting educational attainment

## 3.0 INTRODUCTION

- 3.1 It is the responsibility of City of Wolverhampton Council (the Council) as a Corporate Parent for children and young people in care to ensure that any child or young person in its care receives appropriate education and that their progress is prioritised and maximised. Statutory duties apply, including ensuring that educational needs (including any special educational needs) are met and addressed in the most effective, coordinated way possible. The Council will take all reasonable steps to support the inclusion, attendance, well-being and achievement of children and young people in care and to promote high aspirations for them.

- 3.2 The Council will ensure that a suitably qualified Virtual School Head (VSH) is in place to ensure that the local authority effectively discharges its duty and that the VSH has the resources, time, training and support needed to be effective.
- 3.3 The VSH has the responsibility to ensure that the Council effectively discharges its duty to promote the education of children and young people in care and previously in care. The VSH will manage the Virtual School Team, who will work in collaboration with all key partners to promote the inclusion, attendance, attainment and progress of all children and young people in care.
- 3.3 In Wolverhampton we have a [Model School Policy](#) for Children and Young People in Care (which also includes children and young people previously in care and young people in the criminal justice system). Children and young people's services should be aware of this as a model of good practice for working effectively with schools.

#### 4.0 SECURING APPROPRIATE EDUCATION

- 4.1 All children and young people in care should have access to a high quality educational placement which best suits their needs. The Council will seek to place children and young people in care in schools and other providers that are rated as either Outstanding or Good by Ofsted. Children should not be placed in settings which are rated as **Inadequate**, unless exceptional circumstances apply (such as when a child has moved care placement and it is deemed - with the agreement of the VSH - to be the best available school).
- 4.2 Children and young people in care should only be placed in schools or alternative education providers (as their main educational setting) that are registered with the Department for Education (DfE). In assurance of this, social workers and placement services, including SENSTART, will ensure that they make the necessary checks whenever a care and/or educational placement is arranged. The Virtual School Team will also monitor the appropriateness and effectiveness of educational placements.
- 4.3 The child's social worker is responsible for ensuring that children and young people in care have an appropriate school place and that suitable transport arrangements are made to facilitate their attendance. Social workers should seek a school or other education setting that is best suited to their child's needs, working in partnership with carers, School Admissions, the VSH and other agencies as appropriate.
- 4.4. Children and young people in care will be given highest priority in school admissions and in all oversubscription criteria in accordance with the School Admissions Code.
- 4.5 If a child or young person in care needs to be admitted to a school outside Wolverhampton, the social worker should contact the school admissions team in the local authority where the child resides, for advice on how the school

admissions process works and on the availability and suitability of school places.

- 4.6 For children and young people in care living in Wolverhampton, the **School Admissions Team** will ensure that they are allocated an appropriate school place without drift or delay. Where a child needs to move to a school within Wolverhampton outside of the normal admissions round (called an in-year transfer), the child's social worker must contact School Admissions and notify the VSH, who will offer advice where appropriate.
- 4.7 The School Admissions Team will use their powers of direction where necessary, with the support of the VSH and other key partners as appropriate. If an academy is deemed to be the most appropriate school for a child or young person in care but is refusing to admit the child, then School Admissions and/or the VSH will apply to the Secretary of State for a direction to the academy if required.
- 4.8 If the child has a Special Educational Need or Disability (SEND) the SEND team in the local authority where the child resides may also need to be consulted. If the child is in receipt of an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) for SEND, the SEND team are responsible for identifying and arranging appropriate education. Therefore, in all cases where children and young people in care have an EHCP, the child's social worker will need to work closely with the appropriate SEND team in securing an appropriate educational placement. Parental preference is also key in arranging education for a child with SEND so, where appropriate, this should also be gathered by the social worker so that a properly informed decision can be made.
- 4.9 Where further advice is required for a child with special education need or disability, the child's social worker should seek advice either from the Educational Psychologist (EP) linked to the child's school, or the one of the EPs based within the Virtual School Team.
- 4.10 If social workers need further information on how the school admissions process works, or advice or support in securing the most appropriate school place, they should consult with the VSH and/or the school admissions team in the local authority where the child resides. If the child has a Special Educational Need or Disability (SEND) then the SEND team in the local authority where the child resides may also need to be consulted.

## **5.0 ENSURING EDUCATIONAL STABILITY**

- 5.1 Research shows that children and young people in care are more likely to experience disruption and changes in educational placement compared to other children, and that such disruption often has a negative effect on a child's attainment. The allocated social worker should do everything possible to minimise disruption to the child's education, whatever the child's age. Stability and continuity in education is important at all stages, and particularly so at key stage 4 (years 10 and 11, ages 14-16).

- 5.2 If it is not possible to maintain the child's existing education placement, the child's new school placement must be arranged in consultation with the VSH at the same time as the care placement. The VSH and Virtual School Team will support social workers to ensure timely provision of a suitable education placement for children & young people in care. Therefore, **the VSH must be consulted prior to any school move for a child and young person in care** and their views should be given appropriate consideration as part of decisions on placement moves.
- 5.3 In the case of an emergency placement, in accordance with statutory guidance, the child's social worker should secure a suitable new education placement within 20 school days.
- 5.4 An appropriate education should be full-time and schools judged by Ofsted to be 'good' or 'outstanding' should be prioritised when seeking a school place. Children and young people in care should not be placed in a school judged by Ofsted to be 'inadequate' unless there are exceptional, evidence-based reasons. In such cases, the VSH should be consulted for advice.
- 5.5 **Carers should not take children & young people in care out of school for holidays during term time.** Social care will not give authorisation for children's holidays during term time, unless in very exceptional circumstances. If a carer feels that exceptional circumstances apply in such a case, they should submit a request to their child's social worker, who will forward the request in writing to the Virtual School Head. As the authorising officer on behalf of the local authority, the VSH will consider the request and provide a written response to the social worker within 10 working days of receipt of the request. In such cases, carers should also submit a request to the child's school, either at the same time, or prior to submitting the request to the local authority. The social worker and/or VSH will discuss the request with the school and, in most cases, arrive at a joint decision.

## 6.0 PROMOTING GOOD SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

- 6.1 It is imperative that poor attendance is identified early on. As soon as poor attendance is identified (normally below 95% in any school year) then the child's social worker should seek to identify solutions via a professional dialogue between all key partners (e.g. carers, parents, school, education welfare officer & social worker) as well as discussing any issues with the child themselves.
- 6.2 It is also extremely important that parents and carers talk to children about how they feel about school, particularly if they have recently started at a new school, and raise any concerns with school staff and child's social worker immediately. There are many factors that contribute to non-attendance. These include:
- Bullying
  - Significant events or disruption in the child/young person's life
  - Negative past experiences of school
  - Low self esteem

- Not understanding or struggling to complete school work
- Lacking friends or support
- Negative peer influences, e.g. having friends who truant
- Health-related issues, including attachment-related or other difficulties with emotional wellbeing.

- 6.3 If appropriate, a **Personal Education Plan (PEP) meeting** should take place to address any difficulties that might have impacted on attendance and plan strategies to improve attendance and address the issues identified. The VSH should be consulted if low school attendance becomes persistent (i.e. below 90%).
- 6.4 **The Virtual School team** is responsible for monitoring the attendance of all Wolverhampton children & young people in care and will contact schools and/or social worker to discuss any children in the cohort whose attendance becomes a cause for concern (i.e. falls below 95%) and to identify actions to address any attendance problems. However, it is important that schools, carers and social workers are diligent and proactive in monitoring school attendance and ensuring that children and young people in care are accessing a suitable education.
- 6.5 If attendance does not improve then consideration should be given to involving the school **Educational Psychologist (EP)** and/or other appropriate professionals for advice, assessment or other intervention. In such cases, the school's EWO should continue to take all reasonable steps to promote good attendance. Cases of persistent absence may also be referred to the Virtual School Team for advice or intervention.
- 6.6 Where entrenched problems of non-attendance cannot be resolved at this level, there may be a need for school leadership and managers in the relevant agencies to consider together the best course of action for the child, with further support from the VSH. The VSH and social worker will jointly ensure that this escalation process is used where required and within appropriate timescales.

## 7.0 THE PERSONAL EDUCATION PLAN

- 7.1 Every child and young person in care must have a Personal Education Plan (PEP), whether they are in education or not, from the term following their 3rd birthday. This is a statutory requirement which summarises the child's developmental and educational needs, ensures access to services and support; contributes to stability, minimises disruption and broken schooling, identifies any learning needs; establishes clear goals and acts as a record of achievement. The PEP an integral part of the child's care plan.
- 7.2 The PEP should contain short term and longer-term targets which are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Timed) and achievable. It should also identify who is responsible for ensuring the targets are met, and should build on any other existing plans that the school may already have in place.

- 7.3 Social workers and designated teachers are jointly responsible for ensuring that PEPs are of good quality and all social workers should complete the online course “Quality Personal Educational Planning”, which is available on the council’s learning hub, prior to completing their first PEP as well as reading the [Electronic PEP User Guide](#).
- 7.4 For children & young people in care in **Early Years** (from the term following their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday to school reception year) a dedicated Early Years PEP form is available in WORD format on Carefirst/Eclipse and should be used.
- 7.5 For pupils in **year 1 to year 11** in schools, the PEP is in electronic format on the Eclipse system. All CYP social workers should therefore ensure that they have access to Eclipse and are familiar with how the PEP works. The Virtual School Team will ensure that Designated Teachers in schools are also granted access to the PEP on Eclipse and regularly provide training and advice on effective PEP completion.
- 7.6 **16+ PEP** form is available in WORD format on Carefirst/Eclipse and should be completed for all children and young people in care in school years 12 and 13. PEPs are also recognised as good practice for care leavers and Wolverhampton recommends that they are provided for care leavers aged 16-18 who are in education and/or training. The Education, Employment & Training (EET) Co-ordinator will support social workers and young person’s advisors in completing the 16+ PEP.

## 7.7 PEP Process & Timescales

- 7.7.1 When a child enters care, a PEP must be completed in time for the initial (20 working days from the date the child enters care) review of the care plan. It must then be scrutinised by the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) as part of that initial review meeting. The child’s social worker must contact the designated teacher in the child’s school to inform them as soon as a child enters care, or a child and young person in care starts to attend a new school, to initiate the PEP process.
- 7.7.2 Subsequently, PEPs are reviewed at least every 6 months.
- 7.7.3 Statutory guidance states that the PEP should be reviewed termly.<sup>1</sup> A full termly PEP meeting is good practice. However, provided the full PEP is reviewed in a dedicated meeting at least every 6 months, the third review in that school year can be done less formally, provided the PEP is meeting the child’s needs and they are making good progress. For example, a telephone call or email conversation may take place between the social worker and designated teacher, to check progress against learning targets and address any issues. In such cases, the social worker and/or designated teacher should speak to the child and their carer to confirm they are happy with the PEP and

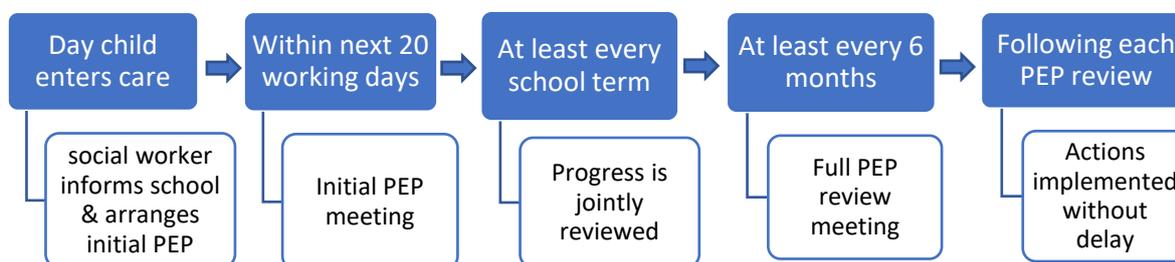
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[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/683556/Promoting\\_the\\_education\\_of\\_looked-after\\_children\\_and\\_previously\\_looked-after\\_children.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/683556/Promoting_the_education_of_looked-after_children_and_previously_looked-after_children.pdf)

the child's progress, and understand any changes that have been made. If significant changes are required, however, then a formal PEP meeting should be convened. The PEP should also be reviewed prior to any significant change to the child's education (e.g. a change of timetable or provision).

- 7.7.4 The PEP should also be reviewed if a child's levels of need require more frequent monitoring arrangements. An early or emergency PEP should be convened if there are significant concerns about a child's progress, wellbeing or placement at school.
- 7.7.5 In most cases, additional contact will be made by the Virtual School Team with Designated Teachers each term to monitor the child's attainment and attendance. However, this is to support, not supplant, the contact made by the social worker. Social workers should still, therefore, ensure that they have at least termly contact with the schools that their children attend. Regular communication between school and social worker is vital.
- 7.7.6 Following each PEP meeting, the agreed PEP targets should be implemented without delay. The **designated teacher** leads on how the PEP is developed and used in school, ensures that it is a 'live' and comprehensive document, and carefully monitors the progress of each child toward their individual targets. It is likely, however, that other attendees of the PEP meeting will have actions identified for them, and they will need to ensure effective communication between PEP meetings.



- 7.7.7 In line with DfE statutory guidance, if a child also has an Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP), the IRO should ensure review of the care plan, including the PEP, is appropriately linked with the statutory review of the EHCP where possible. Children's plans should always work cohesively together.

## 7.8 Early Years PEP

- 7.8.1 All children and young people in care should have an up-to-date PEP in place from the term following their 3rd birthday. There is a dedicated Early Years PEP form available for use in early years (age 3 to school reception year). The school-age PEP form should then be used from school year 1 upward.
- 7.8.2 The Early Years PEP should be completed and reviewed in the same way and to the same timescales as the school PEP, in a discussion between the social worker, carers and Early Years education provider. The should capture the child's progress to date across the Early Years framework and set SMART, individualised learning targets for the child. The Early Years PEP

also sets out the provider's use of the Early Years Pupil Premium, which is allocated to providers by the Virtual School Head. If a child is not accessing an Early Years education provision they should still have a PEP, which is written by the social worker and carers.

- 7.8.3 PEPs can also be written for children and young people in care aged 2 and this is seen as good practice, however it is a firm requirement that the PEP will be in place from the school term following the child's third birthday.

## **7.9 Post-16 PEPs**

- 7.9.1 All children and young people in care in school years 12 and 13 (aged 16/17) should have a quality, up to date PEP. It is also good practice for care leavers to have a PEP.

- 7.9.2 The 16+ PEP form should be utilised for all post-16 PEPs. The frequency of the care leaver PEP should be the same as the regular PEP (this should be organised to work in harmony with the Pathway Plan).

- 7.9.3 Attendees at the PEP meeting should include the care leaver, personal advisor and appropriate individuals from the tutor/college/training provider. The meeting should normally be chaired by the education provider and the Young Persons Advisor's (YPA) should ensure that the completed PEP is logged onto the child's electronic file, and that all attendees are provided with a copy.

## **7.10 The PEP Meeting**

- 7.10.1 The PEP meeting should usually be chaired by the designated teacher, as it is a meeting specifically focussed on education. Everyone attending the meeting must be encouraged to make an appropriate contribution so they can give their views and raise any issues or concerns related to the child/young person's education. All attendees should contribute to target-setting and identifying support to enable the young person to achieve their potential. All attendees have a duty to ensure that a true reflection of the meeting is documented on the PEP form.

- 7.10.2 In Wolverhampton the young person is made aware by either the Designated Teacher or the carer that there is going to be a meeting held where his/her social worker, Designated Teacher and parent/carer are going to be talking about his/her education. Individual roles should be clarified prior to the initial PEP meeting. The child or young person should be given the option of whether they would like to attend or not. However, social workers and Designated Teachers should take all reasonable steps to support the active participation of children or young people in co-producing their plan. This may mean, for example: scheduling the meeting at a time that works for the child or young person and does not disrupt their learning; ensuring that data and basic information is shared before the meeting; enabling the young person to be supported by a friend; enabling them to attend for only part of the meeting, and ensuring that language used is accessible. PEP meetings should be

conducted in accordance with restorative practice (RP) principles (training in RP will be made available to designated teachers by the VSH).

7.10.3 If the child or young person decides not to attend they should still be encouraged to contribute their views via the pupil view section of the form. It is also important that it is agreed who will feed back what was discussed during the PEP meeting, what targets have been decided on their behalf and what they need to do to achieve them. This feedback also gives the child or young person opportunity to agree/disagree with what was discussed, and the chance to make any changes.

7.10.4 Once the PEP meeting has taken place the social worker and designated teacher are able to access the PEP at any time via the Eclipse system. The form can be printed and a printed copy should be given to the child and their carer. If possible, the PEP should be printed and disseminated at the end of the meeting.

## **8.0 THE PUPIL PREMIUM PLUS**

8.1 The Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) is the vehicle for giving extra support to children and young people in care in school, and local authorities have been provided with funding allocations on the basis of £2300 per child in care (reception to year 11). The PP+ grant is managed by the Virtual School Head.

8.2 All children and young people in care are eligible to be supported by the funding, although the VSH can exercise discretion as to how much, if any, allocated to individual schools.

8.3 Wolverhampton allocate £1700 per pupil, per annum, to schools to support the educational progress of each Wolverhampton child and young person in care.<sup>2</sup> This money will be sent directly to the School in 3 termly instalments. Occasionally, a greater or lesser amount may be allocated because it is recognised that some pupils will require more support, or a more specialised form of support, than others. Pupil Referral Units and alternative providers, where they are a child's main education provider, will receive the funding in the same way as schools.

8.4 The remaining grant will be retained by the VSH. This is to strengthen the work of the Virtual School, to enable interventions to take place for high tariff pupils (e.g. specific assessments, tuition or interventions), as well as to support training for key partners. In some cases, the funding may be to fund initiatives to support a group of Wolverhampton children and young people in care, including those placed both in and out of the City.

### **8.5 What can the Pupil Premium Plus be used for?**

8.5.1 The school's allocation of **Pupil Premium Plus should be used to support each child's individual learning targets, as contained in their PEP**. The

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<sup>2</sup> Amounts are correct as of 2018-19 and 2019-20 financial years.

PEP meeting, therefore, is the most appropriate forum in which to plan the use of the funding.

- 8.5.2 It is expected that PP+ will be used by schools to fund specific interventions such as 1:1 or small group tuition, specialist TA support, mentoring etc. can be used to fund wider interventions and support such as educational trips and excursions or ICT equipment such as laptops, as well as therapeutic work and relevant CPD for school staff. However, the child's PEP should clearly state how such approaches will support their learning targets and ultimately raise their attainment in school. It is recognised that some children will require more support than others, and PP+ can be a vehicle to support that differentiation. If a school wishes to request additional Pupil Premium Plus funding for a Wolverhampton child or young person in care, the Headteacher or designated teacher can contact the Virtual School Head. Additional funding will only be allocated where there is an exceptional need, however, and the available funding will be limited.
- 8.5.3. Interventions funded through PP+ should be evidence-based and informed by considerations of value for money. **See Appendix C** for Wolverhampton Virtual School's guidance on appropriate use of the funding. The Education Endowment Fund (EEF) provide guidance on effective interventions to raise attainment.<sup>3</sup>
- 8.5.4 PP+ can sometimes be utilised by schools to fund initiatives to raise the achievement of a number of children and young people in care at once. However, it should not be subsumed by the school into a more general fund for inclusion or vulnerable pupils. The grant is provided purely to raise the attainment of children and young people in care.

## 8.6 Accountability for Pupil Premium Plus

- 8.6.1 The Virtual School Team will audit PEPs for quality on an ongoing basis and will review the use of Pupil Premium Plus via this process, and through regular communication with schools, social workers and IROs. All audit results will be communicated to the child's school and/or social worker. The VSH will provide an overview of the results of PEP audits in a termly report which will be provided to senior managers and summarised in the VSH annual report.
- 8.6.2 The Virtual Head can retain or withdraw Pupil Premium Funding at any time if the child or young person does not have a good quality up to date PEP with clear evidence of how the funding is being spent to support the child's progress.
- 8.6.3 The designated teacher in the child's school is expected to lead on deciding the best use of the PP+, and to monitor, review and evidence its impact. However, the child, and their social worker and carer, should contribute to the discussion about how the funding should be used. Their views should be

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<sup>3</sup> <https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence-summaries/teaching-learning-toolkit>

given due consideration by the school, thus highlighting the importance of their attendance at the PEP meeting.

- 8.6.4 The Virtual School Head also manages the **Early Years Pupil Premium** for Children & Young People in Care. An allocation of £300 per academic year will be provided to Early Years Providers for all Looked after Children aged 2 upward. This will be allocated in termly allocations of £100 per term.
- 8.6.5 The Early Years Pupil Premium must be spent by the education setting or provider in line with the needs and targets outlined in the child's Early Years Personal Education Plan.
- 8.6.6 The Virtual School Team will audit the quality of Early Years PEPs and monitor the use of the Pupil Premium for this cohort. A dedicated Education Support Officer for children in care in Early Years will lead on this work.
- 8.6.7 It is important that there is transparency about how the Pupil Premium Plus and Early Years Pupil Premium have been used to improve the achievement of pupils. Designated teachers are responsible for ensuring that the use and impact of Pupil Premium is clearly evidenced in the PEP.
- 8.6.8 The local authority as the 'corporate parent' must be kept informed about how the pupil premium for children and young people in care has been used to support their educational attainment through existing report supplements, including the annual Virtual School Report and termly PEP audit reports.
- 8.6.9 Decision making and accountability for the Pupil Premium rests with:
- The VSH- to demonstrate how pupil premium funding is managed by the virtual school and its impact on raising achievement for children and young people in care
  - Schools - are accountable for the educational attainment and progress of all disadvantaged pupils, including pupils in care, and the Designated Teacher is responsible for ensuring that the school's allocation of Pupil Premium Plus is being effectively utilised in accordance with statutory guidance.
- 8.6.10 Any disagreements about a request or how funding should be used should be directed to the VSH if a disagreement by the PEP attendees cannot be resolved. Where the Virtual Head is unavailable, the responsibility will be delegated to the Teacher Adviser in the Virtual School Team.

## **9.0 THE ROLE OF CARERS IN SUPPORTING EDUCATION**

- 9.1 Foster carers and residential carer staff have a pivotal role in ensuring that the importance of education is actively promoted for children and young people in their care, and that their achievement is maximised. Carers should ensure that they work in partnership with schools, social workers, the Virtual School Team and other key partners, as appropriate, to ensure that their child's education meets their needs.

- 9.2 Foster carers and residential carer staff must ensure that they promote and represent the best interests of the young person and facilitate their regular attendance at school. They will also facilitate their children's prompt arrival at school with the necessary school uniform and equipment.

Foster Carers shall facilitate contact arrangements for children by taking them to designated Contact Venue.

Foster Carers are expected to transport children to and from school.

Where a Foster Carer transports a child to school and the journey is 2 miles or over for a child aged 7 and under or 3 miles and over for a child aged 8 and over they will receive a payment of 45 pence per mile over this distance which will be calculated in advance of the placement and added to the child's fostering allowance.

If a child moves school whilst in placement within the term the Carer is responsible for notifying their supervising social worker. The supervising social worker is responsible for amending the service agreement via the Placement Support Team.

For more details for see [Fees and Allowances for Foster/Family & Friends \(Connected Person\) Carers](#).

- 9.3 Foster carers will not book family holidays during school term time; see section 5 for further detail.
- 9.4 Carers should familiarise themselves with the educational histories and needs of young people in the home. This will include attending Personal Education Plan meetings, contributing fully to the discussion and planning, and securely retaining a copy of the child's up-to-date PEP. There is a section on the PEP which relates specifically to how carers support the child's education; this should be fully completed at the PEP meeting with the carer's input.
- 9.5 Carers will make every reasonable effort to provide facilities that are conducive to study and to homework. This should include a suitably quiet and comfortable space with a desk, stationary and other necessary equipment such as appropriate books, computer and internet access (carefully monitored to ensure safety). Wolverhampton's foster carer training programme will provide guidance on these and other matters related to education support. A library membership should also be made available.
- 9.6 Children and young people should be actively encouraged and supported where necessary to do homework and other private study. The Virtual School Team will make training and resources available to carers to help them to support safe and effective study, such as the online learning resources and guidance on study skills and supporting learning at home.
- 9.7 Foster carers and residential care staff will maintain regular contact with their child's school or education provider. This will include attending parents'

meetings / evenings, PEP meetings and other school events such as school sports days and curriculum days, which would normally be attended by the parents of the other children at the school.

- 9.8 Children and young people should be encouraged to participate in positive extra-curricular activities. Carers will actively promote their children's attendance at clubs and other activities, both in and out of school, appropriate to their age, abilities, interests and aptitudes. Other factors that are specific to children and young people, such as cultural and other identity factors, should be given due consideration and priority when planning educational activities.
- 9.9 The Fostering Team will ensure that foster carers are aware of, and act in accordance with, the statutory duty on local authorities to promote the education of children and young people in care, statutory duties regarding school applications and admissions, exclusions and the Special Educational Needs (SEND) Code of Practice.

### **9.10 Foster Carers of Children in Early Years**

- 9.10.1 As a corporate parent who wants the best for their children, the Council expects, under normal circumstances, for children in care at Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) to attend a suitable nursery or other registered Early Years provision. This should take place from the term following their third birthday. Any exceptions to this (e.g. when a child would benefit from more time to develop a secure attachment with their carer) will be discussed at the child's statutory review.
- 9.10.2 Thirty hours of free nursery provision is available for all children and young people in care from age 3. This entitlement can be taken at either a maintained, private or independent nursery. Children can access their entitlement from a term after their third birthday. Internal foster carers should contact Wolverhampton's Fostering Team if they wish to claim their free child care. A designated officer in the Fostering Team will process applications within the appropriate timescales. Carers with independent fostering agencies should contact their agency regarding this, and for further support.
- 9.10.3 It is expected that foster carers will seek to secure an appropriate Early Years education provider for a child within their care upon the child's third birthday. It is important that the setting (particularly if it is a school based nursery) is notified that the child is in care as this will ensure priority in most settings when allocating places. This will also enable the VSH to release the Pupil Premium funding for children and young people in care in Early Years (aged 3 upward) to the provider. This is £300 per annum, normally allocated in termly instalments of £100.
- 9.10.4 It is recommended that foster carers try to secure a place at more than one nursery unless the chosen nursery can guarantee a place at the time of enquiry. Foster carers should also, where possible, seek a place in a setting with an OFSTED judgement of good or outstanding. This will ensure that the child is receiving the highest quality provision available.

- 9.10.5 Foster carers should attend any opportunities offered by the setting, such as parent's evenings, to discuss their child's progress. They should also seek opportunities to speak to staff within the setting as to what can be done in the home environment to support the child's development. The council's Early Years Team and Virtual School Team can provide further advice and offer training for carers in supporting learning at EYFS.
- 9.10.6 Where foster carers experience difficulties in finding or securing a place for the child within their care they should speak to their supervising social worker and/or the Virtual School Education Support Officer for EYFS on 01902 556951 who will support in finding a suitable setting.
- 9.10.7 Each child at EYFS, from the term following their 3<sup>rd</sup> birthday, will have an Early Years Personal Education Plan (PEP) which will be initiated and managed in the same way as other PEPs (see section 8). Carers should always attend their child's EYFS PEP meeting and contribute to the review in the same way as for other PEP meetings.
- 9.10.8 The requirement for a Personal Education Plan, and allocation of the Pupil Premium, relates only to Wolverhampton children and young people in care from the term following their third birthday. However, while not a firm requirement at age 2, where children aged 2 are attending a registered early years provision, it may be deemed beneficial for them to have a PEP. Carers can discuss this with the education provider and child's social worker, if they feel it could be beneficial.
- 9.10.9 The Virtual School team will monitor the educational progress and planning of all Wolverhampton children and young people in care, including 2-year-olds where they are attending a registered early years provision. The team can be contacted for further advice and support where required.

## **10.0 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PREVIOUSLY IN CARE**

- 10.1 Research has also shown that many children and young people previously in care also experience many challenges that disrupt their education and reduce their life chances. In response to this, the Children & Social Work Act 2017 introduced a statutory duty for local authorities to promote the education of children who have left care via an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order. The duty applies to children from early years to age 18.
- 10.2 This duty should be discharged by the VSH, through the provision of information and advice to schools and other educators, adoptive parents and other key partners. The VSH will work proactively with adoption support services in making such advice available (for example, around school admissions or meeting the needs of vulnerable children in school) and in responding to requests from educators and adoptive parents.

- 10.3 However, it is recognised that the local authority is not the 'corporate parent' for children and young people previously in care. Therefore, there is not an expectation to monitor and support the educational progress of children in this cohort and the VSH will not be held accountable for their inclusion or achievement.
- 10.4 Adoption support services, with the assistance of the VSH, will help to ensure that adopted children receive their statutory entitlement to the following benefits:
- If a child was previously looked after in England prior to being permanently placed, they have the right to priority in school admission
  - Children aged two years-old who have been adopted from care are entitled to a free early education
  - the Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) for three and four-year olds goes directly to registered early years providers (including pre-schools, nurseries and childminders) that offer children the free early education entitlement. This is additional funding for early years pre-school settings to improve the education they provide for disadvantaged three and four-year-olds including, but not restricted to, those adopted from care.
  - Schools are also entitled to receive Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) funding for previously looked after children, at a rate of £2300 per pupil, per annum. The funding goes directly to schools, based on January census data.

## Appendix A

### Pupil Premium Guidance for Designated Teachers

#### What is Pupil Premium Plus?

In 2014 the DfE announced that the “Pupil Premium Plus” would be made available to Local Authorities to support **raising the educational attainment of children and young people in care**. The PP+ is managed by the Virtual School Head (VSH) for Children and Young People in Care. While it is anticipated that Virtual Heads would work in partnership with schools to identify the best ways of using the funding, the VSH has the final say in how to allocate the funding.

#### 2019/2020 Funding

In Wolverhampton we always allocate the vast majority of funding directly to schools, in the 2019/2020 financial year funding will be made in termly instalments. We retain a small amount for specific projects and interventions such as the volunteer reading programme, additional Assistant EPs support and exam preparation / transition work at Key Stage 4.

Where a pupil becomes looked after part way through a term, PP+ will be paid if they become looked after prior to half term, if they become looked after in the second half term PP+ will be paid from the start of the next term. There is an expectation that if a child or transfers school during a term, the school will arrange for any unspent PP+ to be transferred to the new school.

#### Overarching Principles

It has been clearly stated by the DfE that, for Children and Young people in Care, the Pupil Premium should be utilised to support the child’s individualised learning targets as contained their Personal Education Plan (PEP). It is therefore expected that a breakdown of how each child’s funding is being used will be outlined in their PEP. Termly allocations of pupil premium will be allocated to school based on evidence of appropriate use of the pupil premium as recorded in the PEP.

1. The Pupil Premium Plus should be used in a targeted way to support specific learning interventions or support for children and young people in care; it should not be subsumed into a more general ‘pot’ for inclusion or support. It should therefore be linked to SMART Targets which are based on current attainment and progress data. Additionally, for pupils in assessment years (years 2, 6 and 11), we would strongly encourage schools to provide additional 1:1 tuition throughout the academic year. The Virtual School can provide advice on suitable tuition companies.
2. The use of a child or young person in care’s Pupil Premium should be agreed in the PEP meeting, and clearly recorded in their PEP with costs, description of intervention and an outline of how the impact of the intervention will be measured and monitored. In Wolverhampton’s electronic PEP Form these fields will be mandatory. This will allow the VSH to report more clearly on the impact of the PP+ on pupil outcomes. Where spending of PP+ is not clearly shown as above, the Virtual School may withhold PP+ allocation until this is shown.
3. The PEP meeting is the forum to decide on the allocation of the pupil premium funding. The school is expected to lead on this conversation as they have the greatest insight into how best to support the learning of their pupils. The VSH recommends that the Designated Teacher for Children and Young People in Care chairs the PEP meeting and therefore the and young people in care review (where the

child's care plan is reviewed by an Independent Reviewing Officer) is not the appropriate forum to agree on PEP funding.

4. In the case of a serious dispute, school should contact the VSH or Virtual School Team for assistance. There may be a few occasions when the VSH/Virtual School disagree with a school's view on pupil premium use. In these cases, VSH/Virtual School will have authority to make the final decision and funding will be arranged accordingly.

Virtual Heads from different Local Authorities manage pupil premium in different ways. For Wolverhampton Children and Young people in Care, Pupil Premium can be utilised to fund a wide range of interventions and each case has to be considered on its own merits. There is no 'one size fits all' and schools may need to be flexible and creative in how they use the funding. However, the conditions of grant and associated guidance clearly state that the premium should **not** be used to fund:

- school uniform
- home-school transport
- PRU or alternative provision
- support that is associated with (and normally funded via) an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP)
- anything that is **not** clearly linked to raising attainment / achievement in school
- Out of School Clubs or extracurricular activities unless it directly relates to PEP target and links to raising attainment / achievement)
- Residential trips unless linked to their studying. Virtual School would expect that they are studying for an accredited course and that the school have given due consideration to other identified needs within the PEP.

**Pupil Premium Plus can and should be used to support:**

- 1:1 / small group tuition (in or outside school hours). This tuition can potentially be provided by school staff – paid for additional hours worked – or outside agencies. Research has shown that 1:1 tuition can have an even greater impact on children and young people in care than for other pupils, provided it is properly planned and sustained over a period of time. As previously stated, The Virtual School has an expectation that year 6 / 11 pupils be provided with additional tuition.
- Intervention from a learning mentor, teaching assistant or similar, where the intervention is planned, resourced and monitored to address a specific learning need or desired outcome
- Training for school staff which will enable them to better meet the needs of the pupil (e.g. training in attachment theory/resilience/EAL, ASD or literacy/numeracy)
- Additional intervention, equipment or other resources to support the learning of gifted and talented pupils, or to support a pupil's interest in a specific subject or area, e.g. specialist sports or musical equipment as long as they are studying for an accredited course e.g. GCSE or it is directly linked to their studies and PEP Targets.
- ICT equipment (laptops, IPADs etc.) and other specific tools, where they are clearly linked to the pupil's learning needs and targets
- Appropriate therapeutic intervention, where clearly linked to progress in school, and/or training for school staff in supporting such an intervention. However, as a general rule, we would expect counselling or therapy should be arranged and funded by health or social care.

**Links to further info**

<http://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/toolkit>

[Designated Teacher DFE Statutory Guidance Feb 2018](#)