

# Children in Care – applying for a change of school

## Guidance for Social Workers and Carers

### 1. About this document

Children in Care may need to move schools because they are at the age when they need to move to the next phase of their education e.g., they are leaving primary school and starting secondary school. We aim for all Children in Care to attend schools that have been judged good or outstanding by Ofsted.

**School is often a stable and consistent environment for a Child in Care. School moves need careful consideration and should be avoided wherever possible.** If there is an agreement between the carer, social worker and Virtual School that a school move is in the child's best interest then the procedures described in this document should be followed.

Children in Care who move in Year 10/11 score on average 5 grades lower in their GCSEs. As this impact is so significant any move in these years requires the social worker to obtain approval for the move from the Director of Children and Families.

This document should be used when applying for a change of school for school-age pupils in care. It describes the process for moves within Warwickshire and other Local Authorities.

It is important that this process is always followed to ensure that children have access to the best possible education and that delays are minimised.

## **2. Applying for a place in a Warwickshire school during the year**

- 2.1. Before an application is submitted, the Virtual School should be consulted about the choice of school.** If you are unsure of the linked Virtual School Adviser / Office contact [virtualschool@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:virtualschool@warwickshire.gov.uk)
- 2.2. For moves to a Warwickshire school, the social worker should complete the school application form online at the Warwickshire Admissions website:  
<http://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/changingschools> Some schools manage their own in year admissions, the Virtual School will be able to advise on how to apply to these schools.
- 2.3. Once Warwickshire's Admissions Team receives the application they will liaise with Warwickshire's Virtual School. You will then receive an offer of a school place from Warwickshire's Admissions Service.

## **3. Applying for a place in a school outside Warwickshire**

- 3.1. Before an application is submitted for a place, Warwickshire Virtual School should be consulted about the choice of school and it is best practice for social workers and carers to visit schools to discuss the support that can be provided. Warwickshire Virtual School will liaise with the other Authority to gather information and school suitability, as required.
- 3.2. When a suitable school has been identified, check the relevant Local Authority's arrangements for moving school during the year.
- 3.3. The social worker should complete an application form and submit it to either the relevant Local Authority or directly to a school as advised.

## **4. Applying for a school transfer for a child with an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP)**

4.1 Schools are identified within the child's EHCP. If a school move is required, the EHCP will need to be up to date or reviewed.

4.2 – If there is a Local Authority move it is vital that the plan gets sent to the new authority (unless the child is in 52week residential with education on site or the move is temporary such as to an activity placement.)

Process	Social worker	SENDAR	Virtual School
1. Notify SENDAR of the placement move as soon as you know <a href="mailto:sen@warwickshire.gov.uk">sen@warwickshire.gov.uk</a>	Send email detailing: CLA name DOB Current school Current LA New carers name, address and contact details	Acknowledge receipt with social worker and virtual school	Check processes are followed
2. Papers sent from current LA to new LA		Inform social worker and virtual school when papers are with the new LA, and name of contact details	
3. New LA identifies school/type of provision needed	Social worker can identify school preference at this time. Liaise with CLA's virtual school Education Adviser.	New LA SEN team contact suitable schools to identify place (including social worker preference)	Monitor progress and timescales
4. Place offered			

4.3 The relevant Authority's SEND team will determine the most appropriate provision for the child. For further information contact the Virtual School.

## 5. Applying for a school transfer at regular transition point (e.g. moving from a primary school to a secondary school)

5.1 Planning for a normal school transfer should take place at the PEP meeting. The social worker should make an application according to the local authority's processes which will be familiar to the current school

If a school place application for a usual transition point is made on time for a mainstream (non selective) school then the Child in Care will be allocated a space. Deadlines are:

**Reception – 15<sup>th</sup> January**

**Year 3 (moving from infant to junior school) – 15<sup>th</sup> January**

**Year 7 – 31<sup>st</sup> October**

Please inform the Virtual School of all applications made. This is particularly crucial for late applications.

For further information email: [virtualschool@warwickshire.gov.uk](mailto:virtualschool@warwickshire.gov.uk)

