

Frequently Asked Questions for Parents and Carers

What are the Virtual School's statutory duties towards previously children in care?

Virtual Schools have a statutory duty (from September 2018) to provide signposting, advice, and information to schools, parents and a range of professionals in relation to improving the educational outcomes of previously children in care.

How do I identify the most appropriate school for my child/ young person?

When selecting a school, it is important to visit all prospective schools and meet with the Designated Teacher for previously children in care.

In consultations with experienced adoptive parents, PAC-UK have identified some key questions for parents and schools to consider, not all the questions will be relevant for every child. It's unlikely that any school will be able to implement all the recommendations; look for flexible schools who are willing to listen and learn and are proactive about developing support to meet each child's needs:

[Permanently Placed Children: Key Questions for Secondary Schools](#)

[Permanently Placed Children: Key Questions for Primary Schools](#)

My school does not seem to understand the needs of my previously children in care. What can I do?

Each school has a Designated Teacher with responsibility for previously children in care, the Virtual School would encourage contact to be made with them to explore any worries or concerns.

The Designated Teacher is very welcome to contact the Virtual School for advice and information. There are various training opportunities available to them.

Parents are also welcomed to contact the Virtual School if they need signposting, advice or guidance in relation to their child's education. Please contact virtualschool@warwickshire.gov.uk

How do I support my child with transition to primary, or secondary school?

We recognise that transition and change can be very daunting for children and young people who have previously been in care. Most schools have transition arrangements in place to support the move. This will usually include opportunities in the summer term for the child to spend time at the secondary school and have additional visits to get to know other students and be introduced to key members of staff. If you feel further support is needed, speak to the child's primary school about how they can help and contact the secondary school to explain your concerns and they will support to make the transition as smooth as possible.

The following resources are very useful:

[WCC – starting a new school or college](#)

[PAC UK – example transition plan and strategies](#)

[PAC UK – goodbyes and transitions](#)

[PAC UK – easing the transition](#)

[Beacon House – supporting transitions](#)

[Beacon House – the transition storm](#)

[Anna Freud – supporting transition](#)

How can I ensure a new school understands my child's needs?

We would recommend that parents and carers discuss their child's specific needs with any new school. There should be a good transition plan in place with plenty of opportunity for the child to make visits and connections with staff in the new school. The education planning document can support a positive transition.

Some parts of the curriculum can be very traumatic for my child - how can I work with the school to ensure this does not happen?

If you feel your child may be affected by particular aspects of the school curriculum, it may be useful at the beginning of each academic year to talk to the class teacher, designated teacher, SENCo, pastoral lead or head of year to discuss any potentially difficult areas of the curriculum.

Some common areas that adopters highlight include topic work on families, family trees, WW2 evacuation, writing personal biographies, and any subject that includes an element of grief or loss. The education planning document would allow for exploration of any potential triggers and this document can be passed to new teachers and updated at each transition point.

How much is Pupil Premium Plus for Previously Children in Care and what is its purpose?

The pupil premium rate for 2023/24 is £2530 per child, per year. For more information see the [Pupil premium: overview - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/pupil-premium-overview). This money is paid directly to schools and is not managed by the Virtual School.

The DfE takes the view that many care experienced children will have experienced trauma and attachment in their early experiences. Many children and young people may have entered care due to abuse or neglect. These needs do not change overnight, and they do not stop being vulnerable just because they are in a loving home. Evidence shows that early life experiences can have a lasting effect emotionally, socially and academically. The purpose of the Pupil Premium Plus is to raise educational attainment and close the gap between previously children in care and their peers.

The funding is not a personal budget and should be spent for the benefit of the previously child in care cohort.

How can I make sure my child's school is receiving Pupil Premium Plus funding?

In order for schools to access the funding, parents and carers must declare their child's adoptive, SGO or CAO status directly to the school before the school completes the October census. Parents and carers must provide evidence, for example, a copy of the legal order. Parents should not need to declare their child's status again until their child changes school.

Do schools have to tell parents and carers what they spend the Pupil Premium Plus funding on?

The DFE consider it to be good practice for schools to work in partnership with parents and carers, and to have transparent processes in place. However, schools do not have to inform parents of exactly how much funding is being spent on an individual child.

When does Pupil Premium Plus funding for Previously Children in Care start and finish?

Any child or young person attending school from the start of reception year to the end of year 11 is eligible to receive PP+. Children who are electively home educated, educated in an independent setting or are post-16 students are currently not eligible for the funding.

Can we use the Pupil Premium Plus for providing school uniform?

It is expected that a parent or carer would provide school uniform for their child. If as a family you are experiencing financial difficulties and unable to provide a school uniform for your child, then please seek advice from your child's school.