

LONDON FOSTERING ACHIEVEMENT

Working with schools

Notes and guidance for Foster Carers and Social Workers

Introduction

London Fostering Achievement is a programme of activity that aims to improve educational outcomes for fostered children in London. It is delivered by The Fostering Network in partnership with Achievement for All. It is part of the Mayor's London Schools Excellence Fund, funded by the Department for Education and the Greater London Authority.

We bring together leaders, foster carers, teachers, young people and the wider professional network to take part in training workshops, masterclasses and much more. We recognise that all professionals working with a child need to play their part in transforming outcomes. With the right support, children looked after can and do achieve.

At The Fostering Network we champion the important role that foster carers play in encouraging young people to aspire and supporting them to achieve. Foster carers can be powerful advocates around education.

This pack brings together the following useful resources for foster carers and social workers to use when talking to schools about strategies to better support the children and young people in their care:

- Useful checklists in relation to schools and Personal Education Plan (PEP) meetings
- Information on school policies and practice, and the role of the designated teacher
- A template *Child Looked After Information & Strategy Sheet* which can be used to ensure all staff are consistent in their dealings with traumatised children

This pack is based on materials produced by Bernadette Alexander. For more resources, please visit our website:

www.londonfosteringachievement.org.uk

Contents

Page 4	The Personal Education Plan
Page 5	Prompt Questions for PEPs. What might the social worker and foster carer ask of the school?
Page 6	Prompt Questions for PEPs. What might the school and Designated Teacher ask of the foster carer and the social worker?
Page 7	Personal education plan. Self-Evaluation: Foster Carer
Page 8	Personal education plan. Self-Evaluation: Designated Teacher
Page 9	Personal education plan. Self-Evaluation: Supervising Social Worker
Page 10	Personal education plan. Self-Evaluation: Children's Social Worker
Page 11	The Child Looked After Information and Strategy Sheet
Page 12	Designated Teacher for children looked after (CLA)
Page 13	Indicators of good practice in schools supporting children looked after
Page 14	Whole school policy for children looked after

The Personal Education Plan - why is it important?

It is part of the legal document which is the Care Plan and is used in each Review of the Care Plan

It brings the main professionals in the Team Around the Child (TAC) together to discuss the child's future life chances and seeks to make them accountable through Action Planning

The Personal Education Plan is never a disciplinary meeting

The Personal Education Plan - what should it include?

The child's voice, no matter what age; this may be elicited before the meeting

Current attainment data set against predicted and target data. Where the school is now using its own assessments, an explanation of how the school is measuring progress must be available for the other professionals. It must be recorded whether the child's attainment is in line with national expectations for her/his age or below or above it.

The rate of academic progress of the child. This must specify whether the child is making progress in line with national expectations and her/his peers, or is making slower or faster progress.

Written feedback from each of the child's teachers & other professionals commenting on the child's attainment and rate of progress.

Written feedback from each of the child's teachers & any other professionals involved commenting on the child's personal, social and emotional development.

Attendance and punctuality data, with reasons for any absences or late starts, especially where this is impacting on the child's progress

Evidence of the child's part in the whole school community and wider activities to promote their academic and social development

The following pages include prompt questions and simple check sheets to help each professional prepare for a PEP meeting.

Prompt Questions for PEPs

What might the social worker and foster carer ask of the school?

- What are staff doing to enhance a child's self-belief, motivation and high aspirations?
- What, specifically, is being done to support the development of self-regulation, to improve disorganisation (or other aspects typical of Children Looked After?)
- Are his/her relationships with staff and pupils good and, if not, what is being done to support him/her with this?
- Is s/he engaging appropriately in the work? Is the set work made accessible to him/her (differentiated) when there are difficulties? Is s/he provided with adequate support for work?
- Have her/his needs been taken into account in class seating plans?
- How are social & emotional aspects of learning taught?
- Does the curriculum content and delivery take into account that s/he is looked after?
- Is s/he managing transitions well within the school day? If not, what support is being given?
- Is s/he managing socially and emotionally during lunch and break time? If not, what support is being given?
- Does s/he need extra support with learning? If so, what is or can be done?
- Are there extra-curricular activities s/he could or should be attending?

Prompt Questions for PEPs

What might the school and Designated Teacher ask of the foster carer and the social worker?

- Are you satisfied with the level of communication between school and home?
- What do you do to enhance self-belief, motivation and high aspirations?
- What do you do to support the development of self-regulation?
- Do you have a working knowledge of key stages, national expectations as regards progress, different pathways, how to support transition, etc. or would you like more support?
- What are you doing to promote literacy and numeracy skills at home? Would you like more support with this?
- Are you providing the optimum environment for the completion of home learning?
- What support do you give with home learning?
- Are you taking your child to activities that enhance learning outside of school? (Museums, trips, theatre, cinema, sports etc.)

PERSONAL EDUCATION PLAN

Self-Evaluation: Foster Carer

	Always/ Yes	Sometimes/ Could do more	Don't usually get round to
I know and understand how my foster child is assessed at school			
I know and understand the progress my foster child is making in each subject			
My foster child talks with me about school, about their teachers, their activities, how their day was			
I actively advocate for the child in my care at Personal Education Plan meetings by speaking up for them, being positive about them and encouraging the school and social worker to support them			
I talk with my foster child about their school friends and encourage them to bring friends home			
I read the feedback from my child's teachers written in their exercise books			
I support my foster child with home learning (for example, by reading with them, discussing their homework, offering to proof-read it, help with internet research etc.)			
I read and sign my foster child's homework diary			
I talk with my foster child's class teacher or tutor at least once per half-term			
I attend school functions such as parents' evenings, drama productions, concerts, transition meetings, information evenings etc.			
I actively seek ways to boost the confidence of my foster child, encourage high aspirations and let them know that I (and their teachers, social worker, birth family if appropriate) have high expectations of them			

PERSONAL EDUCATION PLAN

Self-Evaluation: Designated Teacher

	Always / Yes	Sometimes / Could do more	Don't usually get round to
Our Children Looked After (CLA) are on the agenda of Governors' meetings each term			
Our Children Looked After are on the agenda of our Senior Leadership Team Meetings at least once per term			
Our staff (both teaching and non-teaching) have training on issues related to the learning and development of Children Looked After			
I regularly discuss with the teachers of our CLA strategies for ensuring that they are making progress academically, socially and emotionally			
I liaise regularly with our Children Looked After's social workers, foster carers/residential home key workers and virtual school caseworkers concerning their performance in all areas of school life			
I ensure our Children Looked After's foster carers and social workers understand the school's assessment system and the progress being made by their Child looked after			
I liaise with the social worker to ensure that a PEP Review will take place within the timeframe and that all necessary personnel are invited			
I speak to the Child looked after before each PEP Review and discuss what they would like to say, how they feel they have progressed since the last review, and what support they would welcome during and after the meeting			
Within a few days of each PEP review, I disseminate to each of the CLA's teachers the Action Plan and discuss ways of implementing it			
I know what extra-curricular activities each of my Children Looked After is undertaking and whether they are engaging well			
I actively seek ways to boost the confidence of my Children Looked After and let them know that I and their teachers have high expectations of them			

PERSONAL EDUCATION PLAN

Self-Evaluation: Supervising Social Worker

	Always/ Yes	Sometimes/ Could do more	Don't usually get round to
In each meeting with my foster carers, the child's educational progress forms part of the discussion			
I know and understand what Key Stage and Year Group my carers' Children Looked After are in and the levels/grades they are expected to be getting			
I understand the PEP process			
At each meeting with my foster carers, I read through the PEP and discuss how the Action Plan is being carried out			
I am able to advise my foster carers on ensuring good attendance and punctuality, especially with getting their foster children up and out to school on time every morning			
I am able to advise my foster carers on supporting their Child looked after with homework			
I feel confident in supporting my foster carers with ways of increasing their children's reading, writing and communication skills out of school			
I feel confident in supporting my foster carers with ways of increasing their children's numeracy out of school			
I discuss with my foster carers their liaison with school and how to overcome any concerns they may have about it			
I know where to get advice and support for my foster carers concerning the education of their foster children			
I have high expectations of my foster carers with regards to their promotion and support for the educational attainment of their foster children			

PERSONAL EDUCATION PLAN

Self-Evaluation: Children's Social Worker

	Always/ Yes	Sometimes/ Could do more	Don't usually get round to
I know what Key Stage and Year Group my Child looked after is in and what levels/grades s/he is expected to be getting			
I know and understand the current attainment and progress being made by my Child looked after			
When I meet with my Child looked after, I talk about school, how s/he is getting on, whether s/he needs any support with any aspect of school life (teachers, friends, clubs) etc.			
I know what extra-curricular activities my Child looked after does and encourage her/him to participate			
I know the names of key school staff and liaise at least once per half term with the Designated Teacher/Head of Year/tutor/class teacher			
I am confident that the school has my contact details and will contact me immediately if there are any concerns			
I ensure the PEP Reviews take place on time, with full attendance of key people and copies are quickly distributed			
At PEPs, I feel confident in speaking out, in advocating for my child, in challenging the school and/or the foster carer if necessary			
I monitor the PEP Action Plan between reviews and ensure that they are carried out			
I find ways in which to praise and boost the confidence of my Child looked after, especially when things are not going well in school			
I encourage my Child looked after to aspire highly and to have high expectations of themselves			
I know where to get support and advice for my Children Looked After concerning all educational matters			

The Child Looked After Information & Strategy Sheet

The purpose of this is to support staff by making them aware of possible triggers and strategies for avoiding them or for dealing with the upset child. It is particularly useful for staff who do not know the child well, such as cover or supply teachers.

It is also important in ensuring that all staff are consistent in their dealings with traumatised children.

Name: Class:

Prior Data:

Academic Targets:

Academic strengths: e.g. learns well visually, reading age above chronological age).....

.....

Academic weaknesses: (e.g. poor short-term memory).....

.....

Social, emotional and personal strengths: (e.g. works well in groups).....

.....

Social, emotional and personal weaknesses: (e.g. will constantly seek attention & need affirmation)

.....

Types of behaviour child may display:.....

Possible triggers for these behaviours:

Strategies to support learning:

Strategies to support self-regulation:

Ideally who should the Designated Teacher for children looked after (CLA) be and what is their role?

- Either a member of Senior Leadership Team (SLT) or with direct access to SLT/Headteacher and the CLA Governor
- A leader with enough clout to effect whole school and individual change
- Personally knows each CLA within the school, their strengths and weaknesses, even if delegating some duties
- Tracks and monitors progress of all CLA in school at least each half-term and reviews support and interventions to ensure they are working
- Is trained and has an understanding of the impact of attachment trauma and is experienced in strategies and interventions to support vulnerable children with attachment difficulties
- Is able to advise and train (or commission training for) other staff in such strategies and interventions
- Is experienced in multi-agency working and understands the roles of social workers, foster carers and the Virtual School
- Actively supports the CLA during key stage transitions and school moves
- Leads on Personal Education Plans (PEPs) within the school and ensures:
 - ✓ All necessary information and data is available for the PEP
 - ✓ The child's voice is heard
 - ✓ Each PEP results in an action plan to accelerate the child's learning
 - ✓ The action plan is carried out within the school
 - ✓ The PEP is disseminated within the school to all those who need to know.

Above all the Designated Teacher should ADVOCATE FOR THE CHILD

Does commitment for Children Looked After (CLA) come from the very top of your school?

Below are some indicators of good practice in schools supporting children looked after

- Do they exist or do they happen in your child's school?
- **If not, ask!**

	Yes	No	Don't Know
Does your school have a Governor for CLA whom you can name?			
Can you evidence that your governing body undertakes an annual review of policy and practice in relation to CLA?			
Is there evidence that the Governor for CLA ensures that there are resources available for the Designated Teacher when resources are being allocated?			
Does your Governor for CLA meet with the Designated Teacher at least once per term to keep informed about the attainment, progress and provision for CLA, including use of the Pupil Premium Plus?			
Does your school have a whole school policy for CLA?			
Are CLA mentioned specifically and overtly in all relevant school policies?			
Is your Designated Teacher a member of the Senior Leadership Team or regularly communicate with them in order to influence policy and practice?			
Does the child in your care know who the Designated Teacher is in their school and understand their role?			
Has whole school INSET time been used to train all staff in topics which are relevant to working with CLA, including the impact of attachment and trauma on learning, in the past two years?			
Does the school have a behaviour policy which is (discretely) flexible and ensures the needs of the child are paramount, whilst maintaining consistency for all its CLA?			

What might a whole school policy for children looked after (CLA) include?

- Reflects the school's ethos and sets out clearly its commitment to CLA
- Is linked to the statutory framework
- Is linked to other school policies, especially Inclusion, Admissions, Safeguarding, Equality & Diversity etc. in which CLA should be specifically mentioned
- Specifies how it will link with external agencies (Social Care, Virtual School, Foster Carers, Residential Homes, CAMHS, Educational Psychology, Education Welfare Service, Behaviour Improvement Services, etc.)
- Is specific about the roles and reporting duties of key personnel in school, including Governors, Senior Leadership Team, the Designated Teacher, and classroom teachers
- Is specific and detailed about the ways in which the school is going to carry out its duty to support CLA
- Includes what the school will do to support staff who are working with CLA
- Specifies how the Pupil Premium Plus for CLA may be used
- Shows how progress of CLA in all aspects of school life (academic, pastoral, extra-curricular and social) will be tracked and monitored
- Is specific and detailed about what interventions and support will be used when CLA are not progressing in line with their peers academically and personally i.e. use of a *Child Looked After Information & Strategy Sheet*

Whole School practice to support the learning and progress of children looked after

- Transition Planning
- Staff Training
- Alternatives to punishments such as detentions and exclusions
- Commitment to consistency with (discrete) flexibility within behaviour rules
- Whole school commitment to having high expectations and raising aspirations
- Whole school commitment to CLA engagement in extra-curricular activities which raise self-esteem and confidence
- Key Relationships
- A Safe Space
- The Designated Teacher (page 5)
- The Personal Education Plan (pages 6-12)
- The CLA Information and Strategy Sheet - (see page 13) to ensure all staff understand the behaviour of the child and respond consistently