

Fostering

Education

The Trust Board has granted the Chief Executive of the Sandwell Children's Trust the authority to approve this document.

Education

Regulations and Standards

The Fostering Services (England) Regulations 2011

Regulation 16 - Education, employment and leisure activities

Fostering Services: National Minimum Standards

STANDARD 8 - Promoting educational attainment

Scope of this Chapter

This chapter explains the way in which the fostering agency promotes education for children in its care.

Related Guidance

Promoting the Education of Looked After Children (July 2014)

Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice: 0 to 25 years: Statutory Guidance for Organisations who work with and Support Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (2015)

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1. Education Policy

Obtaining a good education can be the key to vastly improving everyone's chances in life. Children in care can be particularly disadvantaged educationally. They will often have had their education disrupted as a result of changes of placements and circumstances, and may not have had the opportunity to develop to their full potential. They may have little sense of their abilities and will need encouragement to develop greater self-esteem.

The agency is committed to providing foster placements that provide a stable, supportive environment from which children can take full advantage of educational opportunities. Foster carers should ensure that their house has a routine that is organised so as to further children's participation in education, including private study and maintaining effective links with any schools/educational setting attended by the child.

The foster carers will be actively involved with Designated Teachers and relevant others to support and plan each child's educational arrangements.

The foster carers and staff of the agency will be actively involved with Designated Teachers and relevant others to support and plan each child's educational arrangements.

If a child is absent from the school/educational setting, the foster carer will inform the setting on the morning of the day of absence unless an alternative arrangement (for example for a recurring appointment) has been made.

2. What the Agency will do

Sandwell Children's Trust Fostering actively demonstrates that education is valued throughout the organisation by ensuring that:

- Placements will only be suggested to local authorities when the fostering agency is satisfied that it can meet the educational needs of the child;
- Every Looked After Child has an up to date Personal Education Plan (PEP) (See Section 2.1, Personal Education Plans) and children with additional needs have an Individual Education Plan (IEP). If these plans are available before the child is placed they should be requested from the child's social worker at the first Placement Planning Meeting;
- If the child has special educational needs or disabilities, an up-to-date copy of the child's Education, Health and Care Plan will be obtained prior to the placement to ensure that the child's special needs can be met in the placement;
- Pre-school children will be provided with educational opportunities;
- Children will be encouraged and supported to undertake further and higher education;
- All efforts will be made to ensure children attend a local school or college; where this is not possible, the agency will work with the child's Placing Authority and the relevant education service to identify a school/setting within reasonable distance which meets their needs or alternatively to facilitate the provision of specialist tuition;
- The parents of children placed are encouraged (if appropriate) to take an interest in and to promote the education of their child;
- Children's achievements are recognised in a manner acceptable to them;
- Records of children's educational achievement show progress towards targets/goals;
- Children in foster placements will have access to a computer;
- The child should have an appropriate area for completing study and doing homework.

2.1 Personal Education Plans

All looked after children must have a Personal Education Plan (PEP) which summarises the child's developmental and educational needs, short term targets, long term plans and aspirations and which contains or refers to the child's record of achievement. The child's social worker is responsible for coordinating and compiling the PEP, which should be incorporated into the child's Care Plan.

The PEP should:

- Identify the educational and social factors that may have caused or may cause in the future a detrimental effect on the child's educational achievement;
- Identify the support required to reduce the impact of these factors;
- Identify the child's immediate and priority needs and targets, (e.g. to maintain the current school place, make transport arrangements, find a new school, obtain short-term interim education);
- Incorporate any Individual Education Plan or other school-based plan;
- Identify a named person for the day-to-day management of the PEP and establish lines of communication between the carer, school/education staff and social worker - the basis of a working partnership;
- Establish boundaries of confidentiality;
- Agree a date for the PEP review meeting and how and when the next (full) PEP is going to be drawn up.

3. What Foster Carers will do

Foster carers will actively demonstrate that education is valued throughout the organisation by ensuring, in relation to children placed with them, that:

- They actively promote the children's education and learning and find ways to introduce aspects of the curriculum into their day-to-day activities in the home;
- They are fully conversant with the children's educational needs and any plans that have been agreed with placing authorities;
- They establish close working relationships with teaching staff at the children's schools/educational settings and attend parents' evenings, concerts, sports events and other events important to the child.
- They encourage the children to leave for school in good time and, where they are not escorted to school, liaison takes place with the school to ensure that there are no issues regarding attendance or lateness;
- They ensure that children/young people have all the necessary equipment to complete their homework;

- They support children to participate in leisure opportunities and out-of-school activities;
- They encourage children to use local libraries and other educational facilities;
- They assist young people who have completed their compulsory full-time education to make arrangements for their continued training and employment.