**School and Education**

**Standards and Regulations**

**Fostering Services National Minimum Standards (England) 2011:**

* [Standard 8 - Promoting Educational Attainment](http://www.minimumstandards.org/fost_eight.html).

**Training, Support and Development Standards for Foster Care:**

* [Standard 2 - Understand your role as a foster carer](https://www.fosteringhandbook.com/bradford/files/fost_care_tsd_standards_guid.pdf);
* [Standard 4 - Know how to communicate effectively](https://www.fosteringhandbook.com/bradford/files/fost_care_tsd_standards_guid.pdf);
* [Standard 5 - Understand the development of children and young people](https://www.fosteringhandbook.com/bradford/files/fost_care_tsd_standards_guid.pdf);
* [Standard 6 - Keep children and young people safe from harm](https://www.fosteringhandbook.com/bradford/files/fost_care_tsd_standards_guid.pdf).

**Useful Information**

* [Promoting the Education of Looked After and Previously Looked After Children (Department for Education)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-the-education-of-looked-after-children);
* [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 (Department for Education and Department of Health and Social Care)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/send-code-of-practice-0-to-25);
* [Keeping Children Safe in Education (Department for Education)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2)

1. **1.****Introduction**

Children in care may have experienced disrupted education due to changes in their placements. This can potentially have a negative impact on their achievements at school and on their ability to make friends.

It is vital that a child’s educational arrangements and needs are discussed with the child’s social worker and your Supervising Social Worker before the placement starts.

Where the child is an unaccompanied migrant child, (and looked after by a local authority), they are entitled to the same local authority support as any other child in care: to have a safe and stable placement; to receive the care that they need to thrive; and the support they need to fulfil their educational and other outcomes.

Unaccompanied migrant children will have experienced trauma and instability prior to coming into care and it is important that the child receives and accesses the correct support networks. Some unaccompanied children who have recently arrived in the country may never have had access to education before. Appropriate education for unaccompanied children may include a period of time in a setting where their full educational needs can be assessed and integrated into their Personal Education Plan (PEP) ([Section 2, The Personal Education Plan (PEP)](https://www.fosteringhandbook.com/bradford/school.html?zoom_highlight=Education#pep)).

They may need time to be prepared for and then become used to formal education, and their initial educational outcomes may include cultural orientation and life skills appropriate to their age. As a foster carer, you will have a key role in this.

Foster carers play an important role in promoting education, including early years/nursery, as well as providing a learning environment in the family home.

**Your role:**

* Have high aspirations and realistic expectations of children placed in your care;
* Keep nursery, school, alternative education provider or college informed of any significant changes and issues;
* Help the young person to express their concerns or aspirations and advocate on their behalf;
* Attend open evenings and any school meetings needed and encourage, where appropriate, parent’s involvement;
* Provide uniform, equipment including a computer and appropriate financial support for trips and after school clubs;
* Establish clear expectations and provide support with attendance, punctuality, uniform, and completion of homework;
* Liaise with the school and other agencies including the child’s social worker if non school attendance is an issue;
* Support a child/young person to achieve their education or training goals;
* Encourage a child/young person to look at alternative education/placements, further or higher education or training;
* Have up to date information about progress and attendance;
* Contribute to the on-going assessment of the child’s educational needs and progress including the support of the [Personal Education Plan (PEP)](http://trixresources.proceduresonline.com/nat_key/keywords/pers_education_plan.html);
* Record any relevant information with regards to the child/young person;
* Speak to the child’s social worker if you have any concerns;
* To give time and space to the child/young person when they return from their education setting to check how it is going for them and ensure things are going well for them; speak to the child's social worker if you have any concerns (see also: [Section 7, Safeguarding in Schools](https://www.fosteringhandbook.com/bradford/school.html?zoom_highlight=Education#sg_schools) and [Bullying Procedure](https://www.fosteringhandbook.com/bradford/bullying.html)).

1. **The Personal Education Plan (PEP)**

All children in care of compulsory school age must have a Personal Education Plan (PEP), even if they are not currently in education. It provides important information to make sure that the right support is in place so that the child can achieve their targets. It should also be a record of the child's leisure interests and their educational achievements.

The child's social worker should arrange a meeting to put together the first PEP within the first 10 days of a child becoming Looked After.

Who should be invited?

* You;
* The child and their parents if appropriate;
* The Designated Teacher for Children in Care and Previously Looked After at the school;
* Any other relevant professionals, for example The Virtual School.

If the child is excluded from school, the Head Teacher, an education officer and the SEND adviser (if needed) should be invited.

PEPs should:

* Identify developmental and educational needs in relation to skills, knowledge, subject areas and experiences;
* Set short and medium-term educational attainment targets agreed in partnership with the child and the carer where appropriate;
* Include a record of planned actions, including milestones on homework, extra tuition and study support, that the school and others will take to promote the educational achievement of the child, based on an assessment of their educational needs;
* Include information on how the child’s progress is to be rigorously monitored;
* Record details of specific interventions and targeted support that will be used to make sure personal education targets are met, especially at the end of Key Stage 2 in relation to reading, writing and mathematics, and at Key Stage 4 in achieving success in public examinations;
* Set out what will happen, or is already happening, to put in place any additional support which may be required - e.g. possible action to support special educational needs involving the SENCO, educational psychologist, or local authority education services (information contained within a EHC plan does not have to be duplicated in the PEP, a reference is sufficient as long as the plans work together to meet overall needs);
* Set out information on what will happen or is already happening to identify and support any mental health needs relevant to the child’s education;
* Set out how a child’s aspiration and self-confidence is being nurtured, especially in consideration of longer-term goals towards further and higher education, work experience and career plans. Discussions about longer-term goals should start early and ideally well before Year 9 (age 13-14) at school. High aspirations are crucial to successful planning for the future. They should focus on young person’s strengths and capabilities and the outcomes they want to achieve;
* Include the child’s views on how they see they have progressed and what support they consider to be most effective;
* Be a record of the child’s academic achievements and participation in the wider activities of the school and other out of school learning activities (e.g. sporting, personal development);
* Provide information which helps all who are supporting the child’s educational achievement to understand what works for them, helping to substitute for the role that parents might otherwise provide; and
* Have clear accountability in terms of who within the school is responsible for making the actions identified in the plan happen.

In addition, the PEP should have:

* An up to date and accurate chronology of education and training history which provides a record of the child's educational experience and progress in terms of [National Curriculum Assessments](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/national-curriculum-assessments-key-stage-2-2018-provisional/national-curriculum-assessments-at-key-stage-2-in-england-2018-provisional--2), including information about schools attended and the reasons for leaving, attendance and conduct record, academic and other achievements, any special educational needs, an indication of the extent to which the child's education has been disrupted before entering care or accommodation;
* A clear statement clarifying existing arrangements for education and training, including details of any special educational provision and any other provision to meet the child's educational or training needs;
* A description of any planned changes to existing arrangements and provision to minimise disruption;
* A description of the child's leisure interests;
* A description of the role of the appropriate person and any other person who cares for the child in promoting the child's educational achievements and leisure interests;
* A description of how the Pupil Premium is assisting the child's progress; and
* Applications for bursaries should be discussed as part of PEP Meetings;
* Details of who will take the plan forward, with timescales for action and review are an essential aspect of all PEP planning.

The Designated Teacher for Children in Care would normally have overall responsibility for leading the process of target setting for children in foster placements at school and should monitor and track how their attainment progresses and ensure that identified actions are put in place. The Designated Teacher will also help the school and the local authority that looks after the child to decide what arrangements work best in the development and review of the PEP.

The completed PEP should be given to you, the child, their parents, and all others invited to the meeting. A copy should also be sent to the child's Independent Reviewing Officer.

The child’s social worker must ensure PEP review meetings take place on time.

PEP decisions and recommendations must be shared with the child's Independent Reviewing Officer at the child’s Review.

If there are changes in arrangements such as a change of school or if the child may need private tuition, these recommendations should be taken to the child’s Review.

Children in care are eligible for Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) funding which is intended to help improve the attainment of children in care and close the attainment gap between them and their peers. It is not a personal budget for individual children. The extra funding provided by the PP+ reflects the significant additional barriers faced by children in care.

The PP+ for children in care is managed by the Virtual School Head (VSH) who works for the local authority.

The PP+ is a key component in ensuring resources are available to support the child’s Personal Education Plan and the plan should clarify what the support is and how it will be delivered.

A guide to PEPs, written by the Virtual School Bradford, can be downloaded from [Useful Resources](https://www.fosteringhandbook.com/bradford/guidance.html#guidance).

1. **When a Child Needs or Joins a New School**

Choosing and applying for a school place is usually the child's social worker's responsibility but in some circumstances may be delegated to you or shared with others.

Changes of school should be avoided as this will disrupt the child's education. It should not take place in the middle of a school year or in years 10 and 11, unless this is unavoidable.

They should be provided with a copy of the child's current PEP. Other members of staff who need to know should be identified at the PEP meeting, taking into account the child's wishes about confidentiality.

A change of school at any time needs the agreement of the relevant local education service maintaining the plan and the responsible social worker in consultation with the Virtual School.

1. **Avoidance of Disruption in Education**

Disrupting a child’s school can have a negative impact for a child at any stage of their school career. However, a Senior Manager in the placing authority must approve any change of placement affecting a child in Key Stage 4, except in an emergency/where the placement ends because of an immediate risk of serious harm to the child or to protect others from serious injury.

In those circumstances, the local authority must make appropriate arrangements to promote the child’s educational achievement as soon as possible.

1. **When a Child Moves to a New Local Authority**

If the child is to be placed in the area of a different local authority and will need a new school, this should be looked at (unless it is an emergency placement) well before they move.

The Education Officer and, if needed, the SEND adviser, should be asked to help with this.

Where possible a child should not be moved to a new placement until they have a school place.

**Pupils With Educational Health and Care (EHC) Plan (Previously called Statements of Special Educational Needs):**

The local education service where the child lives (unless in residential accommodation) is responsible for the placement and provision of education to a pupil who has an EHC Plan. The education service for the area to which the child is moving should therefore be requested to adopt the EHC Plan. This needs to be planned as early as possible as it can cause long delays.

The EHCP should only be exported to the new placement LA at the point the placement is long-term. The Virtual School can provide advice to support this process.

1. **Celebrating a Child's Achievements**

Children’s educational (and other) achievements should be acknowledged at one or more of the following times: at Child in Care Reviews; in the PEP, at school-based meetings; in school reports; and after exams.

The child’s educational attainments at Key Stages 1-3, GCSE, A Level and GNVQ should be recorded, including on the electronic record and in the PEP.

1. **Safeguarding in Schools**

Children in care are a vulnerable group. Staff in the school should all be aware of the systems in place that will support safeguarding. As a foster carer, it is important for you to be aware of the school’s safeguarding policies.

* Protecting them from maltreatment, including emotional, physical abuse and harm; bullying and cyberbullying; upskirting [1]; sexting [2] (also known as youth produced sexual imagery); sexual harassment, etc.
* Preventing any impairment of their mental or physical health or development;
* Ensuring they are growing up in circumstances consistent with safe and effective care;
* Being proactive in enabling them to experience positive outcomes.

[1] [Upskirting is against the law](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/upskirting-law-comes-into-force). See also: [GOV.UK, Upskirting: know your rights](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/upskirting-know-your-rights)

[2] [NSPCC, Sexting: advice for professionals](https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/research-resources/briefings/sexting-advice-professionals)

An Ofsted thematic review ([Review of Sexual Abuse in Schools and Colleges (Ofsted)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-sexual-abuse-in-schools-and-colleges)) identified substantial levels of sexual harassment for both girls (90%) and boys (nearly 50%) – usually in unsupervised settings. Sexual harassment and sexual violence exist on a continuum and may overlap. Where the latter occurs, there could be a criminal offence committed.

The Ofsted Review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges also recognised a wide variety of behaviours that children and young people told (them) happened online including:

* Receiving unsolicited explicit photographs or videos, for example ‘dick pics’;
* Sending, or being pressured to send, nude and semi-nude photographs or videos (‘nudes’);
* Being sent or shown solicited or unsolicited online explicit material, such as pornographic videos.

Keeping Children Safe in Education (see [Useful Information](https://www.fosteringhandbook.com/bradford/school.html?zoom_highlight=Education#useful) above) notes that with regard to sexual harassment, all staff working with children are advised to maintain an attitude of ‘it could happen here’ and must respond to all reports and concerns about sexual violence and/or sexual harassment, including online behaviour and incidents that have happened outside the school/college. This could include picking-up information from other pupils.

Nevertheless, the [Ofsted thematic Review](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/review-of-sexual-abuse-in-schools-and-colleges) also reflected that children said they did not bring events to the attention to staff for fear of losing control over events and the subsequent consequences.

A foster carer who has concerns about the sexual harassment or bullying of a child (in any setting), should always raise these concerns with their supervising social worker or the child’s social worker. It should not be assumed that the school will necessarily inform you of such concerns or behaviour (they may not be aware).

See also: [Internet, Photographs and Mobile Phones Procedure](https://www.fosteringhandbook.com/bradford/internet.html).

There should be staff (usually the Designated Teacher or the SEND coordinator) who will be able to share with you information about:

* The school’s child protection policy and procedures;
* The school’s bullying policy;
* The Data Protection Act and safeguarding
* The child behaviour policy;
* The staff behaviour policy (code of conduct); and
* The safeguarding response to children who go missing from education.

They will also explain that staff must report any concerns regarding Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), modern slavery, trafficking or exploitation.

1. **When a Child is Absent from School**

You must notify the school and the child’s social worker immediately if the child does not attend school for any reason (for example if they are unwell).

You should also complete a Record of Accidents and Illness form, which you can download from the [Bradford Fostering Policies and Guidance](https://www.fosteringhandbook.com/bradford/forms.html) page and submit this to your Supervising Social Worker.

Schools monitor attendance closely and will let you know if they have any concerns about the child’s attendance at school. They will work with you and offer support to address any issues which may be impacting on the child’s attendance. The child’s social worker should also be informed of any concerns you have about a child’s attendance.

If the child is missing, see also [My Foster Child is Missing](https://www.fosteringhandbook.com/bradford/missing.html).

1. **Holidays and Short Breaks**

Under no circumstances are children in care allowed to take holidays or breaks during term-time and miss out on schooling. You should talk to your supervising social worker if there are special circumstances, such as a funeral.

1. **School Suspensions and Exclusions**

The school should tell you and the child’s social worker the reasons for the suspension or exclusion. You should decide with the child’s social worker who should speak to the child. The social worker should inform the parents, if appropriate. The social worker, after talking to the child and their parents, must look at whether to appeal against the decision to exclude the child.

The child’s social worker must also inform the child’s Independent Reviewing Officer.

Suspension/exclusion from school should always be a last resort for children in care so it is vital that you work with the school as soon as a child's behaviour becomes a cause for concern.

If a child is suspended from school for a fixed period, the school will provide homework for the first 5 days of the suspension.

The social worker must talk to you about suitable arrangements for making sure the child does schoolwork during the day and ensuring that the child does not go out during school hours.

From the 6th day, the school should provide a place for the child to be educated.

If the child is in primary school and receives a suspension or is in secondary school and is suspended for more than 5 days, the social worker should make sure a meeting is held within the 5 days to discuss the child’s return and how best this can be supported.

When a child is permanently excluded but is in the same foster home, the social worker should speak to the local education service to find another school placement.

In the case of permanent exclusion, a meeting of the governors will be held within 15 days to review the decision. If the meeting decides to uphold the decision to permanently exclude, an appeal can be made within 15 school days. The appeals form can be completed by you or anyone who has Parental Responsibility for the child.

1. **If a Young Woman Becomes Pregnant**

Becoming pregnant is not in itself a reason for a young person to stop attending school, or to cease education.

Where a young person becomes pregnant, their social worker must ensure that they remain in education if at all possible. This should be discussed with the young person, taking into account their wishes and feelings, and the Designated Teacher for Children in Care at the school should ensure an appropriate plan is in place if required.

1. **School Transport**

The primary responsibility for transporting a child to and from school is with the foster carer and this will be discussed prior to the child being placed with them as part of matching. Where this is not possible but it is considered in the best interests of the child to be placed with a carer who cannot transport, alternative forms of transport will be explored by the child’s social worker prior to placement being agreed.

1. **Training for those Involved in the Care and Education of Children in Care**

Under Section 22 (3A) of the Children Act 1989, local authorities have a duty to promote the educational achievement of Children in Care. Section 99 of the Children and Families Act 2014 requires an officer be appointed to take on this this duty – this is sometimes referred to as a ‘Virtual School Head’ (‘VSH’). The VSH should ensure that there are appropriate arrangements in place to meet the training needs of those responsible for promoting the educational achievement of Children Looked After. This includes carers, social workers, Designated Teachers and IROs.

The training will cover information about school admission arrangements; Special Educational Needs; attendance and exclusions; homework; choosing GCSE options; managing any challenging behaviour in relation to education; promoting positive educational and recreational activities and supporting children to be aspirational for their future education; training and employment, and the importance of listening to and taking account of the child’s wishes and feelings about education and the PEP process. You should speak to your Supervising Social Worker about this.