



STOCKPORT
METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL



Stockport Virtual School

**Information for adoptive parents and those with children
who left care on a special guardianship order or child
arrangements order**

Effective 1st September 2018



What is the guidance for?

Children who were formerly in care and have been placed straight from care with adoptive parents, on a special guardianship order (SGO), or a child arrangements order (CAO), are known as previously looked after children, and for the purposes of this guide, shortened to PLAC for ease.

As part of the virtual school's work with PLAC, we have devised this booklet for parents/guardians to support you in advocating for your child in school. Within it, you should find information and guidance about education and associated processes.

Although some of the information is generic, many details relate to Stockport schools, as the virtual school in Stockport is responsible for providing advice and information for PLAC in Stockport schools only. If your child attends a school outside of Stockport, the virtual school in that authority will be able to signpost you to relevant services in their area.

Enclosed is information about:

- Stockport virtual school's Local Offer for PLAC
- Admissions
- Exclusions
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- Early Years
- Pupil Premium Plus
- How to raise concerns with schools



Local Offer to meet the statutory duties relating to PLAC

Stockport virtual school will:

- Provide or signpost information and advice to the parents/guardians of PLAC who attend Stockport schools to help them advocate for their children as effectively as possible
- Provide support for Stockport schools around issues relating to the education of PLAC
- Provide support for parents/guardians of PLAC, in conjunction with Adoption Counts, around issues relating to education
- Provide a dedicated member of staff within our virtual school who will respond to enquiries within 3 working days. Please contact: virtualschoolteam@stockport.gov.uk or telephone 0161 474 4714
- Signpost any query about a child previously in the care of Stockport local authority, but now living outside its boundary, to the virtual school in the authority where they now live and go to school
- Provide a link within the Stockport council website to the Adoption Counts website for further information relating to adopted children

Adoption Counts

Adoptive parents, children and birth families sometimes have specific concerns or experience which differ from traditional family problems, and it can often be helpful to talk to someone objective who is experienced in all aspects of adoption.

You may therefore also be entitled to Adoption Support for your child through Adoption Counts.

Adoption Counts is a Regional Adoption Agency that covers 5 local authorities – Manchester, Cheshire East, Trafford, Stockport & Salford.

Adoptive families are able to request an Adoption Support Assessment at any time and access a range of targeted and specialist support groups. These include therapeutic parenting, non-violent resistance and children's play groups, amongst others. Adoption Counts also offer workshops which cover a range of topics such as attachment and brain development, working with schools and parenting in the digital world. They can also support you on a one to one basis and give you access to additional therapy through the Adoption Support Fund if they decide collectively that it's the right option for your family.

If requesting an Adoption Support Assessment you will need to be aware that the 3 year rule applies.

This means that the responsibility for an assessment of need is with your child's placing authority for the first 3 years post order. After that, it is the responsibility of the local authority in which you live.

For further information on all the services available from Adoption Counts please visit:

<https://adoptioncounts.org.uk/guide-adoption-support-services-provided-adoption-counts>



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School Admissions

For Stockport schools, applications must be made online by following the appropriate links at: <https://www.stockport.gov.uk/topic/nursery-and-school-admissions>. Full details regarding admission policies and procedures can also be found on this webpage.

For schools outside Stockport, each local authority has their own school admissions team which can be found by searching the website for that particular local authority.

All schools must have oversubscription criteria for each relevant age group and the highest priority must be given to looked after children (LAC) and PLAC. In the case of faith schools, the governors may give priority to LAC and PLAC of the appropriate faith ahead of other LAC and PLAC.

Should the preferred school be full, the applicant will be placed on the appropriate part of the waiting list.

If your child has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), then you should also liaise with Stockport's SEN Team by contacting specialeducation@stockport.gov.uk or by telephone 0161 474 2525.

If your child is refused a place at a school, you will be offered the right to appeal against the decision.

Further information:

Admissions Support and Advice Team

Admissions.Support@stockport.gov.uk

0161 217 6022



Exclusions

Stockport's Education Access Service provides advice and guidance to parents, schools and other services on exclusion from school and ensures that education is in place for pupils who are permanently excluded or out of school for other reasons.

The following information has been taken directly from Department for Education (DfE) publication 'Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England' (2017) and provides an overview of key points relating to exclusion, but should be considered alongside advice and guidance from Stockport's Education Access Team.

'Informal' or 'unofficial' exclusions, such as sending pupils home 'to cool off', are not allowed, even if they are with the agreement of parents. Any exclusion of a pupil, even for short periods of time, must follow the formal process including being formally recorded. Any fixed-period exclusion must have a stated end date.

There is no list of set behaviours for which a pupil can and cannot be excluded, and the decision to exclude lies with the head teacher. Head teachers can only exclude a pupil for a disciplinary reason (e.g. because their behaviour violates the school's behaviour policy). They cannot, for example, exclude a pupil for academic performance/ability, or simply because they have additional needs or a disability that the school feels it is unable to meet. A head teacher can exclude for behaviour outside of school, or for repeatedly disobeying academic instructions. There are 2 types of exclusion:

Fixed-period exclusion: when a pupil is barred from the school for a fixed amount of time (including exclusions during lunchtime). A pupil may be excluded for one or more fixed periods (up to a maximum of 45 school days in a single academic year)

Permanent exclusion: when a pupil is permanently barred from the school premises. Permanent exclusion should only be used as a last resort, in response to a serious breach or persistent breaches of the school's behaviour policy; and where allowing the pupil to remain in school would seriously harm the education or welfare of the pupil or others in the school

When a head teacher excludes a pupil, they must without delay let parents know the type of exclusion and the reason(s) for it. They must also, without delay, provide parents with the following information in writing:

- the reason(s) for the exclusion;
- the length of the exclusion;
- the parents' right to put forward their case about the exclusion to the governing board, how they should go about doing this and how the pupil can be involved; and
- when relevant, what alternative provision will be provided from the sixth day of a fixed-period exclusion.

Schools should take reasonable steps to set and mark work for pupils during the first five school days of an exclusion; and alternative provision must be arranged from the sixth day. There are obvious benefits in arranging alternative provision to begin as soon as possible after an exclusion.

Schools should have a strategy for reintegrating a pupil who returns to school following a fixed-period exclusion and for managing their future behaviour.

Further Information:

Education Access Team

eas@stockport.gov.uk

0161 474 3971



Preventative action and support for behaviour

Where your child is experiencing difficulties with behaviour in school, there are a number of ways to approach schools regarding this:

- In primary schools, the class teacher is usually your first port of call to discuss any issues
- In secondary schools, the relevant member of the pastoral team would usually be your contact in school
- Meet with the Designated Teacher for PLAC – every school has to have one by law. Discuss any triggers and how they are best avoided, as well as any other adjustments that can be put in place by school. Explore with school whether any Pupil Premium Plus (PPP) monies can be used to purchase appropriate support/assessment
- Schools could make a referral to Stockport Behaviour Support Service
- Schools may feel it is necessary to organise an Educational Psychology assessment to provide some support strategies. This should be via the school's Educational Psychologist (EP)
- If your child has had some specialist assessments, work with the school to ensure advice is followed
- If you feel your child has an unidentified learning need, discuss with the school whether your child may need additional SEN support or even a statutory assessment for an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP)

If your child is already placed at SEN Support or already has an EHCP, ask to speak to the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO). For additional advice and guidance you could liaise with Stockport Special Educational Needs Disability Information and Advice Support Service (SENDIASS) or Parents in Partnership Stockport (PIPS) – see contact details within the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities section of this document.



Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

If your child has SEND, or you think that they may have, information and advice can be found on [Stockport's 0-25 Local Offer homepage](#).

Many pupils have special educational needs at some time during their education. These might already be known when your child is very young, or might be identified later once your child starts school.

The majority of children will have their SEND met in their local mainstream school, sometimes with additional support. For a small number of children, Stockport local authority may make a statutory assessment of their needs. Very few children and young people have SEND which requires specialist provision.

In the first instance, you should contact your child's school directly for information and advice regarding provision for SEND via the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO). Contact details should be listed on the school's website.

Further information:

specialeducation@stockport.gov.uk

0161 474 2525

Additionally, you could contact the following services for further advice and support:

Stockport Special Educational Needs Disability Information and Advice Support Service (SENDIASS)

SENDIASS is a free, confidential and impartial service for parents and carers, children and young people (up to 25 years). Stockport SENDIASS offers independent support for parents and families who have children and young people with SEND. This independent advice is also offered directly to young people aged 16 to 25 years with a SEND.

<https://www.kids.org.uk/stockport-sendiass>

stockport@kids.org.uk

0161 480 3189

Parents in Partnership Stockport (PIPS)

PIPS is Stockport's official local parent carer forum run by parents for parents, carers, grandparents and family members who have a child or young person between the ages of 0 and 25 years with SEND.

<http://www.pipstockport.org/>

info@pipstockport.org

07786 101072



Early Education

Some 2 year old children and all 3 and 4 year old children are entitled to 15 hours per week of early education for 38 weeks of the year. You can get your entitlement at any Ofsted registered early years provider such as preschool, day nursery, childminder or school nursery.

In addition working parents of 3 and 4 year olds may also be eligible for a further 15 hours of childcare, 30 hours funded childcare in total. To claim 30 hours funded childcare, you must first create a Childcare Account and get an eligibility code from HMRC.

Some early year's providers offer you the option to stretch your 15 or 30 hours entitlements over 52 weeks of the year meaning fewer hours per week, but over more weeks.

All places start from 1st January, 1st April or 1st September after your child's second or third birthday.

Further information www.stockport.gov.uk/funded-childcare-for-3-and-4-year-olds

To apply for your 2, 3 and 4 year old early education entitlements you can either;

- Contact an early year's provider direct they can be found on this web link:
www.stockport.gov.uk/childcare
- Or to apply for a school nursery place via the on line admissions process at:
<https://www.stockport.gov.uk/apply-for-school-place>

2 year old children eligible for free early education

Children who have left care through an adoption order, SGO or CAO are eligible to a free early education place. You will need to provide a copy of your order as evidence to the local authority to enable them to issue you with a 2 year old code. Once confirmed, you will receive a letter, which contains the code reference to take to your chosen childcare provider.

Further information:

Contact your health visitor or visit: www.stockport.gov.uk/2yearold

Early Years Project Team: eypt@stockport.gov.uk

Telephone: 0161 474 4294

To find childcare, visit: www.stockport.gov.uk/childcare



Pupil Premium Plus

Pupil Premium Plus (PPP) for PLAC is a grant given to schools based on the number of PLAC they identify on the school census. It amounts to £2,300 per pupil, per year, paid directly to the school for the specific purpose of “raising the attainment of disadvantaged pupils of all abilities to reach their potential”. It is vital that you notify the school about your child’s legal status, otherwise the school will not be able to claim.

It is good practice for schools to establish any barriers your child may face and discuss plans for spending the PPP with you as parent/guardian so that these barriers may be overcome. The school is required to publish its pupil premium (PP) strategy online and this should include the principles underpinning the spending of the PP grant for disadvantaged pupils.

It is important to note that all queries relating to the school’s use of PPP must be directed to the school. The Virtual School Headteacher (VSH) does not receive, manage or allocate this funding. The virtual school provide general advice to schools about the use of PPP in the same way as we do for LAC.

The DfE have issued the following guidance for the effective use of PPP:

Getting the most from Pupil Premium Plus:

Approaches that are:

- Individually tailored to the needs and strengths of each pupil
- Consistent (based on agreed core principles and components) but also flexible and responsive
- Based on evidence of what works
- Focussed on clear short-term goals which give opportunities for pupils to experience success
- Include regular quality feedback from teaching staff
- Engage parents/carers in the agreement and evaluation of arrangements for education support (e.g. via the PEP)
- Supporting pupil transition (e.g. primary-secondary/KS3-4)
- Raising aspirations through access to high-quality educational experiences
- Promote the young person’s awareness and understanding of their own thought process (metacognition) and help to develop problem-solving strategies

Which emphasise:

- Relationship-building: both with appropriate adults and with peers
- An emotionally-intelligent approach to the setting of clear behaviour boundaries
- Increasing pupil’s understanding of their own emotions and identity
- Positive reinforcement
- Building self-esteem
- Relevance to the learner: relate to pupil’s interests where possible; make it matter to them
- A joined-up approach involving social worker/carer/VSH and other relevant professionals
- Strong and visionary leadership on the part of both of the pupil’s head teachers
- A child-centred approach to assessment for learning



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How to raise concerns with a school

If you have a complaint about your child's school, every school should have a complaints policy and procedure available on their website. This will explain what you need to do and who to contact in order to submit a complaint.