

Kinship Care FAQs for Schools

What is kinship care, and how is it different from foster care?

Kinship care is when a child is raised by relatives or close family friends due to their parents being unable to care for them. Unlike foster care, kinship carers may not always be formally approved or receive the same level of support, though some may have legal orders like special guardianship.

How can we identify if a child is in kinship care?

Schools may be informed by the carer, social worker or local authority. It's important to create a safe, non-judgmental space for carers to share this information and to record it sensitively in school systems.

How can we identify if a child is in kinship care?

This depends on the child's legal status, such as whether they have a special guardianship order (SGO) or a child arrangements order (CAO). Schools should ask for documentation and clarify who has parental responsibility to ensure the right people are involved in decisions.

Are children in kinship care entitled to additional funding or support?

If they were previously looked after by the local authority, they may be eligible for pupil premium plus. Others may qualify for free school meals (FSM) or special educational needs (SEN) support depending on their needs.

What challenges might children in kinship care face in school?

They may experience:

- emotional or behavioural difficulties due to trauma or instability
- gaps in learning or attendance
- feelings of difference or stigma

How can we support kinship carers as part of the school community?

- include them in all communications and meetings
- offer flexibility for appointments or transitions
- signpost to support services like Kinship or Family Rights Group
- recognise and celebrate diverse family structures

Any further questions?

If you have any further questions or would like support, please contact the Virtual School Extended Duties team vsextendedduties@hants.gov.uk