

PLAC - FAQs for Parents and Guardians

Common acronyms and abbreviations:

DfE -Department for Education
DT -Designated Teacher
ESP -Education Support Plan
FSM -Free School Meals
PLAC -Previously Looked After Child
PP -Pupil Premium PP+ -Pupil Premium Plus

Previously Looked After Children (PLAC)

- If your child was under the care of a local authority before their new order of permanence (through adoption, special guardianship or a care arrangement/residency order), even if they were placed with you during this time, then they will be classified as a previously looked after child (PLAC) by the school.

What is the role of the Virtual School in supporting children who were previously looked after?

- Since September 2018, virtual schools have had a statutory responsibility to promote the education of previously looked-after children. Virtual schools have a duty to provide advice, guidance and information to schools, parents and a range of professionals around the educational needs of previously looked after children.

Which virtual school should I go to?

- For advice and guidance, you should contact the virtual school within the local authority where the school is located, even if this is different to your home address. If your child attends a Hampshire educational setting, then you would contact the Hampshire Virtual School. If your child attends a Surrey education setting, even if you live in Hampshire, then you would contact the Surrey Virtual School for advice and guidance.

What should I expect from the Virtual School?

- The Virtual School can offer advice on educational needs, interventions, and how to access support services. They may also offer training and support to schools. They are not able to case hold for your child, or access additional funding but are happy to assist with your education-related queries.

PLAC - FAQs for Parents and Guardians

Are previously looked-after children entitled to additional funding or support in school?

- Previously looked after children are eligible for PLAC pupil premium, known as pupil premium plus (PP+) to support academic progress, emotional wellbeing and social development to improve their educational outcomes.
- Schools must have a named, appropriately qualified designated teacher (DT) to promote the education of the school's looked after and previously looked after children. PLAC also have priority for in school admissions.

Who is the designated teacher for previously looked-after children in my child's school? What is their role?

- To find out who the designated teacher (DT) is at your child's school, you should contact the school directly. The designated teacher is a qualified teacher with a specific role in supporting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children. This is a statutory role in school, and all schools must have a designated teacher.
- The DfE sets out specific requirements for the role of DTs. You can find out more in their publication: [The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children](#)

What is an education support plan?

- The education support plan (ESP) can be found on the Virtual School Moodle: [Course: PLAC Education Support Plans \(ESPs\)](#). It is a document designed to identify and address the specific educational needs of children who have experienced care adversity, including adopted children, and those with special guardianship orders (SGOs) and child arrangement orders (CAOs). It is a collaborative tool developed by the Virtual Schools of Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Portsmouth and Southampton alongside regional adoption agency, Adopt South, to improve attendance, engagement and outcomes.
- The ESP is not a statutory document. Virtual schools would suggest that this tool be used as best practice within educational provisions. The ESP is intended to highlight the specific needs of children impacted by trauma and loss (where these needs are not already identified by any other existing plan).
- With parent/guardian consent, it is expected that the ESP will be initiated at the start of the academic year, or whenever the child changes an education setting, and then monitored and reviewed each term so that any new targets can be agreed and implemented. The ESP is designed to be dynamic and responsive, with shared, collaborative meetings to best support the education and provision for the child.

PLAC - FAQs for Parents and Guardians

What is pupil premium plus (PP+) for previously looked-after children?

- The purpose of the PLAC PP+ is to raise educational attainment and to close the gap between PLAC students and their peers.
- The PLAC PP+ can be used to facilitate a wide range of educational support for previously looked-after children. It is important that interventions supported by pupil premium should be evidence-based and in the best interests of the child.

Which previously looked-after children are eligible for PP+?

Any child in school from Reception to Year 11, who was looked after by a local authority or other state care before their new order of permanence (through adoption, special guardianship or a care arrangement / residency order) is eligible for PP+ funding. This includes children adopted from state care or equivalent outside of England and Wales. Schools receive PP+ funding directly from the government *if* PLAC status is recorded on the school's autumn census in October.

What is the designated teacher's role in pupil premium plus?

The designated teacher has an important role in ensuring the specific needs of previously looked-after children are understood by the school's staff and reflected in how the school uses PLAC PP+ to support these children.

For previously looked-after children, PLAC PP+ funding is managed by the child's school. It is not a personal budget for individual children.

We recommend that the education support plan is used to support the decisions around the use of the PLAC PP+.

The designated teacher should:

- help raise previously looked-after children's parents' and guardians' awareness of the PLAC PP+ and other support for previously looked-after children – this includes encouraging parents of previously looked-after children to inform the school if their child is eligible to attract PLAC PP+ funding
- play a key part in decisions on how the PLAC PP+ is used to support previously looked-after children
- encourage parents' and guardians' involvement in deciding how the PLAC PP+ is used to support their child and be the main contact for queries about its use

How do schools claim PP+?

In order to receive PP+ funding, schools must record PLAC status of all eligible pupils on the school's autumn census in October. Schools cannot record this information without the consent of a pupil's parent or guardian. If PLAC status is not recorded on the autumn census, then school will not receive PP+ for the year.

PLAC - FAQs for Parents and Guardians

Can all schools claim PP+ for PLAC?

All state-funded education providers may claim the pupil premium plus for children in school years R to 11. This includes children in alternative provision or an education centre.

Independent schools are generally not eligible to receive PP+ funding directly unless the SEN Service have commissioned a full-time place for a pupil with an EHCP. The DfE states:

[Pupil premium 2025 to 2026: technical note - GOV.UK](#)

8. Independent settings

"For PP grant based on FSM Ever 6, eligible service children and PLAC, DfE will allocate funding to each local authority for eligible pupils in any independent setting where the authority pays full tuition fees. This does not include non-maintained special schools, who will receive PP grant direct from DfE."

Children who are electively home educated, privately educated or are post-16 students are currently not eligible for PLAC PP+.

Will my child's legal status be kept confidential?

Your child's legal status should remain confidential at all times. It is your decision as to who you inform that your child is PLAC. When pupils transfer between schools, staff should not disclose this to the receiving school unless you have given permission for this.

Schools will treat your child's information with sensitivity and will follow confidentiality and GDPR policy and procedures.

Please ensure that any new school is informed so that they may add your child's status as previously looked after to the school census, which will attract the PLAC PP+.

It is your choice whether or not to share your child's PLAC status. Schools cannot access PP+ or offer PLAC targeted support unless the parent or carer chooses to disclose their child's status.

Can the pupil premium + be used to provide school uniform?

It is expected that a parent or guardian would provide school uniform for their child. If the family is experiencing financial difficulties, or are receiving specific benefits, and are unable to provide a school uniform for their child then they should seek advice from their child's school.

PLAC - FAQs for Parents and Guardians

Can the pupil premium + be used for school trips/activities?

It is expected that parents and guardians will provide the financial support for additional curricular activities. If your financial situation means that you are unable to support the cost of the activity, or are receiving specific benefits, then please discuss with school staff.

Can a child receive PP+ as PLAC *and* PP for free school meals or service premium?

A child cannot receive both PP (FSM Ever 6) and PP+. If a child qualifies for both, only PP+ is awarded, as it is the higher rate. The child still receives FSM if eligible, but the school does not receive the FSM/Ever 6 PP funding in addition to PP+.

Pupils with a parent serving in the armed forces can receive the service pupil premium in addition to PP or PP+, as it serves a different purpose - supporting pastoral needs rather than academic attainment.

Is PP+ a ring-fenced personal budget?

PP+ is not a personal budget. It is funding allocated to the school to support and improve educational outcomes (academic and pastoral) for its cohort of eligible pupils.

It is the school's decision how they spend PP+. However, the DfE recommends that the funding specifically supports the children that it is intended for. Some common examples of how schools use the funding include pastoral support (emotional literacy, mentoring, counselling), academic interventions, staff training in trauma-informed and attachment-aware practices, resources to support learning and engagement and possible enrichment activities to build confidence and social skills.

Do schools have to tell parents what they spend the PP funding on?

The DfE advise that it is good practice for schools to work in partnership with parents, and to have transparent processes in place. It is recommended that parents and guardians are involved in the discussions as to how PP+ is used to support their child. We recommend that the education support plan (ESP) is used to support decision making in this regard.

PLAC - FAQs for Parents and Guardians

How can I work with the school to explore emotive aspects of the curriculum?

If you feel your child may be affected by a particular area of the school curriculum (topics involving grief, loss, family trees, genetics, personal biographies, etc), it would be helpful to discuss this at the beginning of each academic year, ideally in an education support plan meeting. Ask the designated teacher (DT) to talk with the class teacher or head of year to discuss any potentially difficult areas of the curriculum.

We recommend that school inform parents/guardians when difficult areas in the curriculum are going to be taught or discussed so that this can you prepare your child. We do not recommend that children are removed from lessons. With good preparation and support, children should be able to take part in all lessons as long as they have no surprises and have processed their feelings about tricky topics in advance. Specific advice on this topic can be sought from the Virtual School.

School does not seem to understand the needs of my child. What can I do?

We would advise you to discuss any concerns you have with the designated teacher (DT) at your child's school. You can also request that an education support plan is put in place. School staff are very welcome to contact the Virtual School's Extended Duties team for advice and support. Parents are also welcome to contact us if they need advice or guidance on school and educational matters.

I am worried that photos of my child may be published on their website or publicly shared. How do I avoid this?

Schools are required to have parental permission for photographs to be used, and you will be asked to sign a consent form. You may wish to consider giving permission for a photo to be taken from behind, or from the side. This may be helpful as your child gets older and wants to be included in things such as the newsletter publication to the school community. For younger children, you may like to consider the use of face paints or masks to conceal identity, especially in school performances.

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