



Hampshire
County Council



Hampshire
Virtual
School

Guide

to PEPs, pupil premium,
statutory duties and much
more.

**For designated teachers, social
workers, carers and others working
with care experienced children.**



Hampshire
County Council

Virtual School

Making the difference

“The education setting is probably the greatest opportunity we have, outside the family, to promote and maintain children’s well being.”

(Geddes, 2006)

My teacher gave me the best gift of all...

Believing in me!

Contents

- Hampshire Virtual School
- Designated teachers' statutory duties
- School places (admissions)
- School suspensions & exclusions
- School attendance
- Barriers to learning
- Understanding attachment and trauma needs
- Identify & understand needs
- PACE approach
- PEP toolkit/Reach2Teach app
- SEND/EHCP
- Personal education plans (PEPs)
- Pupil premium
- Early years
- Previously looked after children (PLAC)
- Children with a social worker (CWSW)
- Check list/glossary
- Contact us



Making the difference

This guide aims to put together key information and guidance for designated teachers, social workers, carers and all those who support care experienced children.

Principally focused on Hampshire schools, this guide covers all children in the care of Hampshire County Council who have been placed out of county.

Whilst this guidance sets out to provide simple and consistent advice, we appreciate that an individual approach is needed in some circumstances.

Virtual School staff are always available to help and support the education and development of Hampshire children. Please [contact us at any time](#).

This document has many references and links to web pages and documents. Whilst every effort has been made to ensure these are still live, some links might break. Please google the document if the link no longer works.

This guidance is up to date based on the referenced guidance and dated documents. The government and its departments may update these at any time. Please check government websites for any updated guidance. This document is up to date as of 31st August 2025

If a child can't learn the way we teach, maybe we should teach the way they learn



Hampshire Virtual School

Our Vision

Working in partnership, all children we care for will have high-quality education and support so they are prepared for life.

The Virtual School promotes a culture of high aspirations, progress and achievements for all our vulnerable children and young people.

Our Purpose

Our Values

Collaborative

We work with stakeholders, internally and externally, creating a supportive, aspirational and active network that benefits the child.

Problem solvers

We identify and provide creative solutions to complex scenarios related to our children's education

Passionate

We make a difference. We are knowledgeable, motivated, tenacious and energetic in the work we do for our children

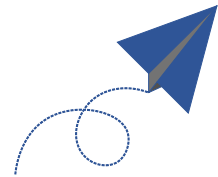
Dedicated

We are committed to enabling a positive shift for our children, ensuring they have a high-quality education that is right for them

Resilient

We are unfaltering in supporting and challenging ourselves, each other, and our stakeholders, ensuring our children achieve their educational goals

Virtual Schools



Virtual schools exist across the country to help improve the educational outcomes of children who are looked after.

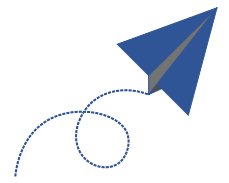
The attainment and progress of this group of children continues to be considerably lower than that of their peers. Since September 2014, it has been statutory that local authorities appoint a virtual school head teacher. A virtual school team often supports the head teacher, but this aspect is not statutory.

The virtual school approach is to work with looked after children as if they were in a single school, providing support and challenge to the schools they attend, tracking their progress, and supporting them to achieve as much as possible.

As the Virtual School, we work in partnership with schools, carers, social workers, independent reviewing officers and a wide range of other professionals to:

- remove barriers and inequalities in educational achievement for children and young people in the care of Hampshire local authority
- ensure that there is suitable education in place for all children looked after by the local authorities
- make sure each child receives the help and support they need to be a successful learner
- prioritise schools judged by Ofsted to be **good** or **outstanding** for looked after children in need of a new school in line with statutory guidance and our admissions protocol 2023/24
- ensure that there is effective and timely communication between all professionals, particularly in relation to possible education placement changes, admissions and exclusions
- challenge low expectations, stereotypes and misconceptions around this group of children and young people
- implementing pupil premium arrangements for looked after children in accordance with the latest conditions of grant published by the DfE





Virtual schools extended duties

Children previously looked after

Since September 2018, virtual schools have had a statutory duty towards children previously looked after. The virtual school is not the corporate parent for this cohort and does not track their education progress or take up specific casework. The duty requires virtual schools to “promote their educational achievement through the provision of information and advice” (Statutory Guidance 2018).

Local authorities have a duty under section 23ZZA of the Children Act 1989 to promote the educational achievement of previously looked-after children in their area by providing information and advice to:

- any person who has parental responsibility for the child
- providers of funded early years education, designated teachers for previously looked-after children in maintained schools and academies
- any other person the authority considers appropriate for promoting the educational achievement of relevant children

Children with a social worker

Since September 2021, virtual schools have had an extended duty towards children with a social worker. The extended virtual school head role will:

- make visible the disadvantages that children with a social worker can experience, enhancing partnerships between education settings and local authorities to help all agencies hold high aspirations for these children
- promote practice that supports children’s engagement in education, recognising that attending an education setting can be an important factor in helping to keep children safe from harm
- level up children’s outcomes and narrow the attainment gap so every child can reach their potential

Children in kinship care

In September 2024, virtual schools extended duty role was further extended to bring greater focus and visibility to the distinct needs of children in kinship care.

The additional activities for the extension to kinship care are:

- Raising awareness of the needs and disadvantage of children in different types of kinship care arrangements
- Promoting practice that supports attendance and engagement of kinship children in education
- Promoting practice that improves the educational attainment of children in kinship care
- Expanding the provision of advice and information, on request, to all kinship carers with special guardianship orders and child arrangement orders, regardless of whether their child was previously looked after by the local authority.

Virtual School duties

Designated teacher duties

Children in care
looked after child
child looked after
(CIC / LAC / CLA)

**Previously looked
after child (PLAC)**
adopted Children
child arrangement
order (CAO)
special guardianship
orders (SGO)
kinship care

Children with a social
worker

child protection (CP)
child in need (CIN)

Remove barriers and inequalities
in educational achievement for
children looked after by
Hampshire County Council local
authority

Ensure there is suitable education
in place for our children and that
transitions are supported and well
planned

Prioritise schools judged by
Ofsted to be **good** or
outstanding for children requiring
a new school place in line with
DfE statutory guidance.

Work in partnership with social
care colleagues to ensure every
child has a high quality and
effective personal education plan
(PEP). This should ensure each
child receives the help and
support they need to be a
successful learner

Implement pupil premium
arrangements for children in care
in accordance with the DfE
conditions of grant

Track and monitor attendance,
exclusions, progress and
attainment to ensure support and
intervention is targeted.

Provide specialist advice, training
and support for schools,
designated teachers and social
workers

Provide advice and guidance
around children previously in care
(PLAC) and children with a social
worker (CWSW)

A Section 47 enquiry is initiated to decide whether and what type of action is required to safeguard and promote the welfare of a child who is suspected of, or likely to be, suffering significant harm, this can lead to a child being subject to a child protection plan (CPP) or in some circumstances taken into care.

In legal terms, children can become looked after through three main routes:

1. Care orders made by the courts under section 31 of the Children Act 1989

Where children are subject to a care order, parental responsibilities are vested in the local authority through its social services department.

2. Voluntary accommodation arrangements under section 20 of the Children Act 1989

The local authority does not acquire parental responsibility if a child is accommodated under a voluntary arrangement. However, they undertake day-to-day parental responsibilities for the child on behalf of the child's parents and any other adult who has parental responsibility for the child.

3. Police protection or involvement with the youth justice system



Hampshire
Safeguarding
Children
Partnership

[Homepage - Hampshire SCP](#)

NSPCC
Learning

[Child protection system for England](#)
[NSPCC Learning](#)

The Virtual School's work is aligned with Hampshire children's social care teams. The family help, CIC and refugee teams where children sit determine which team within the Virtual School supports them.

The Early Years team supports all children from birth to year R.

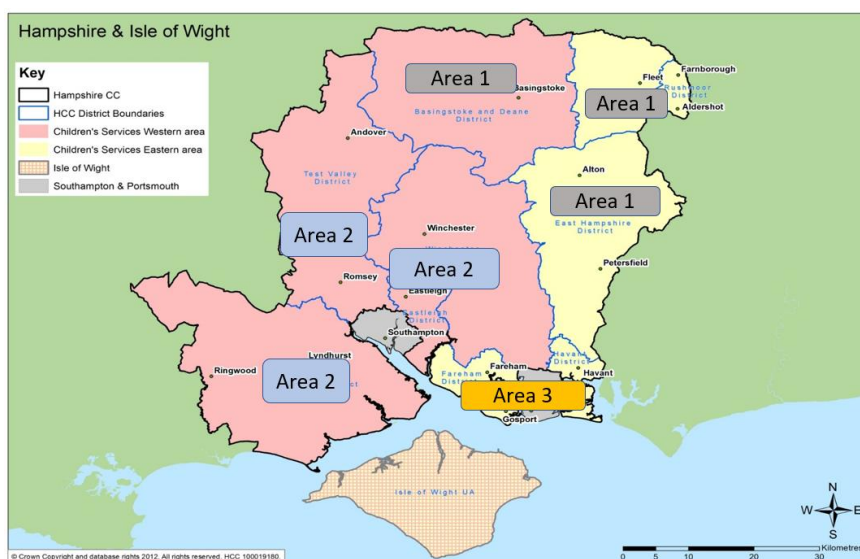
All children and young people in years 1 to 11 are supported by our area teams which, align with the social care teams. For example, a child might sit within Basingstoke CIC (Area 1) but attend school in Winchester (Area 2). The Area 1 team would support this child.

The Post 16 team supports all year 12 and 13 students with the support of the Education Participation team.

The UASC team supports our unaccompanied asylum-seeking children. Hampshire schools can seek advice and support for these young people through [EMTAS](#).

Our Extended Duties team also offers advice and guidance to support PLAC/CWSW and those in kinship care across the county.

Area
Area 1 Basingstoke & Dean Hart & Rushmoor East Hants
Area 2 Test Valley New Forest Winchester & Eastleigh
Area 3 Fareham, Gosport Havant



Don't worry if you don't know which team supports a child or young person. Please email the virtual school inbox with some identifying details, and the appropriate member of staff will reply. For children in care, you can also look on Asset to see who the child or young person's education liaison officer (ELO) is.

virtuelschool@hants.gov.uk

Schools have a crucial role in safeguarding vulnerable children. DTs and designated safeguarding leads (DSL) should work in close collaboration.

Schools should always follow their safeguarding policy and practice, irrespective of a child's status.

Additional protocols may be in place around your most vulnerable children to ensure they are safeguarded. For example, children in care who might be frequently missing may have an agreed-upon plan/protocol that needs to be followed.

If you are ever in doubt about a situation or circumstance, speak with your DSL.

Hampshire Children's Services

Monday to Thursday: 8.30am to 5pm

Friday: 8.30am to 4.30pm

Phone: 0300 555 1384

At all other times, please contact the out-of-hours service on 0300 555 1373

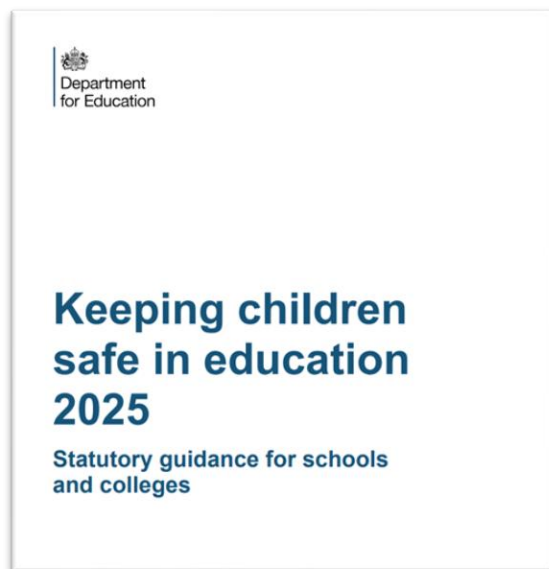
Professionals should complete the [Inter-Agency Referral Form \(IARF\)](#) to report child welfare and safeguarding concerns.

[Safeguarding children and young people | Children and Families | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](#)

[Safeguarding children in education | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](#)

[Report child abuse | Children and Families | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](#)

[Safeguarding guidance | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](#)



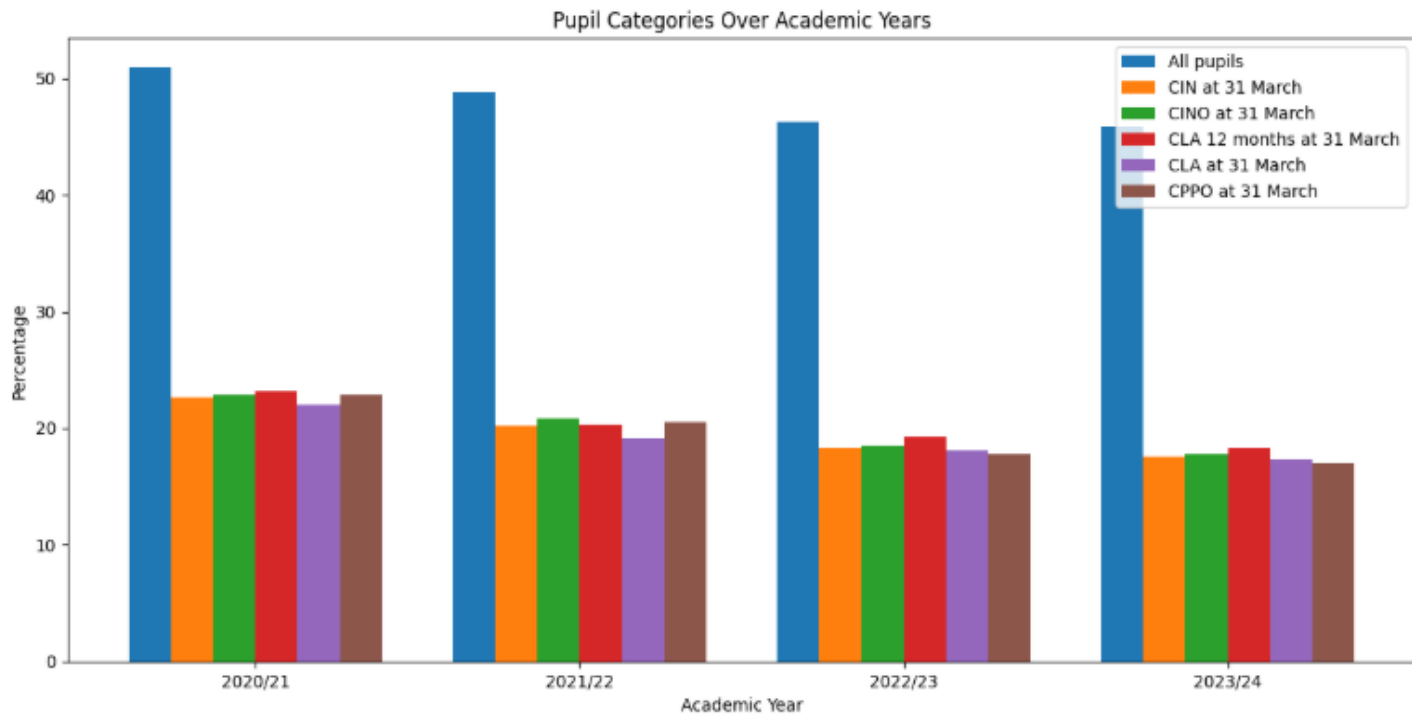
[Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Why virtual schools?

12

“Research suggests that when looked after children are compared with children who have not been in care, they tend to have poorer outcomes in a number of areas such as educational attainment and mental and physical health.”

(Rahilly and Hendry, (2014), in NSPCC [Looked after children | NSPCC Learning](#)).



**Data from DfE
31/07/2025**

Attainment 8 is a measure published annually showing the average academic performance of a secondary school. It is calculated by adding together pupils' highest scores across eight government-approved school subjects, including English and maths.

The nature and environments many children grow up in has significantly impact their development and learning. This graph clearly shows how being in care can impact a child's education.

The impact is not limited to children in care but also those on CIN and CPPs. Care-experienced children progress and achieve significantly lower educational outcomes than their peers, leading to lifelong disadvantages.

Virtual schools exist to ensure the best possible outcomes can be achieved by all care-experienced children.

The Virtual School was created as a direct response to the impact that being in care can have on a child's education.

- **Time in care:** young people who have been in longer-term care do better than those **in need** but not in care and better than those who have only been in short-term care, so it appears that care may protect them educationally.
- **Placement changes:** each additional change of care placement after age 11 is associated with one-third of a grade less at GCSE.
- **School changes:** young people in care who changed schools in Years 10 or 11 scored over five grades less than those who did not.
- **School absence:** For every 5% of possible school sessions missed due to unauthorised school absences, young people in care scored over two grades less at GCSE.
- **School suspensions:** for every additional school day missed due to fixed-term exclusions, young people in care scored one-sixth of a grade less at GCSE.
- **Placement type:** at age 16, young people living in residential, or another form of care scored over six grades less than those who were in kinship or foster care.
- **Educational support:** young people report that teachers provide the most significant educational support, but teachers suggest they need more training to do this effectively.

[The Educational Progress of Looked After Children in England: Linking Care and Educational Data 301411.pdf \(ox.ac.uk\)](#)



Department
for Education

The designated teacher for looked- after and previously looked-after children

Statutory guidance on their roles and
responsibilities

February 2018

Guidance

Promoting the education of children with a social worker and children in kinship care arrangements: virtual school head role extension

Updated 17 July 2025



Children and Social Work Act 2017

CHAPTER 16

Explanatory Notes have been produced to assist in the
understanding of this Act and are available separately

newbook.book
(socialworkengland.org.uk)

[Promoting The Education of Looked After Children
and Previously Looked After Children](#)

[Promoting the education of looked-after children and
previously looked-after children](#)
(publishing.service.gov.uk)

[Promoting the education of children with a social
worker](#) (publishing.service.gov.uk)



Department
for Education

Promoting the education of looked- after children and previously looked- after children

Statutory guidance for local authorities

February 2018

All schools **must have a designated teacher (DT)**. The teacher must be **qualified** and, where possible, a member of the senior team.

- **As well as children in care, the DT has responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of previously looked-after pupils who are no longer looked after** in England and Wales because they are subject to an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order, or were adopted from **state care** outside England and Wales
- The governing body should ensure the DT undertakes appropriate training.
- The governing body should ensure they and the DT regard any guidance issued by the secretary of state.
- The DT should report to the governing board on the attendance and attainment of CLA children. They should also report on how the pupil premium money is spent.

The most effective DTs have a **leadership role** in promoting the educational achievement of every looked-after and previously looked-after child on the school's roll. This involves working with virtual schools to promote the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children and **promoting a whole school culture where the personalised learning needs** of every looked-after and previously looked-after child matter and their **personal, emotional and academic needs are prioritised**.



The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children

Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities

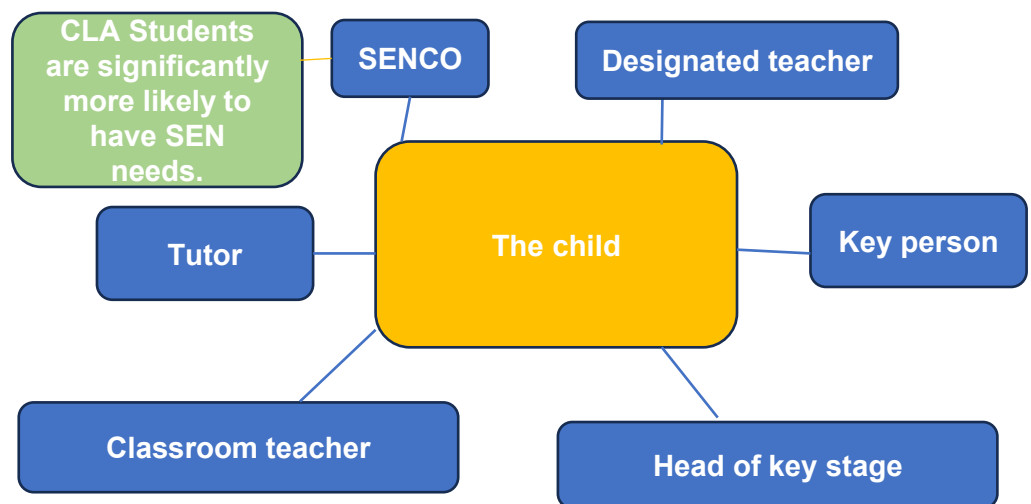
February 2018

[Promoting The Education of Looked After Children and Previously Looked After Children](#)

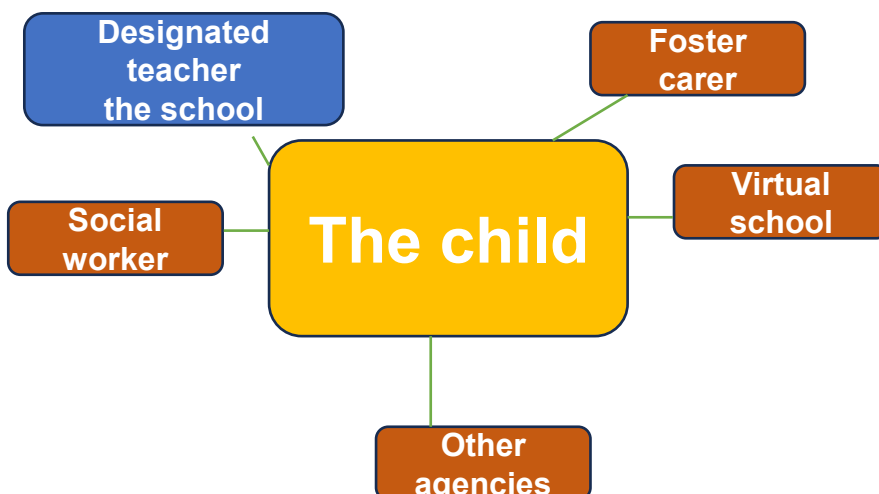
Key tasks for DTs include but are not limited to:

- contributing to the development and review of whole school policies
- be a source of advice for teachers, HLTAs
- working directly with LAC and PLAC and their parents, carers and guardians
- lead responsibility for the PEP (Education Plans for PLAC)
- act as a lead professional for the cohort internally and externally
- monitor, support and report on cohort progress/attainment
- working in close collaboration with senior leaders, SENCO and DSL to ensure the needs of the cohort are assessed, understood and addressed effectively

The role of the DT is to build the network around the child in school:



And to lead on education for the wider team around the child:



The social worker should make a school admission application for a Hampshire CLA pupil. In some other authorities, the virtual school may make applications directly.

The application should clearly state that the child is looked after. This enables the school to liaise with the social worker/virtual school to ensure an appropriate transition and the transfer of all relevant information between schools.

As corporate parents, we want the best for the child and will always look to find the school that best supports a child's needs.

Schools can go over PAN to take looked after children.

If necessary, the virtual school/LA and secretary of state can direct a school to admit a young person.

The most important thing is that the team around the child work together to support that child and give them every opportunity to succeed.

[applying-for-schoolplaces-Hampshire-Children-in-Care.pdf \(hants.gov.uk\)](#)

1.7 All schools must have oversubscription criteria for each 'relevant age group' and the highest priority must be given, unless otherwise provided in this Code, to looked after children and all previously looked after children.

3.26 A local authority also has the power to direct the admission authority for any maintained school in England (other than a school for which they are the admission authority) to admit a child who is looked after by the local authority, even when the school is full.

3.29 Where a local authority considers that an Academy will best meet the needs of any child, it can ask the Academy to admit that child but has no power to direct it to do so. The local authority and the Academy will usually come to an agreement, but if the Academy refuses to admit the child, the local authority can ask the Secretary of State to intervene. The Secretary of State has the power under an Academy's Funding Agreement to direct the Academy to admit a child



School Admissions Code

Mandatory requirements and statutory guidance for admission authorities, governing bodies, local authorities, schools adjudicators and admission appeals panels

September 2021

[School admissions code - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

The Virtual School understands and recognises that some challenging situations can occur with children which leads the school to consider using its suspensions and exclusion policies.

We work with DTs and schools to ensure that needs are fully understood and met to minimise any likelihood of incidents leading to suspensions and exclusions.

We ask that DTs take proactive steps to communicate difficulties early with the Virtual School and a child's social worker so that a collective effort can ensure the best outcomes.

With our training and support available to schools, we work to ensure a trauma-informed approach can be implemented to provide the best and most skilled responses to children's needs.

The Virtual School expects DTs/headteachers to ensure that DfE guidance is followed with respect to notifications of suspensions and working together to improve outcomes.

77. Whenever a headteacher suspends or permanently excludes a pupil they must, without delay, after their decision, also notify the social worker, if a pupil has one, and the VSH, if the pupil is a LAC*, of the period of the suspension or permanent exclusion and the reason(s) for it. The information in paragraphs 65 to 68 must be provided in writing to the local authority.

*If the pupil is previously looked-after (PLAC) the VSH should provide advice and information, upon request from relevant parties (DT, parents, etc) but does not have a corporate parent role that they have for LAC.



Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement

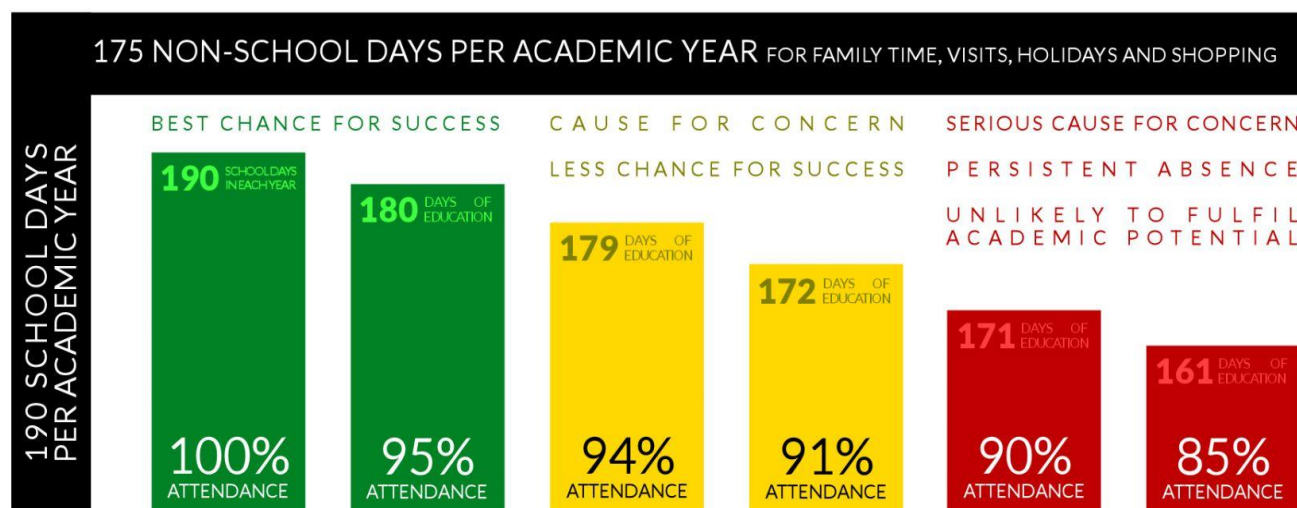
Guidance for maintained schools, academies, and pupil referral units in England

[Suspension and permanent exclusion guidance](#)

The Virtual School understands the importance of school attendance each day of term. We ask that DTs and all those involved with a child in care support full school attendance without hesitation.

GOOD ATTENDANCE MEANS

BEING IN SCHOOL AT LEAST 95% OF THE TIME (BETWEEN 180 & 190 DAYS)



7. Improving attendance is everyone's business. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. The foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn.



Working together to improve school attendance

Statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities

[Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#)

August 2024

Barriers to learning

This section covers a lot!

This is intended to plant seeds of knowledge for you to grow and nurture into future skills and expertise.



Remember...

Children aren't giving you a hard time; children are having a hard time.

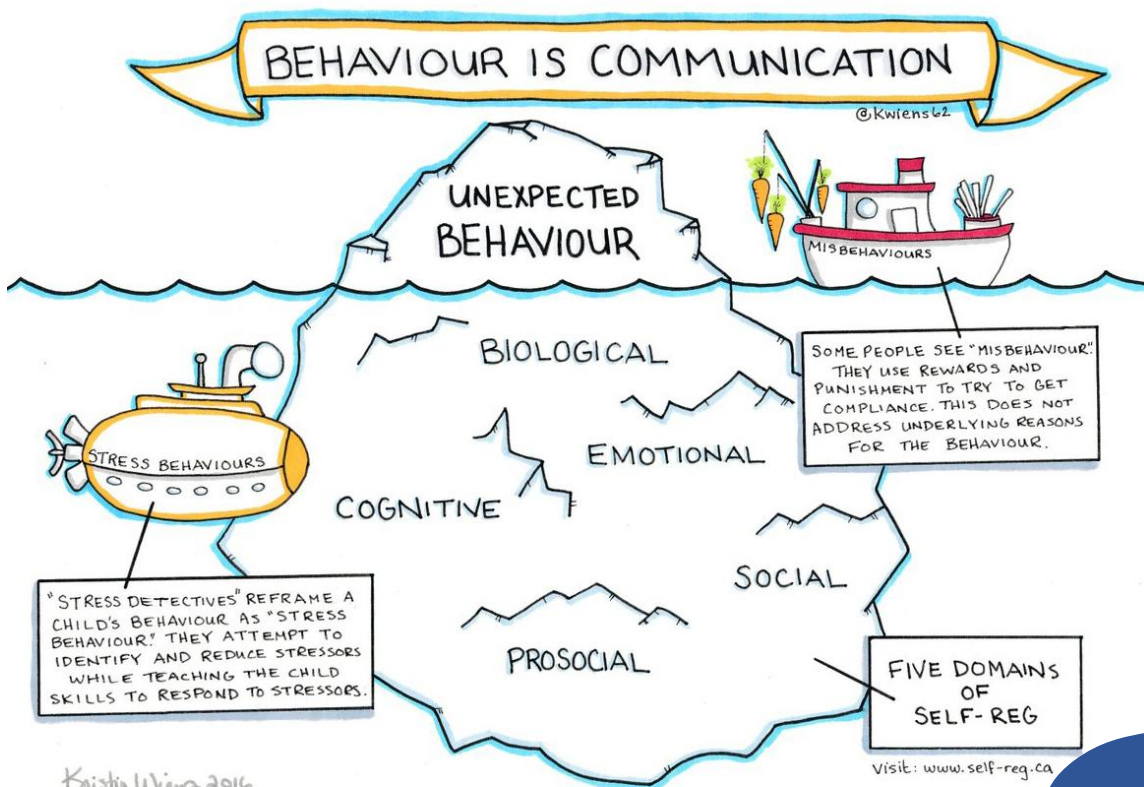
Recognise and understand behaviour is communication

Experiences: abuse/neglect/trauma/stress

Unmet needs: biological/physical, emotional, social, cognitive, sensory

Internal working model: beliefs, values, attitudes, hopes, fears & dreams

Every child's early life experiences shape their view of themselves, the adults and the world around them. This, in turn, shapes how they communicate and interact with the world. This interaction is driven by their needs and seen through their maladaptive behaviours.

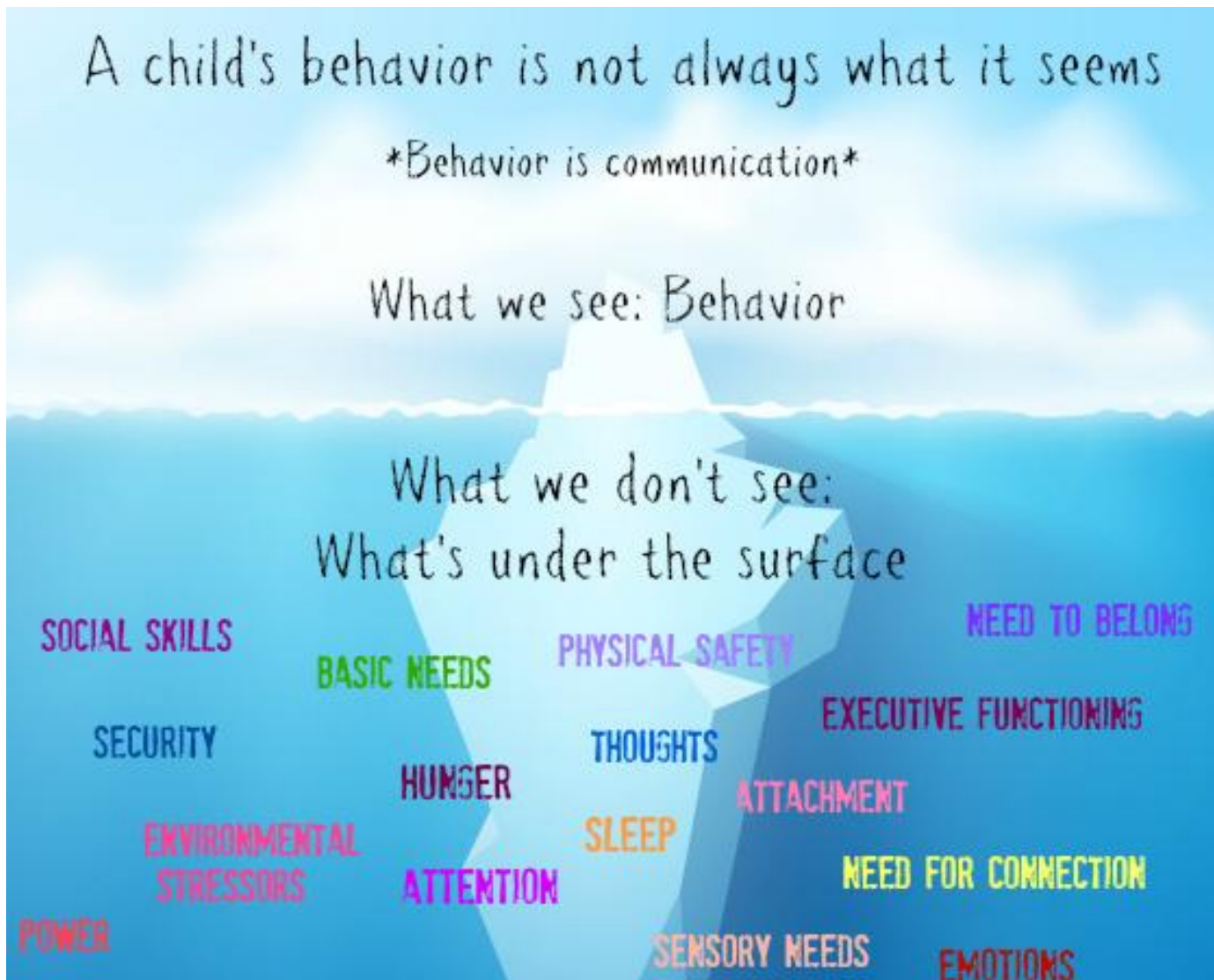


Barriers to learning

Iceberg model of trauma behaviours

The Iceberg Model suggests that many of the behaviours care experienced children and young people develop arise from a place of stress and fear and are automatic responses to the child's **perception** of threat and danger.

Our job is to see beyond the surface behaviours and understand what they can tell us about that young person.



This Australian guide is a useful read and reference point.

Practice approach: trauma lens for children and young people. Iceberg Model: a trauma-informed approach to understanding and managing traumatised children and young people's behaviours.

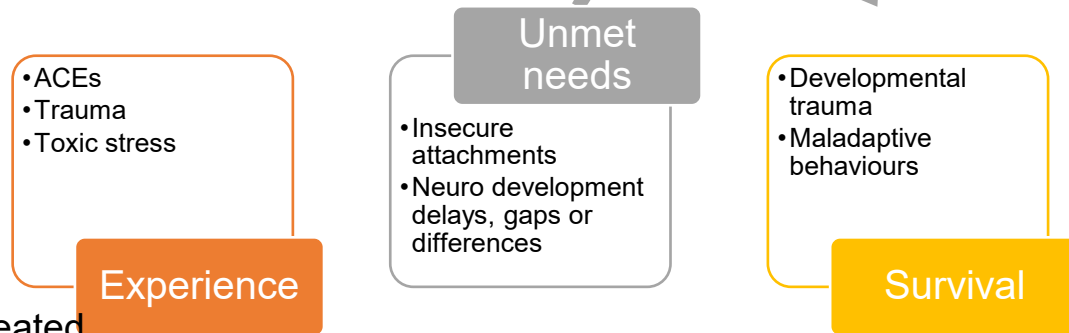
[Iceberg-Model.pdf \(childprotection.sa.gov.au\)](https://www.childprotection.sa.gov.au/Iceberg-Model.pdf)

We hope for **good enough** parenting

Where care needs are consistent and **good enough**, secure foundations around attachment and development enable children to thrive.



Where care needs are not consistent or **good enough** and left unmet, children are left only surviving.



The impact of repeated trauma (such as abuse or severe neglect) can lead to significant needs.

Repeated experiences which ensure the brain is wired/focused purely on survival mean a child is not thriving.



Maslow's pyramid of human needs, proposed in **1943**, has been one of the most cognitively contagious ideas in the behavioural sciences. Anticipating later evolutionary views of human motivation and cognition, Maslow viewed human motives as based on innate and universal predispositions.

Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs)

ACEs are stressful events occurring in childhood.

The term was originally developed in the US for the Adverse Childhood Experiences survey, which found that as the number of ACEs increased in the population studied, so did the risk of experiencing a range of health conditions in adulthood. Numerous other studies have found similar findings, including those in the UK.

ACEs are common. The original study found almost two-thirds of participants experienced one or more ACEs, and more than one in five experienced three or more ACEs. Research has found that a relationship with one trusted adult during childhood can mitigate the impacts of ACEs on mental and physical wellbeing.

Many of our care-experienced children will have experienced several ACEs over a prolonged time.

70/30 CAMPAIGN: EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES TO PROTECT OUR CHILDREN

Adverse Childhood Experiences

Traumatic events that can have negative, lasting effects on health and wellbeing



People with 6+ ACEs can die

20 yrs

earlier than those who have none

1/8 of the population have more than 4 ACEs



www.70-30.org.uk
@7030Campaign

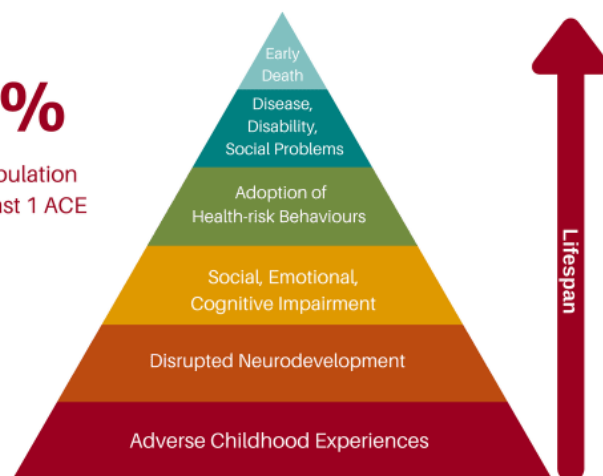
4 or more ACEs



“Adverse childhood experiences are the single greatest unaddressed public health threat facing our nation today”

Dr. Robert Block, the former President of the American Academy of Pediatrics

67%
of the population have at least 1 ACE



Barriers to learning

Trauma

Trauma means injury – trauma is a normal part of human life. Trauma is a subset of **stress**. We all recognise stress in some way, and it's essential.

We all experience trauma in some way; **good enough** parenting can help us to overcome this. We will all experience some toxic stress, and most will recover due to three key factors:

- Safety:** meaning physical safety
- Security:** in relationships or attachment
- Stability** (or narrative) is a cognitive understanding of the effects of trauma that helps us understand why we do what we do so that we can feel understood, learn and move forward.



[Trauma: What it is and how to cope - Kids Help Phone](#)



Barriers to learning

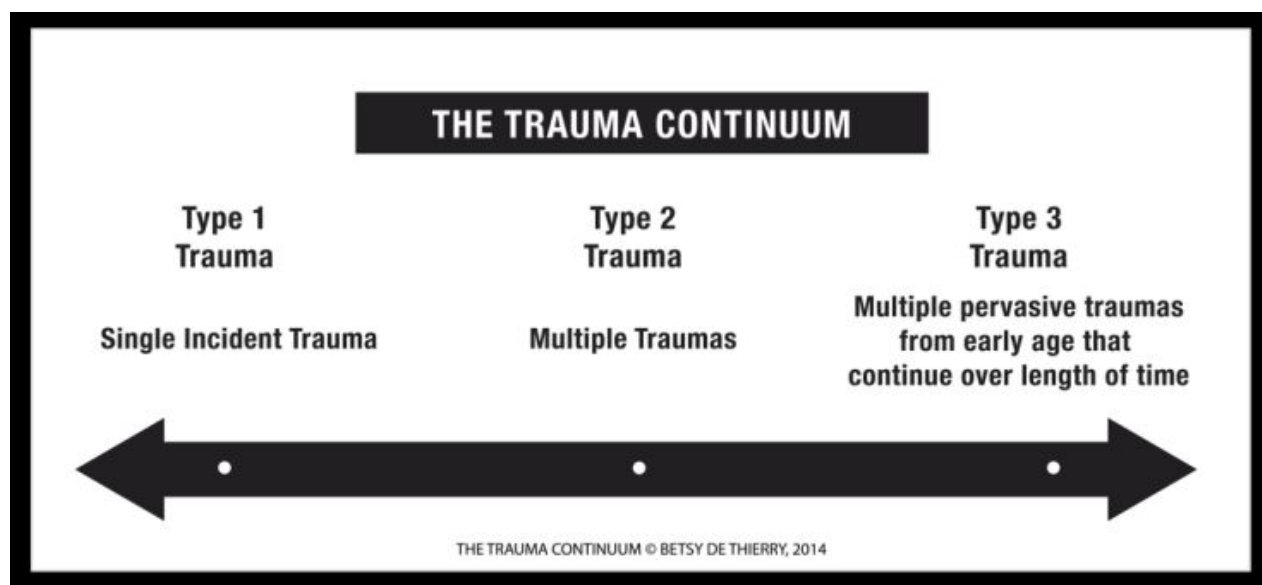
Trauma

Positive stress response: This is the body's response to temporary stress. Stress hormones (cortisol) help the body do what's needed in the moment. Once the event passes, the stress response turns off, and the body goes back to its normal state. For example, starting a new childcare arrangement or getting shots might lead to a positive stress response. When supported through this type of stress, children can gain confidence and learn coping skills.

Tolerable stress response: This is the body's response to more lasting and serious stress. With tolerable stress, a child needs the help of a supportive caregiver to help them stay calm and turn down the stress response. With this support, the body can more easily return to normal. Tolerable stress can occur during events like an injury or natural disaster.

Toxic stress response: This is the body's response to lasting and serious stress without enough support from a caregiver. When a child doesn't get the help they need, their body can't turn off the stress response. This lasting stress can harm a child's body and brain and can cause lifelong health problems. This type of stress results from exposure to things like abuse and neglect.

Source: [What Is Toxic Stress? \(acesaware.org\)](https://www.acesaware.org/)



Betsy de Thierry: The Trauma Continuum

[Books & Resources | Betsy Training UK](#)

Barriers to learning

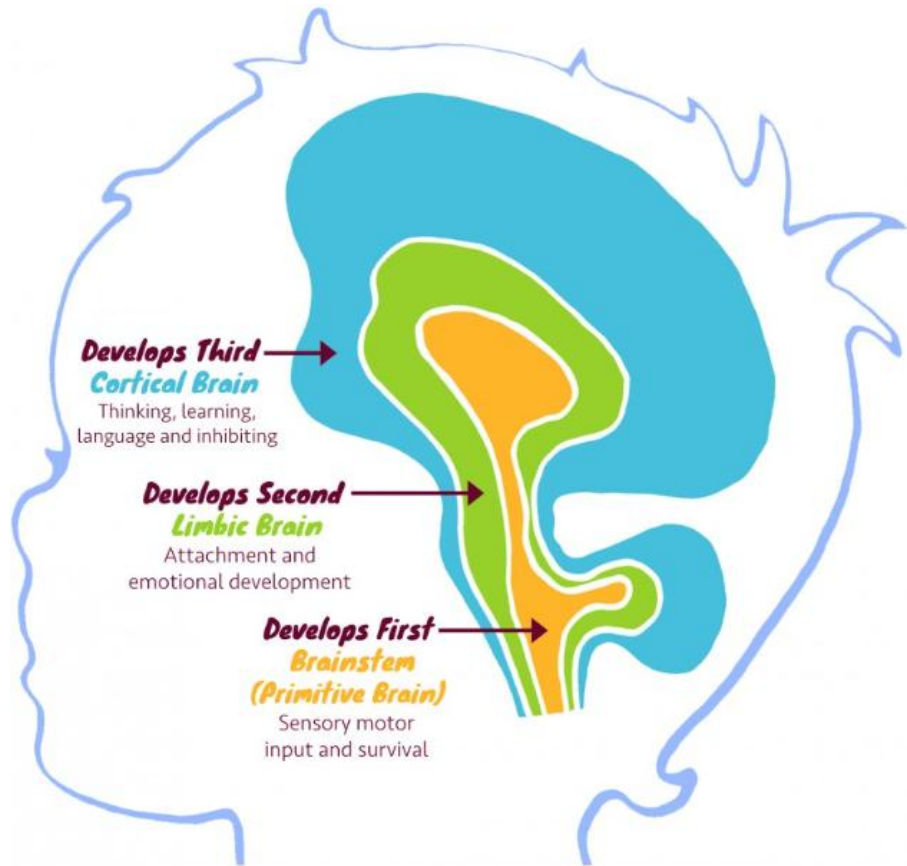
Bottom-up model of brain development

- Primitive brain
- Limbic brain
- Cortical brain

Cortical brain: thinking, learning, language and inhibiting (develops last)

Limbic brain: attachment & emotional development (develops second)

Primitive brain: sensory motor input & survival (develops first)



[Resources \(beaconhouse.org.uk\)](http://beaconhouse.org.uk)

Some amazing brain facts:

1. At birth, the brain is about one-quarter of the size of an adult brain. Now begins a period of huge brain growth. By age two, the brain is about 80% of its adult size as neuron circuitry matures and protective glial cells are born.
2. At age 14, the brain reaches its full size, but the circuitry continues to rewire until early adulthood (we know that teenage brains seem to travel all over the place).
3. By age 25, the brain is hardwired with its neural connections. However, it can still adapt because of its plasticity — the ability of neurons to strengthen or weaken their connections in response to information.

Source: [Timeline of brain development \(uq.edu.au\)](http://uq.edu.au)

Attachment

Babies are born with a biological drive to seek proximity to a protective adult for survival. They depend on the physical and emotional availability of the key adults caring for them.

Their relationships with adults are crucial to their trust in other people, their understanding of relationships generally and their feelings about themselves (Simmonds, 2004). The drive for closeness promotes attachment behaviours, which helps children feel safe.

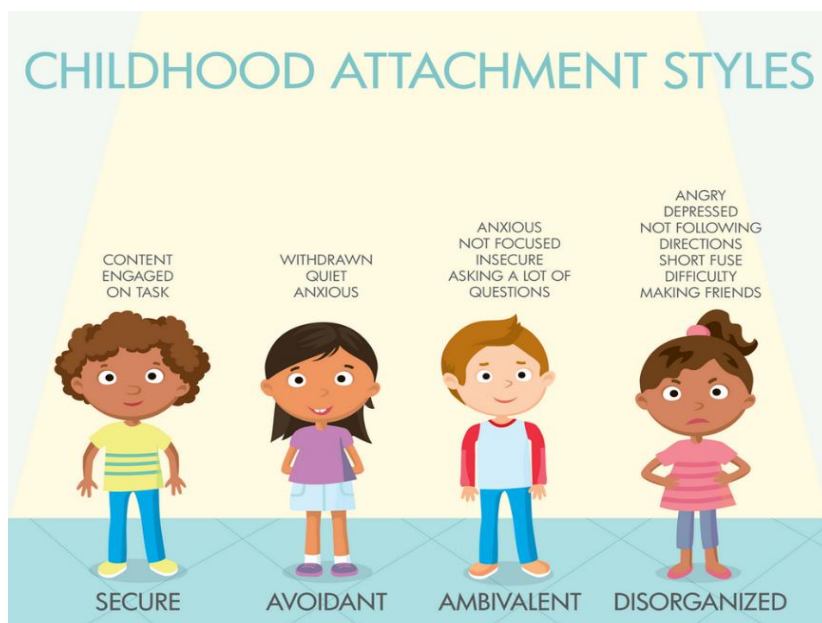
Babies are born with behaviours that grab the attention of adults to ensure their survival. Humans are born to connect, mirror and match.

It takes 25 years for the brain to reach maturity – attachment needs are lifelong to keep brains working well. In adolescence, primary attachments switch from adult caregivers to peers.

Attachment starts in the womb (consider previously looked after children, removed at birth, thought in the past that they would be ok, but they have lost the heartbeat and voice of the mother who has carried them).

The theory of attachment (Bowlby, 1969)

1. Pre-attachment		Birth to 6 weeks
2. Attachment-in-the-making		6 weeks to 6-8 months
3. Clear-cut attachment		6-8 months to 18-24 months
4. Goal-corrected partnership		24 months on



Where attachments have been disrupted or insecure, we see different life-long patterns emerging.

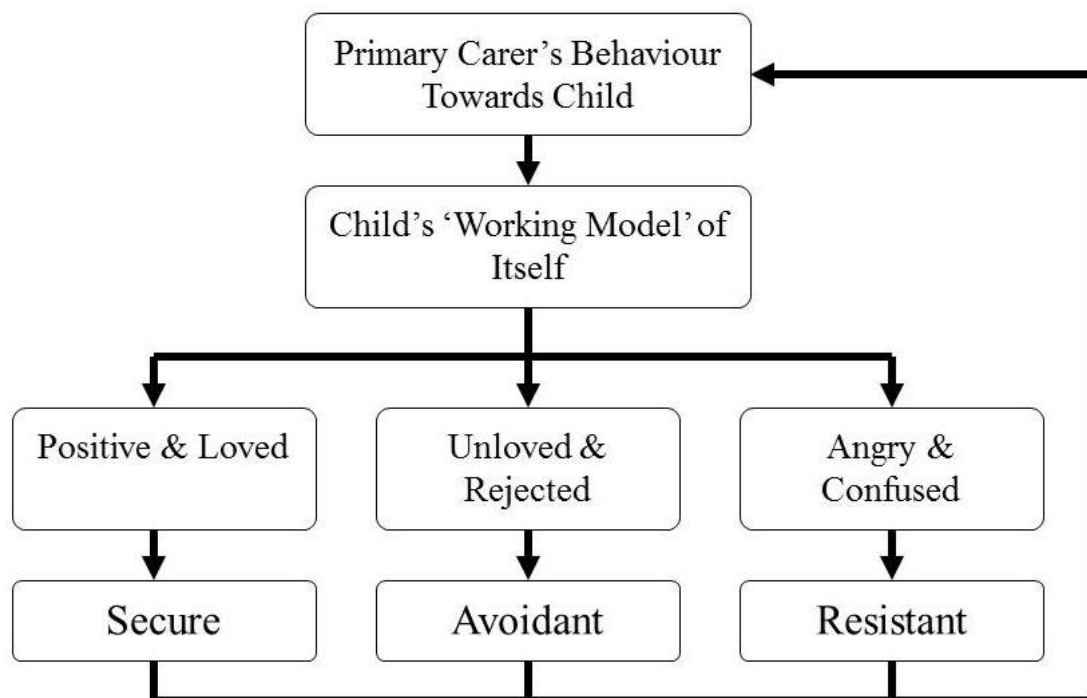
Attachment Styles:

- Secure
- Avoidant
- Ambivalent
- Disorganised

Barriers to learning

Attachment

How children view themselves comes from their early attachment experiences. This is because attachment is formed from reciprocal interactions and building relationships. If the attachment is broken or disrupted, a negative cycle can occur.



Psychiatrist Professor Bessel Van der Kolk showed us that early trauma creates an 'assault' on the child's development over time. Not only do traumatised children develop a range of unhealthy coping strategies, which is how they adapt to threats, but they do not develop the essential daily living skills that children need, such as being able to manage impulses, solve problems or learn new information.

The bottom line is that a child who does not feel safe primarily **lives** in their fight/flight/freeze/collapse responses in order to survive the real or perceived danger they face.

Developmental trauma (trauma that impacts development)

- Somatic (physiological) / sensory
- Attachment
- Emotional regulation
- Behavioural regulation (maladaptive behaviours)
- Self-esteem
- Dissociation
- Cognitive problems

DEVELOPMENTAL TRAUMA





Beacon House

Therapeutic Services and Trauma Team

Developmental Trauma

Moves up to

Brain Area:

Limbic Brain

Developmental Trauma:

2. Attachment
3. Emotional regulation
4. Behavioural regulation

Examples:

- Clinging
- Oppositional
- Rejecting
- Distrustful
- Overly compliant
- Loss of expectancy of protection by others
- Loss of trust in social agencies
- Heightened emotions: anger, rage, fear, sadness, excitement, joy
- Deadened emotions: numbness, emptiness, low mood
- Re-creating traumatic situations
- Self-harming
- Aggression
- Running
- Hiding

Attachment

Emotional Regulation

Behavioural Regulation

Brain Area

Cortical Brain

Developmental Trauma

5. Self esteem
6. Dissociation
7. Cognitive problems

Examples

- Information processing impairments
- Executive dysfunction (problems in planning, organising and executing)
- Inadequate problem solving
- Remembering and recalling information
- Identity confusion
- Flashbacks
- Disorientation
- Memory lapses
- Self hate
- Self blame
- Self loathing
- Self doubt
- Worthlessness
- Helplessness

Cognitive problems

Dissociation

Self esteem

Moves up to

Brain Area:

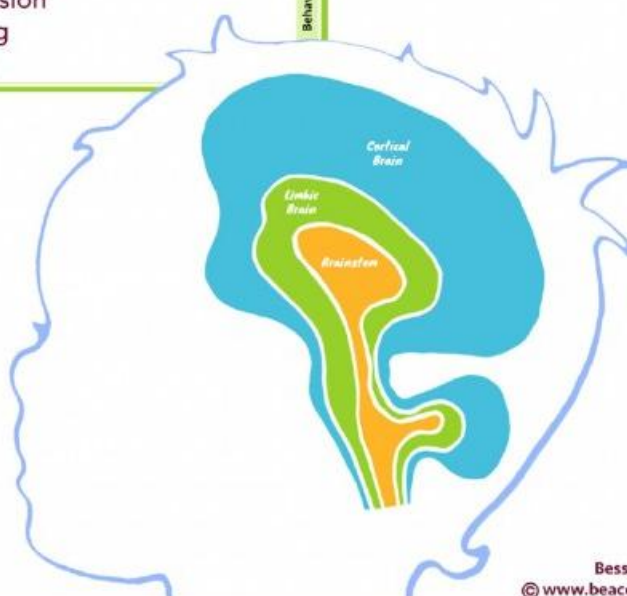
Brainstem (Primitive Brain)

Developmental Trauma:

1. Somatic/Sensory

Examples:

- Sensory processing difficulties
- High or low arousal (fight/flight/freeze/submit)
- Impulsivity and pervasive anxiety
- Impaired sleep patterns
- Poor muscle tone and co-ordination
- Taste and texture preferences
- Heart rate difficulties
- Abnormal breathing
- Unexplained medical symptoms
- Body flashbacks to states of fear



Barriers to learning

Common trauma triggers:

- unpredictability or sudden change
- loss of control
- feelings of vulnerability or rejections
- confrontation, authority or limit setting
- sensory overload
- situations perceived as unfair or unjust

Trauma Responses



Fight: Confront the threat.

anger
rage
confrontation
high energy



Flight: Run away from the threat.

anxiety
panic
avoidance
high energy



Freeze: Shut down to block out the threat.

dissociation
numbness
shutdown
low energy



Fawn: Appease the threat.

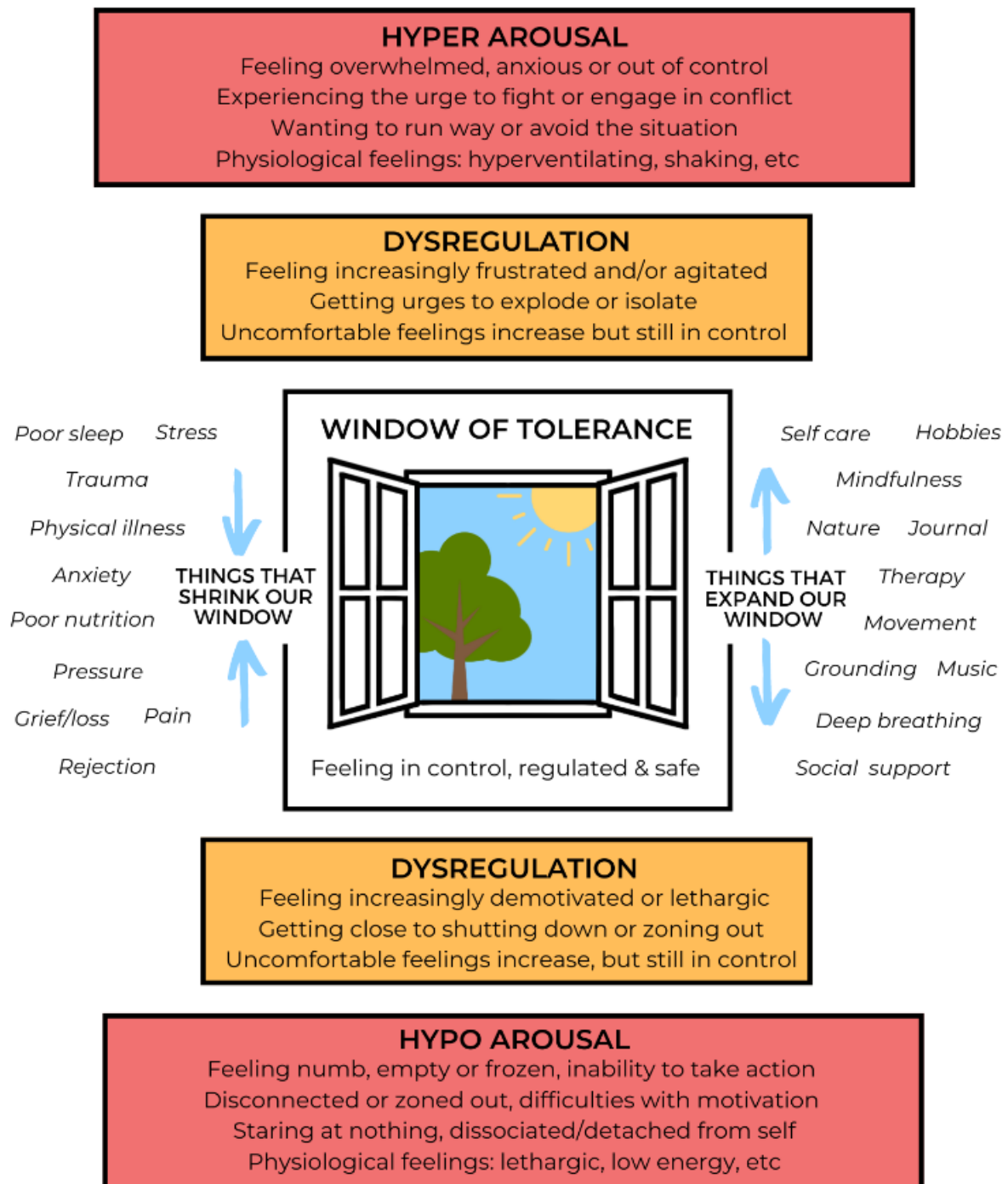
people-pleasing
codependency
lack of boundaries

[Fawn Response: Adding to The Fight, Flight, or Freeze Framework \(psychcentral.com\)](https://psychcentral.com)

Window of tolerance (Dan Siegel)

- Hyper-arousal (fight/flight)
- Hypo-arousal (freeze/fawn)
- Keep in it, keep it wide, keep it open!

Developed by Dan Siegel, a Clinical Professor of Psychiatry, the window of tolerance describes the best state of **arousal** or stimulation in which can function and thrive in everyday life. When we exist within this window, we can learn effectively, play, and relate well to ourselves and others.



Hand model of the brain (Dan Siegal)

Why we 'flip our lid' or 'lose it'

- In the hand model of the brain, your fingers and thumb open and close in response to your internal body signals and your interpretation of the world around you.
- Bodily stress and distress, anxiety and fear make the fingers and thumb open up.
- Bodily safety, contentment and calm make the fingers and thumb close again.



Putting my lid back on - De-escalation

- Vagus nerve
 - oxytocin, dopamine, etc.
 - lowering blood pressure
 - deeper breathing
 - reduced muscle tension

The upstairs brain is back in action

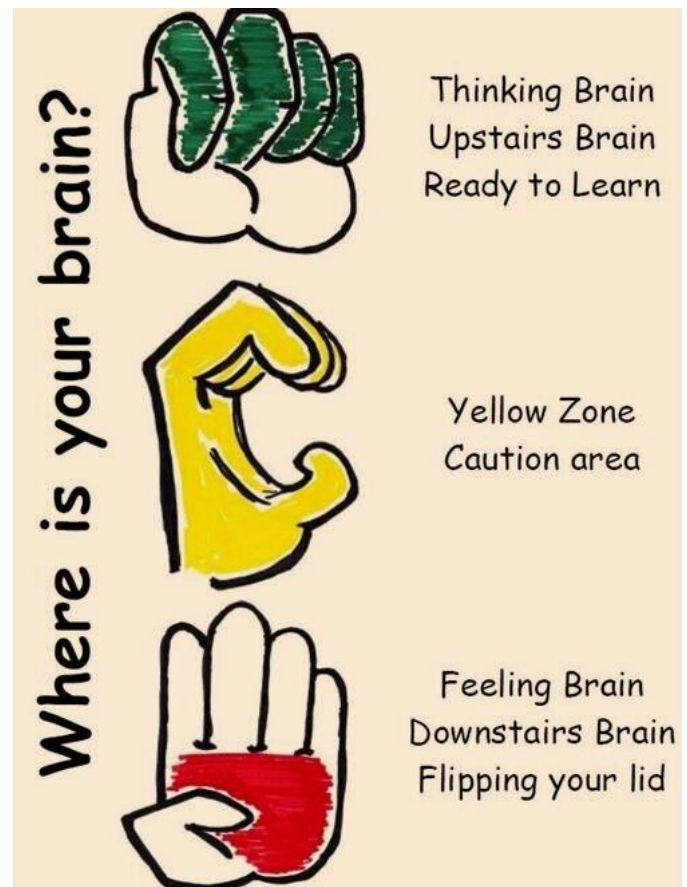
SAFETY

Flip our lid - Escalation

- HPA (stress) axis
 - adrenaline, cortisol, etc
 - rising blood pressure
 - shallow breathing
 - increased muscle tension

The downstairs brain is in charge

SURVIVAL (mode)

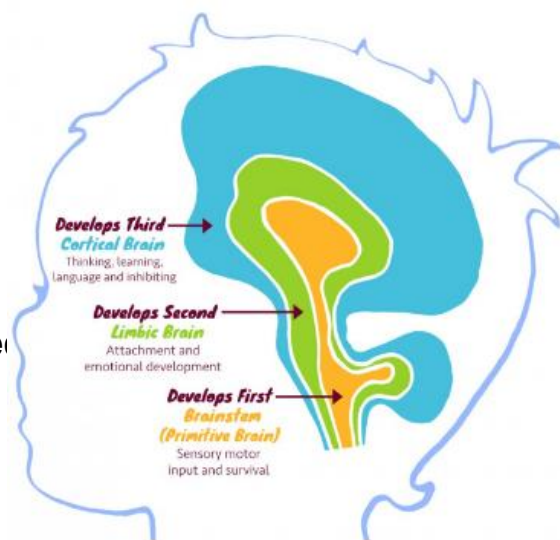


Barriers to learning

Recovery & repair

- Developmental trauma can be overcome
- Attachment needs can be met
- Internal working models can be **reprogrammed**
- Brains can be **rewired**

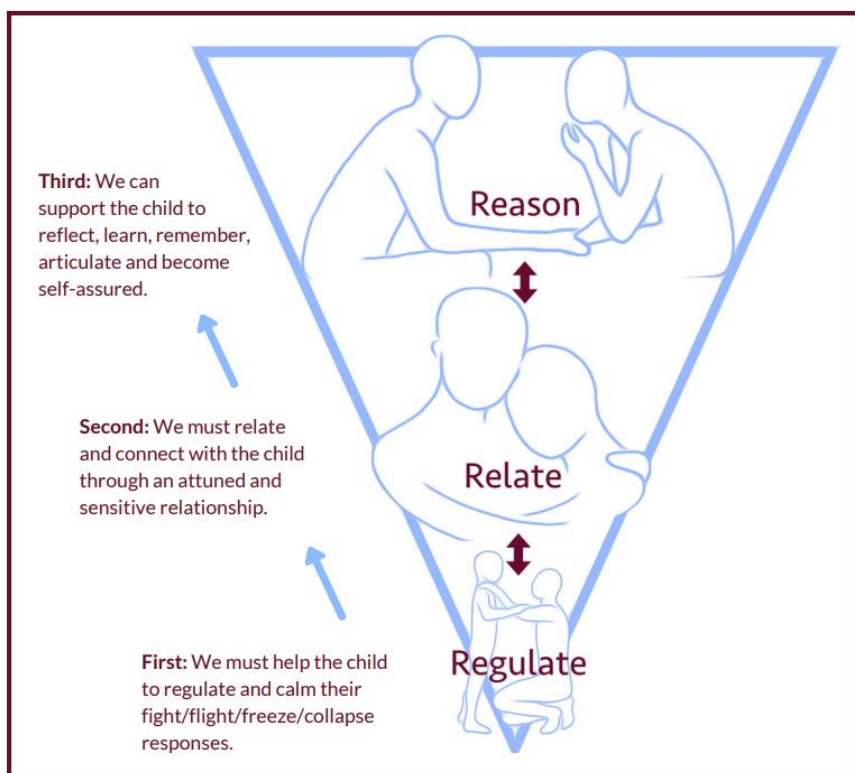
Just as the brain develops from the bottom up, we must support recovery in the same way.



[Home \(beaconhouse.org.uk\)](http://beaconhouse.org.uk)

1. Regulate (calm the primitive brain)
2. Relate (connect, attune, validate feelings through relationship)
3. Reason – only then can we support the child to reflect, learn and develop self-assurance

When children experience consistent safety, security, and stability over time, earlier damage can be repaired. In some cases, specialist therapeutic intervention may be required. Foster carers, adoptive parents, and kinship carers can all provide therapeutic parenting approaches that move a child from fear to love.



Attachment-aware and trauma-informed school settings that take a therapeutic, relational approach, do the same, supporting relational repair.

Relational repair enables the best outcomes, with a strong consistent team, around the child, all supporting in the same way.

[Home \(beaconhouse.org.uk\)](http://beaconhouse.org.uk)

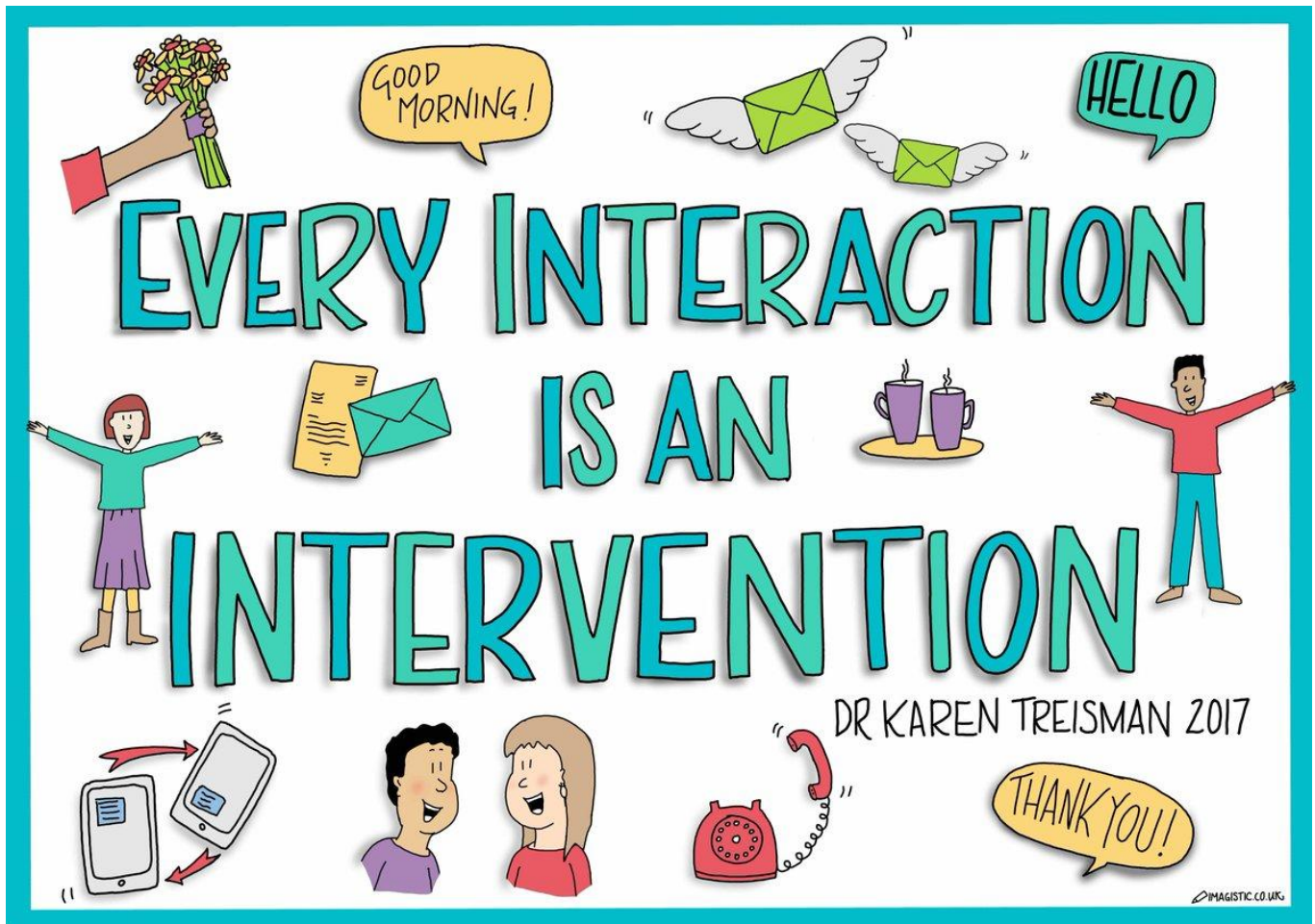
Barriers to learning

Recovery & repair

It is a very simple message: **relational repair supports recovery from relational trauma.**

Again, it is a very simple message for those working in schools with children every day: **every interaction is an intervention.**

The simple, kind, considerate, and compassionate things you say and do each day cumulate to make a massive difference.



[Safe Hands Thinking Minds | Relational and developmental trauma in children](#)

Recovery & repair

Take time to **wonder why**, understand what behaviour is communicating, and how you can respond differently.

Consider what support and interventions can be implemented for your most vulnerable children.

If you think and act differently, you will see and facilitate change.



Your role in school is not to change the past but to influence and reshape the future.

Relationships
are key –
connect before
you correct

Supported
transitions

Change the
narrative – think
iceberg!

PACE
(Dan Hughes)

Five to Thrive
(KCA)

Emotion
coaching

Name it to tame
it (Bruce Perry)

Good enough
parenting /
teaching

Exploration of
speech &
language needs

I wonder if...

Relational
behaviour
policies

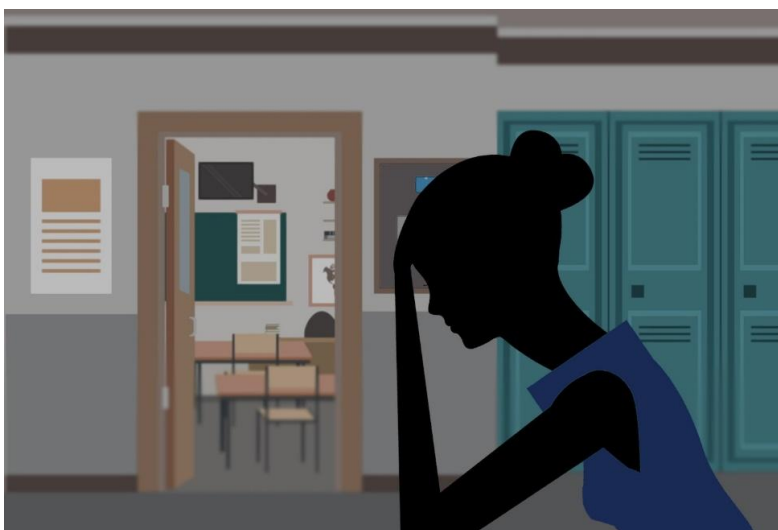
Secondary trauma

When we work daily with children and young people (CYP) who have suffered trauma, we can't help but be impacted by it ourselves. School staff, social care teams, therapeutic staff, carers and family members are all at risk of secondary trauma.

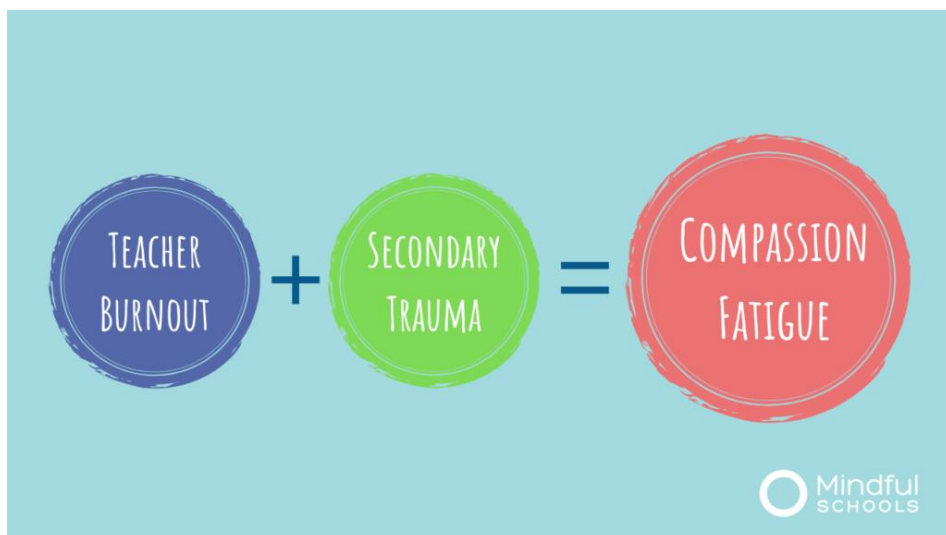
In school, we must share the burden, be open about the impact, and seek help and support as necessary for ourselves and our teams.

Secondary means that although the original (primary) trauma happened to someone else, the impact it's having in your life is traumatic for you. It doesn't mean it's any less significant than any other kind of trauma or any easier to deal with.

Source: mind.org.uk



[Trauma & Mental Health | Guide For Parents | YoungMinds](#)



Identify & Understand needs

Recovery and repair

Re-thinking, re-framing and reshaping the future...

Your role in school is not to change the past but to influence and reshape the future.

- Relational trauma needs relational repair
- The biggest gift you can give is time
- The best outcomes and impact come from highly repetitive small acts
- Relational approaches built on trust are at the centre of success
- Behaviourist approaches are generally not successful

Be a STAR for the child

kca.

- Stop -pause don't react or speak straightaway. Notice feelings the child's behaviour may be bringing up in you
- Think – what feeling might lie underneath the behaviour I'm seeing? What is going on for the child right now
- Attune – attune to the feeling by putting yourself in the child's shoes
- Reflect – what would be an equivalent situation for you that would cause you to feel that way?

Gilbert, Gus and Rose Emotion Coaching 2019

Effective schools support for vulnerable children:

- Doing the things they do for all children, but more so
- Making it a priority to know the children well and to build strong relationships
- Developing strong partnerships with carers, local authorities and specialist agencies
- Balancing high levels of support with real challenge
- Skilfully linking each child to a key person they relate well to
- Making things happen and seeing things through
- Ensuring consistency as well as discrete flexibility
- Actively extending the horizons of each child
- Planning for future transitions

[What Is Growth Mindset And Why It Matters For Children \(thirdspacelearning.com\)](#)

Support and foster growth mindset [Growth Mindset in the Classroom: Inspiring Ideas to Start the Year – Proud to be Primary](#)

GROWTH MINDSET & SELF-REGULATION

@Kudens62



INSTEAD OF THINKING...
(FIXED MINDSET)

- HE NEEDS TO LEARN SOME SELF-CONTROL.
- SHE KEEPS GIVING ME A HARD TIME.
- MY CLASSROOM WORKS FINE FOR ALL THE OTHER STUDENTS.
- HIS BEHAVIOUR COMES OUT OF THE BLUE.
- NOTHING WORKS FOR THIS CHILD.
- SHE JUST NEEDS TO CALM DOWN.
- HE WON'T EVER LEARN SELF-REGULATION.



TRY THINKING...
(GROWTH MINDSET)

- HE NEEDS HELP WITH SELF-REGULATION.
- SHE IS HAVING A HARD TIME. HOW CAN I HELP?
- EVERY STUDENT IS UNIQUE. WHAT CHANGES CAN I MAKE TO SUPPORT THIS STUDENT?
- LET'S LOOK DEEPER FOR PATTERNS AND SETTING EVENTS.
- WHAT ELSE CAN I TRY?
- DOES SHE EVEN KNOW WHAT CALM FEELS LIKE?
- HOW CAN I HELP HIM LEARN SELF-REGULATION?

GROWTH MINDSET AND SELF-REGULATION
DECREASE JUDGEMENT AND INCREASE CURIOSITY



FREE DOWNLOAD: [northstarpaths.com](#)



"Failure is an opportunity to grow"

GROWTH MINDSET

"I can learn to do anything I want"

"Challenges help me to grow"

"My effort and attitude determine my abilities"

"Feedback is constructive"

"I am inspired by the success of others"

"I like to try new things"

"Failure is the limit of my abilities"

FIXED MINDSET

"I'm either good at it or I'm not"

"My abilities are unchanging"

"I don't like to be challenged"

"I can either do it, or I can't"

"My potential is predetermined"

"When I'm frustrated, I give up"

"Feedback and criticism are personal"

"I stick to what I know"

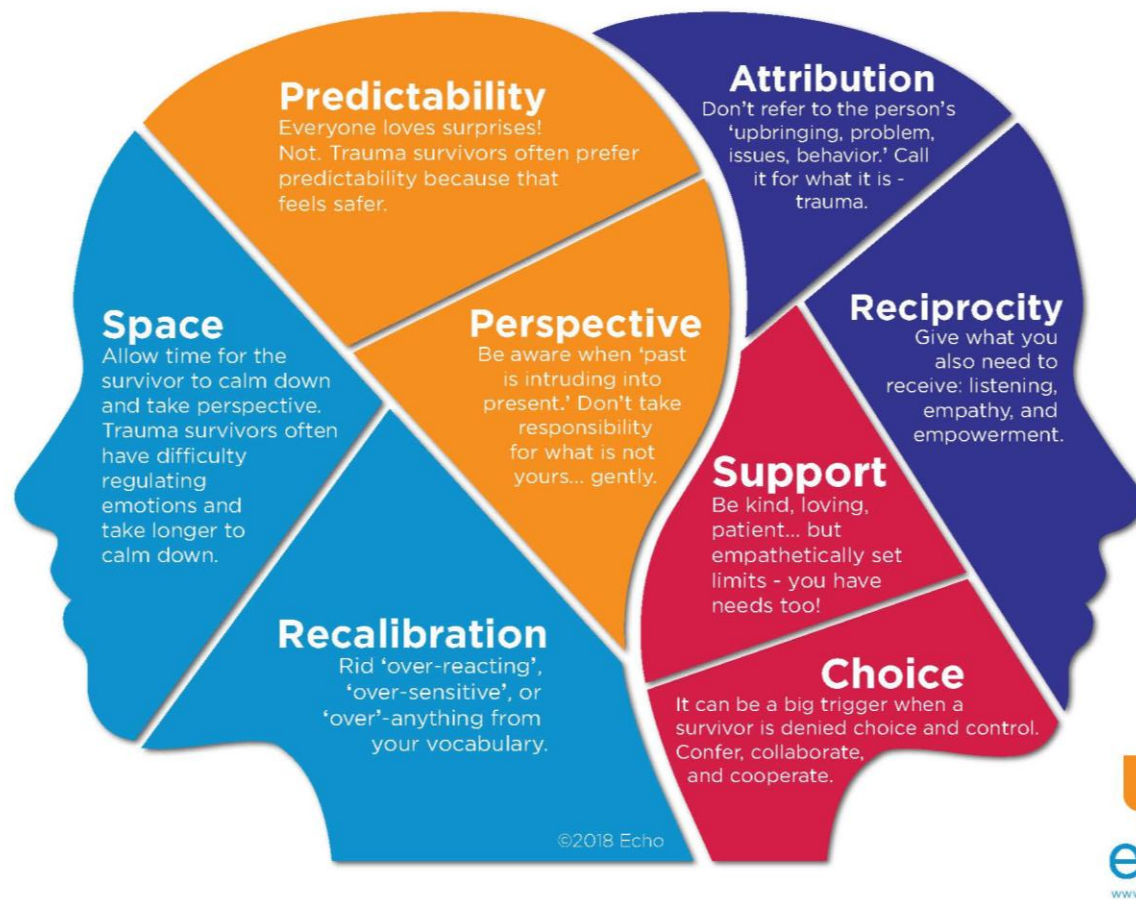
Identify & understand needs

Recovery and repair

Top tips for support:

- 3 Rs: **routine, repetition, relate**
- consistent relational focus boundaries and consequences
- assess and understand needs fully (think full breadth of SEND needs)
- support strengths-based approach (think growth mindsets)
- use PACE and emotion coaching approach
- recognise and respond to (reward) effort more than achievement

How to Support Someone Who Has Experienced Trauma



[Infographics - Echo \(echotraining.org\)](http://www.echotraining.org)

Identify & understand needs

Recovery and repair – understanding behaviours

What lies
beneath
behavior?

Underlying
*basic human
need?*

*Developmental
stage?*

Current state
of the *nervous
system?*

Survival
response:
*fight? flight?
freeze?
appease?*

*Coping strategy
that no longer
works?*

Structural
changes
in the *brain?*



How is this
“problem”
the child’s
solution?

Trauma-induced
*thinking &
conditioning?*

©2017 echo



DOs AND DON'Ts OF A TRAUMA-INFORMED COMPASSIONATE CLASSROOM



1 CREATE A SAFE SPACE
Consider not only physical safety but the children's emotional safety as well.

1

2

ESTABLISH PREDICTABILITY

Write out a schedule and prepare children for transitions. It helps create a sense of security and safety.



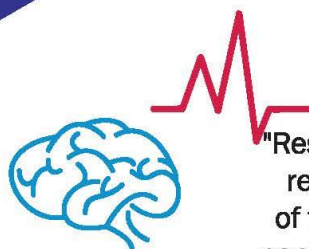
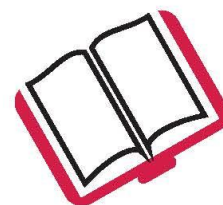
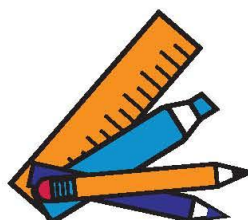
3 BUILD A SENSE OF TRUST
Follow through with your promises and in situations where changes are unavoidable be transparent with your explanations.

3

4

OFFER CHOICES

Empower students and offer "power with" rather than "power over" strategies.



STAY REGULATED

Help your students (and yourself!) stay in the "Resiliency Zone" to promote optimum learning. Have regulation tools ready to help students bumped out of the zone into either hyperarousal (angry, nervous, panicky) or hypoarousal (numb, depressed, fatigued).

5



There's really only one **DON'T**
Let's not punish kids for behaviors that are trauma symptoms.



“What do I do?”

Trauma-Informed Support for Children

1 Create safety

If the child is overwhelmed, perhaps guide them to a quiet corner or allow them to decompress by visiting the restroom. If you are in a classroom, maybe you have a peace corner that you've outfitted with blankets or a screen so that it feels like a safe place.

2 Regulate the nervous system

Stress brings a predictable pattern of physiological responses and anyone who has suffered toxic stress or trauma is going to be quickly stressed into hyperarousal (explosive, jittery, irritable) or hypoarousal (depressed, withdrawn, zombie-like). No matter how ingenious our regulation strategies, how artsy-crafty we get with tools, the child has to find what works for them.

3 Build a connected relationship

This is the number one way to regulate the nervous system. When we are around people we care about, our bodies produce oxytocin, which is the hormone responsible for calming our nervous system after stress. If we stay connected, then eventually the calm discussion of each person's feelings and needs can take place.

4 Support development of coherent narrative

Creating predictability through structure, routines and the presence of reliable adults helps reduce the chaos a child may feel and allows them to start creating the kind of logical sequential connections that not only help them understand their own narrative, but are also the fundamental requirement of many types of learning.

5 Practice 'power-with' strategies

One of the hallmarks of trauma is a loss of power and control. When someone is wielding power over you with no regard to your thoughts or feelings, the toxic shame of the original trauma may come flooding back. As adults, we should use our power well. If we model a 'power-with' relationship with children it's our best chance of creating adults who will treat others with dignity and respect.

6 Build social emotional and resiliency skills

Trauma robs us of time spent developing social and emotional skills. The brain is too occupied with survival to devote much of its energy to learning how to build relationships and it's a good chance we didn't see those skills modeled for us. Learning to care for one another is the most important job we have growing up.

7 Foster post-traumatic growth

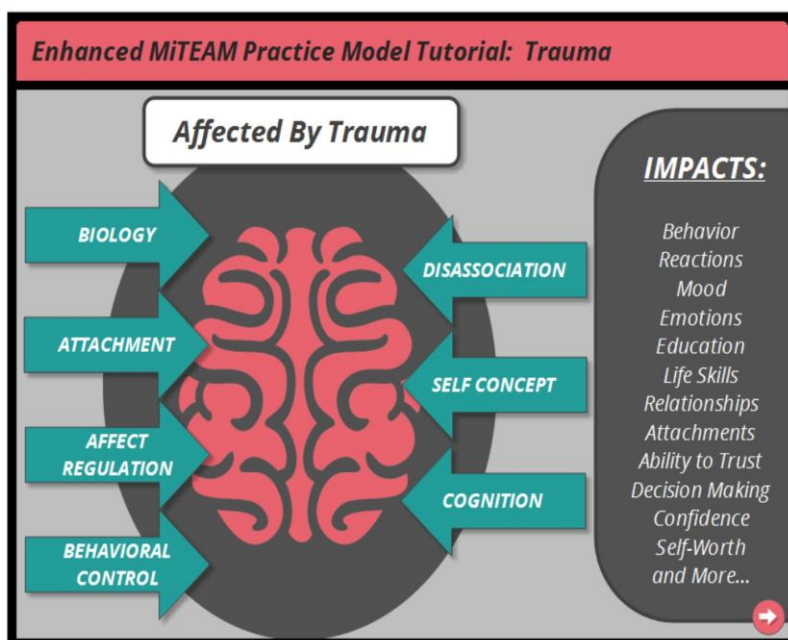
We know that there are qualities and skills that allow people to overcome the most devastating trauma and not just survive but find new purpose and meaning in their lives. Problem solving, planning, maintaining focus despite discomfort, self-control and seeking support are all known to lead to post-traumatic growth and are skills we can foster in children.

New thinking

When we are looking at our most vulnerable children, we must have some key knowledge and understanding of their context and history.

Our experiences, relationships with others, and living environment all shape us.

For those who have lived with neglect, emotional or physical harm, domestic violence, family dysfunction, parental mental health and other similar situations on an ongoing basis, this shapes the mind and body.



[Trauma Module Resources | MiTEAM Virtual Learning Site \(michigan.gov\)](#)

Early life experiences shape children's views of themselves, the adults around them, and the environments in which they live.

To best support a child with trauma and attachment needs, we need to see and understand the world through their eyes.

Using a trauma LENS



L	LOOK	• Behaviour • Body language • Environment
E	EXPLORE	• Think what may have happened • Think how YOU can help • Think about safety
N	NEEDS	• Basic needs • Understanding • Explanation
S	SUPPORT	• Support • Signpost • Safeguard

Playfulness Acceptance Curiosity Empathy

Developed by Dr Dan Hughes

The following two pages were adapted from this guide:

[PACE sheet English \(cardiffhigh.cardiff.sch.uk\)](http://cardiffhigh.cardiff.sch.uk)

PACE is a way of thinking, feeling, communicating and behaving that aims to make the child feel safe. It is communicating using these elements together flexibly, not as a step-by-step process. PACE focuses on the whole child, not just the behaviour.

[P.A.C.E. \(danielhughes.org\)](http://danielhughes.org)

[What is meant by PACE? - DDP Network](#)

[Using PACE in School \(oxfordshire.gov.uk\)](http://oxfordshire.gov.uk)



Playfulness

“Playfulness is **NOT** about being funny or making jokes all the time but having fun and being playful when it feels right. It is about expressing... pleasure, joy, hope and fun...”

By using a light tone in your voice like you would when reading a story to a child.”

Be careful with sarcasm; some children and young people may not understand when something is intended to be a joke and when it isn't.

Setting time aside for playfulness, provides opportunities for relational activities or games. For example, start the lesson with a fun quiz, storytelling or a high-energy game.

Acceptance

“Acceptance is **not** about accepting harmful behaviour, boundaries around behaviour are still very important and safety should always be prioritised. It is about accepting the child or teen's inner experience. Including their; thoughts, wishes, needs, feelings and motivations.”



“Behaviours are often what you see on the surface”

“Thoughts, feelings, wishes, motivations, needs are often the underlying reasons for behaviour”

“I just want to go home”

“I bet it's really difficult when you have to come to school even though you're feeling so sad”

“It's not fair, I don't get why I can't sit next to my friend”

“It's so unfair not being able to sit by your friends like you used to. I know how frustrating you must find it, but we have to follow the rules to keep each other safe”

Acceptance of feelings, but boundary behaviours.

Curiosity

Curiosity is wondering about the reasons behind the behaviour in a non-judgemental way and often without anticipating a response. Being curious avoids directly asking, "Why did you...?" It often leads to a better understanding.



Ask yourself, "What was that behaviour communicating?" or "What might be going on for them?"

Are they...

Out of routine? Bored?
Anxious and confused about the new rules?
Frightened about coming back to school and leaving parents?

"I don't want to go back to school"

Do they ...

Want to hug their friends?
Need a break or some space?
Need some time to play and burn off energy?
Miss being at home worried about a parent ?

"I wonder if you're feeling a bit scared or worried about what's going to happen when you get here. I bet it feels like there are so many things you missed?"

Empathy

"Empathy is about actively showing that you understand and have compassion for the child or young person's experience. It is standing in their shoes and staying with them throughout their emotional experience."

Empathy drives connection.

"I really miss my old teacher"

"I don't understand why I can't go to the play area"

"I guess I just feel a bit anxious some days"

"It's so hard when things change. I know how much you liked Mr Jones'. You didn't get to spend as much time in his class as you wanted."

"It's so confusing. You feel like you can't have fun anymore. That must be really rubbish."

"Thank you for telling me how you're feeling. I know it can be hard to talk about our emotions sometimes. Everything seems so uncertain."

Playfulness: Use a light tone of voice
Acceptance: Accept the child or young person's feelings or emotions, but not harmful behaviour
Curiosity: Wonder about what's beneath the behaviour
Empathy: Show the child or young person that their experience is important to you and that they are not alone.



And if we get it wrong, that's okay too.

"I think I got it wrong earlier. Would you help me to understand what's going on?"

Identify & understand needs

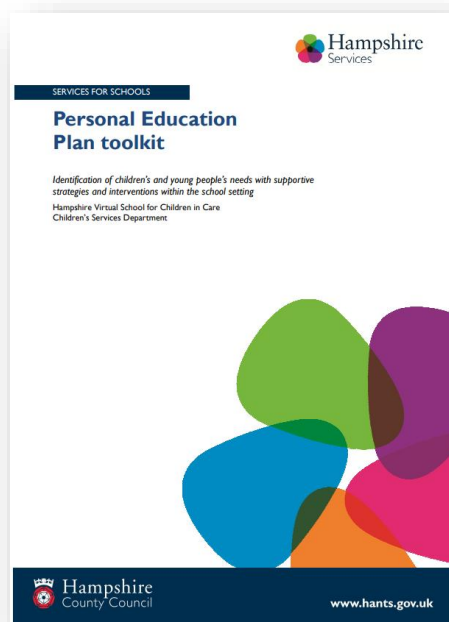
PEP Toolkit

Use the PEP Toolkit to assess, identify and understand needs across seven key areas.

Use the guidance and strategies in the toolkit and other resources to plan support and interventions to meet needs.

Use the toolkit to identify and assess what behaviours are communicating in terms of needs.

You can access the PEP Toolkit [here](#).



**Adult
relationships**

**Peer
relationships**

**Self-
regulation**

**Executive
functioning**

**Motivation
and locus of
control**

Sense of self

**Language
development**

Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ)

The Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire, or SDQ, is a behavioural screening questionnaire that all Hampshire's looked after children and young people have completed annually as part of their care plan.

There are three versions of the questionnaires: one for the social worker, one for the teacher/education professional and one for the parents/carers.

[Guidance for the SDQ process can be found here.](#)

Executive functioning

Executive function is an umbrella term in neuroscience that describes the neurological processes involving mental control and self-regulation.

Executive functions control and regulate cognitive and social behaviours, such as controlling impulses, paying attention, remembering information, planning and organizing time and materials, and responding appropriately to social and stressful situations.

Experts believe executive function is regulated by the frontal lobe of the brain — the prefrontal cortex. Because humans are born with brains that are not fully developed, children are not born with these skills but have the potential to develop them.

Some students do not develop executive functions to the same degree as their peers. For these students with deficits, additional support in the classroom may improve their development of executive function.



How to support:

- visual timetables, visual guides and resources
- concrete examples and resources
- verbal and physical modelling of applications
- checklists, mnemonics, guides
- greater chunking of tasks, sequence guides
- appropriate scaffolding for learning
- regular adult check-in, feedback and reflection

[What is Executive Function? - Twinkl](#)

[Executive Functioning Skills for Kids to Adults - The OT Toolbox](#)

[Activities Guide: Enhancing & Practicing Executive Function Skills \(harvard.edu\)](#)

Reach2Teach app

[Welcome to Reach2Teach - Assessment for Inclusion Tool \(AFIT\)](#)



A web-based tool/app to identify and understand needs through presenting behaviours. Forty behaviours, each with an understanding of the presenting needs, potential attachment pattern, children's needs and suggested approaches and actions.

This is a free tool for all Hampshire DTs. Just email and request a link to log in.

Can't follow instructions

Home screen / Reset



Potential Attachment pattern

Disorganised



Child's needs



Approaches / Actions



General principles



CourseWeDo

Highly anxious

Argues about rules
or can't follow

Seeks to control
the teacher

Hates &
rejects praise

Denies need
for support

Can't organise or
forgets work

Overly dependent

Resists teacher's
guidance

Continually
avoids work

Clingy

Can't sit still

Rubbishing
teacher's work

Rubbishes or
rips up work

Doesn't want
adults being close

Appears
manipulative

Wants to work on
their own

Rapid mood
changes

Resists difficult
conversations

Runs out

Misinterprets
others' behaviour

Sulks if
not picked

Can't follow
instructions

Overly
argumentative

Finds transitions &
endings difficult

Appears arrogant
& controlling

Does not talk
about feelings

Easily distracted

Appears indifferent
or uncaring

Insists on going
first

Talks about
feelings alot

Lies and fabricates

Angry & aggressive

Steals or gorges
food

Gets upset easily

Avoids eye contact

Hypervigilant

Needs constant
reassurance

Risky behaviour

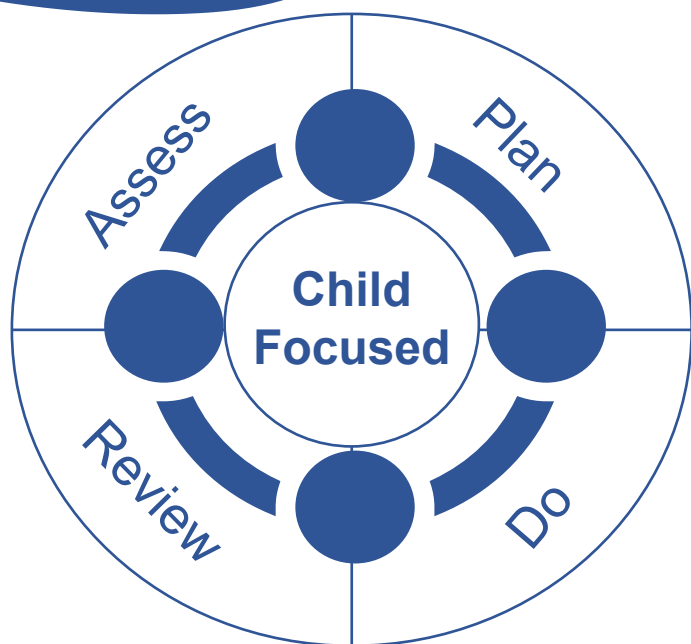
Limited
imagination

Attention seeking

MARK INCOMPLETE

CONTINUE →

SEND needs



Below are some common areas to explore and consider. Remember to assess, plan, do & review:

- receptive and expressive language
- language comprehension
- working memory
- auditory processing
- visual processing
- dyslexia/Dyscalculia
- emotional dysregulation
- executive functioning
- sensory needs
- attachment needs
- neurodiversity
- developmental delay

Royal College and Speech and Language Therapist – Guides:

[RCSLT Adversity Trauma A4 4pp FINAL.pdf](#)
[5-good-standards-a4-2019.pdf \(rslt.org\)](#)

Hampshire SEND Pathway

[Pathway for special educational needs support | Children and Families |](#)

[Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](#)

Care-experienced children are 3-4 times more likely to have SEND needs.

Ensure you work closely with your school SENCO to assess children across the four main areas of need:

- cognition and learning
- communications and interaction
- social, emotional and mental health (SEMH)
- sensory/physical health

Make sure your SEND records are linked to the PEP – key priorities, targets and action plan.



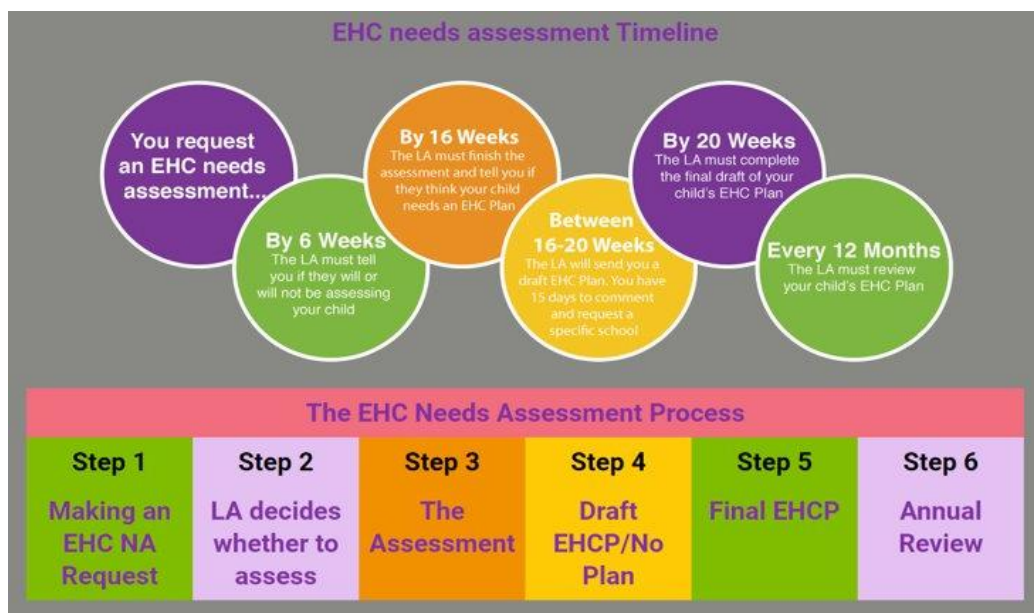
[sen-support.pdf \(hants.gov.uk\)](#)

Education health care plan EHCP

The legal test for when a child or young person requires a statutory education health and care needs assessment is set out in the Children and Families Act 2014:

The local authority must secure an EHC needs assessment if the authority believes that the child or young person may have special educational needs, and it may be necessary for special educational provision to be made in accordance with an EHC plan.

When considering whether an EHC needs assessment is necessary, the local authority should consider whether there is evidence that despite the early years provider, school, or post-16 institution having taken relevant and purposeful action to identify, assess and meet the special educational needs of the child or young person, the child or young person has not made expected progress.



An EHC assessment will:

- identify the child's SEND and any related health and social care needs
- provide advice to the local authority about the child's needs and the provision required to meet them. It should also detail any related health and social care needs and provision
- assist the local authority to determine if it is required to issue an EHC plan

The legal test for when a child or young person requires an EHCP is set out in the Children and Families Act 2014:

- When, following an EHC needs assessment, it is deemed necessary to provide special educational provision for a child or young person in accordance with an EHC plan, the local authority must ensure that an EHC plan is prepared for the child or young person.

Emotionally based school avoidance

Feeling worried or anxious is normal and occurs from time to time. It can protect us from harm or help us perform in difficult situations.

However, sometimes anxiety or excessive worrying can become a problem, especially when it stops us from doing what we want or need to do. Many children and young people worry about school. This is normal.

Anxieties are part of life, and learning to deal with them is part of growing up. However, our feelings can sometimes make us reluctant to go to school. If you have high levels of anxiety and worry about attending school, you may be experiencing emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA).

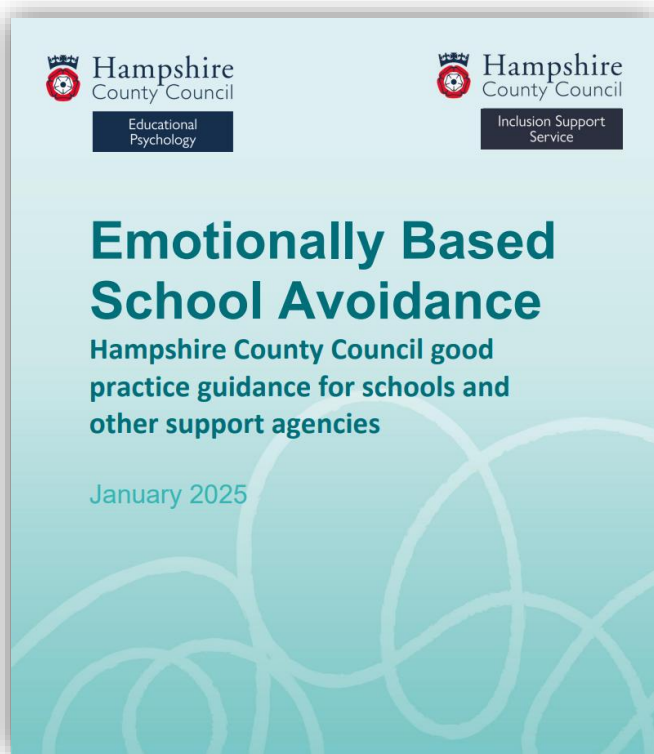
Signs of EBSA could include:

- fearfulness, anxiety, tantrums or expression of negative feelings when faced with the prospect of attending school
- complaints of abdominal pain, headache, sore throat, often with no signs of actual physical illness
- complaints of anxiety symptoms that include a racing heart, shaking, sweating, difficulty breathing, butterflies in the tummy or nausea, pins and needles

The symptoms are typically worse on weekday mornings and absent at weekends and school holidays.

Further useful documents from Hampshire EP Service:

[Educational Psychology policies and documents | Hampshire County Council](#)
(hants.gov.uk)



[EBSA-good-practice-guidance.pdf](#)
[EBSA-Parents-and-Carers-Information.pdf](#)
(hants.gov.uk)

Personal education plan

Education and training are the greatest tools to support social mobility and long-term outcomes.

The principal aim of the Virtual School is to improve the educational outcomes and life chances of children in care. The PEP is the tool for achieving this.

A **personal education plan (PEP)** is a statutory active document for a looked-after child. It forms the education part of the child's **care plan**.

The PEP document should be a dynamic and active tool in ensuring individual needs are assessed, understood and met.

The PEP should drive support and interventions, ensuring measurable outcomes and the best progress and attainment are achieved.



The Children Act 1989 guidance and regulations

Volume 2: care planning, placement and case review

June 2015



The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children

Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities

February 2018

Personal education plan

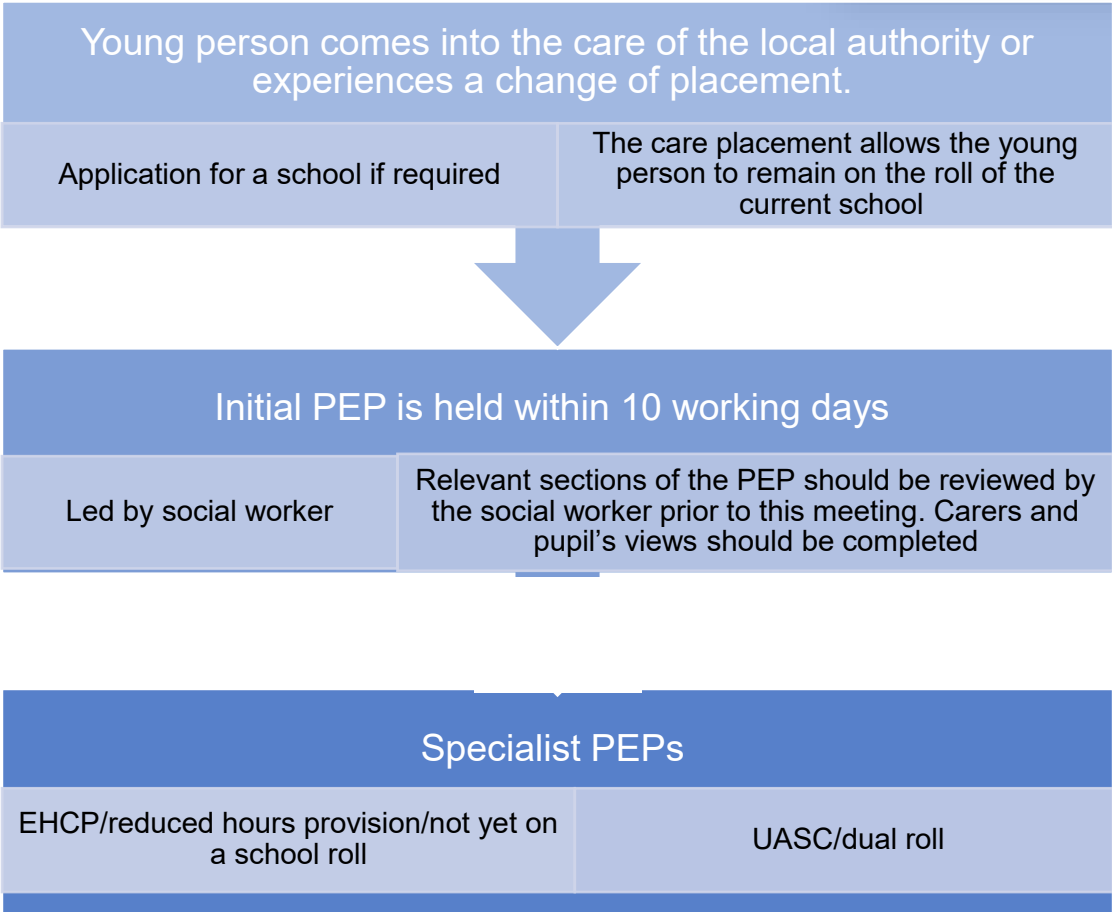
It is vital that the PEP is not seen in isolation from other parts of the care plan. As with other parts of the plan, the PEP should interrelate with other strands of the care plan, particularly those relating to health, emotional and behavioural development, identity and family and social relationships. Given that there is a greater likelihood that a looked-after child will move education placements more than other children, the PEP is the core document which enables children and their social workers, carers and teachers to reach a shared and agreed understanding of what needs to be done, how, and by whom (including services and named people) to implement the plan.



The Children Act 1989 guidance and regulations

Volume 2: care planning, placement and case review

June 2015



Quick guide



high aspirations
support and challenge progress
celebrate achievements



The PEP is a statutory element of the care plan.

It is an evolving record of what needs to happen for looked-after children to fulfil their potential.



As corporate parent, we need to ensure we achieve the best possible outcomes.

The PEP should be focused on needs and measure progress and outcomes.



The PEP should reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning that meets the child's identified educational needs, raises aspirations and builds life chances.



Social workers play a crucial role in supporting a child's education and progress.

Questions to ask :



Enjoyment

How is the child doing at school?
What are they enjoying?
What are their strengths?
What are their interest/passions/views?



Progress & achievements

What is the level of progress from the last PEP?
Is the child making a good level of progress?
If not, why not, and what is being done to address this?
Is the child at ARE?
What are the gaps in progress/achievement?
What interventions and support are in place to close gaps?



Needs assessment

Are there any SEN needs?
Are there any social and emotional needs?
What does the PEP toolkit highlight in terms of needs?
Were any other needs identified?

Use of pupil premium

What are the key interventions and support to meet needs?
What is the support and intervention plan?
How is the Pupil Premium being used to address needs?

Enjoyment

Child focused

Strengths

Voice of child

Opportunities

Progress

Achievements

Needs

Support

PEP Toolkit

Use of PP

Action Plan

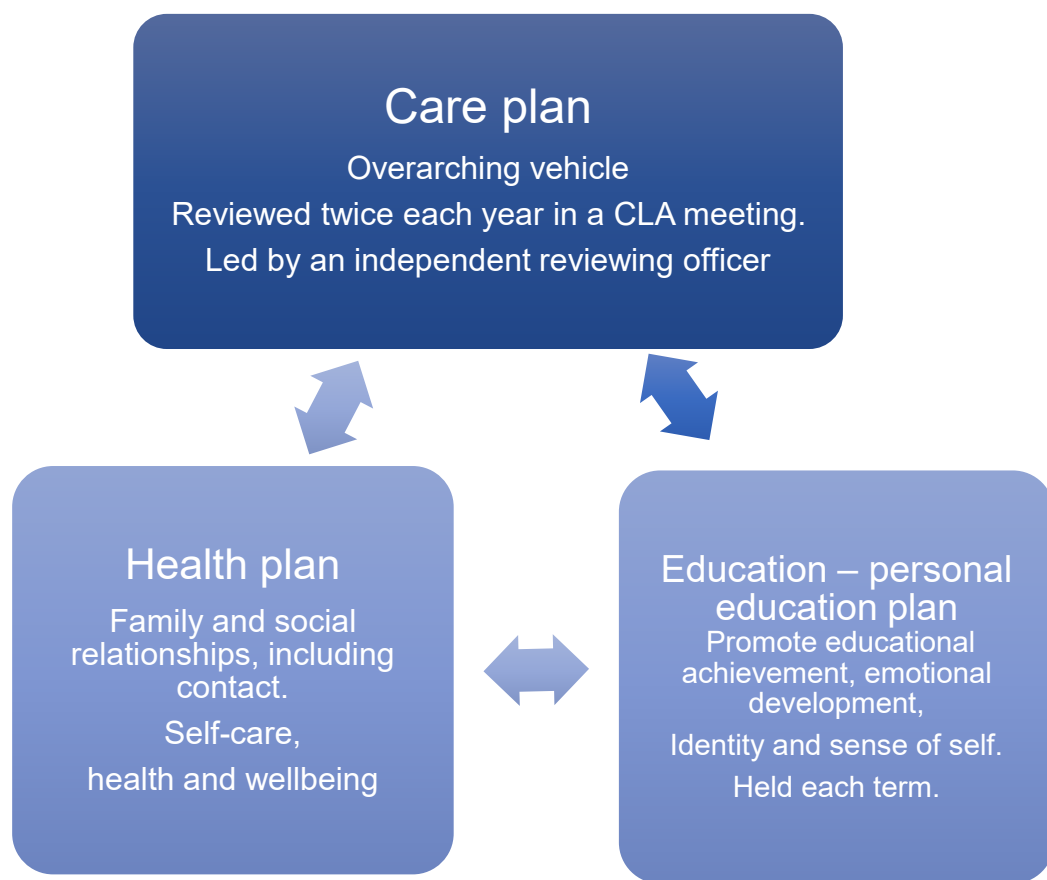
Measure

Success

Personal education plan

The PEP should be treated as a live document that is kept up-to-date, relevant, and used to monitor progress and achievement.

As children in care are more likely to move schools, their PEP should enable any move to be supported by the most up-to-date set of information to ensure consistency of support.



High aspirations are crucial to successful planning for the future.

The PEP should be formally reviewed and updated each term via a PEP meeting and submitted to Hampshire Virtual School via the online PEP system Asset.

The PEP should clearly identify each child's needs and include a SMART action plan to address these through interventions and support. The interventions and support will be costed against the pupil premium funding.



Personal education plan

The PEP should cover the full range of education and development needs, including:

- access to a nursery/high-quality early years provision that is appropriate to needs
- ongoing catch-up support for those who have fallen behind with schoolwork
- provision of immediate suitable education where a child is not in school
- transition support where needed, such as when a child starts attending a new school
- school attendance and, where appropriate, behaviour support
- support needed to help the child realise their short and long-term academic achievements and aspirations.

The PEP should:

- be a living, evolving, comprehensive and enduring record of the child’s experience, progress and achievement
- inform any discussion about education during statutory reviews
- be linked to, but not duplicate or conflict with, information in any other plans
- identify developmental and educational needs (including any related to attachment and past trauma) in relation to skills, knowledge, subject areas and experiences
- say what will happen or is already happening to identify and support any mental health needs

All looked-after children on your roll must have PEPs

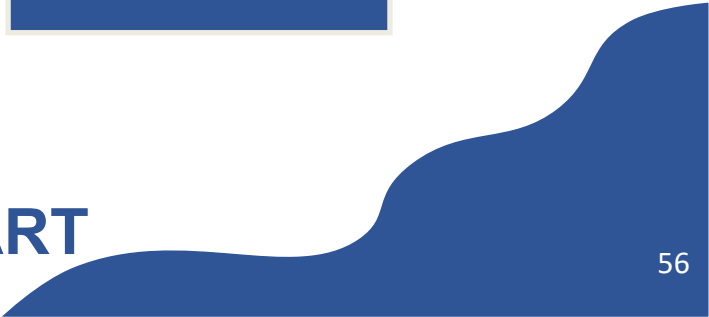
Designated leads and a wider team in school can support the DT

DTs monitor and evaluate progress. Identify barriers to learning and any needs

Begin to address needs with SMART targets

Allocate spending to support engagement and achievement

Think BIG... Plan SMART





Role of social worker in PEP

Social workers should ensure the first PEP is called and in place before the initial child in care review. This should be within 10 days of care status starting.

The social worker is likely to already be in close contact with the education setting unless the child moves immediately while coming into care.

The social worker should ensure that the school and others involved are aware of and knowledgeable about the relevant case history and context.

They should ensure all appropriate permissions (and delegated permissions) are known to the education setting.

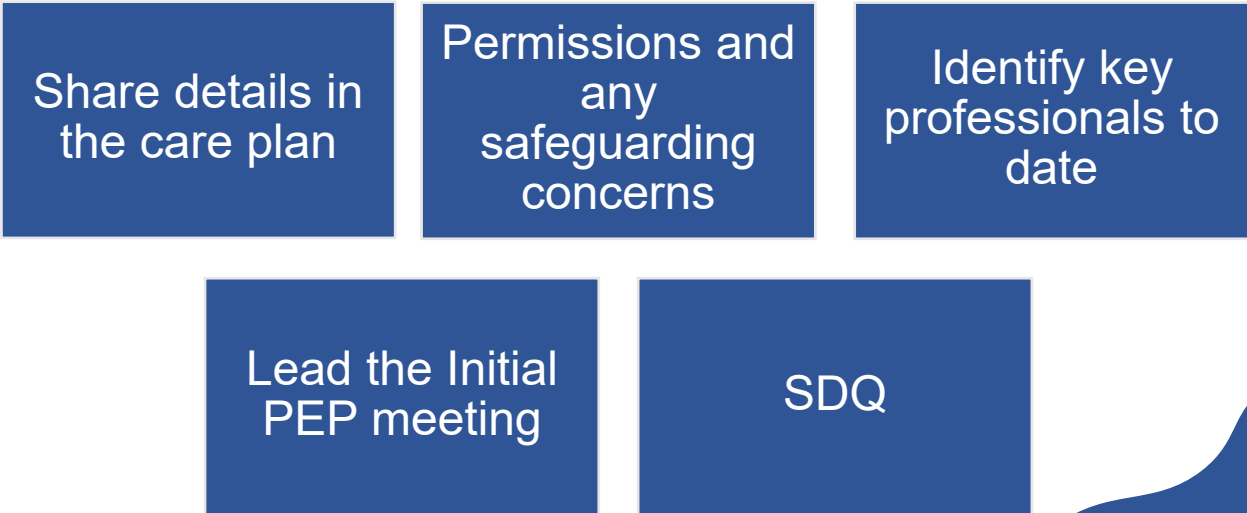
They should ensure all relevant safeguarding information is shared in the initial PEP meeting.

They should support and ensure that the key needs and priorities of the child are considered and agreed upon in the PEP.

They should support the decisions around support, interventions and use of pupil premium in the PEP meeting.

They should complete all their sections of the PEP before or immediately after the PEP meeting.

They should update the school with any significant changes as they occur.



SDQ

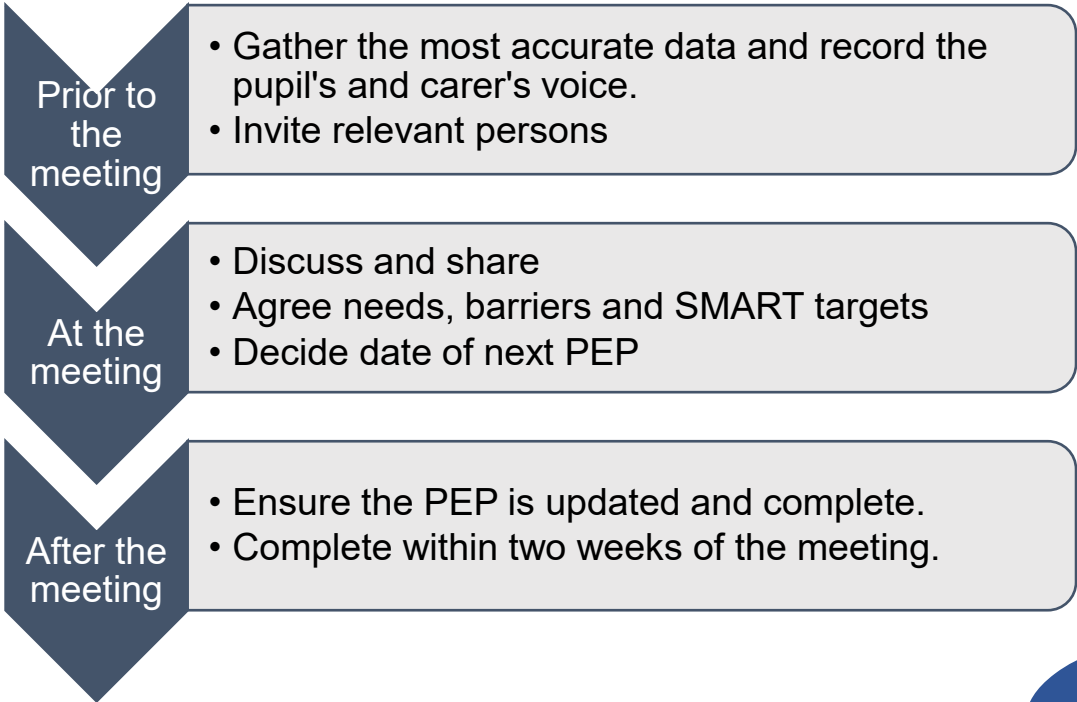
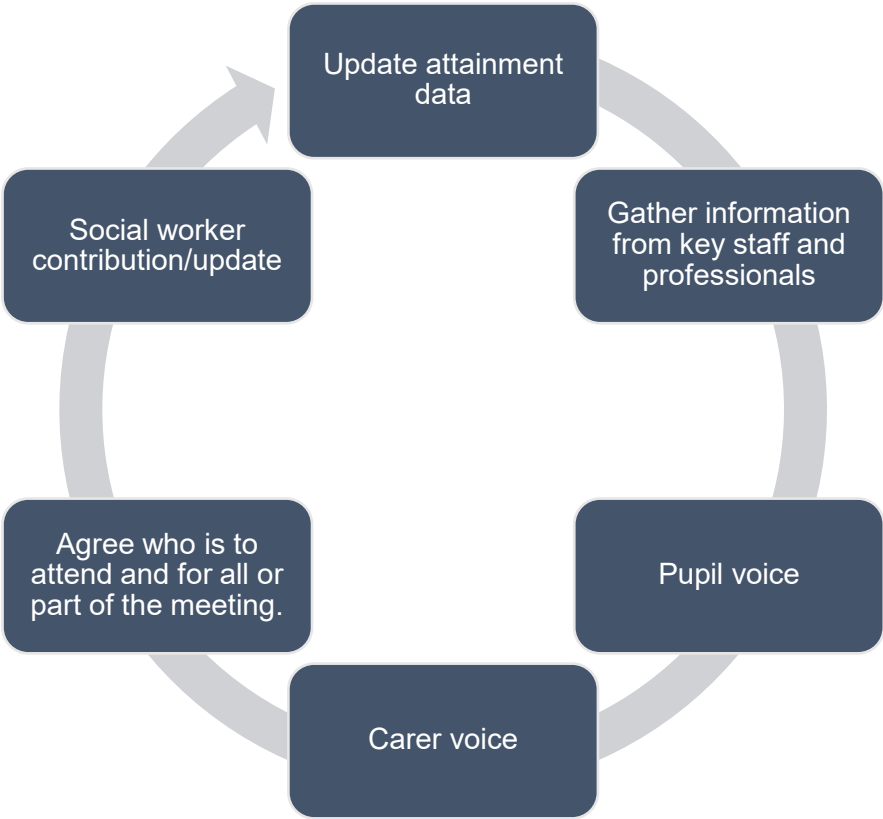


PEP meeting

The PEP meeting is not just about filling in the PEP document.

The meeting should focus on and ensure the following:

- Key needs are understood and shared
- Information on progress and attainment is shared
- Agree on a set of priority needs and actions
- Set out a SMART action plan
- Agree on the use of PP in line with the PEP SMART Plan and priority needs



Do I need to initiate the first PEP meeting?

The social worker should ensure the first PEP meeting is set up and takes place within 10 days of the child coming into care or moving schools. The DT in school is integral to all PEP meetings, so make sure you have spoken in advance of the meeting.

Do I need to attend every PEP meeting?

If you are involved in the life of a looked-after child, you should contribute to the PEP process and meetings. You need to ensure the best possible support and outcomes are achieved. Remember, the PEP is a statutory part of the care plan.

Do we need to have a PEP meeting every term?

The Hampshire Virtual School has determined that holding a PEP meeting each term is our best practice approach. The annual PEP meeting should be held early in the autumn term to establish plans and goals for the year and then reviewed each term.

As a child social worker, what do I need to ask at the PEP meetings?

As a child's social worker, you need to ensure you fulfil your corporate parenting responsibilities and that all of the child's education needs are being fully supported in school. You should take a strengths-based approach to ask how the child is progressing, what difficulties or gaps in learning they might have, and what additional support and interventions are in place to address needs and gaps.

How do I get support with a tricky PEP meeting?

Please make sure you speak to a member of the Virtual School staff well before the meeting. They will be able to support and guide you. If needed, they will provide support by attending the PEP meeting if they are available.

What is the action plan at the back of the PEP?

The action plan should provide clear details of the child's assessed education needs. It should then detail all of the extra support and interventions provided by the school to support the child. The plan should also detail how the pupil premium is being used.

Does the Virtual School monitor PEPs?

The Virtual School completes a quality assurance process on all or a selection of PEPs each term. This process supports feedback and development for schools and DTs.

Think big, plan SMART

- Think about long-term aspirations and educational pathways
- Think about career advice and guidance
- Think about further (college) and higher education (university)
- Assess needs and plan for short-term and long-term support and interventions
- What is the current level of attainment and progress?
- If they are not at ARE, what extra support and interventions will be implemented?
- Make sure plans are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time-specific

Hampshire PEP

The Hampshire PEP is online via Asset. All DTs and other relevant professionals will have individual logins and access to all their children.

As a DT, you can access all your Hampshire children's PEPs in one place.

The online PEP is organised into sections via a tab menu on the left-hand side of the screen. The sections and questions are self-explanatory and relate to the key information that has always made up a PEP.

The online system provides DTs in school and the Virtual School with a much more efficient system to manage and monitor PEPs.

Multiple online guides and videos support all the questions and sections of the PEP.

Book Demo Video Brochure Partners International Awards About Us Contact Us Login

Asset®

Primary Secondary Post 16 MATs LAs Virtual Schools

Accredited Analyse School Performance
Data Supplier by DfE®

Asset®
Advanced Statistical
System Evaluation Tool
for Raising Educational Standards

USERNAME

PASSWORD

LOGIN

[Forgot username?](#) [Forgot password?](#) [Secure Website](#)

[Advanced Statistical System Evaluation Tool
\(assetforschools.com\)](https://assetforschools.com)

Hampshire PEP

- There are several standard summary screens for each child and cohort to support your work in schools.
- The system also allows communication between DTs, and social workers and the Virtual School.
- This online system enables DTs to swiftly add to and update a PEP at any point across the year.
- Individual completed PEPs can be downloaded as a PDF and shared with any other relevant people.

PEP Dashboard for **Cara-Kate Mcmillan**

START NEW PEP

VIEW PEP

Name of Young person

Cara-Kate Mcmillan

Change Pupil

Date of PEP

25/03/2020

@

School Name: Test Sub School

Year Group: Y7

SEND: EHCP

Current attendance

91.5%

Fixed Term Exclusion

2.5%

English latest level

4-

English on track?

Yes

Maths latest level

3-

Maths on track?

No

Actions	Who?	When?	Completed?
Issue revision book	Virtual School	11/02/2020	☒ Yes ☐ No
Arrange after school tuition	Virtual School	21/01/2020	☐ Yes ☒ No
Use software issued by Virtual School to support studies	Virtual School	14/01/2020	☒ Yes ☐ No

Pupil Premium sent this year

£ 475

Date of THIS PEP

25/03/2020

Date of NEXT PEP

26/06/2020 11:00

PEP Grade

Good

[Advanced Statistical System Evaluation Tool \(assetforschools.com\)](https://assetforschools.com)

Pupil premium +

“Pupil premium is funding to improve education outcomes for disadvantaged pupils in schools in England. Evidence shows that disadvantaged children generally face additional challenges in reaching their potential at school and often do not perform as well as other pupils.”

- Department for Education (DfE).



EFFECTIVE USE OF PUPIL PREMIUM PLUS



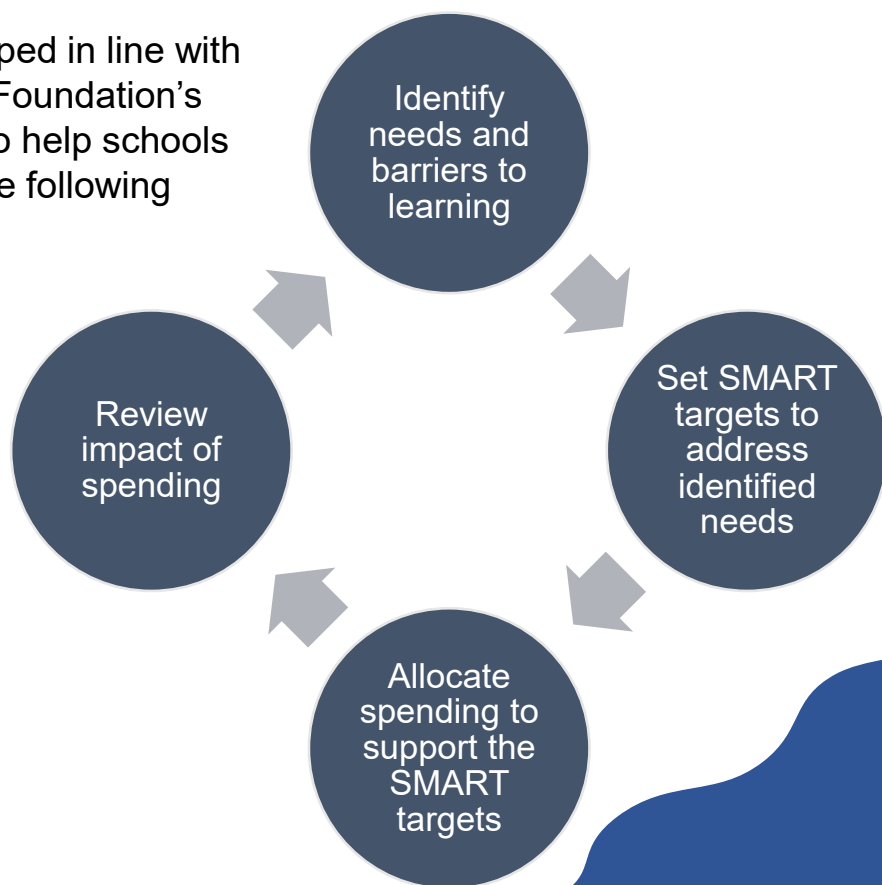
[Using pupil premium | EEF](#)
(educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk)

Schools should ensure the PP grant is focused on effective approaches to raising the educational attainment of eligible pupils. Schools must use their PP grant in line with the **menu of approaches** set by the DfE.

The menu of approaches is in the [using pupil premium](#) guidance.

The menu has been developed in line with the Education Endowment Foundation’s (EEF’s) 3-tiered approach to help schools allocate spending across the following three key areas:

- support high-quality teaching, such as staff professional development
- provide targeted academic support, such as tutoring, through the National Tutoring Programme (NTP)
- tackle non-academic barriers to academic success, such as difficulties with attendance, behaviour and social and emotional wellbeing



Pupil premium +

Pupil premium for looked-after children (LAC) is managed and monitored through the Virtual School. Some of these funds are used to provide central provision and services through the Virtual School.

The amount available for each LAC pupil (Hampshire) is £1,600. This is paid at the end of each term to schools: £600 (summer term), £550 (autumn term) and £450 (spring term).

The pupil premium grant is for the educational benefit of pupils, and spending should be clearly linked to children's needs and educational targets.

Pupil premium

- Based on number of disadvantaged students
- Not a personal budget
- Paid directly to schools
- Based on Oct census return

Pupil premium plus PP+

- Paid to the local authority
- Managed by the Virtual School HT
- VS top slice for central services for CIC
- Paid termly to schools with Hampshire CIC

Effective practice includes approaches that:

- are individually tailored to the needs and strengths of each pupil, keeping their views central. Consistent but also flexible and responsive
- are based on evidence of what works
- are focused on clear short-term goals, providing opportunities for pupils to experience success
- include regular, high-quality feedback from teaching staff
- engage parents/carers in arrangements for education support via the PEP
- support pupil transitions, such as primary to secondary/KS3 to KS4
- raise aspirations through access to high-quality educational experiences
- promote the young person's awareness and understanding of their thought process (metacognition) and help to develop problem-solving strategies
- are relationship-building, both with appropriate adults and with peers
- are joined up involving social worker/carer/other professionals
- are relevant and related to the pupil's interests. Make it matter to them
- have a child-centred approach to assessment for learning
- use positive reinforcement and build self-esteem
- are emotionally intelligent

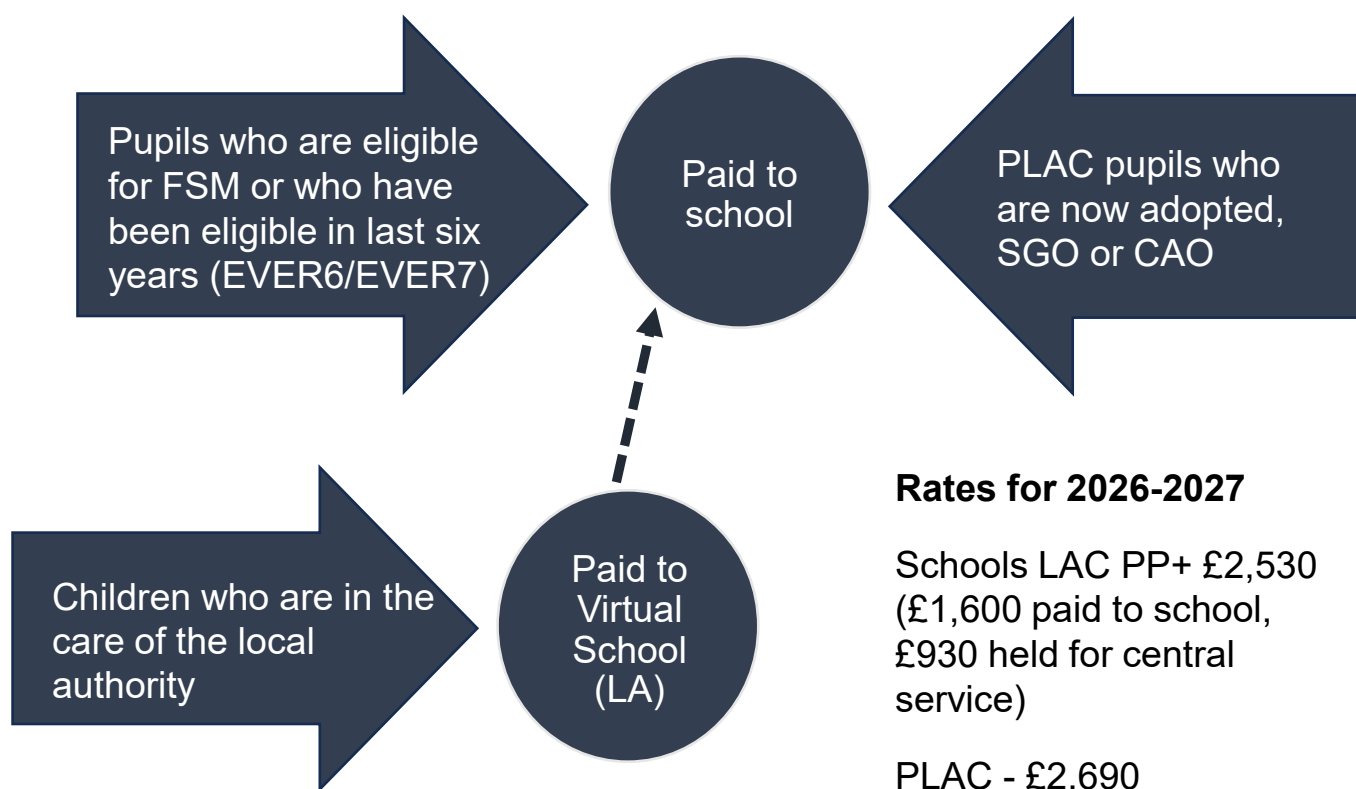
Pupil premium +

Schools are held accountable for the outcomes they achieve with all their funding, including through Ofsted inspections and by governors, and the PP grant is no exception.

The DT has a key role in ensuring that the specific needs of children in care and previously looked after are reflected in how you use your pupil premium.

A school's DT should:

- ensure adoptive parents and guardians are aware that they can declare their child eligible for pupil premium and work with them in deciding how the funding should be used
- consult the VSH on how to use the funding effectively, where appropriate
- be the main contact for queries about how the pupil premium is being used to support previously looked-after children



[Pupil premium: allocations and conditions of grant 2026 to 2027 - GOV.UK](#)

[Pupil premium 2026 to 2027: technical note - GOV.UK](#)

Can PP be used to fund school uniforms or transport?

No, PP should not be used to fund any basic items, equipment, school uniforms, or transport to school. Any of these basic care needs and getting a child to school should be funded through care placement or care support for a child. A child might be eligible for school transport, depending on the situation and their individual circumstances.

Can PP be used to fund an after-school club?

If the club supports the development or needs of the child identified in the PEP, this could be appropriate. The club (and any support/interventions) should be detailed in the SMART plan in the PEP and meet the priority needs identified.

Can PP be used to fund additional English or maths tuition?

Yes, if this is a priority area agreed upon in the PEP and forms part of the SMART plan.

Can PP be used to fund a small school trip?

Possibly, again, if this meets a priority need in the PEP and is in the SMART plan. Schools should take a consistent approach to using PP to subsidise trips across the school. We recommend taking an appropriate proportion of PP and asking for a parental/carer contribution through their carer's allowance.

Can PP be used to fund an expensive residential trip?

Possibly, again, if this meets a priority need in the PEP and is in the SMART plan. Schools should take a consistent approach to using PP to subsidise residential trips across the school. We recommend taking an appropriate proportion of PP towards the cost, seeking some level of parental/carer contribution through their carer's allowance, and seeking some level of support from the child's social worker (child in care resources).

[Course: Pupil Premium \(hants.gov.uk\)](https://hants.gov.uk)

Pupil premium grant should be used to:

- narrow the attainment gap
- support progress and achievement
- address identified learning needs
- be focused, targeted and specific
- provide direct educational interventions
- support pupils reach their full potential

Early years funded hours

What are EYs 'funded hours'?

Early Years funded hours are government-funded hours for children to attend EYs education (preschools, nurseries or childminders) before they begin formal schooling. Depending on the age and circumstances of the child, different amounts of hours are available via government funding.

For Children in Care (CiC), they may be entitled to the following funded hours:

- **Up to 15 (term time) hours per week, from the term after they turn 2 years old** until they start school (up to 570 hours per year in total) via either 'disadvantaged' or 'universal' funding.
- **Up to 30 (term time) hours per week from the term after they turn 9 months old** until they start school (up to 1140 hours per year in total). **This is only available via an application process and where certain eligibility criteria, including working parents or carers, are met.**

'Stretched' Hours (children attending through the school holidays):

Term time hours are calculated based on the child attending for 38 weeks per year. In EY settings that are open during school holidays, children may attend for more than the 38 term-time-only weeks. **Children are still only entitled to up to 570 total hours of funded EY education per year** (up to 1140 hours if approved for additional hours). Therefore, if a child attends EY education for more than 38 weeks of the year, their EY hours entitlement will be **stretched** across the weeks they attend. They will **therefore receive fewer funded hours per week, but will still have the same annual entitlement.**

Please see the following page for a breakdown of EYs funded hours entitlements by age-band.

Further links:

[Early education and childcare - GOV.UK](#)

[Early years entitlements: local authority funding operational guide 2026 to 2027 - GOV.UK](#)
[Services for Young Children | Hampshire County Council](#) (Hampshire EY funding queries)

Social workers/parents/carers: what questions should you ask a preschool, nursery or childminder?

- Do you accept EYE funding (EYs funded hours)?
- Do you offer 'stretched' hours across the year, or are you term time only?
- Have you had looked after children/previously looked after children in this setting before? Have staff had training on attachment and trauma?
- Do you have a designated lead for children in care in the setting? What are their contact details? Have they/will they access training?
- How do you support children with SEND?
- What kind of key person system do you run? Will the child have the same **key adult** caring for them and holding them in mind?
- Do you use electronic learning journeys or paper copies?
(consider confidentiality and photographs)

Early years funded hours

Guidance on EY Funded Hours for CiC by Child's Age:

Age Band	EY Funded Hours
3- and 4-Year Olds	15 hours 'universal' funding: All 3- and 4-year-olds are entitled to 15 hours per week of funded EY education over 38 weeks per year (570 hours annually), regardless of family income or circumstances. This is referred to as 'universal' EY funding. This is not dependent on the child's looked-after status. This starts from the term after the child turns 3. For example, a child who turns 3 in November would be eligible for 15 hours of universal funding from the following January. As this is a universal entitlement, EY settings should register the child for EY funded hours via their normal registration process. They should, however, also log that the child is looked after to trigger EYPP funding. Extra 15 hours for working parents and carers: If the foster carer (or parent, if child is residing with them) is in paid employment (outside of fostering) and other eligibility criteria are met, the child may be eligible for an additional 15 hours, making a total of 30 hours per week. An application process is required. For children in foster care, please see I am a foster carer Health and social care Hampshire County Council under the 'Working Families Entitlement' box. For children residing with a parent or connected carer, application is via the standard Working Parent scheme: Free Childcare for Working Parents: Overview - GOV.UK
2 Year Olds	15 hours Early Learning for 2-year-olds (formally disadvantaged 2-year-old) funding: Looked after 2-year-olds are entitled to 15 hours per week of funded EY education over 38 weeks per year (570 hours annually). This is part of the Early Learning for 2-year-olds entitlement, which includes children in care. This can be accessed from the term <i>after</i> the child turns 2. For children in care attending Hampshire settings, the setting should log the 2-year-old child as 'looked after' on the online portal. SfYC will then check that the child is looked after by Hampshire as part of the registration process. In Hampshire, a separate application process and code is not needed. (For CiC educated out of county, an application process may be needed. Please check with the setting's local authority regarding their processes for Early Learning for 2-year-olds/ disadvantaged 2-year-old funding). Extra 15 hours for working parents and carers: If the foster carer (or parent, if child is residing with them) is in paid employment (outside of fostering) and other eligibility criteria are met, the child may be eligible for an additional 15 hours, making a total of 30 hours per week. An application process is required. For children in foster care, please see I am a foster carer Health and social care Hampshire County Council under the 'Working Families Entitlement' box. For children residing with a parent or connected carer, application is via the standard Working Parent scheme: Free Childcare for Working Parents: Overview - GOV.UK
9 Months up to 2 Years	There is no automatic entitlement to funded EY education funded hours for children in care in this age band. Up to 30 hours for working parents and carers: If the foster carer (or parent, if child is residing with them) is in paid employment (outside of fostering) and other eligibility criteria are met, the child may be eligible for up to 30 hours per week of EY funded education from the term after they reach 9 months old. An application process is required. For children in foster care, please see I am a foster carer Health and social care Hampshire County Council under the 'Working Families Entitlement' box. For children residing with a parent or connected carer, application is via the standard Working Parent scheme: Free Childcare for Working Parents: Overview - GOV.UK

Early years pupil premium

Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP)

The Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) aims to support early years settings in narrowing the achievement gap between children from disadvantaged backgrounds and their peers. Its purpose is to enhance the progress of these children through focused and strategic interventions, encouraging practitioners to give particular attention to their development.

EYPP should be automatically paid to a setting where a child in care is attending for funded hours, and settings should receive up to £655 per year per CiC. **Settings must ensure that the child is registered with their local authority EY funding team as a looked-after child to ensure EYPP for the child is received.**

How should EYPP be used?

EYPP received for a CiC should **be used by education settings to narrow the disadvantage gap**, and should be directed to support identified educational needs, and/or enhance the strengths of the child. Education settings should decide how this funding is used and should consider the views of the social worker in doing this.

EYPP is not 'ringfenced' to a specific child. However, **we would expect settings to be carefully considering how EYPP use is benefiting the child in care**. Use of EYPP on provision, training or resources should have a positive impact on the progress of the CiC. **This should be evidenced in the child's personal education plan (PEP)**. Settings should be able to answer questions around how the use of EYPP is supporting the child's needs or strengths, as identified in the PEP, and narrowing the disadvantage gap for them.

Further useful guides on effective use of EYPP are available via the links below:

[Hampshire Virtual School Moodle: Early Years Resources](#)

[Early Education: Practical tips on allocating EYPP funding](#)

[Early Years Pupil Premium | Education Endowment Foundation Guidance](#)

[Framing your thinking for spending your EYPP funding - Early Education](#)

Parents/carers, social workers, designated leads, independent reviewing officers: what questions should you ask?

- Is the child on track for their age and stage of development in the prime and specific areas of learning? Are they making progress?
- If they are not, what is being done to address gaps in the prime areas, literacy and mathematics?
- What progress is being made in personal social and emotional development (PSED)?
- Are there strands in any of the seven areas
- Are there any additional special educational needs and disability (SEND)?
- Are there any long-term needs or requirements for therapeutic support?

EYPP - FAQs

Can the early years pupil premium be spent on resources/technology/outings?

What is the educational benefit? What are the identified needs and actions in the PEP, and how would this spending support them? If a pupil is not on track, what is being done to address this? How is the EYPP being used to meet the child's needs?

Can a child also receive DAF funding if they get EYPP? Yes, a child can also receive the **disability access fund** if they are in receipt of the **disability living allowance** and attend the setting on funded hours.

If the child attends for over 15 hours, can they receive additional EYPP funding? No, the maximum EYPP a child can receive is around £655 per year. .

Can EYPP be pooled within a setting or group of settings? Yes. As the EYPP is a small sum of money, it can be pooled to provide training and resources. Any money spent must be based on meeting the setting's disadvantaged children's needs.

Can a childminder claim EYPP? Yes, all EY providers eligible for funding for the three and four-year-old EYE entitlement can receive the EYPP if they have a looked-after child on roll.

Who chooses how the EYPP is spent?

The setting and social worker should agree on **how to spend** the **EYPP**, but this **must** be based on the needs of the eligible children at the setting and focused on **educational needs**.

EYPP should be used to:

- narrow the attainment gap
- support progress and achievement
- address identified learning needs
- be focused, targeted and specific
- provide direct interventions
- support children to reach their full potential

Previously looked after child

Virtual school

The remit of the Virtual School is to provide advice, guidance and signposting (not to case hold)

Designated teacher

Your primary role is to advocate and champion the needs of this vulnerable cohort. Many looked-after and previously looked-after children have suffered disrupted learning, may have missed extended periods of school, and have special educational needs (SEN).

For a pupil to be a post/previously looked after child, they will have been in care and immediately moved to a new order of permanency through:

- adoption
- special guardianship order (SGO)
- residency order (RO) ceased 2014
- child arrangement order (CAO)

('going home' does not meet criteria for PLAC)

Nearly all adopted children are care-experienced children and are removed from their birth families for significant and serious reasons.

The number of PLAC children in Hampshire is based on school census data. This may not be the total number, as parents do not have to declare.

The number of children with SEN needs and EHCPs is much higher than average (July 2025 data).

Hampshire	SEN Support	EHCP	Receiving either
All pupils	14%	6.5%	20.5%
PLAC	27.6%	23%	50.7%



The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children

Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities

February 2018

[The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

PLAC category	Hampshire (July 2026)
Adoption	882
Adoption - O	14
SGO	482
CAO	82
RO	12
	1472

PLAC pupils

As a DT/school, you need to first determine which children qualify for PLAC status. You may wish to make sure your school enrolment paperwork asks parents to declare this.

- PLAC pupil premium is the largest PP (£2,690 a year)
- parental choice to self-declare their children's status to the school
- school should ask and be satisfied they qualify
- schools/DTs should ensure PLAC children are recorded on Oct census, as this determines PP funding
- Hampshire best practice – Education Support Plan (ESP) and similar for SGO/CAO
- Education Support Plans (ESP), like PEPs, identify needs, make SMART targets and action plans and determine how to use PP
- Consultation with parents and other professionals is crucial for success
- Many adoptive parents are skilled professionals and can greatly contribute to their child's success in school

Check out our PLAC pages to find out more: [Course: Previously Looked-After Children \(PLAC\) | Hampshire Virtual School](#)

Information and guidance on school census:

[Complete the school census - Guidance - GOV.UK](#)

-
- We can provide generalised advice anonymously or specifically with parental consent
 - Our training offer is for schools with CLA, PLAC, CWSW and those in kinship care. See the Virtual School Training Brochure for details
 - We work closely with other HCC services such as HIEPs, PBS, ISS, STAS, DQC and SEN

For support with PLAC/CWSW and those in kinship care students, email VSExtendedDuties@hants.gov.uk

Children with a social worker

The extended duties of the Virtual School

Since September 2021, virtual schools have had an extended duty towards children with a social worker. The extended Virtual School Head role will:

- make visible the disadvantages that children with a social worker can experience, enhancing partnerships between education settings and local authorities to help all agencies hold high aspirations for these children
- promote practice that supports children's engagement in education, recognising that attending an education setting can be an important factor in helping to keep children safe from harm
- level up children's outcomes and narrow the attainment gap so every child can reach their potential



Promoting the education of children with a social worker

Virtual School Head role extension

June 2022

[Promoting the education of children with a social worker \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

Desired outcomes

Raised attendance

Reduced exclusions and suspensions

Improved outcomes

Strategic intentions

Enhancing partnerships between education and social care

Providing advice and guidance

Using data to inform interventions

For support with PLAC/CWSW and those in kinship care students, email
VSExtendedDuties@hants.gov.uk

Children in Kinship Care

The extended duties of the Virtual School

In September 2024, virtual schools extended duty role was further extended to bring greater focus and visibility to the distinct needs of children in kinship care.

The additional activities for the extension to kinship care are:

- Raising awareness of the needs and disadvantage of children in different types of kinship care arrangements
- Promoting practice that supports attendance and engagement of kinship children in education
- Promoting practice that improves the educational attainment of children in kinship care
- Expanding the provision of advice and information, on request, to all kinship carers with special guardianship orders and child arrangement orders, regardless of whether their child was previously looked after by the local authority.

Guidance

Promoting the education of children with a social worker and children in kinship care arrangements: virtual school head role extension

Updated 17 July 2025

[Promoting the education of children with a social worker \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

For support with PLAC/CWSW and those in kinship care students, email VSExtendedDuties@hants.gov.uk

Imagination Library

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is a free source of books for vulnerable children aged five years and under. All Early Years Hampshire Looked After Children are automatically signed up to receive free books across the year.

Those children who fit under the following Virtual School Duties can now also be signed up for this by a parents or carer:

- Previously Looked After Children (those who left care via an Adoption Order, Special Guardianship Order or Child Arrangement Order)
- Children with a Social Worker (children with Child in Need or Child Protection Plans in place)
- Children in Kinship Care (living with wider family or close friends)

For more information, please see our Virtual School Moodle: [Dolly Parton's Imagination Library | Hampshire Virtual School](#)

Parents or carers with parental responsibility can sign up directly via this form: [Dolly Parton's Imagination Library Sign Up](#)

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is a book-gifting charity for young children aged 0-5. Dolly was inspired to set up her Imagination Library as a tribute to her father, a smart and hard-working man who was unable to read or write. Dolly wants to guarantee access to books, inspire a life-long love of reading and help children reach their full potential.

"I remain totally convinced that if we could do one simple thing to inspire kids and adults to learn more, it would be to inspire them to read more. Thank you for your interest in my Imagination Library programme."





Hampshire County Council

Virtual School

If you have any questions or comments regarding this scheme please do not hesitate to contact Hampshire Virtual School:

Tel: 01962 835227
virtualschool@hants.gov.uk

We hope the children in your care enjoy the books!



Registered Charity
1121917 (England & Wales)
SCO45571 (Scotland)
imaginationlibrary.com/uk



Hampshire Virtual School



Inspire a Love of Reading

Foster Carer – role in PEP

As a foster carer, you will be one of the closest adults to a child and will have a good understanding of their needs and views. Make sure you take some time before a PEP meeting to think about what questions you might want to ask.

- Listen and record views of the child either in the child voice section or the carer section
- Attend the meeting and complete your parts of the PEP
- Have conversations with the school about the child's progress and their engagement in learning
- Ask good questions, such as what other interventions are available and what other activities or exercises would help my young person's development at home.

Are targets achievable within a term?

Can you see progress in PEPs?

Is the child's voice represented in targets?

Does the carer have a voice in the targets?

Would the PEP be good enough for your child?

Make sure you:

- ask questions
- ask others to explain things or any jargon used
- Ensure the needs and targets of the child are correct
- raise questions or concerns on behalf of the child
- ask about additional support or interventions where needed
- ask difficult or challenging questions if needed, championing the needs of the child
- don't leave the meeting with unanswered questions
- seek advice and support from the social worker or Virtual School when needed

Foster carer – how do I support?

You don't need to be an expert in learning to support children in enjoying and succeeding with their education. You just need to take some time, show interest and support in lots of little ways:

- talk up education and learning
- have high aspirations and support these
- ensure space and resources for learning
- encourage reading and talking daily
- plan trips, activities and opportunities
- broaden horizons and experiences
- play games and puzzles
- encourage hobbies, clubs and sports
- keep up to date with school
- celebrate achievements regularly
- ask and talk about school each day
- keep things calm and relaxed and support any stress
- make sure you look after yourself as much as the child you are looking after



Think about the little things you can do:

- step by step (help break things into smaller chunks which feel less of a challenge)
- side by side (sit down and support with some time and energy)
- simple resources (do a little googling or ask someone for things that might help)
- small repetitive acts, such as giving some time or making a drink, to show understanding that some things are hard)
- with purpose: give real life opportunities for children to learn and develop skills
- be a positive role model
- help them organise and plan
- Provide them with fuel: feed their brain and growth with a good diet every day, take time to talk when the child is ready
- care and compassion: prepare bucket loads of care and compassion
- focus on and understand needs and wants. Take time to wonder why and understand what might be going on for a child
- never stop learning yourself

Designated teacher – check list



Know your children

- Know who every child in care is
- know who every PLAC child is
- Fully assess and understand their needs
- know their progress, achievements and current working levels
- understand and explore all SEND needs

Relate connect trust

- connect a team of adults around each child
- ensure several key adults build secure and trusting relationships
- ensure every teacher knows/understands the needs of the child
- ensure the child is secure with trusted adults
- ensure the child has access to trusted adults as they need

Plan routine support

- ensure priority needs and SMART plan are in place for each child
- ensure support, interventions and catch-up sessions in your weekly routine
- ensure each child is a confident learner, has high aspirations and builds self-esteem and confidence
- ensure adults use consistent approaches/strategies

Check-in monitor track

- ensure trusted adults have regular check-ins (as needed)
- ensure trusted adults use coaching strategies
- ensure emotional wellbeing is supported
- ensure monitoring/tracking is in place and used
- ensure review with adults/teachers takes place to champion the child

Review reflect renew

- review and reflect with key adults on progress/difficulties
- ensure key trusted adults review and reflect with the child
- ensure relational repair is put in place to address any issues
- keep focused on the plan-do-review cycle

Recognise reward celebrate

- ensure progress and effort are frequently recognised and communicated to the child to build a growth mindset and confident learner
- appropriately celebrate bigger achievements/effort for the child
- reward effort with quality time/experience with a trusted adult
- ensure the wider team around the child (out of school) is kept up-to-date and involved

Social worker – check list



Know your children

- What are their interests and ambitions?
- Who are their trusted adults in school?
- How are they doing academically in school?
- How are they doing socially & emotionally at school?
- Do they have any SEND needs?

Relate connect trust

- Do you have any shared interests or topics to connect with?
- What regular means of communication do you have in place?
- Ensure you have regular and positive conversations around education, aspirations and interests

Plan routine support

- ensure priority needs and create a SMART plan in the PEP
- ensure support and interventions from agencies outside of school are in place
- ensure space and resources are available in the home to support learning & development
- ensure clubs, activities and enrichment takes place

Check-in monitor track

- keep informed and up to date with education progress and achievement
- ensure reviews with adults/teachers take place to champion the child
- ensure corporate parenting duties are fulfilled
- ensure swift action takes place to address issues

Review Reflect Renew

- review and reflect with key adults on progress/difficulties
- ensure key trusted adults review and reflect with child
- ensure relational repair is put in place to address any issues
- keep focused on the plan-do-review cycle

Recognise Reward Celebrate

- ensure that progress and effort are frequently recognised and communicated to the child to build a growth mindset and confident learner
- Appropriately celebrate bigger achievements/efforts for the child
- reward effort with quality time/experience with a trusted adult
- ensure the wider team around the child (out of school) is kept up-to-date and involved

Parent/carer/guardian – check list



Know your children

- What are their interest and ambitions?
- Who are their trusted adults in school?
- How are they doing academically in school?
- How are they doing socially & emotionally at school?
- Do they have any SEND needs?

Relate connect trust

- Do you have any shared interests or topics to connect with?
- Establish positive daily routines and rituals
- ensure you have regular and positive conversations around education, aspirations and interests

Plan routine support

- support priority needs and create a SMART plan in the PEP
- Ensure support and interventions from agencies outside of school are in place
- ensure space and resources are available in the home to support learning & development
- ensure clubs, activities and enrichment take place

Check-in monitor track

- keep informed and up to date with education, progress and achievement
- ensure review with adults/teachers take place to champion the child
- ensure swift action takes place to address issues

Review reflect renew

- review and reflect with key adults on progress/difficulties
- ensure key trusted adults review and reflect with the child
- ensure relational repair is put in place to address any issues

Recognise reward celebrate

- ensure that progress and effort are frequently recognised and communicated to the child to build a growth mindset and confident learner
- Appropriately celebrate bigger achievements/efforts for the child
- reward effort with quality time/experience with a trusted adult
- ensure the wider team around the child (out of school) is kept up-to-date

Glossary

CIC/LAC/CLA

Child in care/looked after child/child looked after

PLAC

Previously looked after child

PEP

Personal education plan

ESP

Education support plan

SEND/SEN

Special educational needs & disabilities

ARE

Age related expectations (expected point of educational achievement for age)

DfE

Department for Education

EHCP

Education, health care plan

EYFS

Early years foundation stage

EYPP

Early years pupil premium

KS1, KS2, KS3, KS4

Key Stage 1, 2, 3, 4

PACE

Playful acceptance curiosity empathy

VSH

Virtual School Head

LA

Local authority

DAF

Disability access fund

HCC

Hampshire County Council

DL/DT

Designated lead/teacher

School stages

Age	Year Group	Key Stage	Assessment
3-4	Nursery/pre-school	Early years foundation stage (EYFS)	EYFS profile assessment 17 strands in 7 areas of learning
4-5	Reception		
5-6	1	Key stage 1	Phonics screening
6-7	2		
7-8	3	Key stage 2	End of KS2 SAT tests Yr6
8-9	4		
9-10	5		
10-11	6		
11-12	7	Key stage 3	
12-13	8		
13-14	9		
14-15	10	Key stage 4	GCSE exams
15-16	11		
16-17	12	Key stage 5/post 16	A Levels T Levels NVQs / BTECs
17-18	13		

Resources & links

Below are various resources for watching, reading and reviewing to support your knowledge, understanding and skills in supporting vulnerable children.

To read: [Why-are-these-kids-different.pdf \(beaconhouse.org.uk\)](https://www.beaconhouse.org.uk/why-are-these-kids-different.pdf)

To watch: [Adverse Childhood Experiences \(ACEs\) \(Wales\) – YouTube](#)

- [Hampshire Virtual School and College \(hants.gov.uk\)](https://hants.gov.uk/virtual-school)
- [Hampshire SEN Support Guide](#)
- [Hampshire Emotionally Based School Avoidance Guide](#)
- [Educational Psychology | Hampshire County Council \(hants.gov.uk\)](https://hants.gov.uk/educational-psychology)
- [Children's Therapy Service | Solent NHS](#) – Schools Resources Pack (at bottom of page)
- [Resources \(beaconhouse.org.uk\)](https://www.beaconhouse.org.uk/resources)
- [Our services for educators & professionals | Adoption UK Charity](#)
- Betsy de Thierry (author): Simple Guides to Trauma...
- Louise Bomber (author): Settling to Learn, Inside I'm Hurting, Know Me to Teach Me
- Dan Siegel (author): The Whole-Brain Child, Brainstorm
- Kim Golding (author): Working with Relational Trauma in Schools
- Margot Sunderland (author): Conversations that Matter.
- Rebecca Brooks (author): The Trauma & Attachment-Aware Classroom
- Rendle & Messengers (author): Curious not Furious
- Sarah Naish (author): A-Z of Therapeutic Parenting (Professional Companion)
- [The ARC - Attachment Aware schools - YouTube](#)
- [How childhood trauma affects health across a lifetime | Nadine Burke Harris - YouTube](#)
- [Dr Daniel Siegel presenting a Hand Model of the Brain – YouTube](#)
- [Understanding Trauma: Learning Brain vs Survival Brain – YouTube](#)
- [Childhood Trauma and the Brain \(with English subtitles\) | UK Trauma Council – YouTube](#)
- [ReMoved – YouTube](#)
- [Remember My Story - ReMoved Part 2 – YouTube](#)
- [Ian Wright's teacher gave him direction and purpose during his turbulent upbringing - BBC - YouTube](#)
- <https://vimeo.com/321701224>
- [I LAC NOTHING – YouTube](#)
- [BraveHeart Education](#)
- [Adverse Childhood Experiences - NHS Health Scotland - YouTube](#)

Contact us

Hampshire Virtual School

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SO23 8UG

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virtualschool@hants.gov.uk

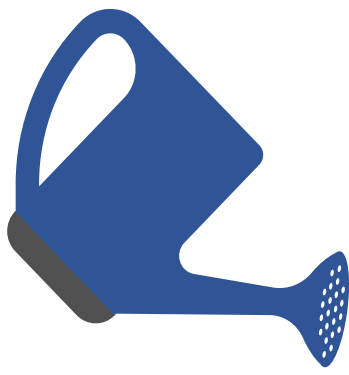
Extended Duties Team (CWSW, PLAC, Kinship) mailbox:

VSExtendedDuties@hants.gov.uk

Virtual School website:

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/virtual-school>

Virtual School Moodle: <https://virtualschool.hants.gov.uk/>



unconditional positive regard
playfulness, acceptance, curiosity, empathy
assess, understanding, acknowledge
connect, relate, regulate
safety, trust, engage
Kindness, care, compassion



“When a flower doesn’t bloom, you fix the environment in which it grows, not the flower.”

Alexander Den Heijer



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