



Previously Looked- After Children Information Sharing Guidance Document for Schools

Information Sharing about Previously Looked After Status

- Schools must treat adoption status as **sensitive personal data**
- It should only be shared with staff **on a need-to-know basis**
- Schools must have a **lawful basis** for processing it
- They must include it in their **privacy notices** and follow strict **data retention and security protocols**

Parents should be notified in high-level terms of all processing of this data, including its collection, storage and any necessary sharing. This is achieved through the school's privacy notice for pupils and parents, which should be published on the school website. Hampshire County Council recommends the template privacy notices in the Hampshire Legal Services' pages within [Hampshire Services for Schools](#)

Known adoption status should be shared with the local authority, the child's next school and the DfE.

In the UK, **parents are not legally required to notify a school of their child's adoption status**, but **doing so is strongly recommended** for several important reasons:

1. Access to Additional Support

- **Pupil premium plus** funding is available for children who have been adopted from care. This provides schools with extra financial resources to support the child's educational and emotional needs.
- To access this funding, schools need to know the child's adoption status. Parents must self-declare this to the school, usually during the annual school census.

2. Tailored Educational Support

- Adopted children may have experienced early trauma, attachment issues or disrupted schooling. Sharing adoption status allows schools to:
 - Implement trauma-informed practices
 - Offer emotional and behavioural support
 - Adjust teaching strategies to better suit the child's needs

3. Safeguarding and Confidentiality

- Schools are bound by confidentiality and data protection laws. If parents disclose adoption status, it should be handled sensitively and only shared with staff who need to know to support the child effectively.

4. Admissions Priority

- Children adopted from care are given **highest priority in school admissions** under the School Admissions Code.

Key Points from the DfE's Data Protection in Schools Guidance [www.gov.uk]:

1. Legal Framework

Schools must comply with:

- **UK GDPR** (UK General Data Protection Regulation)
- **Data Protection Act 2018**

These laws require schools to:

- Process personal data lawfully, fairly and transparently
- Keep data secure and only for as long as necessary
- Limit access to personal data to those who need it

2. Sensitive Data

Adoption status is considered **extremely sensitive data**, which requires **extra protection**. Schools must:

- Have a lawful basis for processing it (such as consent or safeguarding)
- Ensure it is stored securely and only shared when necessary

3. Privacy Notices

Schools must provide a privacy notice for parents and pupils explaining:

- What data is collected (including adoption status if declared)
- Why it is collected (such as for funding or support)
- Who it may be shared with (such as local authorities, DfE)
- How long it will be kept

4. Data Sharing

- Schools should only share adoption-related data with staff who need it to support the child
- Sharing must be justified, proportionate, and documented
- A Data Protection Impact Assessment (DPIA) may be required if the data sharing poses a high privacy risk

5. Retention and Disposal

- Schools should have a data retention schedule. Hampshire County Council recommends the retention schedule in the Hampshire Legal Services' pages within [Hampshire Services for Schools](#).
- Adoption status data is included in the child protection file and should be securely deleted when no longer needed in line with the retention schedule.

Transfer of Records

We recommend that on transition to the next setting, data is shared in accordance with Child Protection records. See section below on Child Protection records.

Child protection records

Before registration at the new school: Be careful about sharing anything that may affect admission decisions – most of what you share informally about child protection matters might be on the point of registration rather than beforehand. Paragraph 122 of [KCSIE](#) says "... the designated safeguarding lead should also consider if it would be appropriate to share any information with the new school or college in advance of a child leaving. For example, information that would allow the new school or college to continue supporting children who have had a social worker and been victims of abuse, or those who are currently receiving support through the 'Channel' programme and can have that support in place for when the child arrives. More information on the child protection file is in Annex C." It is fine to share information on the phone prior to registration and often schools will have an informal chat with the receiving school (this fits in with paragraph 122 of KCSIE). Anything shared informally in this way should be focussed on what the new school needs to prepare to support the child and could include the fact that there is a CIN plan, social worker appointed, EHH support etc.

Upon registration: The child protection records are sent separately and securely in a folder marked confidential. Paragraph 121 of KCSIE says "Where children leave the school or college, the designated safeguarding lead should ensure their child protection file is transferred to the new school or college as soon as possible, and within 5 days for an in-year transfer or within the first 5 days of the start of a new term to allow the new school or college to have support in place for when the child arrives. The designated safeguarding lead should ensure secure transit, and confirmation of receipt should be obtained. For schools, this should be transferred separately from the main pupil file. Receiving schools and colleges should ensure key staff such as designated safeguarding leads and special educational needs coordinators (SENCOs) or the named persons with oversight for special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) in a college, are aware as required."

PLAC Status and Pupil Premium

In order for the school to be eligible to claim PLAC pupil premium plus funding, a pupil must be classed as a previously looked-after child (PLAC). This includes pupils who were looked after by a local authority or other state care immediately before being adopted, or who left local authority or other state care on a special guardianship order or child arrangements order (previously known as a residence order). This also includes children adopted from state care or equivalent from outside England or Wales.

More information can be found in the Department for Education Publication [DfE Pupil Premium Overview](#)

Schools may wish to consider offering a general invitation to parents/guardians to self-declare, in a confidential manner via their school newsletter or enrolment documents, asking them to get in touch with the DT or named member of staff.

The Virtual School has published a template invitation which is available on our Moodle.

Important considerations:

- Not all parents/guardians will want to declare their child as PLAC – schools cannot claim PP+ if the parent/carer chooses not to disclose
- There are still some children who may not have been told that they are adopted – this is rare