PEP support guide for Foster Carers, Residential Care Placement Keyworkers and Fostering Support Social workers

The Virtual School

The Personal Education Plan - why is it important?

- It is part of the care plan which is a legal document and is used in each child in care review.
- It brings the main professionals in the team around the child (TAC) together to discuss the child's future life chances and seeks to make them accountable through action planning.
- The child's social worker is the lead professional for calling and coordinating the PEP and the school is responsible for chairing the meeting and ensuring that the plan is educational.

The Personal Education Plan - what should it include?

- The child's voice, no matter what age; this may be elicited before the meeting. This is critical as it is the child or young person's plan.
- Current attainment data set against predicted and target data. Where the school is now using its own assessments, an explanation of how the school is measuring progress must be available for the other professionals. It must be recorded whether the child's attainment is in line with national expectations for her/his age or below or above it.
- The rate of academic progress of the child. This must specify whether the child is making progress in line with national expectations and her/his peers, or is making slower or faster progress.
- Targets must be SMART. Specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time bound.
- Written feedback from each of the child's teachers & other professionals commenting on the child's attainment and rate of progress.
- Written feedback from each of the child's teachers & any other professionals involved commenting on the child's personal, social and emotional development.
- Attendance and punctuality data, with reasons for any absences or late starts, especially where this is impacting on the child's progress.
- Where there is poor school attendance (below 95% attendance), an attendance target will be included within the PEP.
- Where there is persistent absence from school (below 90% attendance), an attendance target and an attendance improvement plan will be included within the PEP. This will detail how the school, social worker, Virtual School, parents/carers/keyworkers and pupil will use the Virtual School Attendance Policy document and processes to work together to support improved attendance.
- For pupils in transition years (Pre-School, Year 6, Year 11) or with a planned school move, a robust and detailed transition action plan will be included within the PEP.
- Evidence of the child's part in the whole school community and wider activities to promote their academic and social development.

Prompt Questions for PEPs

What might the foster carer/keyworker ask of the school?

- What are staff doing to enhance a child's self-belief, motivation and high aspirations?
- What, specifically, is being done to support the development of self-regulation and/or self-belief (or other aspects typical of children in care?).
- Are his/her relationships with staff and pupils good and, if not, what is being done to support him/her with this?
- Is s/he engaging appropriately in the work? Is the set work made accessible to him/her (differentiated) when there are difficulties? Is s/he provided with adequate support for work?
- Have her/his needs been taken into account in class seating plans?
- How are social & emotional aspects of learning taught?
- Does the curriculum content and delivery take into account that s/he is a child in care?
- Is s/he managing transitions well within the school day? If not, what support is being given?
- Is s/he managing socially and emotionally during lunch and break time? If not, what support is being given?
- Does s/he need extra support with learning? If so, what is or can be done?
- If attendance is an issue, what is being done at school to support improved attendance?
- If there is an upcoming transition, what do the school feel the child needs in order to make the move successful/positive?
- Are there extra-curricular activities s/he could or should be attending?

What might the school and Designated Teacher ask of the foster carer/keyworker?

- Are you satisfied with the level of communication between school and home?
- What do you do to enhance self-belief, motivation and high aspirations?
- What do you do to support the development of self-regulation?
- Do you have a working knowledge of key stages, national expectations as regards progress, different pathways, how to support transition etc, or would you like more support?
- What are you doing to promote literacy and numeracy skills at home? Would you like more support with this?
- Are you providing the optimum environment for the completion of home learning?
- What support do you give with home learning?
- If attendance is an issue, what is being done at home to support improved attendance?
- If there is an upcoming transition, what do you feel the child needs in order to make the move successful/positive?
- Are you taking the child to activities that enhance learning outside of school? (Museums, trips, theatre, cinema, sports etc)?

Personal Education Plan

Self-evaluation questions for the foster carer/keyworker

1. I attend and contribute to every Personal Education Plan (PEP) meeting.
2. I know and understand how the child is assessed at school and the progress they are making in each subject.
3. The child talks about school, their teachers, their activities, and how their day was.
4. I actively advocate for the child at PEP meetings by speaking up for them, being positive about them and encouraging the school and social worker to support them.
5. I talk to the child about their school friends and encourage them to bring friends home (if appropriate).
6. I read the feedback from the child's teachers written in their exercise books.
7. I support the child with home learning (for example, by reading with them, discussing their homework, offering to proof-read it, help with internet research etc).
8. I read and sign the child's homework diary.
9. I talk with the child's class teacher or tutor at least once per half-term.
10. I attend school functions such as parents' evenings, drama productions, concerts, transition meetings, information evenings etc.
11. I actively seek ways to boost the confidence of the child, encourage high aspirations and good school attendance and let them know that I (and their teachers, social worker, birth family if appropriate) have high expectations of them.
12. If I have any concerns regarding school attendance, progress/attainment, relationships at school or any other educational issue, I raise this immediately with the school, social worker and Virtual School so that support for the child can be put in place promptly.