



**Guidance for Schools with Children who
Left Care through a Permanency Order**

EDUCATION

Virtual Schools (South East Region) Published 2024

Contents

Introduction	4
Prior to a Permanency Order Being Granted	5
Admissions Process	5
Court Date	5
Consistent Language	5
Birth Family	6
Contact	6
Connecting with The Family	6
Pre-empt Curiosity	7
Last PEP Meeting	7
Settling in Period. Life Change	7
Moving Schools	8
Starting at Your School/Setting	10
Child's Name	10
Transitioning to School	10
Transitions	10
Identity	11
Claiming Pupil Premium for previously looked after children	11
Resources for The Classroom	12
Adoption Support Fund	12
Virtual School	13
Permanence through Adoption	13
What is an Adoption Order?	13
Prior to Adoption	13

Adopters	14
The Court Order — Celebrations	14
Adoption Paperwork	15
Supporting The Family in The Future	16
Regional Adoption Agencies (RAA)	16
Post Adoption Support	17
Special Guardianship Orders	18
What is a Special Guardianship Order?	18
Post Order Support	18
Child's Name	19
Permanence through Child Arrangements	19
Child Arrangements Order	19
Additional Information	19
Contact Details	19

Introduction

This guide has been put together in collaboration with Virtual Schools across the Southeast of England, with particular thanks to Virtual School Kent, East Sussex Virtual School and Reading Virtual School, Brighter Futures for Children.

It is designed to support Designated Teachers and wider school staff, in their understanding of children's journeys to becoming permanently placed with different families other than with their birth parents, under a Permanence Order. The government refer to this group of children as Previously Looked After, i.e. they have been in the care of a Local Authority; prior to becoming adopted or living with a family under a Special Guardianship or Child Arrangements Order. [Children and Social Work Act 2017 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#) Some local authorities use the term 'children previously in care', or 'children previously looked after'.

For the purposes of this guidance, we have referred to parents and carers being those who the Permanency Order refers to as adoptive parents, special guardians or carers.

The guide provides some practical advice, as well as information, on how to support these children and their families through their children's educational journeys.



Prior to a Permanency Order Being Granted



The journey to coming into care and then a decision to permanently place a child outside of their immediate birth family is a difficult one for all concerned. The child will have experienced adverse childhood experiences, the effects of which will not magically vanish when placed with a new family.

When a child who is, or will be, leaving care under a permanency order is coming to your school, it is important to understand the legal processes. Understanding the effect that the trauma will have had on that child is also important so as to support them and their family through this transitional time.

Admissions Process

If a child starts school, or they are due to change schools, when they are still officially in the care of the Local Authority (i.e. before the Order has been granted) the Virtual School and social worker will have worked together with the adoptive parents or carers to identify the best school for the child. Personal Education Plan (PEP) meetings will still be held and the Virtual School from the Local Authority that has corporate parenting responsibility will still manage and monitor the Pupil Premium Plus for them.

The school will need to use the child's current legal name on the school roll, and you will need to follow the normal procedures for registering a looked after child within your school.

Court Date

Ensure that the last PEP meeting is held prior to the court hearing (when the permanency order is expected to be made). Ensure that the necessary Pupil Premium funds are in place for the school to fully support the needs of the child until the Pupil Premium for Previously Looked After Children can be claimed as part of the census.

As with any court hearing, there is no guaranteed outcome. Court hearings can be postponed for various reasons, so regular contact with adoptive parents/carers and social workers is important to ensure that the child and family are supported through any anxiety that they may be experiencing.

Consistent Language



Ensure questions that the child may have regarding their 'journey', feelings, emotions etc are responded to in exactly the same way as their family responds to them. Find out how the child refers to their new family (names etc) as well as their birth family, so that there is no confusion as to who the child is talking about.

Phrases such as “Forever Family” are not always helpful. Remember to use the words and phrases that the social worker and family are using. The terms we use are incredibly important as they can impact a child’s wellbeing and identity.

Birth Family

If relevant, find out whether the child has siblings. Find out basic facts, such as gender and how the family would like the school to respond if the child says, for example, that they have a sister (who is not living with them). Consistent approaches and responses support the child’s understanding of their identity and family relationships.

Contact

Contact is when children get a chance to stay in contact with their birth families. This can be through a variety of different means, for example Letter Box contact, video calls or face to face visits. Contact is explored and discussed within the care plan for looked after children and is likely to change once the Permanency Order has been granted.

Contact with birth family members can be very positive but it can also raise children’s anxiety levels both before and afterwards. Ensure good communication between school and family is maintained so that you can have a full understanding around any changes in their behaviour.

Often adopted children continue to have contact, which may be different from any previous contact plan, but could include Letter Box contact, video calls or face to face meetings with birth family members and previous foster carers.

Children under a Special Guardianship or Child Arrangements Order will have different levels of contact with their birth parents and other family members, depending on their individual situation and what is in their best interests.

Connecting with The Family

Sometimes parents and carers can feel isolated when their children start school. They may not have had the benefit of meeting parents at nurseries, toddler groups and may not have peers with similar aged children.



Speak to them about any possible ‘triggers’ that may affect their child. For example, a certain time of year may remind the child about coming into care or bring back memories of being with a particular foster family. Although the child may not be able



to vocalise these moments or indeed have conscious memories, it may trigger unusual behaviours or increase anxiety.

The curriculum can cover many issues which may be retriggering for children: for example, genetics, family trees, Personal, Social Health and Citizenship Education topics and English literature texts. Children can often mask during the lesson, become anxious about going to school or become dysregulated. Having regular contact with parents and carers can ensure that Support Plans can be made (both at school and at home) to support the child in accessing the learning objectives in a more trauma informed way.

Pre-empt Curiosity

Some children move across the country to be with their new family and therefore may have different accents to them or the child's new peers. Some children will be from different ethnic or cultural backgrounds or may have different physical attributes such as hair colour. Some parents with older siblings can be known to other parents, who may be surprised that they suddenly have a younger child attending the school.

All of the above scenarios can create curiosity amongst the children, school staff and other parents. Be mindful of this and work with the family around a collective way to address any unwanted curiosity, for example, supporting children to use the WISE approach (W – walk away, I – ignore or change the subject, S – share what you are comfortable sharing and E – educate about adoption/living with different families). This will also be relevant to a whole school approach to promoting an understanding and awareness of family diversity.

Last PEP Meeting

Discuss with the Virtual School at the last PEP meeting any Pupil Premium funding that may be needed to support the child until the Pupil Premium for previously looked after children funding is received. This will come as part of a Pupil Premium Grant, once the child or young person has been identified as Previously Looked After on the Autumn school census (after the court order has been granted). For more information regarding the Pupil Premium Plus for Children Previously Looked After, contact your Virtual School.

All schools have a Designated Teacher who is the main point of contact for parents and carers of previously looked after children. (See [The designated teacher for looked after and previously looked after children. Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities](#). DfE February 2018.) Good communication between parents, carers and the Designated Teacher is vital in promoting the educational achievement of every looked-after and previously looked-after child on the school's roll. Contact the local Virtual School for guidance around best practice within your area.

Settling in Period. Life Change



Children who are in care, or leave the care of a Local Authority, may have experienced a great many disrupted attachments in their journey to receiving a Permanency Order. They are more likely to have been removed from their birth family as a result of child protection issues and however young they were when this happened, the trauma and loss that creates can have a huge effect on the child's ability to build relationships and their overall development. Often children have experienced loss several times, including their birth and foster families, before reaching their permanent families. Some will have already been in the education system, losing their trusted adults and peers within previous settings.

It is important to remember that these children may find it hard to trust the adults around them and both the family and school will need time to enable the child to feel safe in their environments.

As with many children who have suffered adverse childhood experiences, some permanently placed children will often 'mask' at school, appearing to be the model student or one who 'does not want to be noticed'.

As soon as they return home to their 'safe space' and family, they can become very dysregulated. Other children will not be able to contain their feelings in the school environment and will show their distress, which can sometimes be mistaken for 'poor behaviour'. Understanding what is going on for a child and supporting them to be regulated throughout the whole day, will not only benefit the child's ability to settle and access their learning, but will also support the stability of the family.

The following are common needs/challenges for permanently placed children:

- Wellbeing
- Social skills
- Executive functioning skills
- Speech and language difficulties
- Emotional regulation and understanding
- Sensory needs
- Transitions and unstructured times

Work with the parents and carers to fully understand their child. Encourage them to support their child at home with the interventions and resources used at school.

Moving Schools

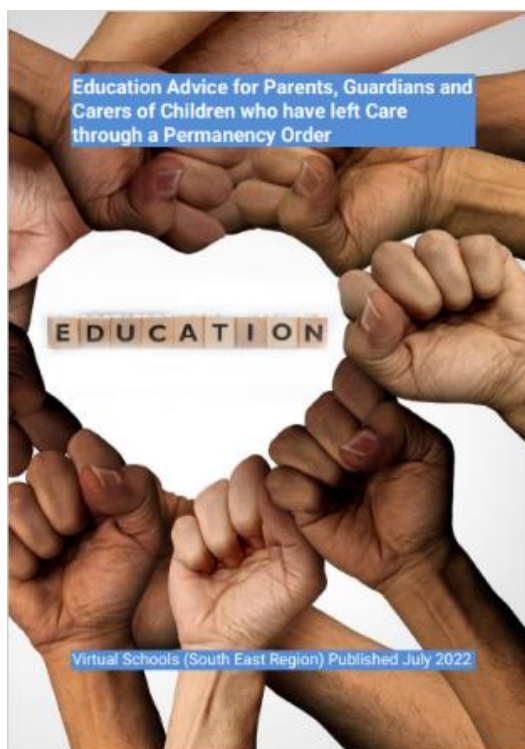
Parents and carers have the challenging task of deciding the best school for their child; sometimes this is done in partnership with a social worker and Virtual School if the child is going to be attending school prior to the court order being granted and is therefore still a 'looked after child/child in care'.



If the order is granted before the child is of statutory school age, this decision is down to the parents or carers with parental responsibility. They are looking for the school that will best suit their child's needs, one that is nurturing and demonstrates an understanding of supporting children who may have experienced adverse childhood experiences that are affecting their development.

Virtual Schools (South East Region) have produced [a guide to advise Parents and Guardians regarding education](#).

When children are transitioning to live with their new families, education plans are developed with the social worker, parents or carers, Virtual School and education in line with their age, stage and needs of each individual child.



For example, for some children, there may be a plan to stay at home as a new family unit (with no external visitors), which allows the child the time and space to develop relationships with their parents or carers and siblings. Gradual introductions to other family members and friends happen over time, as they settle into the routine of their new family. For other children, friendships, routines (especially if they are older and used to being in school) are equally important so transition planning, including introductions to new family, friends and school are adapted accordingly. It is important to acknowledge that those with parental responsibility must ensure that their children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education.

Once the child is on roll with the school, it does not necessarily mean that they need to be in school full time straight away. Whilst the aim should be for the child to be integrated into school full time as soon as possible; this needs to be balanced against the need for the child to feel emotionally secure and connected to their new families. Regularly review any transition plans with the social worker, Virtual School and adoptive parents/carers to ensure that the timetable is increased appropriately. Any reduced hours provision/phased integration needs to be recorded with the local authority and agreed by both school and parents/carers. It should be short term and regularly reviewed with details of decision making around it clearly recorded. Every consideration should be given to the child attending school full time within the context of their particular needs.

For statutory school aged children, please ensure a plan for attendance and how the child will be recorded on the school attendance system has been agreed with the social worker and Virtual School.

agreed with the social worker and Virtual School



Starting at Your School/Setting



It is recommended to speak with the social worker, Virtual School and adoptive parents/carers at the pre-admissions meeting to ascertain the best way of supporting the child starting at your school. The following is a list of things to consider, although not exhaustive, may help to smooth the transition into school.

Child's Name

Whilst a child is placed for adoption (before the adoption order is granted) they will legally still have their birth surname. This can lead to confusion on how to support their identity. Depending on the individual situation, it is sometimes worth considering using first names only (for the whole class) on books, labels etc. This can be useful for safeguarding and confidentiality reasons, including protecting their identity. (It also avoids the need to amend books and other non-statutory paperwork once the adoption order has been granted).

Transitioning to School

Although it is important to have access to education, it is sometimes in the child's best interest to have a slower transition into school, so that they have time to bond with their new families as well as reducing any anxieties that they may have within their new environment. Care experienced young people will often struggle with transitions and the move to a new family and school is a big change however resilient they may be.

Before the child starts at your setting, ensure there is a robust transition plan in place which is agreeable to all professionals, prospective adopters, parents and carers whilst ensuring that the child's voice is central to any decisions made.

Possible strategies to consider:

- Provide virtual and face to face opportunities for the young person to become familiar with the site, buildings and key members of staff.
- Work with parents to plan positive experiences, for example for purchasing appropriate equipment and school uniform.
- Encourage parents to help the child become familiar with the journey to school.
- Develop social stories, for example around key times of the day, key members of staff and important parts of the building.
- Provide copies of timetables, a visual timetable and other school information.

Transitions



Care experienced young people often find transitions hard. Whether it is a transition to a new school, a new year group or even transitions between lessons.

Please speak to your local Virtual School for further advice around transitions.

Identity

It is the parents and carers right to decide if they will let an education setting know if their child is on a Permanency Order. Parents and carers of previously looked after children tend to be very open with their children about their life stories and are encouraged to share information with them in a developmentally appropriate way. Children will often talk about birth siblings, foster families and can have various memories (conscious or unconscious) about certain times of the year, smells, colours etc.

There will be some children, however, who may not have been told that they are on a Permanency Order. Before any conversations about family history, it is advised to check with parents and carers about their child's understanding of their legal status and agreeing a shared narrative.

Some children can be very open about their legal status, and this can lead to peers (and their peer's parents/carers) becoming naturally inquisitive. By ensuring that you are responding in the same way as their families, you can help and protect the child during times of uncertainty.

Good home-school relationships will enhance professionals' understanding about how best to support children as their understanding around their life story develops. Parents and carers can seek further advice on this subject from their post adoption service or via the special guardianship/kinship care support services in your area.

Claiming Pupil Premium for previously looked after children

Pupil Premium funding for previously looked after children is not ring-fenced for the individual child. Schools may use a portion of the Pupil Premium Grant to meet the needs of children who do qualify for Pupil Premium funding themselves (for example, children with a social worker), as set out in the [Pupil Premium 2023-2024 Conditions of Grant](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/714242/pupil-premium-2023-2024-conditions-of-grant.pdf) (www.gov.uk). It can be used for whole class approaches or staff professional development, for example; high quality teaching, tackling non-academic barriers to academic success, such as difficulties with attendance, behaviour or social and emotional wellbeing needs; all of which may also benefit others. It is the responsibility of the school to ensure that the Pupil Premium Grant addresses the specific needs of all previously looked after children on roll at their school by supporting with evidence-informed activities in line with the 'menu of approaches' set by the Department of Education (DfE).

The school's Designated Teacher should:

- ensure that they and the wider school staff, are fully aware of the cohorts' needs with regards to previously looked after children.



- ensure adoptive parents and carers are aware that they can declare their child eligible for Pupil Premium.
- encourage parents and carer's involvement in how Pupil Premium for previously looked after children is used to support their child and be the main contact for queries regarding pupil premium for this cohort.
- consult the Virtual School Head on how to use the funding effectively, where appropriate.

Please refer to the government guidance (Pupil Premium conditions of grant for local authorities and guidance for school leaders - [Pupil premium: allocations and conditions of grant 2023-24 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)), the 'Menu of Approaches' on Page 8 in [Using pupil premium: guidance for school leaders \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk) and the Education Endowment Foundation - [The EEF Guide to the Pupil Premium | EEF \(educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk\)](https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk) for further information on best use of this funding.

Resources for The Classroom

There are a wealth of books and resources available for schools to support children who are permanently placed with new families. From books about family diversity to anxiety and starting school. Your Virtual School may be able to suggest resources for this. Please always speak to the parents/carers before introducing any book or theme which may trigger responses from their children; they may also have books that are particularly useful for their children that you may find useful as a class book.



Adoption UK, First4Adoption, PAC-UK, Family Action and Kinship are just some examples of organisations that have great websites for resources and support for schools supporting permanently placed children. Beacon House and the Anna Freud Centre are examples of organisations offering fantastic trauma informed resources. Your Virtual School or Regional Adoption Agency can also provide useful resources and information.

Consider training, resources and Continuing Professional Development opportunities for your staff that support understanding of attachment, trauma awareness and trauma informed practices. Your local Virtual School will be able to guide you and may provide this training.

Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund

The Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund (ASGSF) provides funds to local authorities and regional adoption agencies to pay for essential therapeutic services for families with eligible Adoption, Special Guardianship and Child Arrangements Orders. Families can request an assessment of their family's support needs, which may lead to an application to the ASGSF.



Please note that the ASGSF will not pay for education support or universal health services such as speech and language or occupational therapy.

For more details on the Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund, including the types of therapies that can be funded, please refer to [Adoption Support Fund - First4Adoption](#) or [Adoption Support Fund | Adoption UK Charity](#) for families with adopted children and [Kinship care - Family Rights Group \(frg.org.uk\)](#) or [Adoption support fund for special guardians - Kinship Compass](#) for SGO families.

Virtual School

The role of Virtual Schools for previously looked after children is to promote their educational achievement through the provision of information and advice to their parents and carers, educators and others who the Virtual School considers necessary. Virtual Schools work with educators to champion the needs of previously looked after children (those who have left care under an Adoption, Special Guardianship or Child Arrangements Order) in order that these children have the maximum opportunity to reach their full educational potential. They are a source of advice and information to help the children's parents advocate for them as effectively as possible. The Virtual School where the child accesses their education (regardless of where they live or were in care) is responsible for providing advice and information to parents/carers, professionals and education settings. As soon as the Permanency Order is granted, parents/carers and professionals (with parent/carer consent) can contact the relevant Virtual School for information and advice.

Permanence through Adoption

What is an Adoption Order?

An Adoption Order is a legal order that legally and permanently connects the child to their adoptive parents. The child will be issued an Adoption Certificate, which will replace their birth certificate. This is the point the child's surname changes and any legal connection to their birth family is permanently cut. The child's legal connection to their Local Authority also ends at this stage.



'Birth parents will always remain the child's biological parents and their history will be important for the child to understand as they grow up, but after the order is made, they will no longer be the child's legal parents. An Adoption Order can only be made either with the consent of the child's birth parents or if the court has dispensed with the birth parent's consent by making a Placement Order.' [Adoption terms explained | Coram Adoption](#)



Prior to Adoption

Children with a Care Plan of Adoption will have what is called a ADM (Adoption Decision Maker) who is the person who makes the decisions as to whether the proposed Care Plan for Adoption, Early Permanence, Foster to Adopt or Permanent Fostering is the right decision for the child. Once a decision has been made on the Care Plan, it is at this stage that the Local Authority will be engaged in court

proceedings and request a Placement Order. The Placement Order is the legal order that allows the Local Authority to place a child for adoption.

Local authorities only seek a Care Plan of Adoption when a child can no longer remain in the care of their birth parent/s, and the outcomes of assessments show that the child would benefit from being adopted rather than remaining in the care of the Local Authority.

Once a Placement Order is granted, the search for an adoptive family begins. Adopters have to be assessed and approved by a Regional Adoption Agency (RAA), or Voluntary Adoption Agency (VAA) in order to be considered as a match for a child.

Children's social workers regularly visit the child, to do what is often known as 'Direct work' with them. This helps children explore feelings, understand their lived experiences and understand any future plans that have been made. If you are working with a child who has a plan of adoption, always check with the social worker before speaking with a child about their future. The school, social worker, Virtual School and foster carers all need to work together to ensure everyone is supporting the child with the same messages, language and understanding.

Once a link is made, the social work team around the child and adopters, will attend a Matching Panel. This is a panel of adoption experts, who will review the matching plans and consider if the match can go ahead. Following a recommendation of panel, the matching paperwork is then presented to the Adoption Decision Maker (ADM), who will give the final approval on the plans.

Once the plan has been approved by the ADM, there will be a period of introductions in which the child and new family meet. This takes place over a series of planned weeks prior to the move date. Once a child moves, their legal status remains the same, in that the Local Authority remains involved and all of the social workers around the child and parents stay involved. When the family feel ready to submit their adoption application, their supporting social workers will write and submit a report for court and wait for a court hearing date.

Adopters

Prospective Adopters are people who have been approved by an adoption agency as suitable to adopt a child. They would have gone through a process of assessment, training and counselling prior to this. Once a child is with them, they are often referred to as *Adoptive parents*, until such time that the adoption order has been granted. At this point, they are referred to as *parents*.



The Court Order — Celebrations

Celebration Days take place after the court hearing granting an Adoption Order. They are a chance for adoptive families to celebrate the making of an adoption order. Adoptive families visit the court and meet the judge, who will give a certificate and

usually invite families and friends to take photos. Celebration days have no legal standing and are not part of the adoption process.

If you know that a child is attending a Celebration Day – please discuss with their parents how to support the child if they wish to share this news with their peers.

Adoption Paperwork



Once a child has received a Court Order of Adoption and has therefore been legally adopted, it is vital that the child's records held on school and Local Authority computer systems are updated to reflect this change.

Every school must change the child's record and when the details come through the electronic files to the LA, the LA will update their databases.

The following rules apply:

- The school must create a brand-new record for the child in their new name with a new UPN.
- The school must then end the current record for the child by treating them as a leaver. Off roll them from the end of the last term. Attendance for the new admission will need to be added onto the new record, therefore make a note of the attendance from the old record before you off-roll the child.
- In completing this procedure there must be no connection between the two records, so all links must be deleted.

Case Study

Poppy was placed with her adoptive parents when she was 4 years old. She was due to start school in September and the court date for the adoption was planned for January the following year.

As a result of Poppy's journey to adoption, the social worker was keen to ensure that Poppy's legal identity was not common knowledge as this may pose a risk to Poppy and her new family. There was also some concern that birth parents may decide to contest the adoption. Although Poppy was very aware that she was going to be adopted, she was less familiar with her surname due to her age.

The social worker, school and adoptive parents agreed that whilst Poppy's current legal surname would remain on the school system, the class teacher would refer to the whole class by first names only. This included their learning journals, book bags etc. (Although there were a couple of children with the same name, a solution was found in the interim!)



During the Autumn Term, the class teacher used several books as part of Story Time, around family diversity, transitions and anxiety and emotions. This helped the whole class to settle into their new school and Poppy was allowed to borrow some of them to share with her parents which they reflected, really helped her settle into school and family life.

The court hearing went ahead in January and Poppy was keen to share her Celebration Day photos with the rest of the class during Show and Tell. The class teacher had used this opportunity for the whole class to celebrate different aspects of their families and to support them in understanding Poppy. She was also able to link this with the children beginning to identify their surnames as part of their reading and writing journey.

Poppy's parents reflected on how inclusive the school had been, both to Poppy and them as parents. The school continued to hold regular meetings with the parents to ensure Poppy's needs were met, particularly around key points and transitions during the year.

Prior to the Adoption Order, it is recommended that the Designated Teacher speaks with the child's social worker and adoptive parents regarding what to do with all of the child's paperwork.

Supporting The Family in The Future

Families and their children may sometimes need additional support. They are encouraged to self-refer for support from the following:

Regional Adoption Agencies (RAA)

Regional Adoption Agencies (RAA) are a group of adoption professionals from a specific region. Every Local Authority in England is connected to an RAA and the RAA provides adoption services.



Often families from one local authority will be supported by a post adoption social worker from another local authority. This is because local authorities have joined together to form Regional Adoption Agencies.

Children and their families can access adoption support from Regional Adoption Agencies, up to the age of 21 or 25 with an Education and Health Care Plan and in full time education. This support needs to be related to adoption and does not replace the support from any national services such as Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service, Local Authority Safeguarding, and health.

Post Adoption social workers from within the Regional Adoption Agency will offer an assessment to determine the right support is put in place. This will be completed in partnership with the parents and child, depending on their age. Should the assessment identify that support/services are needed, a proposed plan outlining the provision will then be agreed.

If the assessment has identified that a therapeutic service is needed, the Regional Adoption Agency will apply to the Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund directly. If successful, the ASGSF will release funding to the RAA which uses the fund to commission and pay for the agreed provider of the therapeutic services.

Please note that when managing concerns related to safeguarding for an adopted child, your school staff will need to follow your school's safeguarding policies, as you would with any other child, irrespective of whether they are currently receiving adoption support from a Regional Adoption Agency. A post adoption social worker does not hold the same safeguarding responsibilities as other social workers. If you are aware that a family is being supported by a post adoption social worker and a safeguarding referral is being made, please ensure that the post adoption social worker is made aware of the referral so that they can get in contact with social worker carrying out the assessment in a timely manner.



Post Adoption Support



Regional Adoption Agencies and local authorities will support the family for the first three years after the court order. Following this period, families can access the Regional Adoption Agency where they are living for post adoption support.

Virtual Schools, on the other hand, work differently. They will advise and offer guidance to any family who has an adopted child who attends an education setting within their Local Authority, irrespective of where they are living or where the child originated from.

Special Guardianship Orders

What is a Special Guardianship Order?

A Special Guardianship Order is a legal order, made by the family court. It grants parental responsibility to the special guardian (often known as a SGO Carer) – who the child will live with on a long-term basis. It secures long-term placement with them whilst maintaining the opportunity to continue links with the child's birth parents. The special guardian shares parental responsibility with the child's birth parents, however they can exercise this parental responsibility to the exclusion of all others who hold it and can make most decisions about the child without the birth parent's consent or even knowledge. They are the child's primary carer for all aspects of their wellbeing. The Guardian would still need approval from everyone who has parental responsibility for some important decisions such as; changing the child's surname, changing the child's religion, putting the child up for adoption or taking the child abroad for more than 3 months.

The child may have been living with their new family for some time (e.g. with foster carers who are then approved as special guardians) or they may be placed with the family after the care proceedings.

A Special Guardianship Order lasts until the child reaches 18 unless the court ends the order before then.

Post Order Support

By law, every Local Authority provides special guardianship support services. These support services are dependent on the assessment of support needs.

Most people with a Special Guardianship Order will have a Support Plan which outlines the support that is available for their special guardians within their Local Authority. It is often worth asking guardians to refer back to this Support Plan in the first instance; to ensure that they are accessing the support that is available to them.

Children who have left care under a Special Guardianship Order are also eligible for the Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund. If the Local Authority assessment has identified that a therapeutic service is needed, they will apply to the Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund directly. If successful, the ASGSF will release funding to the Local Authority, which will use the fund to commission and pay for the agreed provider of the therapeutic services.



Some children can live with grandparents or other family members under a Special Guardianship Order without having been taken into the care of the Local Authority. Because these children were not in Local Authority care when the order was made, they are not classified as previously looked after children in terms of eligibility for Pupil Premium for previously looked after children, or access to the Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund. As of September 2024, children in Kinship Care are a cohort under the Virtual School so contact them to determine what support is available within your local authority.

Child's Name

Unless birth parents and the courts have agreed, the child's surname will legally remain as their birth name. However, some children prefer to be known by their new family's surname. Please discuss this with the carers and ensure that all relevant staff members are aware of the 'known as' preference.

Permanence through Child Arrangements

Child Arrangements Order

Child Arrangements Orders are governed by Section 8 of the Children Act 1989. It is an order that regulates who a child will live with, spend time with or have contact with and is a formalised agreement. Each Child Arrangements Order is decided on the individual circumstances of the family and what is in the best interests of the child.

The Order lasts until the child reaches 18; unless the court ends the order before then.

Some children can live with grandparents or other family members under a Child Arrangements Order without having been taken into the care of the Local Authority. Because these children were not in Local Authority care when the order was made, they are not classified as previously looked after children in terms of eligibility for Pupil Premium for previously looked after children. Again, contact your Virtual School to determine what support is available to them within your local authority.

Children under a Child Arrangements Order who were previously in the care of a Local Authority in England or Wales, are eligible for assessment to access the Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund (ASGSF) and are eligible for schools to claim Pupil Premium funding for previously looked after children.

Additional Information

Contact Details:

Clare Houlton - Virtual School Headteacher
clare.houlton@brighterfuturesforchildren.org

Nicola Blake – Assistant Headteacher for Children with a Social Worker
Nicola.blake@brighterfuturesforchildren.org

Cathy McCarthy – Education Advisor for Children Previously Looked After, Children with a Social Worker and in Kinship Care
cathy.mccarthy@brighterfuturesforchildren.org



Matt Bevan – Assistant Head EYFS and Primary Children Looked After
Matt.bevan@brighterfuturesforchildren.org

Sarah Cross – Assistant Head Secondary and Post-16 Children Looked After
sarah.cross@brighterfuturesforchildren.org

More information about Permanency in Reading can be found at:

[Fostering and adoption | Brighter Futures for Children](#)

Or contact familyandfriends.duty@brighterfuturesforchildren.org

Useful Websites

Brighter Futures for Children [Virtual School - Brighter Futures For Children](#)

Adopt Thames Valley - [Adopt Thames Valley | A Child's Future Starts with You](#)

Kinship Care - [Kinship: Home | The Kinship care charity | England and Wales](#)

Coram BAAF - [Homepage | CoramBAAF](#)

PACT - [Adoption Information | Adopt in the South | PACT UK \(pactcharity.org\)](#)

Useful Guidance

[Promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)



EDUCATION