



Guidelines for Bristol Residential Units on Promoting Education and Life Chances

Purpose of guidelines

To promote and maximise educational and work opportunities and subsequent life chances for individual children and young people looked after in children's homes.

Part 1: Responsibilities

i) Managers and assistant managers have a duty to ensure their own knowledge is of sufficient depth to supervise and support staff in upholding these guidelines.

Work and education should be a permanent item on team meeting and supervision agendas.

Children's Home managers should, in consultation with the Team Manager, produce induction packs for staff and for young people, which must include clear policies about education, including homework and home / school liaison. The HOPE Virtual School for Children in Care can advise on the content of the educational section of induction packages.

Unit managers will need to ensure that there are systems in place to follow up on specific educational issues when the key worker is absent, for example if the young person is sick, in trouble at school, or struggling with a piece of work.

Unit managers must ensure the ELAC2 form (see Appendix 1) is completed and sent to The HOPE within 24 hours of a child or young person's admission to the home.

ii) Residential staff are expected to give clear, consistent messages about the importance of education which will be reflected in day-to-day practice. Some things that can get in the way of educational or work experiences are late bedtimes, late TV, appointments during teaching time, and an 'anti-school' culture that can very quickly develop within the home.

All residential staff must have a working knowledge of all processes and procedures, including curricula, timetables and homework policies, relating to education generally and to the specific schools that the young people in residence attend.

iii) The respective roles of the social worker and key worker need to be negotiated within the first week of placement, so everyone is clear about who will take responsibility for what. The Roles and Responsibilities table (Appendix 2) offers guidelines to these decisions.

Support can be provided in all aspects of Education by The HOPE. Residential staff must follow the guidelines for contacting The HOPE within 24 hours of a child or young person being admitted to the unit. The HOPE's procedures for this notification are attached (Appendix 3).

iv) Induction for new residents

As part of general unit induction young people need to understand that residents must participate fully in education or work opportunities.

v) Placement Planning

Staff must have an understanding of the importance of ensuring continuity of education if a placement move is being considered. Current requirements are that no placement change can be made without education provision being in place.

On or before the placement of a young person in a children's home, the LAC Placement Information Record must be completed by the social worker. No child or young person should be admitted to any placement without this basic planning being in place and must include consideration of how the young person will get to school. Where planning for education is complex (e.g. if the young person is excluded from school), contact should be made with the SEN Team for statemented children, or with The HOPE for all other children, within 48 hours of the young person's admission to the unit.

Within 24 hours, The Children's Homes' Education form (ELAC2) must be completed and sent to The HOPE team. It is the responsibility of the unit manager to ensure that this is done.

The Care Plan is the responsibility of the social worker: the plan should be completed and agreed with the key residential worker. It is suggested that spare blank paper or electronic copies of the Placement Information Record should be kept in the units in case placements are made in an emergency, and the social worker fails to provide the necessary forms.

No child or young person should be accepted into a residential unit without these basic plans being in place.

Part 2: Specific educational issues

i) Maintaining a positive educational placement

Residential staff need to find out who the designated teacher for children in care is in each school. Key workers must make direct contact at the earliest opportunity with the relevant teacher(s) to plan ongoing liaison arrangements. These details need to be recorded and made accessible for colleagues to pursue in the absence of the key worker.

It is important to bear in mind that young people need to be involved in making a decision about whom in school needs to know their care status and how this will be shared. This should also be discussed with the designated teacher for children in care.

It is the role of the residential worker to advocate when there are difficulties at school. It is also their role to promote young people's involvement in out of school activities.

ii) Attendance

Staff must actively promote attendance at school for all young people of school age. They should encourage academic achievement at an appropriate level for all young people in the unit. Staff should know who to contact in cases of sickness or school refusal, and the unit manager must ensure this is done, on each occasion, before 9am or as soon as possible. Any concerns about attendance, however minimal the concern, should be reported immediately to the relevant teacher or education welfare officer.

All legitimate school absences must be authorised in writing. The unit manager should ensure this is done.

iii) Homework/home study support

Every child will need access to a quiet space to work in, although the unit manager and key staff must discuss with each individual young person the circumstances which best suit them in successfully completing homework/home study. (Environment, timing etc should be considered.)

Internet safety training must be provided for young people before using the Internet.

Staff should make themselves familiar with young people's homework timetables and school's procedures for monitoring homework (for example, homework diaries).

Parents' evenings and all other school functions (the school play, sports' days) must be attended by a representative of the children's home, usually the key worker. The children's home staff must encourage parents to accompany them.

iv) Supporting reading

Staff must ensure that there is varied reading material in the unit. Books and magazines should be reviewed and renewed regularly. Young people should be asked what reading materials they would like in the unit. Staff should make links with the local library and actively encourage its use by residents, including joining children to the library.

Staff should acquire a working knowledge of the procedures and key contacts regarding any literacy problems. The HOPE can offer support with this.

v) Personal Education Plans

Personal Education Plans are designed to promote and support the education of looked after children. Staff must have an understanding of the purpose and process of Personal Education Plans. The HOPE will offer advice if required.

It is the responsibility of the social worker to initiate a PEP meeting. PEPs are mandatory for all children and young people looked after. The unit manager or assistant manager will attend the PEP meeting.

vi) Leisure activities

Young people need to be made aware of their right to leisure activities and encouraged and helped to continue to find positive activities that increase their self esteem, confidence and positive use of leisure time, and may lead to life long interests or help with future studies or jobs. Staff should discuss with young people their current leisure activities and support these to continue where possible, and discuss ideas they have for new activities and support these. For specific information, liaison is needed with relevant external agencies. These activities and interests need to be raised with social workers and fed into the Reviews.

Staff should make young people aware of the free sports vouchers and unit leisure card and encourage their use in Bristol Community Sports facilities.

vii) Targets, rewards and incentives

The residential staff will work in partnership with young people to discuss how to give incentives and rewards to children and young people relating to school attendance.

Staff should discuss and agree specific achievable targets, rewards and incentives for all individual young people, including those who attend school or work regularly.

All targets should be reviewed regularly.

Celebrating the residents' achievements is crucial, and, in addition to unit incentives and rewards established by the teams, formal recognition of achievement can also be gained through informing The HOPE of a school or education based achievement. They will arrange for a letter of congratulation to be sent by The HOPE's Headteacher.

viii) Resources

Staffing - Unit managers have the responsibility to prioritise within rota planning, wherever possible, the deployment of staff and their work allocation in order to adequately support homework/home study.

Equipment - Units will provide an adequate bank of resources to meet basic educational support needs for each individual resident. Computers should be available for use by the young people. Staff will need to contact schools or Caroline Payne, Schools IT Officer, to ensure the units provide appropriate software and for advice on educational software (some free software is available).

Teams are committed to developing and extending the basic resource bank to meet a variety of wider needs. Teams are also committed to encouraging and supporting young people in accessing and appropriately using books from their local libraries, and local leisure facilities.

For further advice on library and leisure activities, please see

<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/libraries-archives/find-a-library>

<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/schools-learning-early-years/activities-for-young-people>

ix) Designated teacher for looked after children

Every maintained school and academy has to have a designated teacher (DT) for looked after children. Their role is to promote the educational achievement of children in care.

Within the school, the role of the DT is to:

- have lead responsibility for helping school staff understand the things which affect how looked after children learn and achieve
- promote a culture of high expectations and aspirations for how looked after children learn
- make sure the young person has a voice in setting learning targets
- be a source of advice for staff about differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual children and in making full use of Assessment for Learning
- make sure that looked after children are prioritised in one-to-one tuition arrangements and that carers understand the importance of supporting learning at home
- have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of the child's personal education plan (PEP) within the school.

The designated teacher also has a key role to others beyond the school in making sure there is a central point of initial contact within the school who can manage the process of how the school engages with others (e.g. social workers, virtual school heads), works in a joined up way and minimises disruption to the child's education.

The designated teacher should make sure that:

- there is an agreed process in place for how the school works with others in focusing on how everyone contributes to promoting the child's educational achievement
- school policies (e.g. around Home School Agreements) are communicated to social workers and carers
- the school does everything possible to maximise educational stability for the child, especially by finding ways of sharing information through the PEP and in providing advice to the local authority about the impact of disrupting education.

The full guidance on the Role and Responsibilities of the designated teacher for looked after children can be found at: <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/schools-learning-early-years/resources-professionals/guidance-policies-and-procedures>.

x) 1:1 Tuition

Children in care are likely to benefit from one to one tuition in English and maths. This should be discussed in the young person's Personal Education Plan (PEP) meeting and is a good use of Pupil Premium funding. The HOPE requires schools to use 80% of their Pupil Premium funding on one to one tuition.

xi) Special educational needs

Sometimes young people in care live at a special residential school. Residential workers have a role in linking with and supporting these children. Information about Bristol's special educational needs service can be found at: <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/schools-learning-early-years/children-with-special-needs>. Information about Bristol's local offer is on the [Findability](#) website.

Appendices

Appendix 1: ELAC2 form

Appendix 2: Roles and Responsibilities

Appendix 3: Guidelines for residential workers for contacting The HOPE



The HOPE Virtual School for Children in Care

Children's Home Education Form

ALL AREAS MUST BE COMPLETED

Name of Children's Home	
Name of Young Person	
Date of Birth	Year Group
Date Admitted	Previous placement
Key Worker	Social Worker
Current educational arrangements (school/other provision, full/part time, days attending etc)	
Designated teacher/link person	Tel
Special provision required to continue current education placement eg transport, uniform etc	
Other professionals involved	
Other comments	
Signed: Social Worker/Duty Social Worker	
Residential Worker	
Unit Manager	Date

Please email to [The HOPE](#) within 24 hrs of admission.

Roles and Responsibilities

This table represents Bristol City Council's agreed understanding of who holds which responsibility for all aspects of the education of looked after children.

1 denotes primary responsibility. 2, 3 show where others may be involved. Where two roles show the same number, both are usually involved. * denotes parent to take an active role where appropriate.

Task	Social worker	Residential Manager/ Foster Carer	Key Worker/ Foster Carer
Arrange school admission	1*		
Briefing to school re parental status and contact with parents	1		
Introductory visit to school with Young Person	3	2	1*
Sign home-school contract			1*
Knowledge of school procedures, e.g. uniform, notes, etc.			1*
Contact name/number for pupil record	3	2	1*
Permission for trips, etc	1*		
Permission for medicals	1*		
Permission for injections	1*		
Update to school on any change of parental circumstances	1		2
Attendance at open evenings/ options/ careers evenings/ school events	2	2	1*
Early problems at school	1*		1*
Exclusions/ re-admissions	1		1
Signatory on homework diary		2	1
Personal Education Plan and reviews	1		2
Liquid Logic Input	1		
Arrange transport to school where necessary	1		

The HOPE (Bristol's virtual school for CiC) has a key role in supporting teachers, foster carers and social work staff to promote and support education and can be contacted for support on any of the above if necessary and where any particular problems are arising.



SUPPORTING EDUCATION

Guidelines for residential workers for contacting The HOPE

When a young person is newly admitted to your unit:

1. Ensure that the social worker has informed you of the current educational arrangements for the young person, including how they will get to that provision the next day.
2. Contact the designated teacher for looked after children at the school or other provision to ensure that they are aware that the young person has moved. Ensure that school uniform is clean and available for the next day.
3. On admission the Residential Key Worker **and** Social Worker should complete ELAC(2). No sections are to be left blank.
4. Email via Outlook the completed form to The HOPE within 24 hours of admission.
5. If a young person has a statement of special educational needs, contact the SEN Team for information and support.

For additional information and advice contact The HOPE at the address below.

The HOPE Virtual School for Children in Care (CH)
PO Box 3176
Bristol
BS3 9FS
Tel: 0117 90 36282

You may also contact individual members of The HOPE via Outlook.