



Education Policy

Having a good education can significantly improve a child's chances in life, but children in care are often disadvantaged educationally. They may have experienced disruption, with changes of placement and circumstances, and had limited opportunities to have their abilities and needs recognised and supported. Most Looked after Children will need encouragement to develop greater self-esteem and confidence in order to enjoy the best outcomes of education

AFA is committed to providing foster placements that provide a stable, supportive environment from which children can take full advantage of the opportunities their education provides. It is vital that this secure base is used as the springboard to promote education as valuable in itself, and part of a child's preparation for adulthood.

Foster Carers should ensure that their home has an established routine and clear expectations that reflects the importance of investing in education. There should be a commitment to creating an environment that encourages and supports children's participation in learning. This could include a quiet place to study, carers maintaining effective links with the child's school, attending events and parent/teacher feedback.

AFA Foster Carers and staff are actively involved with designated Teachers and relevant others, to support and plan each child's educational path. This will include attending Personal Education Plan (PEP) meetings and ensuring that any recommendations for informal learning are followed through to the home environment.

If a child is absent due to illness or other circumstances, the Foster Carer should contact the school the morning of the first day of absence, unless there is an agreed alternative arrangement, for example, to attendance at a recurring appointment that cannot be made outside of school hours.

What the Agency will do

AFA actively demonstrate that education is valued by striving to ensuring that:

- Placements will only be considered if AFA is satisfied that it can meet the educational needs of the child;
- Information on the Virtual School responsible for the child placed, will be provided to carers following placement to help them support the child's education.
- Every child has an up to date Personal Education Plan (PEP) and Individual Education Plan (IEP) (where appropriate) which is available before the child is placed or has been requested from the child's Social Worker for sharing at the first placement planning meeting where possible. A Placement Manager will attend PEP and other educational meetings alongside Foster Carers wherever possible;

- The attendance and educational attainment of children is monitored so that progress can be evidenced and celebrated and to also promote the identification of support needs at an early stage.
- The use of a child's Pupil Premium is monitored to ensure that it is specific to that needs of that individual child.
- Consideration is given to a child's safety within school ensuring that plans are put in place to support issues raised or vulnerabilities for instance in respect of CSE, bullying, child on child violence, sexual harassment etc.
- If the child has special educational needs or disabilities, an up to date copy of the child's Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) will be requested prior to the placement where possible to ensure that the child's special needs can be met in the placement;
- Pre-school children will be provided with educational opportunities and Personal Education Plan (PEP) meetings undertaken;
- Children will be encouraged and supported to undertake further and higher education, as outlined in their Personal Education Plan (PEP);
- All efforts will be made to ensure children attend a local school or college; where this is not possible, the agency will work with the child's placing authority and the relevant education service to identify a school within a reasonable distance which meets their needs. Where relevant, AFA will potentially facilitate the provision of specialist tuition;
- The parents of children placed are encouraged (if appropriate) to take an interest in the child's achievements and promote the education of their child;
- Children's achievements are recognised and celebrated;
- A record of each child's educational achievement will be kept which will show progress towards targets/goals;
- Children will be facilitated within their placements to have access to a computer;
- The child should have a suitable area for studying and doing homework;
- Carers should be available to support and encourage children whilst they are completing homework.
- In some circumstances a child may not be able to attend school for a period of time, and AFA will provide Foster Carers with a range of online resources to help them support the child through home learning. Additional advice will be sought from other professionals as required. This may include the child's Social Worker, the Virtual and current school.

What Foster Carers will do

Foster Carers will actively demonstrate that education is valued by ensuring, in relation to children placed with them, that:

- They actively promote children's education and learning and find ways to introduce aspects of the curriculum into day to day activities in the home;
- They are fully conversant with the children's educational needs and any plans that have been agreed with placing authorities;
- They establish close working relationships with teaching staff at the children's schools and attend parents' evenings;
- They attend at PEP and EHCP meetings and where a representative from AFA is not able to attend, they will provide information regarding attendance, attainment and pupil premium usage for monitoring purposes.
- They encourage the children to leave for school in good time and, where they are not taken to school, regular liaison takes place with the school to ensure there are no issues regarding attendance or arriving late;
- They ensure that children/young people have all the necessary equipment for school and to complete their homework;

- In circumstances where a child is not able to attend school for a period of time, Foster Carers will provide the child with support for home learning, either directly or through a tutor.
- They support children to participate in leisure opportunities and out-of-school activities;
- They encourage children to use local libraries and other educational facilities;
- They assist young people who have completed their compulsory full-time education to make choices and arrangements for their continued training and employment.

Connected Policies or Guidance

Name of Policy / Guidance	Relevant for
Expectations of Foster Carers Behaviour	Foster Carers, Placement Managers and Senior staff
Foster Carers Handbook	Foster Carers and Placement Managers
Placement with Foster Carers	Foster Carers and Placement Managers

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