



Education Policy

A good education can significantly improve a child's chances in life, but children in the care system are often disadvantaged educationally. They may have experienced disruption, with changes in the places they live and circumstances, and had limited opportunities to have their abilities and needs recognised and supported. Most children who are looked after 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 homes 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 Parents 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, Foster Parents maintaining effective links with the child's school and them attending events and parent/teacher feedback.

AFA Foster Parents 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 Parent 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:

- A foster home 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 Foster Parents to help them support the child's education
- Every child has an up to date PEP and Individual Education Plan (IEP) (where appropriate) which is available before the child's care arrangement begins or has been requested from their Social Worker for sharing at the first Care Arrangement Planning Meeting, where possible. A Fostering Social Worker will attend PEP and other educational meetings alongside Foster Parents wherever possible

- If the child has special educational needs or disabilities, an up-to-date copy of their Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) will be requested prior to the care arrangement starting, where possible, to ensure that the child's special needs can be met in the foster home
- The attendance and educational attainment of children is monitored so that progress can be evidenced and celebrated, targets monitored, and any needs identified at an early stage
- The use of a child's Pupil Premium is monitored to ensure that it is specific to the needs of that individual child
- Consideration is given to a child's safety within school ensuring that plans are in place to support issues raised or vulnerabilities for instance in respect of CSE, bullying, child on child violence, sexual harassment etc.
- Pre-school children will be provided with educational opportunities and PEP meetings undertaken
- Children will be encouraged and supported to undertake further and higher education, as outlined in their 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 responsible authority and the relevant education service to identify a school within a reasonable distance which meets their needs.
- The birth parents of children looked after are encouraged, if appropriate, to take an interest in the child's achievements and promote their education
- Children will be facilitated within their foster homes to have access to a computer
- In some circumstances a child may not be able to attend school for a period of time, and AFA will provide Foster Parents 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

What Foster Parents will do

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

- They actively promote children's education and learning, finding ways to introduce aspects of the curriculum into day-to-day activities within the home
- They are fully conversant with the children's educational needs and any plans that have been agreed with local authorities
- They establish close working relationships with teaching staff at the children's schools and attend parents' evenings
- They attend 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 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 have all the necessary equipment for school, a suitable area to study within the home and they support them to complete their homework
- In circumstances where a child is not able to attend school for a period of time, they will provide the child with support for home learning, either directly or through a tutor
- They support children to participate in leisure opportunities outside 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 Parents Behaviour	Foster Parents, Fostering Social Workers and Senior staff
Foster Parents Handbook	Foster Parents and Fostering Social Workers
Care Arrangements with Foster Parents	Foster Parents and Fostering Social Workers

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