

The Right Side of Care

In Care Your Education

The leaflets in this pack have been developed with children and young people from Wirral to give you some information when you first become looked after. You can also visit our website for children looked after, young people and care leavers: www.therightsideofcare.com

Your education

Education is important to all children and young people. Education can be one area of your life that is stable and consistent.

School is a big part of your daily life and routine. It is somewhere you can build relationships with adults as well as people your own age, and find out what you are good at, all while learning.

When we asked young people in Wirral, you told us that a good education is the foundation of making your lives better. A good education gives you the best options for the future, whatever you decide to do.

Every young person who is looked after will have a personal education plan, also known as a PEP. This is a plan to make sure you get the most out of school while you are looked after. It is part of your care plan.

Every school has a designated teacher to look after the children in care in the school.

What is a personal education plan (PEP)?

Your PEP is your plan of action for doing well at school. It has a record of your achievements and any targets. It will say how you will be supported to achieve your targets and any additional needs you may have. It will also include information about your attendance, and your views about your education.

What happens at my PEP meeting?

Your social worker will arrange your first PEP meeting with the designated teacher from your school. This will take place within 28 days of you becoming looked after. If you do not have a school at that time your social worker will work with you and other people including the Virtual School to make plans for your education so that the PEP can be written.

Your PEP will be looked at termly to check it is still up to date and the information is right. If there are any changes, such as if you need to move school there will be a meeting and your PEP will be updated to make sure it includes all the important information.

Who will be at my PEP meeting?

You should go to your PEP meeting, as it is your chance to let everyone know your views about your education and to celebrate what you have achieved. If you don't want to go you can give your views to your social worker or designated teacher who will share them with the meeting.

Your designated teacher and social worker will be at your PEP meeting along with anyone else who can put some help into the plan. This could include people like your carer, who may be able to help with your homework, or a learning mentor, who could be someone you can talk to about any school issues.

What is Wirral Virtual School?

All children looked after by Wirral are part of Wirral Virtual School. It has a headteacher and educational progress officers (or EPOs) who help make sure you are getting the best out of school and have the support you need to do well. It is also called LACES (Looked After Children Educational Service).

What is a designated teacher?

Every school has a designated teacher. A designated teacher is someone who wants to listen to you, know you, help to get the best for you and is ALWAYS on your side, no matter what.

What is an educational progress officer (EPO)?

An educational progress officer works for the Virtual School. You may meet them at your planning or review meetings and they will speak to your designated teacher throughout the school year to see how you are doing. They look at how all children looked after are doing in schools and write reports on how well they are doing. This is another way of making sure that the right help is available.

Can I get extra help in school?

Your school will get money to help every looked after child in your school. It may not be spent specifically on you, but you can ask about how it is spent.

If you or someone like your social worker or designated teacher think extra money could help you to do well in school, you may be able to get a Personal Education Allowance.

What is a Personal Education Allowance (PEA)?

You can apply for this each school year. This is money that can be spent helping you to learn new things such as sports or music lessons, extra help in school or to pay for school trips.

How do I get it?

Talk to your social worker or designated teacher about what would help you the most. They will give in an application to a panel of people who will decide if you can have the money, and if it is agreed, your social worker or school will let you know.

What about when I start college or training?

After Year 11, a bursary is available and your school or college will discuss with you how this should be spent. A bursary is money to help you study and can be spent on things you will need such as books and stationery and transport to get there.

If you are looking at higher education such as university, there is extra money available to help you.

You can ask your social worker for help finding out what you could be entitled to.

I'm worried about school - who can I speak to?

You can always speak to someone you trust such as your carer, social worker, designated teacher or learning mentor. You can speak to them about moving school, friends, homework, bullying or anything else that is on your mind.

You may feel nervous or a bit scared about moving school, either because you are going up to Year 7, you've moved to a different area, or you are starting college or sixth form.

Tell someone how you are feeling, and they will help you get all the information you need to start your new school or college feeling excited about the next chapter in your life. They can often arrange extra visits or a meeting with someone from your new school so you know what to expect.

I'm being bullied - what should I do?

Always tell someone you trust if you are being bullied. Every school has an anti-bullying policy, so you know they will take it seriously. Remember it is not your fault if you are being bullied, and your school wants you to be happy there.

If you want to look online for advice about bullying, you can check out www.bullybusters.org.uk or www.childline.org.uk

Some useful contact numbers

Childline

Tel: 0800 1111
www.childline.org.uk

Childrens Commissioner for England

Tel: 020 7783 8330
www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk

Childrens and Young People's Participation and Engagement Team

Tel: 0151 678 1936
Mobile: 07799 861 764

Childrens Complaints Officer

Tel: 0151 666 5677

Bullybusters

Tel: 0800 169 6928
www.bullybusters.org.uk

Ofsted

Tel: 0300 123 1231
enquiries@ofsted.gov.uk

Wirral Council Central Advice and Duty Team (CADT)

Tel: 0151 606 1008

Wirral Council Emergency Duty Team:

Tel: 0151 677 6557