

What are the most frequently asked questions from parents and carers about education?

1. My child is starting school soon, how can I get help to choose a school?

It is advisable to research all of the schools you are interested in, including attending their open days or arranging to visit beforehand as well as reviewing their Ofsted reports which can be found at www.reports.ofsted.gov.uk.

The ERYC School Admissions Team will be able to help with any questions you have about the admissions process and will be able to provide general information about all schools in the East Riding of Yorkshire. This can be found at <http://www.eastriding.gov.uk/learning/schools-colleges-and-academies/schools-and-school-places/school-admissions-and-catchment-finder/school-places-and-admissions/>. PLAC are entitled to priority placing within a school so it is important that you included your child's previously looked-after status on the admissions form.

If you have more specific questions about a school – for example around attachment awareness, whether they are trauma informed or have nurture provision, it is advisable to approach each school directly.

The ERYC Virtual School, known as the Vulnerable Children in Education Team (VCET) will also be able to offer advice about any schools that could meet your child's needs.

2. What is pupil premium plus and how do I access it?

Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) is additional funding schools receive and manage which is designed to help improve the educational outcomes for previously looked-after children, and close the attainment gap between them and their peers. Parents must make the school aware that their child has previously been in the care system and the school may ask you to provide evidence of this. The school will then record this onto what is known as, the 'January Census' and this triggers the funding to be allocated directly to the school. From September 2018 the PP+ is ring-fenced and must be used for the previously looked-after cohort in school. Parents should note that the funding is not a budget for an individual child. A good school should

encourage parents of their adopted children to be involved in discussions how the funding could be used for the cohort.

3. How do I help my child's school to understand curriculum triggers like family trees, NSPCC talks etc.?

It is important to develop and maintain regular communication with your child's school and designated teacher for previously looked-after pupils from the outset. Go into school early in the term and explain the potential triggers so they can be prepared.

Wherever possible share as much information as you can (this will depend on the age of the child and how much the child wants to share) and work with the school to consider:

- What does the young person know about their past?
- What are their worries or concerns?
- What sort of activity in school might cause them upset or distress?
- When you might ask them to let you know about something that might be happening in advance?

You may need to be prepared to give the school guidance on how they should handle the situation and you could also signpost the school or designated teacher to DfE post-adoption documents and/or adoption support resources that you feel could be useful with regard to your child.

4. How do I challenge the behaviour policy of my child's school?

Every school must have a behaviour policy and must make this available in writing to parents. However there are differences in how this might be done depending on the type of school your child attends. Many schools publish a copy of the behaviour policy on their website. If your child attends an academy and a copy is not published on the website then a copy must be made available to you on request.

If you feel that a school disciplinary policy is unreasonable then you would need to discuss this further with the head teacher and the school's governing body. However, the law states that in a maintained school *"the headteacher must decide the standard of behaviour expected of pupils at the school. He or she must also*

determine the school rules and any disciplinary penalties for breaking the rules. When deciding what these measures should be, the headteacher must take account of the governing body's statement of behaviour principles."

In an Academy school "the proprietor of an Academy school is required to ensure that a written policy to promote good behaviour among pupils is drawn up and effectively implemented. The policy must set out the disciplinary sanctions to be adopted if a pupil misbehaves. The proprietor is also required to ensure that an effective anti-bullying strategy is drawn up and implemented."

Things which should be taken into consideration include;

- Are sanctions monitored to identify any inconsistency or potential discrimination (e.g. Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) or ethnicity)?
- Are systems in place to identify pupils showing persistent poor behaviour and if there are any underlying causes?
- From September 2018, the designated teacher for previously looked after children should make sure that policies do not discriminate against students who have experienced early trauma.

5. My child is struggling at school, who do I go to for help?

If your child is struggling at school it is recommended to speak to their class teacher or designated teacher in the first instance to discuss your concerns. Depending on how you feel your child is struggling, be it in their learning, making friends, socialising etc. they may be able to recommend extra support or suggest how they could do things differently in lessons to help your child feel more comfortable and confident.

It is also worth considering what you can do at home to further support their learning and personal development at school such as:

- Get to the root of the issue. Speak with your child as well as their teacher to get to the bottom of what's contributing to the problem. By understanding where the problems are coming from, you and your child will be able to both confront them and fix them, together.

- Instead of asking 'how was school' ask specific questions based on what you know about their school day. Ask about what they have learnt, what they found interesting, even asking what they had for lunch shows you are interested in their day.
- Provide your child with the resources they need and create a safe, healthy working environment at home to help them on their way.

6. How do I approach school to support my child who is struggling at home but seems OK at school?

Allow the child to see that home and school are working together and providing consistent messages. Make sure you involve your child, talk to them and get their views.

It might also be useful to ask yourself some questions:

- Why do you think the child is struggling at home?
- What could be causing the child stress at school – could additional support be put in place in school so that the child is not like a shaken up bottle of fizzy drink being opened when they return home? Is it something social, emotional or educational?
- What additional skills are needed for the child to manage?
- Do you really know how well your child is thriving at school?
 - Educationally
 - Socially
 - Emotionally
 - Mentally
 - Friendships
- Or are certain things being masked?

7. I need help understanding EHCPs

An Education, Health and Care plan (EHCP) describes your child's special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and the help they will get to meet them. An EHCP also includes any health and care provision that is needed. It is a legal document written

by the local authority and is intended to ensure that children and young people with an EHCP receive the support they need.

If you need help understanding your child's EHCP contact your child's teacher or the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) at school. Further advice could be sought from your SEND Officer within the SEND Team of the local authority that wrote your child's EHCP.

You can find out more about SEND Support by:

- looking at the SEND policy on the school website
- looking at the ERYC Local Offer <http://www.eastridinglocaloffer.org.uk/>
- Approaching the Family Information & Support Hub (FISH) <http://www.eastriding.gov.uk/living/children-and-families/the-family-information-service-hub/special-educational-needs-and-disabilities-send/>
- reading Chapter 6 of the SEND Code of Practice

SENDIASS can give you impartial advice and support and explain your options. This may include independent disagreement resolution, mediation or going to appeal. More information can be found here. <https://www.kids.org.uk/sendiaass>

8. How do I handle transitions in school? (Change of teacher, moving to secondary school etc.)

Transition can be a very difficult time for young people who do not like change. Therefore whenever possible careful planning and an extended period of transition activities can help to ease any worries or feelings of uncertainty.

Key to this is:

- Sharing of information
- The young person getting to know the physical space they will be moving to
- The young person building relationships in advance of the move

For a change of school:-

All schools have a designated teacher (DT). It would be very useful to ask for a meeting with the DT from both schools to plan the transition.

Where transition works well:-

- Transition activities are planned well in advance
- A key worker from each school is involved in this planning.
- Information – e.g. academic and detailed knowledge about the young person is shared between the schools
- Key workers visit the young person in their existing school.
- Key workers go on visits with the young person to the new school – this may be as part of a bigger transition programme if all children are moving. This enables the young person to build relationships in advance of the school move, and be able to find their way around the school.

Gather as much information as you can, and talk everything through with your child so they understand what will happen. Use visual displays at home of timetables, map of school layout, photographs etc. and give them lots of reassurance, before and during the transition period. Be prepared that it may take quite a while for them to settle in.

9. My child has been excluded from school, where can I go for help?

If your child has been excluded speak to school via the designated teacher in the first instance to ascertain what has happened and if there is anything which could be done to rectify the situation.

For children and young people who are looked after or previously looked after you can also contact VCET.

The statutory guidance on exclusions can be found on the DfE website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion>

A school's governing body has a duty to consider parents' representations about an exclusion. The extent of this duty and how it is exercised depend on the length and nature of the exclusion. If the governing body uphold a permanent exclusion, parents have the right to request that their decision is reviewed by an Independent Review Panel (IRP).

Useful contacts for advice on exclusion are:

- Coram Children's Legal Centre www.childrenslegalcentre.com

- Child Law Advice: <https://childlawadvice.org.uk/information-pages/school-exclusion>
- ACE Education <http://www.ace-ed.org.uk>

Other services may be appropriate to the needs of your child. These could include;

- Information Advice & Support Services Network: <https://www.kids.org.uk/sendias>
- Independent Parental Special Education Advice <http://www.ipsea.org.uk/>
- Council for Disabled Children: <https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/information-advice-and-support-services-network/about>
- National Autistic Society School Exclusion Service, 0808 800 4002 or schoolexclusions@nas.org.uk.

10. What help can I access for my child post 16?

Everyone born on or after 1st September 1997 must stay in some form of education or training until 18.

Post-16 options are full-time education (e.g. at a school or college), an apprenticeship or traineeship, or part-time education or training - as well as being employed, self-employed or volunteering for 20 hours or more a week.

Some financial support may be available. In England young people may be eligible to apply for a 16 to 19 Bursary Fund to help with studying cost for example equipment you may need for your course and travel expenses. The bursary is paid directly by the school, college or training provider. They will decide how much and when it is paid.

All young people should be offered careers advice at school during Key Stage 4 to help them explore and decide upon a post 16 pathway. You can speak to the school's designated teacher if you think that this has not been made available to your young person or you feel they need further support.

You and your young person can also check the websites of post 16 education and training providers for information about courses and the dates for information events. The ERYC website can provide a useful starting point for exploring Post 16 education and training providers in the East Riding and bordering local authorities.

<http://www.eastriding.gov.uk/learning/schools-colleges-and-academies/training-providers/>