

# Hillingdon Virtual School Handbook - Extended Duties 2024 / 25



## Contents

<u>Introduction</u>	4
Children with a Social Worker - who are they?	4
The extended remit of the Virtual School Head	5
The Team Around the Child	6
 <u>Barriers to Education for CWSW</u>	 8
Attainment	8
Attendance	8
Holistic Outcomes	8
Social Care Escalation	8
Why?	8
 <u>Current Processes to Support CWSW in Hillingdon</u>	 9
Master Spreadsheet	9
New Starter Process	9
Education Disruption Master Spreadsheet	10
Attendance Monitoring	10
Hospital Learner TACs	10
Suspension and Exclusion Monitoring	11
The Skills Hub Pilot	11
High Risk Panel	11
Fair Access Panel	12
Project Manager	12
 <u>Support Available to Professionals Working with CWSW</u>	 13
Training	13
Clinics	13
CIN/CP Meeting Attendance	13
 <u>Pupil Premium</u>	 14
 <u>The Children with a Social Worker Team</u>	 15
 <u>Support for Children in Kinship Care Arrangements, Previously Looked After Children and Adopted Children</u>	 16
Kinship Care Arrangements	16
Previously Looked After Children	16
Adopted Children	17
 <u>Jump to Contents</u>	 2

Barriers to Education for Children in Kinship Care Arrangements, Previously	17
Looked After Children and Adopted Children	
Support Available	17
Pupil Premium Plus	18
Adoption and Special Guardian Support Fund	19
<a href="#"><u>CWSW Frequently Asked Questions</u></a>	20
CWSW Generic Enquiries	20
Admissions	20
Attendance	22
Suspensions / Exclusions	24
Elective Home Education	24
Children Missing Education	25
Post-16	26

## Introduction

### Children with a Social Worker - who are they?

Children with a Social Worker (CWSW) are defined as children currently being supported on a Child in Need (CIN) or Child Protection (CP) plan - those defined as being in need under section 17 of the Children Act 1989.

Children are supported by social care on these plans when there are safeguarding concerns. A Child in Need plan is a consent-based intervention for children where it is deemed their basic needs are not currently being met by those with parental responsibility for them. A Child Protection plan is a statutory intervention for children where it is deemed they are at significant risk of harm.

When supported on a CIN plan, the social worker will conclude the category of need for the child. This category of need is recorded within the child's social care file. The category of need will be one of the below:

- Absent parenting
- Abuse or neglect
- Disability
- Family dysfunction
- Family in acute stress
- Low income
- Parental illness or disability
- Socially unacceptable behaviour

When supported on a CP plan, the plan must be agreed at a Child Protection conference. Within the initial Child Protection conference, the core group members will each vote on the category of need for the child during the scaling of risk level; the social worker will also have recorded their view regarding category of need within their evidence. The Child Protection chair will then conclude and confirm with the core group the category of need for the plan. The category of need can change in later review conferences. There are four potential categories of need:

- Neglect
- Physical abuse
- Emotional abuse
- Sexual abuse

### The extended remit of the Virtual School Head

Under the non-statutory guidance [promoting the education of children with a social worker and children in kinship care arrangements: virtual school head role extension](#) the Department for Education (DfE) has extended the role of the Virtual School Head to include strategic support to improve educational outcomes for CWSW. The remit was extended based on the [Child in Need Review 2019](#) which identified that CWSW perform less well in all areas of education compared to their peers without social care involvement. Since their inception, Virtual Schools have been successful in narrowing the gap in academic attainment and holistic educational outcomes for Looked After Children and the DfE is keen to replicate this success for all CWSW.

This extended remit is a strategic role in which Virtual School Heads should champion and promote the education of CWSW through:

- Making visible the disadvantages that CWSW can experience, enhancing partnerships between education settings and local authorities, including with children's social care, to help all agencies hold high aspirations for these children
- Promoting practice that supports children's engagement in education, recognising that attending an education setting is an important factor in helping to keep children safe from harm
- Levelling up children's outcomes to narrow the attainment gap so every child has the opportunity to reach their potential - including helping to ensure that children with a social worker benefit from support to recover educationally from the impact of the pandemic

Virtual School Heads are **not** expected to:

- Work directly with individual children and their families - including tracking and monitoring of individual educational progress, providing academic or other interventions
- Respond to requests from parents or carers to offer advice, intervention, and support in relation to individual children with a social worker
- Take responsibility for children with SEND who do not require or need a social worker

In order to improve the outcomes for CWSW, Virtual School Heads have been given a degree of flexibility to meet the specific need in their area. However, there are some specific activities that are critical for all:

- Enhancing partnerships between education settings and the local authority so agencies can work together in a child focused manner
- Identifying the needs of the cohort and addressing barriers to poor educational outcomes to ensure pupils make educational progress

- Offering advice and support to key professionals such as social workers, designated safeguarding leads, designated teachers, and school leaders to help children make progress, including through increasing their confidence in using evidence-based interventions

### **The Team around the Child**

All children are unique and have their own specific needs to be met, so the individuals required to provide support will vary, but together they make up what is known as 'the team around the child.' The child must always be kept at the centre of the thinking and actions of members of the team, because the legal and moral duties are to safeguard and promote the child's welfare and to ensure they realise their maximum potential.

The roles and responsibilities of some of the key team members are described below:

The Parent or Legal Guardian: When a child is supported on a CIN or CP plan, full parental responsibility remains with the parents or legal guardian; there is no shared parental responsibility with the LA. Therefore, all decision making and day-to-day care for the child remains the responsibility of their parents or legal guardian. As a CP plan is statutory, parents or legal guardians are required to engage with the support and interventions put in place by social care. Therefore, parents or legal guardians should:

- Encourage and support children to have a positive attitude towards their education, helping them to do well
- Support a good attendance record
- Maintain regular liaison with the school
- Be an active advocate for their needs
- Provide them with adequate space in the home to complete their homework
- Attend parents' evening and other similar events

The Social Worker: Every child supported on a CIN or CP plan has an allocated social worker from the local authority. It is the role of the social worker to coordinate the team around the child to share all safeguarding concerns and create the 'plan' (either CIN or CP) which outlines the support required, interventions to be put in place and who is responsible for each of these. It is best practice for the child's allocated social worker to attend all meetings regarding their education, particularly for children supported on CP plans.

The Child Protection Advisor: When a child is supported on a CP plan, they will have an allocated Child Protection Advisor who chairs their initial and review Child Protection conferences. The role of the Child Protection Advisor is to assess and advise on the risk of significant harm to children. They hold professionals within the team around the child

to account during conferences, ensuring there is evidence to back up views and decisions. Another key role is to try and maximise the role of families in the CP process and to work with them to help them bring about change. After the initial conference, review conferences are held at least every six months or sooner at the discretion of the Child Protection Advisor.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead: The Designated Safeguarding Lead has overall safeguarding responsibility at the education provision where the child attends. The Designated Safeguarding Lead sees the child regularly at school and shares any safeguarding concerns with the allocated social worker. CWSW often have additional barriers to education therefore the Designated Safeguarding Lead is required to adapt and develop interventions in school as well as advocate for the child to support them to reach their full potential. The Designated Safeguarding Lead should be the main point of contact at the school for all professionals within the team around the child and regular communication is expected.

Health (Health Visitor or School Nurse): Local authorities work in partnership with health services to ensure the health and wellbeing of CWSW is effectively promoted. Designated nurses or health visitors assist with drawing up health plans which impact on any Education Health and Care Plan.

## **Barriers to Education for CWSW**

The following data is based on the findings of the Children in Need Review 2019 which formed the basis of the extension of Virtual School Heads to include all CWSW.

### **Attainment**

Based on the Children in Need Review 2019, on average CWSW do worse than their peers at every stage of their education. This includes academic outcomes at the end of the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), Key Stage Two (KS2) and Key Stage Four (KS4). For example at the end of KS4, CWSW are half as likely to achieve a strong pass in English and maths compared to their peers. For those CWSW who had a social worker during their GCSE year, by the age of 21 half had still not yet achieved any level two qualifications, compared to 11% of those not in need of a social worker.

### **Attendance**

During the 2021/2022 academic year, CWSW were twice as likely to be absent from school compared to their peers. CWSW were also three times more likely than their peers to be persistently absent from schools; a child is persistently absent when their attendance to school is below ninety percent.

### **Holistic outcomes**

CWSW are two to four times more likely to be permanently excluded from school than their peers and are also suspended from school at considerably greater rates. CWSW are also over ten times more likely to attend state-funded alternative provision settings than all other pupils. CWSW are more likely to experience social, emotional, and mental health issues than their peers.

### **Social care escalation**

More than half of children in care have spent time supported by a CIN or CP plan in the 5 years prior to becoming looked after children.

### **Why?**

There is no clear reason for why CWSW face additional barriers to education, however it is known that they are more likely to have experienced trauma including emotional, physical, or sexual abuse, or neglect. Experience of trauma and traumatic lived experiences are known to impact emotional resilience, self-esteem, and confidence which all impact on a child's education. Additionally, CWSW are much more likely to experience multiple transitions, including moving home or school, and experience changes in the professionals supporting them and their families.



## Current Processes to Support CWSW in Hillingdon

### Master Spreadsheet

A master spreadsheet is maintained of all CWSW currently open to Hillingdon's social care. Within this master, the following information is held regarding each child:

- Identity
- Category of need of CIN / CP plan
- Social worker details
- School details
- UPN
- Sessions missed through suspensions
- Open EHE referral
- Open CME referral
- SEND
- Free school meal eligibility

A closed master spreadsheet is also maintained of children who have closed to social care in the past academic year.

A new master spreadsheet is created for each academic year and the previous academic year's master is archived.

### New Starter Process

A report is received weekly showing the children who have opened, closed, stepped up or stepped down from either a CIN or CP plan within the past week. These children are then either added, removed, or moved between the master sheets and eGov Solutions as required. Checks are also completed to identify any special educational needs and disabilities (including SEN Support and EHCPs) of the child and whether they are eligible for free school meals.

The CWSW team complete initial checks of the child's file to identify if there are any recorded educational concerns, these are then noted on the new starter check. An email is sent to the networks of all new children, irrespective of if a concern has been identified or not, signposting the CWSW clinic and frequently asked questions page to the child's allocated social worker and school the child attends. This is to encourage professionals to seek support where there are concerns for the child, allowing the child the best chance of achieving positive outcomes.

### **Education Disruption Master Spreadsheet**

The education disruption master spreadsheet holds a record of all CWSW also open to the following teams:

- Children missing education
- Elective home education
- Post-16

The master contains identity information as well as the referral date to the team the child is known to. This is to monitor and reduce disruption to the education of CWSW. During monthly meetings between the CWSW team and each relevant team, the education disruption master spreadsheet is updated with the information and updates shared. Actions are discussed for both the CWSW and other education team/s to ensure a multi-agency approach in supporting the child's education.

### **Attendance Monitoring**

All schools with CWSW on roll are given access to eGov Solutions where they report attendance for the student weekly. Schools are required to report this data. This is due to the evidence that attendance to school for CWSW is an area of concern. The CWSW team complete weekly checks of attendance identifying:

- Average attendance
- The number of children where schools have not reported attendance
- The number of persistently absent CWSW and the schools they attend
- The number of severely absent CWSW and the schools they attend

Where trends are noticed, particularly for severely absent CWSW where attendance is below fifty percent, the team reach out to the team around the child to offer support and receive further context regarding the child's attendance.

### **Hospital Learner TACs**

The majority of children who are inpatients in hospital are also CWSW. A new policy has been developed for the education of Hillingdon's hospital learners where a team around the child meeting is chaired by the local authority with a focus on the education the child will be receiving whilst in hospital - this is for all children, not only those who have a social worker. The aim of this team around the child meeting is to quality assure the education the child is receiving whilst an in-patient, ensure the child's home school continues active involvement with the education of the child and encourage professionals and families to be proactive in reintegration planning for the child to education in the community when they are discharged from hospital. To view the policy please click [here](#).

### Suspension and Exclusion Monitoring

The CWSW team complete weekly checks of all suspensions and permanent exclusions across the borough to identify if any CWSW have received either sanction in the past week. This is then recorded on the CWSW suspensions and exclusions master spreadsheet, where the total number of suspensions and sessions missed per child and school are recorded and analysed.

When a child reaches 10 sessions of suspension (equivalent to five days), the CWSW team reach out to the network to have a discussion regarding the reason for suspensions and to explore avenues of support to avoid future suspensions.

When a child is permanently excluded from school, the pilot at The Skills Hub is initiated and the CWSW team offer support via the team around the child protocol.

### The Skills Hub Pilot

Where a CWSW is permanently excluded from school, the CWSW team will attend their initial intake meeting at The Skills Hub - the local authority's main alternative provision provider. During the intake meeting, a member of the CWSW team will chair a team around the child meeting based on the Personal Education Plan model for Looked After Children.

The pilot aims to bring together the team around the child ensuring the appropriate support is in place to give them the best chance of success after permanent exclusion. There is a focus on the progress of the child against set targets, which have the overall outcome of the child being reintegrated back into a mainstream provision where appropriate.

To view the Guide to TAC Pilot for CWSW at The Skills Hub please click [here](#).

### High Risk Panel

The CWSW team attend Hillingdon's monthly High-Risk Panel. Through attendance to the panel, they offer advice, guidance, and signposting for children at high risk of criminal or sexual exploitation. It also provides the opportunity to raise and identify any wider educational challenges or trends for the cohort and a forum to have a roundtable discussion with the multi-agency group.

### **Fair Access Panel**

The CWSW team attend the monthly Fair Access Panel, where they advocate for the most appropriate school placement for CWSW who are being presented. Children are presented at Fair Access Panel when they have not been successful in gaining a school place through the usual admissions route and they also meet the qualifying criteria. For CWSW they are eligible for presentation at Fair Access Panel under the following additional criteria "children either subject to a Child in Need Plan or a Child Protection Plan or having had a Child in Need Plan or a Child Protection Plan within 12 months at the point of being referred to the Fair Access Panel". A CWSW may be presented for several reasons including:

- Those without a school place
- Those who are reintegrating back into a mainstream school from an alternative provision.

### **Project Manager**

The project manager is a strategic position analysing current trends and patterns for Hillingdon's CWSW cohort. With the aim to identify areas of training needs for those professionals working directly with CWSW. Several projects are currently being explored including:

- Absenteeism
- Education in Child Protection Plans
- Behaviour in EYFS and KS1

## **Support Available to Professionals Working with CWSW**

### **Training**

The Virtual School have a varied offer of training opportunities for schools and social workers regarding the education of CWSW. The training opportunities are run both internally and by commissioned external providers. This includes, but is not limited to:

- Lunch and Learn Sessions
- Training in collaboration with other teams e.g. attendance support
- Attachment Lead in Schools Training
- AC Education Training
- Sessions on Trauma with Dr Karen Treisman

### **Clinics**

Online clinic slots are available each week for schools and social workers to receive advice, guidance, and signposting regarding educational concerns for a specific CWSW or to discuss wider educational challenges for CWSW.

Both schools and social workers can follow the below link to book a clinic slot: [Virtual Clinic for Education of Children with a Social Worker \(2024-25\) \(office.com\)](#).

### **CIN/CP Meeting Attendance**

Where requested, a member of the CWSW team may attend a CIN or CP meeting for a child to discuss educational challenges and offer advice and guidance to the team around the child collectively.

It is important to note that the extended remit for CWSW is strategic and not operational, therefore only under exceptional circumstances will the team attend multiple CIN or CP meetings.

## Pupil Premium

Pupil Premium is a grant awarded to state-funded schools in England to improve educational outcomes for disadvantaged pupils aged 5-16 years old. Funding is allocated to eligible schools based on the number of:

- Pupils who are recorded as eligible for free school meals (FSM) or have been recorded as eligible in the past six years
- Children previously looked after by a local authority

This means not all CWSW will qualify for the Pupil Premium grant.

Schools should view the Pupil Premium grant, not as a personal budget for individual pupils, but rather as a pool of funding which can be used for whole-class or whole-school interventions.

To develop and deliver an effective Pupil Premium strategy schools should use their data from internal and external assessments to identify the challenges faced by their disadvantaged pupils. Schools should use external evidence as well as internal evidence including using the ['what works' evaluations](#) and [menu of approaches](#) by the Education Endowment Foundation.

Schools should allocate funding to target three key areas:

- **Tier 1** High-quality teaching (for example: developing high-quality teaching, assessment, and a broad and balanced curriculum, and mentoring, and coaching for teachers etc.)
- **Tier 2** Targeted academic support (for example: small group intervention, specific SEND interventions, teaching assistant deployment etc.)
- **Tier 3** Wider strategies (for example: supporting pupils' social, emotional, and behavioural needs, attendance, extra-curricular activities etc.)

## The Children with a Social Worker Team

**Lisa Steel**  
Virtual School Headteacher

**Chloe Rock**  
Project Manager for CWSW

**Charlie-May Flaherty**  
Virtual School Officer for  
CWSW

**Susan O'Farrell**  
Virtual School Support Officer

## Support for Children in Kinship Care Arrangements, Previously Looked After Children and Adopted Children

### Kinship Care Arrangements

Across England there are more than 130,000 children living in Kinship Care Arrangements. There are two categories of Kinship Care Arrangements, formal and informal. Within these categories there are different types of arrangements.

#### Formal Kinship Care Arrangements

- Kinship Foster Care - a family member or friend is assessed and becomes a child's approved foster carer; they will receive a regular foster care allowance to help support the child. The child is in the care of children's services, who share parental responsibility with the child's birth parents.
- Private Foster Care - when someone who is not a child's parent or close relative looks after them for 28 days or more. Arrangements are agreed by the individual and the child's parents and they should alert the local authority and undergo a short assessment. Private Foster Carers can be asked to make day-to-day decisions for the child but birth parents maintain full parental responsibility.
- Special Guardianship Order - a legal order given by family court, when granted the child will continue to live with the carer until they reach 18 years old. Parental responsibility is shared with the child's parents but most major decisions can be made without the parents' involvement.
- Child Arrangements Order - a legal order given by a family court that usually lasts until the child is 18 years old. Parental responsibility is shared with the child's birth parents and the carer. The carer can make day-to-day decisions however, any major decisions must involve the birth parents.
- Testamentary Guardianship - someone who has been appointed, formally in writing, by a parent or special guardian. If there is no-one else with parental responsibility, the testamentary guardian gains parental responsibility upon the parent or special guardian's death.

#### Informal Kinship Care Arrangements

- A close relative, distant relative or family friend looks after a child. Overall parental responsibility remains with the child's birth parents and there are no court orders in place.

### Previously Looked After Children

Previously Looked After Children are those no longer looked after by a local authority in England and Wales because they are the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or



child arrangements order or, they were adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales.

Please see the [Kinship Care Arrangements section](#) for further details regarding Special Guardianship Orders and Child Arrangements Orders.

### **Adopted Children**

When a child is adopted, their adoptive parents gain full parental responsibility. The link between the child and their birth parents is legally and permanently broken.

### **Barriers to Education for Children in Kinship Care Arrangement, Previously Looked After Children and Adopted Children**

When a child is raised not by their birth parents, it is likely the child has experienced adverse childhood experiences, abuse and/or neglect in their early life or prior to moving to live with family, friends or adoptive parents. Often, as there is not always current children's services involvement, professionals can overlook or be unaware of the children's experience of trauma and associated attachment difficulties. It is important that all children in Kinship Care Arrangements and all Adopted children are supported using trauma informed and attachment aware practice that is based on relational approaches to best support their academic success.

The barriers to education for these children will differ between each individual child. However, generally they are likely to experience similar barriers to children who currently have social workers. Please see the earlier section of this handbook outlining these barriers [here](#).

### **Support Available**

The team are developing a bank of resources outlining responses to frequently asked education questions for children living within Kinship Care Arrangements and Adopted Children. Please access these resources via LEAP or by contacting the team via [virtualschoolcsw@hillingdon.gov.uk](mailto:virtualschoolcsw@hillingdon.gov.uk). Carers and Adoptive Parents can request access to resources by emailing [virtualschoolplac@hillingdon.gov.uk](mailto:virtualschoolplac@hillingdon.gov.uk).

The team can also provide advice, guidance and signposting regarding any educational concerns for these children via online clinics. In order to book a clinic for a child in a Kinship Care Arrangement or an Adopted Child, the professional **must** gain consent from the carer or adoptive parent prior to booking the clinic. Professionals can book a clinic with the team using the following link: [Virtual Clinic for Education of Children with a Social Worker OR Kinship Care \(2024-25\)](#).

Adoptive Parents and Carers with Special Guardianship Orders or Child Arrangements Orders can also contact the team directly to access information, advice and guidance regarding the education of their child. Adoptive Parents and Carers can contact the team via the email address here [virtualschoolplac@hillington.gov.uk](mailto:virtualschoolplac@hillington.gov.uk).

### **Pupil Premium Plus**

The availability of funding depends on the type of Kinship Care Arrangement the child is living in. Pupil premium plus is funding for schools in England for children currently in care or those who were previously in the care of the local authority. The funding is not a personal budget for specific previously looked after children; however, it must be spent by the school on improving educational outcomes for those previously in the care of the local authority.

### **Early Years Pupil Premium Plus**

- Around £380 per year available, which is paid directly to the provider e.g. nursery or childminder. The following eligibility criteria must be met, the child:
  - o Is under 5 years old
  - o Is in nursery or attending a childminder
  - o Was looked after in local authority care and left through adoption, a Special Guardianship Order or a Child Arrangements Order

### **Pupil Premium Plus for Previously Looked After Children**

- Around £2500 per year which is paid directly to schools for children who:
  - o Are statutory school aged
  - o Are on roll at a school
  - o Were looked after in local authority care and left through adoption, a Special Guardianship Order or a Child Arrangements Order
- Carers must contact their child's school to confirm and share proof that they are eligible for Pupil Premium Plus, the school must then record this in the autumn census.
- If the child changes school, carers will need to declare their status again.
- Schools will typically consult with carers and other key agencies or stakeholders regarding how to effectively use the funding, they can use it to support academic outcomes as well as to support children's social and emotional needs.
- Schools are required to publish how they have spent their pupil premium plus annually; carers can also speak to the school's Designated Teacher regarding the funding.

### Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Fund

The adoption and special guardian support fund provides funds to local authorities to pay for essential therapeutic services for eligible adoptive, special guardianship and child arrangements order families. Up to £3000 is available per child per year for therapy or specialist assessment (up to £2500). The Department for Education has confirmed funding until March 2026. Families cannot apply for the funding directly themselves; the local authority has to apply for the funding.

The fund is available for children and young people up to and including the age of 21, or 25 for those with an Education, Health and Care Plan. To be eligible the child has to fit at least one of the following criteria:

- are living (placed) with a family in England while waiting for adoption
- were adopted from local authority care in England, Wales, Scotland or Northern Ireland and live in England
- were adopted from abroad and live in England with a recognised adoption status
- were in care before an SGO was made
- left care under a special guardianship order that was subsequently changed to an adoption order, or vice versa
- are under a residency order or child arrangement order (CAO) and were previously looked after
- were previously looked after but where the adoption, special guardianship, residency or CAO placement has broken down, irrespective of any reconciliation plans

## CWSW Frequently Asked Questions

### CWSW Generic Enquiries

How can I contact the CWSW team?

For generic enquiries please contact: [virtualschoolcsw@hillingdon.gov.uk](mailto:virtualschoolcsw@hillingdon.gov.uk)

To book a virtual clinic to discuss a specific child, please complete the following form:

[Virtual Clinic for Education of Children with a Social Worker \(2024-25\) \(office.com\)](#)

How can I book a virtual clinic to discuss a specific child?

To book a virtual clinic to discuss a specific child, please complete the following form:

[Virtual Clinic for Education of Children with a Social Worker \(2024-25\) \(office.com\)](#)

A member of the team will then be in touch to offer the next available clinic slot following triage.

Does the Virtual School CWSW team hold a caseload of children and attend all meetings for those children?

As this is a strategic role, the CWSW team are unable to hold a caseload of children and therefore cannot attend all meetings or offer casework level of involvement. The team may deem it necessary to join some wider professional meetings or specific CIN/CP meetings however they will not form part of the Team Around the Child and this will differ on a case-by-case basis.

Hillingdon Virtual School do not usually provide for CWSW:

- Case work.
- Stationery or books.
- Educational visits.
- Payment for uniform, trips, exam entry fees, equipment, etc.
- Regular meetings.

Please note that the DfE do not allocate Pupil Premium Plus (PPP) to Virtual Schools for the CWSW cohort. PPP remains an allocated funding for CLA only.

### Admissions

When is a child statutory school age and what does this mean?

Children become Statutory School Age following their fifth birthday.

- Children who will turn 5 between 1st January and 31st March are of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term after 1st April.

- Children who will turn 5 between 1st April and 31st August are of compulsory school age from the beginning of the term after 1st September.
- Children who will turn 5 between 1st September and 31st December are of compulsory school age from the beginning of the term after 1st January.

A child is no longer Statutory School Age from the last Friday in June of the school year in which they turn 16 years of age.

During the years that a child is Statutory School age, their parents must, by law, make sure that they are in full-time education - either in school or by receiving Elective Home Education.

A family has moved into the borough and the children do not have school places, what needs to happen?

If the child has never been permanently excluded from school, then an in-year application should be made to local schools. This can be completed using the following link: [In-year school application form - Hillingdon Council](#)

If the family wish to apply to an out of borough school, then they will need to do this using the specific local authority's in-year application form - this can be found on individual's local authority's websites.

If the child has previously been permanently excluded from mainstream school and was attending a Pupil Referral Unit in their previous borough, then their previous PRU will need to complete a PRU to PRU transfer to the PRU in Hillingdon - The Skills Hub.

If the child has an EHCP, then the previous borough's SEND team will need to transfer the EHCP to Hillingdon's SEND team who will then consult with local schools. For further information regarding this please contact Hillingdon SEND: [strongerfamilieshub@hillington.gov.uk](mailto:strongerfamilieshub@hillington.gov.uk) Phone: 01895 556 006.

A family is unhappy with their child's current school, what can they do?

Parents have the right to apply to change their child's school via an in-year application, using the following link: [In-year school application form - Hillingdon Council](#).

It is important to note that schools may not have spaces in the year group applied to and spaces are especially limited in Years 10 and 11. Schools must give a reason for not accepting an application and children may be added to their waiting lists. Waiting list positions can be found out by contacting individual schools.

A child who was previously permanently excluded in another borough has moved to Hillingdon; how do they gain a place at The Skills Hub?

The child's previous PRU / Alternative Provision must contact The Skills Hub to complete and PRU to PRU transfer. The child will then be invited for an intake meeting at The Skills Hub.

A child will be presented at Fair Access Panel, what does this mean?

Fair Access Panel is a forum where vulnerable (including those supported on a CP or CIN plan) secondary age child without a school place are allocated a school place. The local authority admissions team and local head teachers chair the panel.

Children are allocated to schools considered within a reasonable distance from their home address in line with the admissions code.

If a child on a CIN or CP plan is being presented at the panel, then their social worker or the CWSW team may share further information regarding the child at the panel to support an informed decision.

For further information regarding the Fair Access Protocol, please find statutory guidance here: [Fair access protocols: advice for local authorities and school admission authorities \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/612212/fair-access-protocols-advice-for-local-authorities-and-school-admission-authorities.pdf).

### **Attendance**

I am working with a child who has low attendance to school, what support can be offered?

Often the first step of understanding why a child may have low attendance to school is in identifying the barriers to going to school. It is often most effective for an adult with a positive and trusting relationship with the child to have this discussion with them - this could be a family member, a social worker, or a member of school staff. Examples of barriers could be:

- Mental health
- Bullying
- The journey to school
- Educational neglect
- Lack of importance of education within the family network
- Challenging relationships between home and school

Once the barriers have been identified, then a Team Around the Child meeting could be useful in considering how to overcome the barriers and strategies that could be implemented.

Further specific attendance support resources can be found here: [Resources & Training - Leap \(hillingsdon.gov.uk\)](#).

A family have been invited to a formal attendance panel, what does this mean?

Prior to being invited to an attendance panel in school, families are likely to have received several letters outlining concern regarding their child's attendance to school. Individual schools choose the regularity and attendance thresholds when they send letters. This information can be found in their individual attendance policies.

If a child's attendance continues to be a concern then it is likely the family will be invited to a meeting / panel in school including parents, the child, and the attendance officer. There may be other professionals in attendance at the meeting. If a child is on a CIN or CP plan then the school or family may choose to invite the allocated social worker.

At the panel barriers to attending school and support available will be discussed. A target / goal will be set for the child with regards to attendance with a deadline / review date.

A family have received a penalty notice for attendance, what does this mean?

If following a formal attendance panel in school, a child's attendance to school has not improved in line with the agreed goals and deadlines; the school may then refer to the Local Authority's Attendance Support Team.

The Attendance Support Team can issue fines to parents for poor attendance, which if not paid could result in court proceedings being issued.

To find out more about the role of the Attendance Support Team, please see their LEAP page here: [Attendance Support - Leap \(hillingsdon.gov.uk\)](#).

A family are taking their child on a family holiday during the term time, will they be fined?

If a child is taken out of school during term time for a holiday, then school may refer to the Attendance Support Team to issue a Holiday Penalty Notice to the family. Further information regarding Holiday Penalty Notices can be found here: [Penalty Notices - Leap \(hillingsdon.gov.uk\)](#).



If you are a member of school staff looking to refer to the Attendance Support Team - you can do so via the Stronger Families Hub: [Stronger Families - Hillingdon Council](#).

### **Suspensions / Exclusions**

#### **A child has been suspended from school, what happens next?**

The suspending school will inform the family in writing that the child has been suspended, this letter should include the reason for suspension, the date and time of the reintegration meeting and details of how to appeal the suspension if the family wish to do so.

It is best practice for social workers to attend the reintegration meetings for children on CP and CIN plans who are suspended - to ensure joined up working in reducing the risk of further suspensions.

If a child is suspended for more than 5 days (10 sessions) then the suspending school must provide an alternative education provision from day 6.

#### **A child has been permanently excluded from school, what happens next?**

The excluding school will inform the Local Authority's Exclusions Support Team who will then refer the child to The Skills Hub from day 6 following the permanent exclusion.

Parents have the right to appeal any permanent exclusions and information regarding this process will be shared in the permanent exclusion letter from the head teacher.

The CWSW team should attend all intake meetings for children on CIN and CP plans at The Skills Hub to support with their successful integration into the school and continued educational progress.

It is best practice for the social workers of all CIN and CP children who are permanently excluded attend all meetings regarding the permanent exclusion as well as intake meetings at the new PRU.

### **Elective Home Education (Also Known as EHE)**

#### **A family wish to EHE their child, what do they need to do?**

The family must confirm in writing to the child's current school that they wish to Electively Home Educate their child. The school will then refer the child to the EHE team who will contact the family. The family will need to provide an Outline Plan of the education their child will be receiving whilst being educated at home. This Outline Plan will be reviewed at least annually by the EHE team to ensure the child continues to



receive appropriate education. Reviews will be led by the EHE team. They may contact the VS CWSW team for advice or signposting if the child is on a CIN or CP plan and the family needs additional support.

If the child has an EHCP, then school will need to call an Interim Annual Review, naming that parents wish to EHE. The Hillingdon SEND team will then need to authorise the Outline Plan before naming EHE as the education provision on the EHCP. Annual Reviews will need to continue taking place yearly for all electively home educated children with EHCPs.

The EHE team will be in contact with the social workers of children on CIN and CP plans whose family have requested EHE to gain understanding of any associated safeguarding concerns.

The EHE team will confirm to referring schools when they are able to off-roll the child.

I as a professional have concerns regarding the EHE that a child is receiving, what can I do?

Please contact the EHE team at [ehc@hillingsdon.gov.uk](mailto:ehc@hillingsdon.gov.uk) to share your concerns. They will be able to advise regarding next steps.

For further information regarding EHE please follow this link: [Elective Home Education - Leap \(hillingsdon.gov.uk\)](#).

### **Children Missing Education (Also Known as CME)**

A child does not have a school place and they are statutory school age, what can I do?

If the family have not completed school applications, then this child is a CME. You will need to complete a referral to the CME team via the Stronger Families Hub: [Stronger Families - Hillingsdon Council](#).

A family have gone abroad, and we are unsure when they are returning, what can we do?

As there is no confirmed return date, then this child is a CME. You will need to complete a referral to the CME team via the Stronger Families Hub: [Stronger Families - Hillingsdon Council](#).

A child has not been to school recently, and we are unable to locate them, what can we do?

As the location of this child has not been possible to determine, this child is a CME. You will need to complete a referral to the CME team via the Stronger Families Hub: [Stronger Families - Hillingdon Council](#).

What support does the CME team offer to children on CIN and CP plans?

The CME team will allocate a specific officer to each child referred to them, it is their role to investigate where they are currently studying. The CME and CWSW teams meet monthly to discuss all CP and CIN children who are currently missing education; in this meeting they share knowledge to inform the best next steps in identifying and supporting pathways for these children back into education.

Either the CME or CWSW team will usually contact the social worker to gain their perspective as well.

For further information regarding CME please follow this link: [Children Missing Education - Leap \(hillington.gov.uk\)](#)

**Post-16**

A young person is not currently accessing any education, employment or training and they are over 16, what can I do?

Please contact the Post-16 Education, Employment and Training team at [post16eet@hillington.gov.uk](mailto:post16eet@hillington.gov.uk).