Social Care Staff Education Handbook

FOREWORD FROM THE HEADTEACHER OF ISLINGTON'S VIRTUAL SCHOOL

Children Looked After (CLA) generally attain much lower than their peers. The national CLA average of young people attaining at least 5 'Good' GCSEs for 2008/09 was 15%, as opposed to the national average of young people achieving this same benchmark of 70%. It is this gap of 55% of pupils not attaining at least 5 GCSEs grade A* - C that we are all, as Corporate Parents, trying to close.

Many young people who are in care may not have had the stable family like other children and may not have gone to the same school with the same friends day in and day out for years like their peers. They may have missed key points in their schooling life that has put them at a disadvantage or they may be trying to cope with the reality of being in care and being away from their home and their family.

Islington's Virtual School has one main aim; to raise the educational attainment and aspirations of all children and young people in care to Islington. We believe that education is the key that these young people need to reach their aspirations.

This guide sets out the important information that social care staff should know about education; including information on exams and teacher assessments points, the levels of attainment that young people are expected to attain at different ages and support that can be obtained through young people's schools to ensure that they reach these levels.

Key educational processes for Islington's CLA are also outlined; beginning with the role of the Virtual School. Also explained are the processes surrounding Personal Education Plans (PEPs) and attendance of young people and additional packages of support that are available to help young people.

In the final section of this handbook, additional information is given to help you when dealing with young people's education, including useful websites, links to resources and training developed by the Virtual School and a helpful list of acronyms, abbreviations and common educational terms used.

All of this information has been compiled by the Virtual School to help social care staff in their role as a Corporate Parent to Islington's young people in care. We hope that it is useful in championing their educational needs.

Hermione Michaud
Headteacher
Islington's Virtual School

SECTION 1: EDUCATION AND SYSTEMS

CURRENT LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

The education of CLA is covered by many national legislative and guidance documents as well as London and Local policy. The main documents are listed below.

- Children's Act 1989 – Section 52 Local Authority to promote the education of CLA
- Children's Act 2004
- Social Exclusion Unit Report – A better education for Children in Care (2003)
- Children and Young Person's Act 2008
- Every Child Matters (2003) – Focus on 5 outcomes for children
- Promoting the Educational Achievement of Looked After Children – Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities (2010)
- Letter to Directors of Children's Services 2009 – Action for all Local Authorities to appoint a Headteacher of a Virtual School
- Personal Education Allowances for Looked After Children: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities (2008)
- Islington's Children and Young Person Plan 2008 - 11
- Islington Plan For Looked After Children and Young People 2008 – 11
- The London Pledge (2008)
- The Role and Responsibilities of the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children. Statutory guidance for School Governing Bodies (2009)
- New Guidance on LAC with SEN placed out-of-authority (2009)
- Looked after children - good practice in schools (2008)
- Improving the Educational Attainment of CIC (2009)

INSPECTIONS AND CLA

OfSTED are now undertaking unannounced annual inspections child protection practices, as well as full inspections of safeguarding and services for CLA every three years. Bespoke inspections may also be triggered if it is deemed that a Local Authority has weaknesses.

Local Authorities now need to have at least a 'Good' rating in regards to the Enjoy and Achieve section of the Every Child Matters agenda to achieve a 'Good' overall judgement. Therefore, CLA will need to be making good educational progress overall in relation to their starting points and capabilities.

WHAT IS THE NATIONAL CURRICULUM AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

The National Curriculum:

- Sets out key knowledge and skills that every child has a right to learn
- Is a framework given to teachers by government, so that all school children are taught in a way that is balanced, manageable and challenging.
- Gives standards that measure how well children are doing in each subject – so teachers can plan to help them better.

The Government sets 'targets' of achievement for all statutory school age children. These are to be seen as guidelines – some children will need extra help towards achieving them as not all children progress at the same rate. The National Curriculum says when things must be taught by describing broad 'key stages'.

Key Stages, Year Groups and Assessments
(Source: DirectGov)

Age	Year	Key Stage (KS)	Assessment
3-4		Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)	
4-5	Reception	EYFS	
5-6	Year 1	KS1	
6-7	Year 2	KS1	Teacher assessments in English, maths and science
7-8	Year 3	KS2	
8-9	Year 4	KS2	
9-10	Year 5	KS2	
10-11	Year 6	KS2	National tests and teacher assessments in English, maths and science
11-12	Year 7	KS3	Ongoing teacher assessments
12-13	Year 8	KS3	Ongoing teacher assessments
13-14	Year 9	KS3	Teacher assessments in English, maths and science and the other foundation subjects
14-15	Year 10	KS4	Some children take GCSEs
15-16	Year 11	KS4	Most children take GCSEs or other national qualifications

Guide to the National Curriculum levels

Level	Key Stage 1 (Ages 5 – 7)	Key Stage 2 (Ages 7 – 11)	Key Stage 3 (Ages 11 – 14)
8			
7			
6			
5			National Expected Level of Attainment
4		National Expected Level of Attainment	
3			
2	National Expected Level of Attainment		
1			

What are the different Key Stages?

Foundation Stage (Ages 4-5)
Is for children aged 3 - 5, and covers the years they spend from the beginning of nursery or pre-school to the end of reception class in a primary school or early years setting.

"Early learning goals" set out what a child is expected to achieve by the end of the Foundation Stage.

Six areas of learning are explored:

Personal, Social and Emotional Development	Knowledge and Understanding of the World
Communication, Language and Literacy	Physical Development
Problem Solving, Reasoning and Numeracy	Creative Development

Primary Curriculum (years 1 – 6)

Key Stage 1 (Ages 5-7)
Subjects that are taught at Key Stage 1:

English	Mathematics	Science	Music
History	Geography	Art & Design	Design & Technology
Religious Education**	Citizenship*	Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE)*	Physical Education
Information & Communication Technology			

* Non-statutory programme of study
** Statutory subject with a non-statutory programme of study

There are no tests at the end of the Foundation Stage. Children are assessed through play and everyday activities. At the end of the Foundation Stage, children are 'assessed' based on 13 assessment scales that are derived from the 6 early learning goals above. This assessment forms the basis for the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) Profile which sums up the development and achievement of individual children.

Within the final term (Summer term), the EYFS Provider must provide the parent or carer with:

- A written summary on the child's progress.
- A copy of the Early Years Foundation Stage Profile (if requested).
- Details of how and when the EY practitioner and parent/ carer may discuss the outcomes of the EYFS Profile.

Key Stage 2 (Ages 7-11)
Subjects that are taught at Key Stage 2:

English	Mathematics	Science	Music
History	Geography	Art & Design	Design & Technology
Religious Education**	Citizenship*	Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE)*	Physical Education
Information & Communication Technology		Modern Foreign Languages*	

* Non-statutory programme of study
** Statutory subject with a non-statutory programme of study

Secondary Curriculum (years 7 – 11)
The aim of the secondary curriculum is to build on the experiences from the primary phase.

Key Stage 3 (Ages 11-14)
Subjects that are taught in Key Stage 3:

English	Mathematics	Science
Design & Technology	History	Geography
Art & Design	Music	Physical Education
Information & Communication Technology	Modern Foreign Languages	Religious Education**
Citizenship*		

* Non-statutory programme of study
** Statutory subject with a non-statutory programme of study

New 14 – 19 Curriculum
The new 14 – 19 Curriculum has been set out to streamline the different routes that young people may take. The aim is that by 2013 there will be four main routes for young people aged 14 – 19; GCSEs and A-Levels, The Diploma, Foundation Learning and Apprenticeships, of which the first 3 (not including A-Levels) are usually achieved by the end of Key Stage 4. A map of the different qualifications and routes under the new 14 – 19 curriculum can be found in appendix 1.

Key Stage 4 (Ages 14 -16)
There are numerous different types of qualifications that can be gained at Key Stage 4 level. These fit into two main frameworks; the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF). Entry level to level two qualifications are usually achieved in Key Stage 4. A breakdown of the different qualifications under each framework can be found over the page.

Level	Examples of NQF qualifications	Examples of QCF qualifications
Entry	- Entry level certificates - English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) - Skills for Life - Functional Skills at entry level (English, maths and ICT)	- Awards, Certificates, and Diplomas at entry level - Foundation Learning Tier pathways at entry level - Functional Skills at entry level
1	- GCSEs grades D-G - BTEC Introductory Diplomas and Certificates - OCR Nationals - Key Skills at level 1 - NVQs at level 1 - Skills for Life	- BTEC Awards, Certificates, and Diplomas at level 1 - Functional Skills at level 1 - OCR Nationals - Foundation Learning Tier pathways - NVQs at level 1
2	- GCSEs grades A*-C - BTEC First Diplomas and Certificates - OCR Nationals - Key Skills level 2 - NVQs at level 2 - Skills for Life	- BTEC Awards, Certificates, and Diplomas at level 2 - Functional Skills at level 2 - OCR Nationals - NVQs at level 2

(Source: DIrectGov)

Below is a brief explanation of the most common awards that young people will achieve.

General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE)
GCSEs can be gained in over 45 different subjects and aim to give learners the knowledge and skills to progress to further education. GCSEs are usually taken over two years (year 10 and 11), however, may be offered over three years in certain situations at certain establishments. There are five different GCSE awarding bodies; AQA, CCEA, Edexcel, OCR and WJEC and Ofqual regulates all the different qualifications and monitors the standards by which GCSEs are graded over time.

In line with the new 14 – 19 Curriculum, GCSEs are changing to include:

- Replacement of coursework for controlled assessments in subjects where it is deemed appropriate as the best way to demonstrate a pupil's knowledge, understanding and can do.

- The incorporate of functional elements in English, Maths and ICT
- Introduction of linear and unitised assessment.

From September 2010, the new style GCSEs in English, English Literature, ICT and Maths will be taught.

For a complete explanation, a guidance booklet can be found here: http://www.qcda.gov.uk/resources/436.aspx

The Diploma
A Diploma combines theoretical study and practical experience. There will be 17 diplomas available to young people by September 2011. They require students to achieve a minimum standard in English, Maths and ICT, to complete a project related to their diploma and carry out at least 10 days of work experience.

There are different levels of Diploma that a young person may take, one in Level 1 and one in Level 1 for Key Stage 4 young people. Their equivalencies to GCSEs can be found in the table above.

Foundation Learning
Foundation learning is mainly for young people who are working at Entry Level or Level 1. The young person and the education practitioner should negotiate and agree a learning programme that reflects the young person's entry point and intended destination e.g. GCSEs, the Diploma, Apprenticeships or employment. Qualifications for Foundation Learning are derived from the QAF and are captured through 'stepping stones' of learning.

Public Examinations
The school's Headteacher and governing body decide:

- The range of public exams the school will offer.
- The examining board.
- The stage at which pupils will take exams.
- Which pupils will take exams.

Key points in education
Key Stage 1, 2 and 3 exams/ teacher assessments in early May
Key Stage 4 in May and June
Year 6 transition to Secondary School plans October and March
Year 9 transition plans and option choices for GCSEs in year 10

Children's Social Care staff should note that young people at these key points in their education should not be changing placements, if possible.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP
Be interested and involved in your young person's education.
At your meetings with the young person ask them how their education is going, about any upcoming projects or assessments, how they are planning their week, how they are getting on with their homework.
When speaking with their carer, ask them how they think their foster child is coping at school, if there are any issues, if they have regular contact with the school.
Make sure during exam times that you are the carer both have a copy of the timetable and that you wish them luck before an exam and see how they did after the exam.

SCHOOL BASED SUPPORT

What is an IEP? - Individual Education Plan
- All children on the register at the School Action stage are entitled to an Individual Education Plan (IEP).
- It is the responsibility of the child's class teacher to draw up and review the IEP at this stage.
- Strategies employed to enable the child to progress should include information about:
- The short-term targets set for, or by, the child;
- The teaching strategies to be used;
- The provision to be put in place;
- The review date;
- Success and/or exit criteria;
- Outcomes (recorded at the review).
- The IEP should only record what is different from, or additional to, those in place for the rest of the group or class. It should be written crisply and focus on three or four targets that match the child's needs.

- Targets should relate to key areas in communication, literacy, mathematics and aspects of behaviour or physical skills.
- The pupil's strengths and successes should underpin the targets set and the strategies used.

IEP review
- IEPs should be reviewed at least twice a year. The class teacher arranges reviews.
- Certain children might benefit from more frequent reviews.
- Parents'/carers' views on the child's progress must be sought.
- Parents/carers' will be invited to the IEP reviews.
- One review may coincide with the Parents' Evening.
- Where possible the child should also take part in the review process and be involved in setting targets.
- If a child is not at the review, their views should be considered in any discussion.

What is a PSP? - – Pastoral Support Programme
The Pastoral Support Programme (PSP) is a school-based intervention to help individual pupils better to manage their behaviour. It will in particular be needed for those whose behaviour is deteriorating rapidly.

The PSP should identify precise and realistic behavioural outcomes for the child to work towards. A nominated staff member should oversee the PSP. It should be short and practical and administration should be kept to a minimum.

A PSP should be automatically set up for a pupil who has several fixed period exclusions that may lead to a permanent exclusion or who has been otherwise identified as being at risk of failure at school through disaffection.

A PSP should not be used to replace the special educational needs assessment process. Rather than set up a PSP for pupils with an Individual Education Plan (IEP), schools should ensure that IEPs for pupils at serious risk of exclusion or disaffection reflect appropriate strategies to meet their additional needs, including the approaches in this Section. There will be some pupils, however, who need a PSP but do not have particular special educational needs.

Setting up the PSP
The programme needs to be agreed with parents/carers, who should be regularly informed about their child's progress. To set up a PSP, the school should invite the parents/ carers and an LEA representative to discuss the causes of concern and what is reasonably required of the pupil to put right the situation, both academically and socially. The LEA should agree with the school what monitoring and help it will offer. LEAs may either offer support free to the school, or, if that is its policy, supplement the school's budget to enable it to buy the extra support outlined in the PSP. The LEA may, alternatively, offer support to a different school to receive and educate the child (see opposite).

Other agencies should also be involved, as appropriate:

- Children's Social Care may be able to resolve home problems that contribute to irregular attendance or behavioural difficulties at school. For CLA, the PSP should form an integral part of the Care Plan and be included in the education section of the plan so that the targets and outcomes are known to the social worker. Children's Social Care are responsible for reviewing all aspects of the care of the child regularly (at least six monthly and more often when necessary). This should include changes to the education targets in the Care Plan. Schools should inform Children's Social Care when a CLA is failing to meet their PSP;
- Voluntary organisations and the Youth Service, both statutory and voluntary, can help to support young people both in and out of school. Youth workers might, for example, carry out intensive support work with an identified group of non-attenders;
- Careers Services can help young people make informed decisions about their future and encourage them not to drop out of learning at 16. Children with PSPs are likely to need group careers discussions and opportunities to discuss ideas with a careers adviser;
- Ethnic minority community groups can help schools with mentoring programmes, and provide them with advice and guidance on framing PSPs.

In drawing up a PSP schools should, in discussion with others:

- Review any learning difficulties, particularly literacy skills that may affect behaviour. If necessary, a remedial programme must be put in place immediately. This may include lunchtime or after-school homework clubs, and other forms of study support;
- Consider, or reconsider, disapplying the National Curriculum to allow time for specific learning activities;
- Consider changing the child's teaching set or class. The PSP could specify where a pupil is to sit among their peers and perhaps identify a "buddy" who supports the child. Older pupils or adults could, with suitable training, act as mentors. Staff should be given guidance on behaviour management specific to that child within the group;
- Consider jointly registering the pupil at the school and a Pupil Referral Unit providing the opportunity to benefit from the PRU's expertise while remaining at the school, aiding full re-integration later. Both primary and secondary pupils could do this, full-time or part-time - the latter is preferable for primary pupils;
- Consider, with the agreement of the pupil's parents and the receiving school, a managed move to another school. A fresh start, with the opportunity to develop new relationships, can have a positive impact on a child's progress;
- Consider whether the pupil should be offered specialist support, e.g. for bereavement or alcohol or drugs dependency using outside
- Consider, or reconsider, placing the child for a period in a Learning Support Unit.

The programme should set targets broken down into fortnightly tasks. It should identify the rewards that can be achieved for meeting the targets, and the sanctions that will apply if certain behaviour occurs. A PSP could have an automatic time limit of, for example, 16 working weeks. PSPs should be reviewed at least halfway through their agreed duration.

HOW THE VIRTUAL SCHOOL MAY HELP
If at any stage you are unsure about what your young person should be receiving, want further clarification on their levels and their educational progress or any other educational advice, contact the Virtual School.

SECTION 2: KEY EDUCATIONAL PROCESSES FOR ISLINGTON'S CLA

ISLINGTON'S VIRTUAL SCHOOL FOR CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER (CLA)

The Virtual School is part of the 'Corporate Parent' for CLA and has educational responsibility for all CLA in care to Islington. It also has a duty to promote and champion the educational needs of CLA to Islington and those young people in care to other LAs attending an Islington school.

The Virtual School provides additional and on top of advice, support and guidance on the education of CLA to schools, social workers, foster carers and other members of the Corporate Parent. The Virtual School, formerly the REACH Team, is part of Cambridge Education @ Islington's School Improvement Service department and based within Children's Social Care's Children Looked After Service. As the Virtual School is positioned between social care and education, specific issues and barriers to a CLA's learning can be identified and the Virtual School may act as an intermediary to ensure that each young person reaches their full potential by bringing together appropriate professionals and ensuring information sharing takes place.

The Virtual School work with all CLA to Islington from Foundation Stage to the end of Key Stage 4. It can also offer pre and post adoption guidance and sign posting.

Structure of the Virtual School

Islington has structured its Virtual School to reflect that of a traditional school. The Virtual School is led by a Headteacher and has three departments of Learning and Curriculum, Attendance and Inclusion and Business Management (appendix 2).

The Virtual School also has termly project group meetings with a School Improvement Partner who supports and challenges the Headteacher and Senior Leadership team on all facets of the school, as would happen in a traditional school.

The Virtual School works to a Self Evaluation Framework (SEF) and is part of many operational and strategic groups across education and children's social care within Islington to promote the education of all CLA. Also, the Virtual School is a member of the Pan London Virtual Headteachers Group where Headteachers from within London share good practice and discuss strategies to raise the educational achievement of CLA.

What Services Are Offered?

Services that are offered to Social Care Staff include the following.

- Specific education training on Key Stages, Curriculum, SEN, Transition Points, Attendance and Exclusions and PEPs.
- Monthly visits to CLA teams to discuss educational issues.
- 2 workshops per term on key education processes and points.
- Pre-PEP meeting to discuss issues prior to a social worker attending a PEP.
- PEP auditing to ensure the PEP is of good quality.
- Negotiation of additional packages of support for CLA, where appropriate.

Services offered to young people:

- Support with their studies.
- Educational resources.
- Access to befrienders and mentors.
- Out of school hours activities.
- Study skills and homework clubs.
- School council.
- Recognition for their commitment to school.
- Advice and guidance on their future pathways.

We also support other Corporate Parents:
Foster Carers:

- Advice, information and tips on helping a young person get the best out of their education.
- How to support learning in the home.
- Regular contact from a named Virtual School staff member.

Islington Schools:

- Training on the new statutory guidance for Designated Teachers and Governors.
- Regular visits to school.
- Inspection advice and preparation for OfSTED.
- Advice and guidance on legislation and policies regarding CLA.

Who to Contact

Area	Team Member	Telephone	Email
General enquiries		020 7527 5972	virtualschool.camb-ed@islington.gov.uk
General information on additional support and Key Stage 4	Hermione Michaud, Headteacher	020 7527 7708	hermione.michaud.camb-ed@islington.gov.uk
Attendance, Exclusions and Out Of School Hours Learning	Kodie Webb, Attendance and Inclusion Manager	020 7527 1814	kodie.webb.camb-ed@islington.gov.uk
Foundation Stage	Joanna Watt, Education Support Officer	020 7527 7090	joanna.watt.camb-ed@islington.gov.uk
Key Stage 1, 2 and training opportunities	Kathryn Webber, Advisory Teacher	020 7527 5839	kathryn.webber.camb-ed@islington.gov.uk
Key Stage 3	Alan Wilmer, Advisory Teacher	020 7527 5474	alan.wilmer.camb-ed@islington.gov.uk
Data and Information	Malini Hoezoo, Data and Information Officer	020 7527 2227	malini.hoezoo.camb-ed@islington.gov.uk
EP (1 day only)	Lisa Crispin, Principal Educational Psychologist	020 7527 5817	lisa.crispin.camb-ed@islington.gov.uk

THE PERSONAL EDUCATION PLAN (PEP)

What is the PEP and Why is the PEP Important
The PEP is the key educational tool that is used by the Virtual School to monitor the progression of individual CLA. It is a statutory document that must be initiated within 14 days of a young person becoming looked after and completed within 28 days. After the initial PEP, a review must be held every 6 months or when a young person has a change of placement, social worker or school.

What is the Process

It is the social worker's responsibility to arrange and record the meeting and it is expected that the Designated Teacher or class teacher provide up to date information on a young person's education levels, achievements and any identified areas for additional support. It is expected that the Designated Teacher or school staff member that attends the meeting will play a pivotal role in leading the meeting to ensure that the focus is on educational progress and setting effective SMART PEP targets.

Where possible, the PEP should be aligned with a young person's release of predicted levels in Autumn term (September to December) and then again in Summer term (April – July) before exams. If a person has a statement of Special Educational Needs it is highly recommended that the PEP is held in conjunction with the SEN Annual Review.

It is important that the social worker completes section 1 prior to the meeting and asks the school for a time for the PEP meeting well in advance. Standard letters to send to the school have been written to aid this process. Social workers should also forward the completed section 1 to the Designated Teacher along with section 2 for the school to complete prior to the meeting.

The PEP meeting itself should be used as a time to set and review the progress towards the targets of the previous PEP (if applicable). Therefore, it is essential that a copy of the previous PEP targets be brought to the meeting.

The Virtual School aims to be available to offer advice and guidance prior to the PEP meeting to social workers to help make the PEP meeting a meaningful meeting. It is recommended that a Pre-PEP meeting is arranged by the social worker with the relevant young person's link worker to discuss any issues. Also, a prompt sheet with sections for each key stage has been developed by the Virtual School for social workers to use (appendix 3).

All forms can be found on izzi (WEB ADDY) and Fronter.

PEP Quality and Monitoring

The Virtual School monitors the completion and quality of all PEPs for Islington's CLA and may, if appropriate, attend the PEP meetings. In September 2010, the Virtual School will be tightening up on it quality assurance monitoring of PEPs. The criteria used for this task is from the 2010 'Promoting the Educational Achievement of Looked After Children. Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities', point 76 as below.

Effective and high quality PEPs should:

- be a comprehensive and enduring record of the child's experience, progress and achievement (academic and otherwise);

- be linked to information in other education plans, including a statement of special educational needs and IEPs;
- identify developmental and educational needs (short and long term) in relation to skills, knowledge, subject areas and experiences;
- set short term targets, including progress monitoring against each of the areas identified against development and educational needs;
- set long term plans and educational targets and aspirations (e.g. in relation to public examinations, further and higher education, work experience and career plans and aspirations);
- document identified actions for specific individuals intended to support the achievement of agreed targets;
- identify whether the child is eligible for a PEA and if so how the allowance will be used to support the targets set in the PEP; and
- highlight access to one-to-one tuition and how this will make/has made a difference to achievement levels.

The Virtual School will look at each PEP that is submitted and assess them against these criteria. Any PEPs that do not meet at least four of the above criteria will not pass the quality audit and will be returned to the Social Worker to amend. All PEPs that have at least one criterion missing will be discussed with the Social Worker or School to ensure that they are aware of the issue(s) that led to the PEP not passing the criterion/a.

PEP Reporting

When PEPs are completed they need to be forwarded to the Virtual School's inbox (virtualschool.camb-ed@ islington.gov.uk). Those PEPs will then go through the quality audit above and then, if they have passed, they will be included in the monthly PEP report compiled by the Virtual School. This report shows all the PEPs that have and have not been completed that were due within the month. This report is sent to senior managers within Cambridge Education @ Islington and Children's Social Care and is also sent for inclusion in the monthly Children Social Care's Local Performance Indicators Report (LPIR).

For a full break down on the PEP process, see appendix 4.

ATTENDANCE OF CLA

Daily Attendance and Monitoring

Islington's Virtual School for CLA monitors the attendance of all CLA to Islington on a daily basis via a company called Welfare Call. Welfare Call phone the school directly to get the daily attendance mark of all of Islington's CLA. The Virtual School's Attendance Officer will follow up each absence with the social worker and school and foster carer if appropriate.

In addition to the normal absence follow up procedures above, the Virtual School has six separate trigger points at which they will send absence notifications to relevant Children's Social Care staff. These notifications are sent when individual young people's accumulated absences (not consecutively) reach 3, 5, 10, 15, 20 and 25 days absent in a school year or since being in care.

Days Absent	Professional's Notified
3	Social Worker
5	Social Worker, Deputy Team Manager, Team Manager
10	Social Worker, Deputy Team Manager, Team Manager, Operational Manager, Service Manager, Virtual School Head Teacher
15	Social Worker, Deputy Team Manager, Team Manager, Operational Manager, Service Manager, Virtual School Head Teacher, Director of Child Protection
20	As above
25	As above

Please note other professionals will be included in these notifications as relevant (e.g. school Education Welfare Officer, key worker, CAMHS / Health team professional, Youth Offending Team worker).

The trigger system is used to ensure relevant professionals are aware of individual CLA's absences and to identify any attendance issues before they become entrenched.

Attendance Targeting

The Virtual School must report annually on the number of CLA to Islington that miss 25 days or more of schooling within 1 school year. To try to prevent young people from missing this many days of school, the Virtual School may 'target' individual CLA for attendance. If a young person is 'targeted' all Corporate Parents will be informed via a letter from the Virtual School's Attendance and Inclusion Manger.

The Virtual School may also put in place or initiate an Attendance Action Plan that will outline any barriers that a young person may be experiencing that is impacting on their attendance and specify who from within the Corporate Parent; school, foster carer, social worker etc will need to take actions to improve their attendance. The Virtual School will work in conjunction with other mainstream services such as Education Welfare and Behaviour Support to join up any interventions. These Action Plans (appendix 5) are regularly monitored by the Headteacher and Attendance and Inclusion Manager within the Virtual School and attendance of CLA remains a high priority within Islington Council.

School Admissions

Where the child does not have a school place, it is the responsibility of the social worker to apply for a school place.   This is usually done by contacting the Admissions Department of the LA or by contacting the preferred school directly.

The School Admissions Code (2007) makes in mandatory for all schools and admissions authorities to give priority to CLA. Furthermore the Education and Inspections Act (2006) gives the LA power to direct schools to admit CLA even when they are over subscribed to ensure that young people in care spend as little time off roll as possible.

Within Islington there is also a local agreement with three secondary schools to fast track the admission of asylum seeking children in Key Stage 4.

Also within Islington Schools, where a young person is admitted under the Fair Access agreement (administrated by Universal Services, Cambridge Education @ Islington), a sum of £1,000.00 is available to help the school with the transition. Any casual admission of a CLA is dealt with under the Fair Access agreement. When a young person is admitted via a managed move, £3,000.00 is available to the receiving school to help manage the transition.

Where there are difficulties in securing a school place, the advice to Corporate Parents is for them to contact the Virtual School for assistance.

Young people with Special Educational Needs (SEN)

Applications for students with a SEN Statement need to go through the SEN Department of the LA. They will identify which school will be best able to meet the young person's needs.

It is responsibility of the LA in which the young person resides to educate the young person. For children who are waiting for education provision, the LA should be asked what interim education they can provide. Responses from LAs will vary.

The Virtual School is not a statutory education provider. However, the Virtual School may be able to provide emergency, short-term home tuition in some cases to ensure continuity of education. Similarly, the Virtual School Tuition Service is sometimes available for CLA without school places and accessible to Islington. Corporate Parents should contact the Virtual School to ascertain whether this service is available and appropriate for their CLA. A maximum of six weeks or £1,500 can be agreed by the Attendance and Inclusion Manager or the Headteacher of the Virtual School if this course of action is deemed appropriate. Any additional costs will need to be agreed and met by Children's Social Care.

School Exclusions

Children and young people in care are subject to the same behaviour policies as all other children in schools. When CLA behave inappropriately or display challenging behaviour, it is essential that all parties are informed and work together as Corporate Parents to provide the maximum amount of support to the young person to prevent exclusions.

Schools are recommended not to exclude CLA except in extreme circumstances and for serious breaches in behaviour.

In extreme circumstances where there is no other option for a school than to exclude a CLA for a fixed term, the government advises it is good practice for schools to provide full time appropriate provision from the 1st day of exclusion rather than from day 6 as is the requirement for all students.

A reintegration meeting should always be held to explore whether the young person requires any additional support in or out of school to support their behaviour. The Virtual School monitors the attendance of reintegration meetings and any relevant outcomes.

TRACKING THE EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF CLA TO ISLINGTON AND ADDITIONAL PACKAGES OF SUPPORT

Islington's Virtual School for CLA individually track pupil level progress through a variety of methods.

The main tracking system employed by the Virtual School is through termly educational progress reports received directly from schools. This information will include termly assessments data on subjects studied under the national curriculum. At the end of the school year, an end of year report will be requested from schools which include information on all subjects studied, including both quantitative and qualitative data.

RAG System

All young people are allocated a named link worker through the Virtual School's RAG System. This link worker will be matched to the young person's need. It is this link worker who will individually track the progress of their allocated young people, including reviewing the data that is received from schools, providing support, advice and guidance to the social worker, foster carer, school and young person where appropriate, attending relevant meetings concerning the young person (where appropriate) and reading the young person's PEP. Corporate Parents will be informed of the relevant Virtual School link worker at the beginning of the school and year and again if the young person's situation should change and the young person is reallocated to another member of the Virtual School team.

Additional Packages of Support

All of this information is used as and when it comes into the Virtual School. All levels will be scrutinised by their Virtual School link worker to ascertain achievements and/ or any gaps that may be helped with an additional package of support. If it is deemed appropriate, the Virtual School link worker will negotiate an individualised package of additional support to raise the young person's levels. This support will be subject specific and time limited and is to be monitored through the PEP. In addition, all support implemented by the Virtual School will be monitored through the use of monitoring forms to the person conducting the support and evaluations will be sought and compiled by the link worker when the support has ceased.

Cambridge Education @ Islington takes young people's safety seriously. Any person who is employed by Islington's Virtual School to conduct an additional support will undergo an enhanced CRB check prior to the support commencing. It is also an expectation that if the support will be taking place in the young person's home that an adult is present at all times and that the support happens in an open area within the home.

At the beginning of the year each individual young person's school targets will be recorded and progress will be measured against these on a termly basis. This information will be compiled into a termly progress report on the Virtual School that is available to the Head of Primary School Improvement Service and other vested parties.

Role Maintenance of the Virtual School

Islington's Virtual School should be informed by the relevant social worker within **24hours** of a young person becoming looked after. The information should include details of their placement, including carer name/s and contact details, current educational provision and other pertinent social or educational information.

The Virtual School will then contact the young person's school to obtain a baseline of the young person's education. If when a young person becomes looked after they do not have a school place, the admissions process previously noted will be initiated.

A introductory letter with contact information and the name of the link worker will be sent to the carer and the young person, an email will be sent to the social worker with the name of the link worker and reminder that a new PEP must be initiated within 14 days and an email sent to the school to inform them that the young person is looked after and the name of the link worker.

When a young person leaves the local authority's care, the Virtual School will email the school to inform them. Once a young person has left care the Virtual School will no longer be able to provide any support, however, is available for advice and signposting for those young people who are going on to be adopted.

SECTION 3: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

CONFIDENTIALITY AND INFORMATION

The sharing of information about children looked after is an essential part of multi-agency, joined up working. This dissemination of information helps all Corporate Parents to maximise individual young people's education to keep them engaged in education and ensure they reach their full potential.

However, all people involved in a CLA's life should consider how and what information they are sharing with others. Information should only be shared on a need to know basis and should consist only of factual and accurate information.

As part of this, the Virtual School adheres to the governments Code of Connection (CoCo) guidelines and any electronic correspondence to and from the Virtual School to an email address outside of the @islington.gov.uk domain will only be done using Cambridge Education @ Islington secure email system, Voltage. When you receive an email from the Virtual School to an email address that does not end in @islington.gov.uk it will be in a secure mode. To retrieve the email, follow the easy step-by-step instructions. If you experience any problems, please let us know immediately.

COMMUNICATION AND ACCESS TO RESOURCES

Islington's Virtual School have developed two Fronter sites to provide a bank of resources and information and to act as a secure channel for communication between Corporate Parents and the Virtual School. To access the site log on via www.londonmle.net/islington/login. If you do not yet have a log in, contact Selina Anderson at virtualschool.camb-ed@islington.gov.uk.

Fronter site for Islington Schools and Islington Staff

This site is specifically designed to provide:

- Timely and up-to-date information on current good practice, legislation and guidance.
- Information on upcoming training and events from the Virtual School.
- General information on the Virtual School, including leaflet, structure chart and contact details.
- A bank of resources, including previous training materials and general information (including this handbook).

The second site is specifically designed for young people and foster carers. This site has two separate areas, one with information similar to that which is available in the site for Islington School and Islington Staff for foster carers and the other for young people.

USEFUL WEBSITES

DCSF: http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/
The new education department: http://www.education.gov.uk
Every Child Matters: http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/
The Who Cares Trust: http://www.thewhocarestrust.org.uk/
BAAF: http://www.baaf.org.uk/
Islington Council: http://www.islington.gov.uk/
Cambridge Education @ Islington: http://islington.camb-ed.com/
Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency (QCDA): http://www.qcda.gov.uk

EDUCATION GLOSSARY

Annual Review: (for all children in care)
The review of the care plan, which includes a child's heath, education, emotional and behavioural development, identity, social relationships, social presentation and self-care skills. The review examines the child's current needs in the light of changing circumstances, and has input from all those who have a key interest in the child's life.

Annual Review: (for children with special educational needs)
The statutory process that must take place each year to check the progress of a child with a statement. It should consider whether their needs have changed and whether the provision on the statement continues to meet their needs. Following the annual review meeting, the LEA must decide whether to make amendments to the statement, including changing the school named on the statement, and whether to stop maintaining the statement.

Attainment Target
Each National Curriculum subject has one or more attainment targets. Each attainment target is made up of eight level descriptions and 'exceptional performance', and are a kind of measure.

Breadth
National Curriculum subjects have a section about 'breadth of study'. This says that every child is entitled to be taught through a range of important learning experiences.

Disapplication
At key stage 4, a school can propose that a particular pupil should not study all the compulsory National Curriculum subjects, so that they can take part in a particular programme.

English as an Additional Language
Children who speak English as an Additional Language, rather than as their first language, may need extra help with their reading and writing. They will need lots of opportunities to talk with English-speaking adults and children about their work, thoughts and feelings. Some pupils for whom English is an additional language may also have special educational needs.

ICT
This stands for Information and Communication Technology, which includes the use of computers, the Internet and video and sound recording equipment.

Inclusion
One of the aims of the government is that, as far as possible, schools should teach all pupils the National Curriculum, whatever their needs. This includes pupils with special educational needs, and those who are extremely gifted and talented (who need harder challenges to tackle), together with other pupils.

Individual Education Plan (IEP)
A short-term planning document for pupils with special educational needs. It should include three or four short-term targets that match a child's needs; ways of teaching to be used; the help to be put in place; and how the school will decide whether it has been successful.

Key Stage
A key stage is a block of years in the child's schooling. Key stage 1 covers the first two years a child spends at school (aged 5-7), key stage 2 the next four (aged 7-11), key stage 3 ages 11-14, and key stage 4 ages 14-16.

Levels (or Level Descriptions)
Each level is a measure teacher use to check how much each child knows, understands and can do.

Personal Education Plan (PEP)
Every child and young person in care should have a PEP, which sets out academic achievement; identifies developmental and educational needs; and sets out short and long-term targets and plans. The PEP should be part of the child's Care Plan and reflect any other education plans such as an IEP, Statement, etc.

Statement of Special Educational Needs
A document in six parts, which sets out a child's needs, provision to meet those needs, and where the child should be educated.

Sure Start
Initiative, mainly in disadvantaged areas, to provide early support for families with young children.

Designated Teacher
A teacher with responsibility for Looked After Children in the school. The Designated Teacher is expected to be an advocate for young people in public care and to ensure that each child has a PEP and act as a contact for relevant.

SENCO
Each school must have a Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator, who organises the support for children with special educational needs and liaises with parents and carers over reviews of IEPs and Annual Reviews of statements.

Mentor
An individual who may be an older pupil, non-teaching assistant, teacher or volunteer mentor who provides support or a role model for pupils who need help and guidance. Learning mentors are generally school staff who works with teaching and pastoral staff to support pupils with difficulties in the school.

Connexions Personal Adviser
Provides advice and guidance for all young people aged 13-19, especially those who may experience difficulty making the progression to adult life.

National Curriculum
All mainstream and special schools, but not pupil referral units, must provide the National Curriculum. The three-core subjects- English, Mathematics and Science- are given more teaching time than other subjects. Children's achievements in the core subjects is tested at the end of Key Stages 1, 2 and 3, with national public examinations taken at the end of Key

Stage 4. The Foundation Stage begins when children reach the age of three, and continues until the end of the reception year. Early learning goals for this age group cover the main areas of development that young children need to progress in before beginning more formal learning.

Pupil Referral Unit
A school set up to teach children who have been excluded from school or at risk of exclusion, or who cannot attend school for other reasons such as ill health, pregnancy or school phobia.

LIST OF COMMON ACRONYMS, ABBREVIATIONS, TERMS OR PHRASES

|	
A LEVEL:	Advanced Level (often called A2).
AS LEVEL:	Advanced Subsidiary Level.
BSP:	Behaviour Support Plan.
BTECS:	Business and Technology Education Council.
CLA:	Children Looked After
CRB:	Criminal Records Bureau.
CTCs:	City Technology Colleges.
DfES:	Department for Education and Science.
EBD:	Emotional and Behavioural Difficulties.
EWS:	Education Welfare Service.
FSW:	Family Support Worker.
GCSE:	General Certificate of Secondary Education.
G&T:	Gifted and talented.
EWO:	Educational Welfare Officer.
GNVQ:	General National Vocational Qualification.
HOD:	Head of Department.
HOY:	Head of Year.
ICT:	Information and Communication Technology.
IEP:	Individual Education Plan.
KS:	Key Stage.
LAC:	Looked after children.
LASW:	Local Authority social worker.
LEA:	Local Education Authority.
LSA:	Learning Support Assistant

MLD:	Mild Learning Difficulties.
MFL:	Modern Foreign Languages.
NC:	National Curriculum.
NVQ:	National Vocational Qualification.
NQT:	Newly qualified teacher.
Ofsted:	Office of Standards in Education.
PSP:	Pastoral Support Programme.
PEP:	Personal Education Programme.
PMLD:	Profound and Multiple Learning Difficulties.
PRU:	Pupil Referral Unit.
QCA:	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority.

PTA:	Parent Teacher Authority.
SATs:	Standard Assessment Tests.
SEN:	Special Educational Needs.
SENCO:	Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator.
SLD:	Severe Learning Difficulties.
SpLD:	Specific Learning Difficulties.
UCAS:	University and College Admissions Service.
VCE:	Vocational Certificate of Education.

USEFUL CONTACTS IN ISLINGTON

Service	Key Contact Name	Telephone
General Islington Council		020 7527 2000
General Children's Looked After Service		020 7527 7000
Head of Children Looked After Service	Melanie Davies	020 7527 4071
Islington's Virtual School for Children Looked After	Hermione Michaud	020 7527 5972
Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)	Miranda Pattinson	020 7445 8150
Children In Need Service	Joy Nield	020 7527 7174
Behaviour Support Service	Nigel Smith	020 7527 5715
Education Welfare Service	Ian Norman-Bruce	020 7527 5843
Child Protection	Barbara Hillier Ian Norman-Bruce	020 7527 4286 020 7527 5843
Special Education Needs (SEN) Service	Candy Holder	020 7527 5639
Admissions	Brian Jones	020 7527 5517
Social Inclusion	Gabriella Di-Sciullo	020 7527 5779
PULSE	Gillian Seiles	020 7527 1300
Targeted Youth Support	Michael MacKay	0207 527 7050
Adolescent Multi-Agency Support Service (AMASS)	Kim Lawson	020 7527 5557
Adoption	Lindsay Wright	020 7527 4400
Islington Fostering Service		0800 073 0428
Youth Offending Service (YOS)		020 7527 7050 / 7060
Islington's Connexions Service		020 7527 7031

APPENDIX 1: 14-19 CURRICULUM ROUTES

Main routes through 14-19 education and training in 2015 and beyond
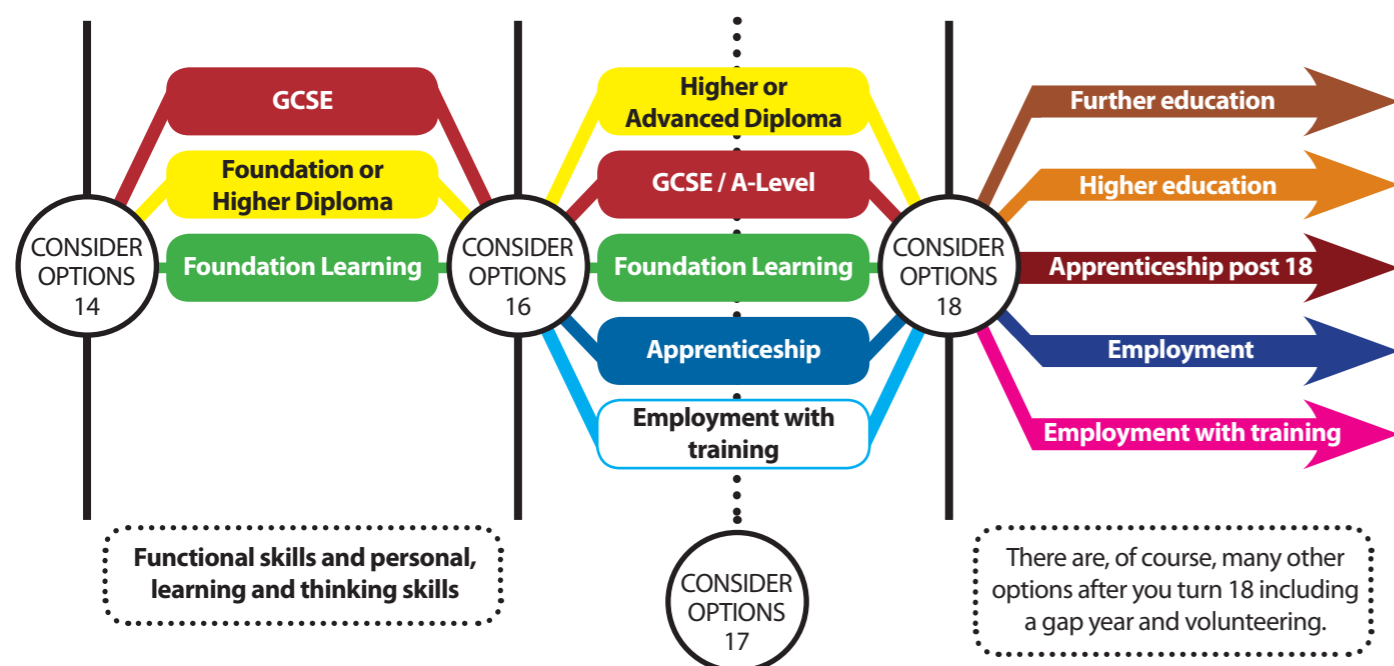
Higher or Advanced Diploma

The Diploma combines theoretically study with practical experience based around a work-related curriculum. It is available at Foundation, Higher and Advanced level (Level 1 - Level 3).

GCSE / A-Level

GCSE and A-Level qualifications are regularly updated and ensure that they remain high quality, relevant and interesting. They can be combined with Diplomas.

Apprenticeship

Apprenticeships allow students to learn at work and gain qualifications. The number and range of Apprenticeships is increasing hugely so 1 in 5 will take this route by 2010.

Foundation Learning

This is for learners not ready for a full level 2 qualification and include a mix of learning to suit the individual.

CONSIDER OPTIONS

Well before the decision points information and advice will be critical to guide young people to make the best choice for them in relation to their prior learning.

Some students may change paths at 17 because there are more one year courses available after 18.

ℹ️ For further information, please visit www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19

Source: Department for Children, Schools and Families. 2009. 14 – 19 Reform: Qualification and Curriculum. http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/14-19/index.cfm?go=site.home&sid=3 [Online]

APPENDIX 2: VIRTUAL SCHOOL STAFF CHART
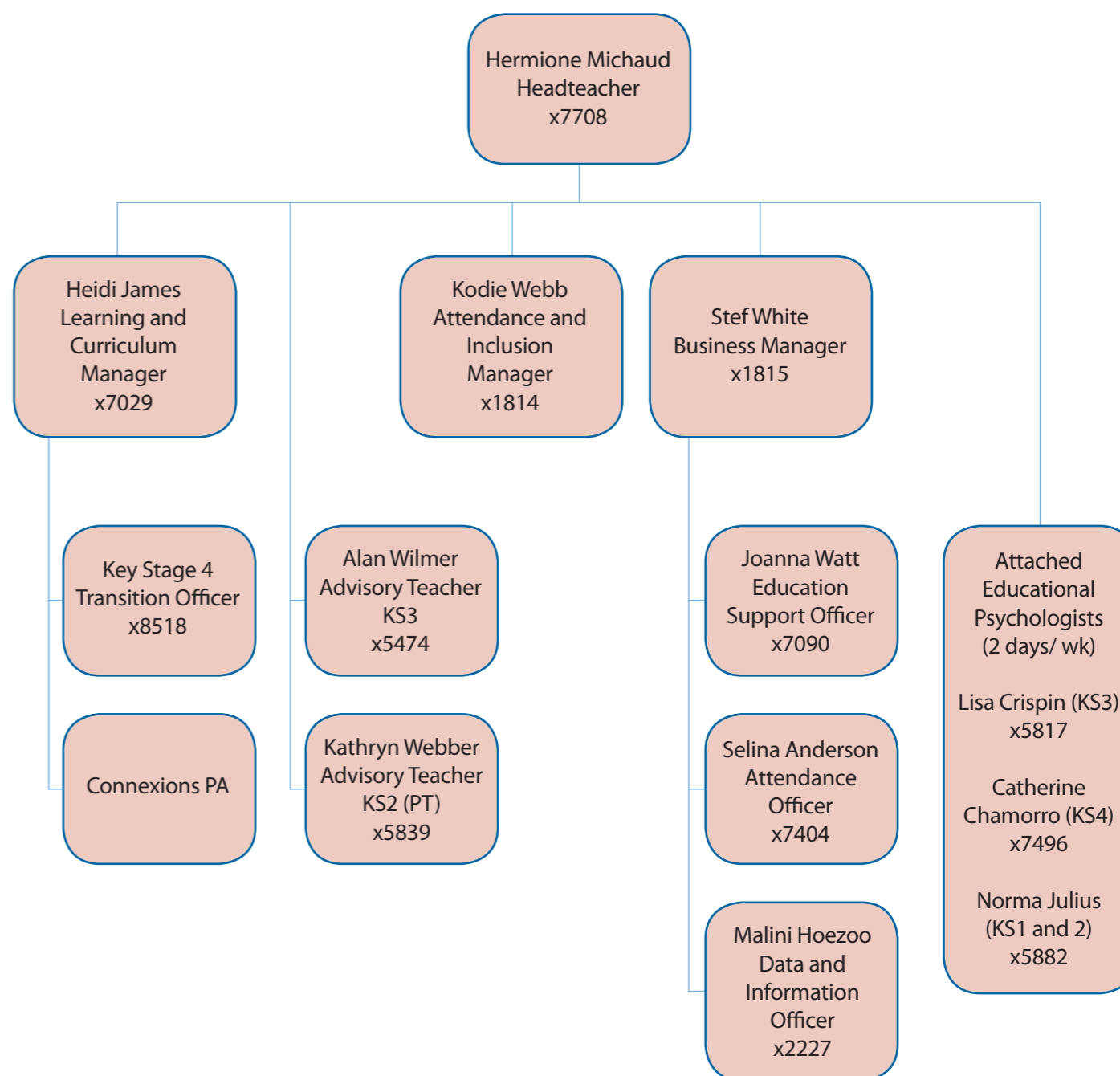
T: 020 7527 5972
F: 020 7527 2527
E: virtualschool.camb-ed@islington.gov.uk
Ext: 020 7527 xxxx

APPENDIX 3: PEP PROMPT SHEET

Personal Education Plan (PEP) – Key Stage Crib Sheets for Social Workers
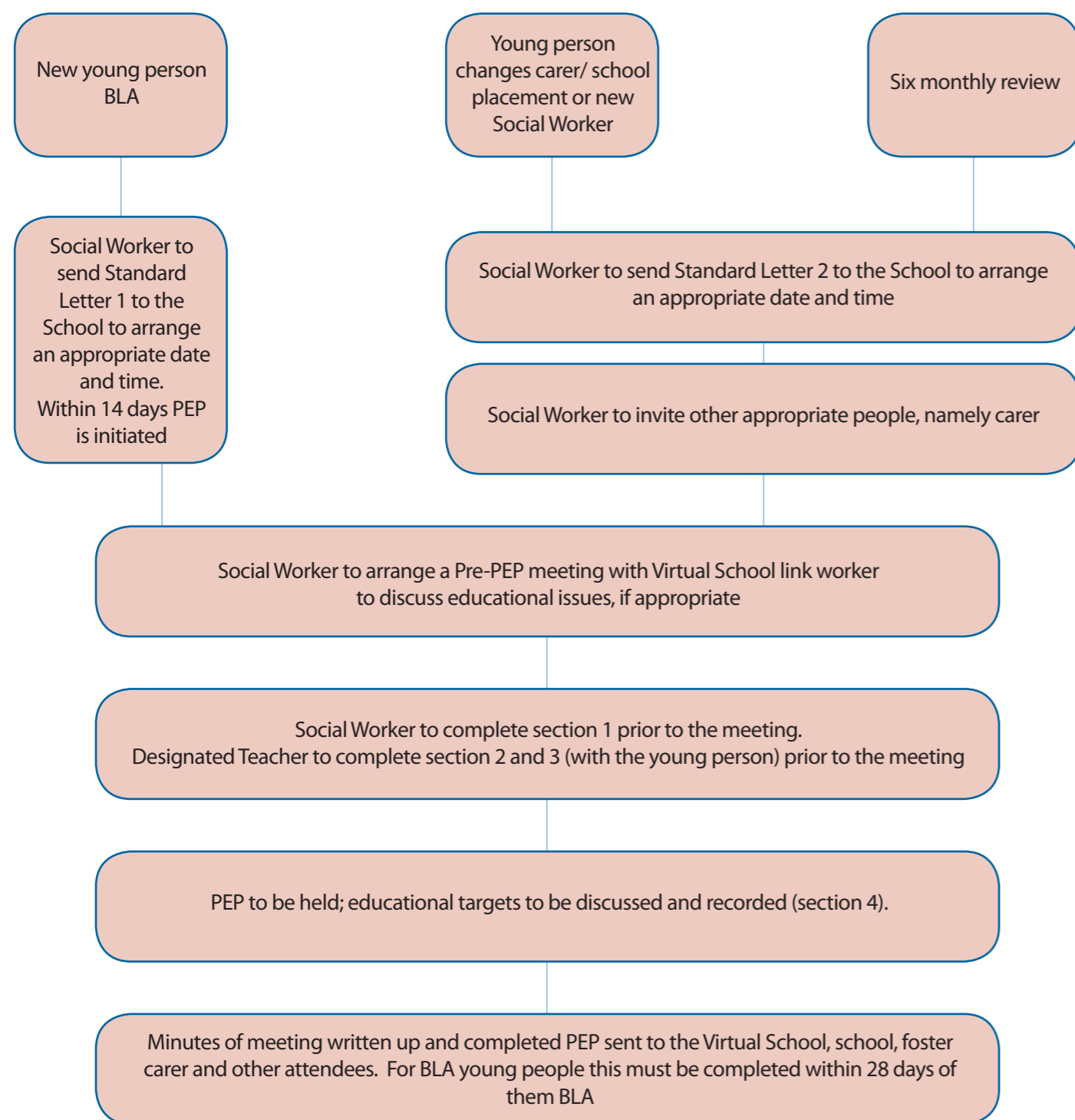**Islington's Virtual School for CLA**

PEP Questions Key Stage 1	
Year 1	1. If the child is achieving below level 1c- are there any considerations for a Statement application?
Year 2	1. Is the child expected to achieve a level 2c/ 2b by the end of the academic year? • If no - what additional support is being provided or needed to achieve expected levels?

PEP Questions Key Stage 2	
Years 3, 4 and 5	1. What is their class project this term/ next term? Can you suggest any trips/ museums/ visits that support the project? 2. How much reading should X be doing at home? Can you suggest any books/ authors/ strategies to support? 3. How frequently is homework set and how long should the homework tasks take? 4. What special interests/ talents is X especially motivated by? How can this best be nurtured in the placement? 5. What clubs, OSHL, music lessons are available at school? Can they be prioritised if there is a shortage of places? 6. When will X be offered 1-1 tuition? 7. When are the parent teacher annual meetings? What informal opportunities are there for foster carer to discuss issues with class teacher? **Questions to the foster carer at PEP** 8. Are you: • Getting the school newsletter? • Involved in school events/ watching performances, concerts, sports days etc? (make sure X has someone there to watch them)
Year 6	September questions/ End of year 5 1. Which secondary school do children/ girls/ boys go to from the primary school? (Head's may offer some advice on different schools but you should go and visit on open days/ evenings with your foster child). 2. Is there a residential school journey this year? (Discuss any issues that might be a concern e.g. nightmares, sleepwalking, bedwetting.) 3. What dates do the SATs take place? Will X be sitting the SATs? What booster classes/ extra support are available? 4. What transition support is available in school to prepare them? Plus all questions above.

PEP Questions Key Stage 3	
Years 7, 8 and 9	1. How is the journey to school? 2. How much homework is set and how often? How long should it take? How much support should be given (X and the foster carer should have a homework timetable) 3. When will X be offered 1-1 tuition? 4. When are the parent/ teacher annual meetings? How best is it for foster carer to communicate with the form teacher? (phone/ email?) 5. What clubs and/ or OSHL are available at school? 6. What musical instruments can be offered? (music tuition through school should be free for CLA)

PEP Questions Key Stage 4	
Years 10 and 11	1. What is going well? 2. What is not going well? 3. Homework routine - do you get support at home? 4. Revision routine - how is this structured? 5. Are there any outside school/ extra curricular visits that could take place to be supported by the foster carer? 6. Coursework a. How many subjects require coursework? b. What is the deadline? c. What happens if coursework is not completed? d. Does the foster carer have a copy of the deadline dates? e. Which subjects have coursework outstanding? f. What is being done to address this? g. What else needs to be done? h. How do I find out when the matter has been resolved?

APPENDIX 4: PEP PROCESS

New young person BLA

Young person changes carer/ school placement or new Social Worker

Six monthly review

Social Worker to send Standard Letter 1 to the School to arrange an appropriate date and time. Within 14 days PEP is initiated

Social Worker to send Standard Letter 2 to the School to arrange an appropriate date and time

Social Worker to invite other appropriate people, namely carer

Social Worker to arrange a Pre-PEP meeting with Virtual School link worker to discuss educational issues, if appropriate

Social Worker to complete section 1 prior to the meeting. Designated Teacher to complete section 2 and 3 (with the young person) prior to the meeting

PEP to be held; educational targets to be discussed and recorded (section 4).

Minutes of meeting written up and completed PEP sent to the Virtual School, school, foster carer and other attendees. For BLA young people this must be completed within 28 days of them BLA

APPENDIX 5: ATTENDANCE ACTION PLAN

Islington's Virtual School for CLA – Attendance Action Plan

Young Person's Name		D.O.B.	
School		Year Group	
Social Worker		S/W Team	
Number of absences to date		Date	

What is currently happening? (I.e. what is the pattern of non-attendance and what is preventing the child/ young person from attending or wanting to attend school).

• ....

• ....

The Plan
These are some things that you might like to think about when making plans… - What is going to help the child/ young person improve their attendance? Is there an incentive scheme in place? Has the child/ young person got a mentor? Is there someone that can assist the child is getting to school each day – i.e. is it a transport issue? Is the child/ young person involved in out of school activities/ learning? Is there an activity they could be involved in? Has the child/ young person got a particular person in school that could assist them in getting to school and staying in school?

Who is the lead professional in respect of attendance?			
What is the overall AIM for the child – what is the desired outcome?			
Issue	**Action/ Support to be put in place**	**By Whom?**	**By When?**

Plan completed by:	Plan completion date:	Approved by A & I Mger on:	Copy sent to relevant parties:	First review date:	Subsequent review dates: