

Children with a Social Worker (CWSW) and Children with a Social Worker Ever6

Model Policy for schools



Enfield Virtual School

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Definition

For the purposes of this policy 'Children with a social worker' includes all children who have been assessed as needing or previously needing a social worker within the past 6 years due to safeguarding or welfare reasons. It includes all children aged 0 to 18 across all education settings subject to a child in need plan or child protection plan.

Rationale

The DfE 2019 [Children in Need review](#) highlighted that at least 1.6 million children needed a social worker between 2012 and 2018 – equivalent to one in 10 of all children, or 3 children in every classroom. **These children do significantly worse than others at all stages of education, and poor educational outcomes persist even after social work involvement ends.**

Children with a Social Worker (CWSW) face significant barriers to education due to experiences of adversity, most commonly as a result of domestic abuse, mental ill-health, and or substance misuse. Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE's) and trauma can impact on children's cognitive development as well as their Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs. The experiences and behaviours of CWSW are very similar to those of Looked After Children (LAC) a cohort whose needs are well-acknowledged and effectively addressed through Trauma Informed Practice, therapeutic approaches and close working with Local Authority Virtual Schools. Emotional distress makes effective learning very hard for any child and is a daily reality for many CWSW.

On average, children with a social worker do worse than their peers at every stage of their education.

- In 2018, 50% of children who had a Social Worker in the last six years were able to achieve a good level of development in the early years, compared to 72% of children who never had a Social Worker.
- Pupils who had a Social Worker in the year of their GCSEs were around half as likely to achieve a strong pass in English and Maths than their peers, and at the end of Key Stage 4 they were around 3 times less likely to go on to study A levels at age 16, and almost 5 times less likely to enter higher education at age 18.
- After age 18 of those who needed a social worker in the year of their GCSEs, 6% were in higher education compared to 27% of those who did not have a social worker; and by age 21, half had still not achieved Level 2 qualifications (which include GCSEs), compared to 11% of those not in need of a social worker.
- CWSW are around 3 times more likely to be persistently absent from school
- CWSW are 2 to 4 times more likely to be permanently excluded from school than their peers.
- They are over ten times more likely to attend state-funded alternative provision settings than all other pupils.
- CWSW are much more likely to experience frequent transitions, including moving home or school and experience changes in the professionals that are supporting them and their families

Children with a social worker are more likely to have experienced complex family circumstances; some may have been at risk of, or have suffered, physical, emotional, sexual abuse or neglect. At home, they may have lived in families where there is domestic abuse, mental ill-health, or substance misuse, and outside of the home, may be at risk of extra-familial harms, such as experiencing criminal or sexual exploitation or serious violence.

These experiences can affect children's attendance, learning, behaviour, and wellbeing and, if children cannot access support, they may struggle to reach their full potential. Even after a child no longer has a social worker, poor educational outcomes can persist. While there is no single cause for the poor educational outcomes for children with a social worker, experiences of adversity can create barriers to good outcomes.

Improving the educational outcomes of children with a social worker and maintaining high aspirations for them is a key priority for **(INSERT SCHOOL NAME HERE)**

Intent

(INSERT SCHOOL NAME HERE) is committed to ensuring that children with a social worker achieve the highest standards, including supporting aspirations to achieve in further and higher education. This is fully supported by our Governing Body. Our success can be measured by the improved academic achievement and pastoral progress of children with a social worker at our school.

(INSERT SCHOOL NAME HERE) promotes the improvement of the educational achievement of children with a social worker by:

- Prioritising education and pursuing education in tandem with safeguarding
- Promoting excellent attendance, challenging absences and working with all professionals to develop Attendance Support Plans where attendance is becoming a concern.
- Reducing suspensions and permanent exclusions by identifying concerns early and putting in appropriate support swiftly.
- Working in partnerships with parents and carers, social workers, the Virtual School and other professionals
- Identifying any possible additional learning needs and putting in appropriate support swiftly.
- Focusing on early intervention, priority action and targeted support
- Supporting transitions
- Maintaining high expectations
- Promoting inclusion through challenging and changing attitudes
- Achieving stability and continuity
- Student voice
- Promoting health and wellbeing

Special Educational Needs

DfE guidance highlights that the majority of children with a social worker have special education needs. As such our Designated Safeguarding Lead, SENCo and Designated Teacher for Looked After and Previously Looked After Children work closely together to ensure that **(INSERT SCHOOL NAME HERE)'s** teaching and learning and inclusion policies reflect the needs of children with a social worker, that concerns regarding possible additional needs are identified at an early stage and that access to additional support is provided swiftly. Where a child has an EHC plan it will work in harmony with their Child in Need/Child Protection plan to tell a coherent and comprehensive story of how the child's needs are being met.

Responsibilities

The Governing Body

The Governing body will:

- Identify a nominated Governor for children with a social worker
- Ensure that all Governors are fully aware of the guidance and legal requirements around the education of children with a social worker.
- Annually scrutinise the academic and pastoral progress of children with a social worker (via the Designated Safeguarding Lead's annual report) with a key focus on suspensions, permanent exclusions and attendance, identifying areas for further development and focus.
- Oversight of pupil premium spending and the pupil premium strategy, ensuring that in line with the DfE guidance, it is used "...to meet the needs of eligible pupils and others who may benefit from extra support, such as children with a social worker."¹
- Prevent exclusions and reduce time out of school, by ensuring that the schools policies and procedures are in line with 'School suspensions and permanent exclusions 2023 (DfE), with specific reference to children with a social worker
- Encourage school to adopt and engage in Enfield Trauma Informed Practice (ETIPs) and ensure that it is reflected throughout all school policies and procedures.
- Ensure that all schools policies and procedures support and reflect the needs of Children with a Social Worker.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

The Designated Safeguarding Lead will

- Produce an annual progress report for children with a social worker which is written in way that preserves the anonymity of individual children, outlining
 1. The number of children with a social worker on the school's roll.
 2. Attendance, as a group compared to the whole school.
 3. Academic outcomes, as a discrete group compared to the whole school.
 4. The number and proportion of suspensions and permanent exclusions, comparable to all pupils.
 5. The destinations of pupils who leave the school.
 6. Outlining how the pupil premium strategy is being used to support the improved outcomes of children with a social worker
- Inform staff when a child is allocated a social worker, recording and sharing this information with all relevant members of staff.
- Ensure that educational information is provided as required, within agreed timeframes.
- Ensure that processes are in place to inform Social Workers of unexplained absences, suspensions and permanent exclusions swiftly.
- Take into account that

"...education is an important protective factor, providing a safe space for children to receive support, be visible to professionals and realise their potential. When children are

¹ [Promoting the education of children with a social worker and children in kinship care arrangements, DfE Dec 2023](#)

not in school, they miss the protection and opportunities it can provide, and become more vulnerable to harm.”²

when considering reintegration timetables, suspensions and permanent exclusions of children with a social worker.

- Prevent exclusions and reduce time out of school, by ensuring that the schools policies and procedures are in line with [Suspension and Exclusions Guidance](#) (2023) DfE, with specific reference to children with a social worker.
- Be part of an agreed system to track and monitor academic progress and attendance, suspensions and permanent exclusion of children with a social worker.
- Ensure confidentiality for individual pupils, sharing personal information on a need-to-know basis.
- Champion Enfield Trauma Informed Practice (ETIPs) throughout the school and ensure that it is reflected within all school policies, procedures and interactions with all children, staff and families.
- Support the school and staff to explore alternatives to suspension and permanent exclusion and to take a Trauma Informed approach to address the needs and behaviours of children with a social worker.
- Work with the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children (LAC) and Previously Looked After Children (PLAC), the SENCo and the Senior Mental Health Lead to contribute to the development and review of whole school policies to ensure that they do not unintentionally put children with a social worker at a disadvantage and support their needs.
- Ensure that Pupil Premium spending is used “...to meet the needs of eligible pupils and others who may benefit from extra support, such as children with a social worker.”³ and that children with a social worker are prioritised for early intervention and access to support.

All Staff:

All our staff will:

- Maintain high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of children with a social worker.
- Maintain children with a social worker’s confidentiality and ensure they are supported sensitively.
- Work to enable children with a social worker to achieve stability within school.
- Engage in Enfield Trauma Informed Practice (ETIP’s) training and engage with children, families and staff in a trauma informed way.
- Have an understanding of the key issues that affect the learning and progress of children with a social worker, including Adverse Childhood Experiences and the impact of trauma.
- Notify the Designated Safeguarding Lead (and other relevant members of staff) of any concerns regarding a child with a social worker (including academic concerns) promptly.
- Promote the self-esteem of all children with a social worker.
- Understand that behaviour communicates need, and respond with respectful curiosity, warmth, support and positive regard, rather than a punitive response.

The Virtual School Head Teacher

From September 2021 the role of Virtual School Heads was extended to include strategic responsibility for improving the educational outcomes and highlighting barriers to progress for children with a social worker.

² [Suspension and permanent exclusion guidance September 2023 \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

³ [Promoting the education of children with a social worker and children in kinship care arrangements, DfE Dec 2023](#)

Virtual School Heads are not required to provide direct intervention, help or support for individual children with a Social Worker or their families. Using their expertise and knowledge from working with looked-after and previously looked-after children, Virtual School Heads' responsibility is to increase understanding of partners and to address the disadvantages and barriers that children with a social worker experience.

Virtual School Heads are working to strengthen partnerships between education settings and Local Authorities, to establish a culture of high aspirations that helps children with a social worker to make educational progress, and to demonstrate the benefits of good attendance.

The specific aims of this extended role are:

- making visible the disadvantages that children with a social worker 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 can be an important factor in helping to keep children safe from harm.
- levelling up children's outcomes and narrowing the attainment gap so every child has the opportunity to reach their potential. This will include helping to ensure that children with a social worker benefit from support to recover educationally from the impact of the pandemic.

Other school policies & guidance

This policy is closely linked to the following school policies which also reflect the needs of children with a social worker:

- Admissions
- Attendance
- Behaviour Policy
- Home Academy Agreement
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Inclusion & Special Educational Needs Policy
- Pupil premium Strategy
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Looked After and Previously Looked After Children Policy

This policy takes account of:

- [Children in Need review](#) (2019) DfE
- [Promoting the education of children with a social worker and children in kinship care arrangements: virtual school head role extension](#) (2023) DfE
- [Suspension and Exclusions Guidance](#) (2023) DfE
- [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#) (2022) DfE
- [Behaviour in schools: Advice for headteachers and school staff](#) (2022) DfE

Named members of staff responsible for Children with a Social Worker

Governor for children with a Social Worker

Designated Safeguarding Lead

Deputy Safeguarding Lead

Designated Teacher for Looked After
and Previously Looked After Children

Senco

This policy is reviewed annually and was last reviewed on

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