

Personal Education Plans - writing to the child/young person

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Walsall Council



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Why do we need to change the language we use?

- Helps us build better relationships with children and young people
- Helps children and young people feel listened to, cared for and valued.
- Children and young people have told us that words commonly used were confusing, demeaning or too complicated, making them feel disempowered stigmatised and victimised
- Children and young people are able to request to view their files and are able to look at what was written about them- this may be many years afterwards.



Why do we write to the child?

- Allows a conversation between you and the child in clear language that is understandable to them.
- Plan that is more personal to the child.
- Writing directly to the child helps us remain child focused- all thoughts and thinking is child focused.
- Helps us keep language sensitive and will help them see that we genuinely care about them.
- The tone and the pitch of the writing is much warmer, using sensitive language, when they do come back and read their records you can show you did genuinely care about them and want them to know why decisions were made, making explicitly clear their plans.



The impact of Personal Education Plans used in the child's/young person's care review

- They are read by IRO's to inform the review and during midway reviews (at least 4 times a year)
- Teachers are often the professionals that spend most time with children and young people and can be a valuable source of information
- Personal Education Plans are often specifically referenced in the review meeting
- Can be powerfully positive and give children a sense of achievement
- Demonstrate that teachers listen, care and want to support children
- Young people are almost always interested in knowing what their teachers have to say

Involving children and young people in their plans

- Planning the meeting to ensure the young person is involved in **their** meeting the way they want to be.
- The young person should be encouraged to add their own agenda items.
- The young person is encouraged (with support) to identify their own learning and support needs.
- The young person can identify the adult they are closest to in the school and ask that they support them during their personal education plan meeting.
- Using the young person's language.
- Using the young person's goals.



Words/language that we prefer...

- Aggressive- when XX is anxious or feels threatened, they can appear angry towards their peers. They may raise their voice or lash out. When this happens, the following support is needed to make them feel safe...
- Attention Seeking- XX needs to have an adult nearby to feel safe and will use the following techniques to gain the adult's attention if they are feeling unsafe/anxious.
- Can't be bothered/lazy- XX can find it difficult to feel motivated
- Contact- time with family/friends
- Defiant/obstinate- XX is independent/likes to do things their way
- Disengaged – XX finds it hard to focus/concentrate
- Doesn't like learning- XX can find it challenging to take on/remember new knowledge/skills
- Lack of engagement- XX's previous life experiences have impacted on their resilience, and they become anxious if they feel they may fail or get something wrong. This means they find it difficult to take part in some lessons.
- Manipulative/controlling- XX feels safe when they are leading
- Placement/home/Rehomed- XX home with foster family or home with birth family
- Produces the bare minimum- Needs support to make answers thorough and include additional content
- PEP- school review, education meeting, education plan



Example of good practice 1

(Names and identifying details have been changed)

Lucy, we know you have had a difficult term personally and this has reflected in your work in your lessons. You have lots of strategies in place that you sometimes use to help you focus, when we have seen you using these strategies, they have worked really well for you.

We have seen that you are finding it more difficult to use these strategies and you are walking out of lessons. This is difficult for you and for the other students in your classes. We would like to know how we can help you more with this.

Lucy, we can see you are experiencing a roller coaster of emotions due to the breakdown of your placement. We can see that you are hyper-vigilant at all times and you often use 'flight' to remove yourself from conflict and any issues you feel may be happening. You have stopped talking to most of your teachers and we are worried about this and we need to be sure you have a trusted person you can talk to at school.

Lucy, your behaviour at school has deteriorated in recent weeks which we understand is the impact of the difficulties you are currently experiencing. There have been aggressive incidents towards staff which have increased risk taking behaviour from Lucy.



Example of good practice 2

Mason has worked incredibly hard over the course of his KS4 education and has shown progression across all areas of the curriculum. Within his English, his writing structure has developed, and he is now able to write longer pieces of prose. He excels in Science and has shown a fantastic ability to work as part of a group to complete an experiment.

Mason has managed really well, although has found aspects challenging due to family illness and transition. He has worked well to communicate these to home and staff, and it is reinforced how he has matured that he is able to work with people to overcome what's on his mind.

Mason has a good core group of friends, some of which are transitioning with him to post-16 education. He is a well liked member of the school community, and finds it easy when out on social times to talk to his peers and take part in activities which doesn't require staff structure.

Mason has shown some progress in his behaviour, he still finds it hard to withdraw when he finds a situation difficult. He has shown tendencies to some violent outbursts, which needs time to come down. He has started to reflect on these incidents better, and says what he could do better.

After plenty of discussion and input from different colleges, Mason has decided he would like to go to Futures. He was debating between XXXX and XXXX, but has made that decision as he wants to pursue a retail pathway. Mason has got a transition plan in place to support his transition to Futures.



continued

What's working well?

Mason, you told us that you feel happy and supported in school and you have a very good relationship with your teacher XXXX. You feel you have worked hard and you have really enjoyed the play therapy you have been offered. You would like to continue to have play therapy as you feel you have a good relationship with XXX and she has helped you to develop some strategies that are helping you a lot

Mason, we agree that you have been working really hard, you have particularly focussed on the development of your writing structure, and you have been able to attain a predicted grade of Entry Level 3.

Mason we have seen you using a strategy around making a "T" sign to show us that you need timeout. You are using this most of the time when you need to. We would like to support you to do more of this.

What are we worried could happen in the future?

Mason told us he is worried about going to college and he is worried he might have big feelings and get upset about it. He is worried his big feelings might show in his behaviour. Mason would like more help with his strategies.

Mason, we are going to support you to use more of your strategies and we would like you to continue to attend play therapy.

CONT...

What are our next steps?

Mason, you told us you are excited and nervous and worried about college.

Mason, we will support you to visit your chosen college and meet your new teachers. We will also continue to support you with strategies you can apply to a college context to support you to participate.

Mason we would like to support you to take the lead in times of distress and take time out before becoming dysregulated.



ANY QUESTIONS ?

