



Questions to ask when choosing a school

- **What is your behaviour policy?**

You should be able to read the school's behaviour policy on their website. Look for a behaviour policy that is not shaming or rejecting. Ideally the school should not have a policy based on a behaviourist approach such as moving from 'green', 'amber', 'red', or with emphasis on removing children from the classroom without support. If they do have a policy like this, will they be flexible in use of this with adopted children? Ideally the school will have a relational and restorative justice approach, and will see behaviour as communication and seek to understand the reasons for behaviour

- **Do you have experience with adopted or Looked After Children?**
- **Do you have termly meetings with parents (e.g. in format of PEP meeting)?**

It is important that the school communicates well with you as parents, and discusses spending of Pupil Premium Plus funding.

- **Is there a coffee morning or similar for parents of adopted children?**

Not essential but nice to know if there's peer support and a community of adopted families.

- **Who is the designated teacher for Previously Looked After Children?**

The school should know who this person is, and whether they actually know who the designated teacher is says a lot about whether they are supporting Looked After and Previously Looked After/Adopted children well, and are up to date with the guidance on this.

- **How do you manage transitions, such as starting school, moving between year groups?**

Look for a school that manages transitions well for all children, such as having a phased entry for all children, but is also willing to be flexible and put more support in place.

- **How have you spent Pupil Premium Plus money with other adopted children at the school?**

*Look for an understanding that the school differentiate between Pupil Premium and Pupil Premium **Plus**, as schools sometimes lump them together when they shouldn't, as the needs are different. Will they spend the money to benefit your child?*

- **Have staff received training on attachment and the impact of early trauma and loss?**

Who was involved in the training? E.g. Did senior leadership attend? Were Teaching Assistants and playground supervisors included? What impact has this had on the ethos of the school?



- **How does the school manage curriculum hotspots i.e. issues which might trigger your child?**

For example, bringing in baby photos and family trees; cards for mothers' and fathers' day; subjects such as evacuees in WW2 in English and History; NSPCC and Children in Needs assemblies etc

- **How does the school support children who find it difficult to manage their feelings? Is there a safe base for children when they need to calm down or regulate?**

E.g. nurture group; calm boxes; a calming zone within the school; emotion regulation skills teaching and coaching; anger management training; empathy from all staff; social skills groups.

- **What support is in place for children who find unstructured times such as lunch time difficult?**

E.g. Is there an indoor lunch club for more vulnerable children, where they can develop their social skills, or calm down and relax? Do the midday supervisors organise structured games on the playground? Are there systems for children who want to play with friends e.g. a buddy system or a friendship bench?

- **Probably most importantly- how does the school come across? Does the school seem open, warm and nurturing? Does the school take time to meet with you as parents? Are the school happy to offer an appointment to meet with the head or designated teacher?**