

## **Guidance for ‘Understanding Child’ Document**

### ***Overview:***

The purpose of the ‘Understanding Child’ document is to ultimately provide Fair Access Panel with an evidence based, accurate and clear description of a child’s strengths and needs to inform placement.

Day 6-30, an appropriate person at Mary Astell (or Day 6 provision) completes the document, to the best of his/her knowledge. In order to develop understanding of the child’s strengths and needs and to complete the document, it is expected that he/she will consult the transition file provided by the excluding school, speak with family members, other professionals and the child. Key people in the child’s life and, where appropriate, the child should review the document and update it as necessary.

Please note, if the child is not able to participate he/she should have the opportunity to share his/her thoughts with a trusted adult who can feed into the process.

All Mary Astell (or Day 6 provision) staff working with the child should have time to read and amend the document and to plan intervention.

Finally, the updated document is presented to FAP to inform decision making and planning. See Guidance for Supporting (Child’s name)’s Transition from Day 6 Provision to Receiving School; During the transition meeting, a Day 6 representative refers to the Understanding Child document (and transition file) to share information about the child’s strengths and needs. Considering the child’s strengths and needs, priorities and support needed in the child’s receiving school are identified.

### ***Aims:***

The aims of the ‘Understanding Child’ document are to:

1. Summarise the child’s strengths and needs in the four areas:
  - Emotional and behavioural development
  - Learning
  - Language and Social skills
  - Health and Medical
  
2. Develop SMART targets to inform intervention:
  - At the 1 – 1 level
  - Small group level
  - Class level
  - Community level

The targets should include realistic time scales. There is an expectation that the targets are closely monitored and reviewed and that the child should be involved in that process.

### ***Further Guidance on completing sections in the document:***

For all four sections, please provide all relevant information. Sheets can be stapled to the document if it is felt relevant, along with annotations.

### ***Emotional and Behavioural Development:***

#### **Strengths:**

Question 1: When asked about when the child is happiest and most relaxed, consider his/her personal interests, what motivates him/her, when he/she is energised. Consider the child's strengths and interests outside of school.

Please note that a child at their happiest and relaxed does not necessarily mean being quiet or calm.

Question 3: When thinking about the child's future, please include details about the child's choice of school if he/she has mentioned this.

Question 4: When asked about when the child seems at his/her most calm, consider:

- What he/she is doing
- Where he/she is
- Who he/she is with

Question 5: When asked about the child's strong beliefs, consider:

- Religious beliefs
- Cultural beliefs
- Sense of self

#### **Needs:**

Question 1: When asked about whether the child has experienced significant trauma, consider any Adverse Child Experience.

Question 2: When asked about factors relating to stability and security, consider:

- Family circumstances (e.g. housing)
- If the child has been Looked After/is Looked After
- Anti social behaviour in family/social context
- Frequent/significant house moves

Question 3: When asked about the experience of educational placement 'other information', consider whether the child's emotional needs (and challenging behaviour) have been sustained over a long period of time or whether a significant change is relatively recent. If the latter is true, consider any possible triggers e.g, a particular trauma/event.

Question 4: When asked about a child's ability to independently manage their emotions consider the child's emotional literacy, the child's ability to identify triggers

for their emotions and behavioural responses and their ability to make choices and respond in socially appropriate ways.

**Planning:**

After completing the strengths and needs sections, prioritise a key area for development and intervention. Aims should be specific, time limited and measurable. Possible considerations, when asked what is needed, could include:

- Using specific approaches at the 1 – 1, small group, class and community levels
- Using specific resources
- Accessing specialist knowledge, where appropriate

**Learning:**

When completing the sections in relation to both the child's strengths and their needs, ensure information is factual and evidence based. This could include quantitative and qualitative data.

**Strengths and Needs:**

Questions 1 and 2: When asked about the child's literacy strengths, include specific information such as standardised test scores, observations and professionals' assessments.

Question 3: When asked about the child's approaches and attitudes to learning, it may be appropriate to consider your own and other professionals' assessment into areas such as memory and processing. Also, be sure to consider the child's own interests. What subjects do they enjoy?

Further notes, be sure to include information about coursework or portfolio work which could be transferred to the new school.

**Planning:**

After completing the strengths and needs sections, prioritise a key area for development and intervention. Aims should be specific, time limited and measurable. Possible considerations, when asked what is needed, could include:

- Using specific approaches at the 1 – 1, small group, class and community levels
- Using specific resources
- Accessing specialist knowledge, where appropriate.

### ***Language and Social skills:***

#### **Planning:**

After completing the strengths and needs sections, prioritise a key area for development and intervention. Aims should be specific, time limited and measurable. Possible considerations, when asked what is needed, could include:

- Using specific approaches at the 1 – 1, small group, class and community levels
- Using specific resources
- Accessing specialist knowledge, where appropriate.

### ***Health and Medical needs:***

#### **Strengths:**

Question 1: When asked to consider health needs, include the child's dietary requirements/known allergies

#### **Strengths and Needs:**

Question 7: When asked about the child's ability to stay safe, consider:

- Known involvement in criminal activity
- Known sexual activity
- Independent travel
- Real world problem solving

#### **Planning:**

After completing the strengths and needs sections, prioritise a key area for development and intervention. Aims should be specific, time limited and measurable. Possible considerations, when asked what is needed, could include:

- Using specific approaches at the 1 – 1, small group, class and community levels
- Using specific resources
- Accessing specialist knowledge, where appropriate.