



## CHILDREN IN CARE AND POST CHILDREN IN CARE POLICY

### INTRODUCTION

Schools are key in helping to raise the educational standards and improving the life chances of Children in Care (CiC), and in tackling the causes of social exclusion through careful planning, monitoring and evaluation. Schools can also provide a source of continuity and “normality” for children who may have been subject to emotional distress, abuse, and disruption. School can be the place where children maintain friendships and a place where they feel safe and can be themselves.

Raising levels of achievement has been strongly and clearly highlighted as a major part of improving the life chances of Children in Care and schools play a pivotal role in this.

### Definition

A pupil who has been in the care of their local authority for more than 24 hours is known as a looked after child (LAC). Looked after children are also often referred to as children in care (CiC).

In general, looked after children are:

- Living with foster parents or carers
- Living in a residential children's home or
- Living in residential settings like schools or secure units.
- In some instances, could be living with relatives, or even with parents on a part or full time basis.

A student stops being looked after when they are adopted, return home or turn 18. When this occurs, a student is then classed as being a previously looked after child (Post LAC or Post CiC).

### Legal Framework

Recent legislation and guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) and the Department of Health (DH) requires schools to have effective policies for supporting and promoting the education of children in care and those previously in care.

Schools must:

- Ensure access to a balanced and broadly based education to all CiC and Post CiC
- Prioritise improving the academic achievement of all CiC and Post CiC
- Prioritise a reduction in the number of exclusions and truancies for all CiC and Post CiC
- Ensure there is a designated teacher to advocate for the rights of CiC and Post CiC
- Develop systems of communications and protocols
- Promote the attendance of CiC and Post CiC

## **AIMS**

- To provide a safe and secure environment, where education is valued and there is a belief in the abilities and potential of all children.
- To support our CiC and Post CiC and give them access to every opportunity to achieve to their potential, enjoy learning and take as full a part as possible in all school activities.
- To ensure that school policies and procedures are followed for CiC and Post CiC as for all children.
- To work with the Virtual School and ensure that carers and social workers of pupils are kept fully informed of their child's progress and attainment.
- To fulfil our schools' role as corporate parents to promote and support the education of our Looked After Children, by asking the question, 'Would this be good enough for my child?'

## **OBJECTIVES**

We will:

- Work alongside social workers to ensure that each CiC has a current Personal Education Plan in place.
- Provide a climate of acceptance and challenge negative stereotypes.
- Ensure all children who are looked after have the same opportunities to participate fully in the National Curriculum, careers guidance, extra-curricular activities, work experience, and enjoy the school experience fully in line with corporate parenting principles.
- Ensure discretion when addressing a child's care status and ensure there is sensitivity to the background of children who are looked after, especially surrounding work on family.
- Ensure the designated teacher is provided with regular training, and that they cascade this training to school staff as appropriate.
- Seek to review all school policies regularly in the light of the LEA's Social Inclusion guidance, Special Educational Needs Legislation, and joint Department for Education/Department of Health guidance on The Education of Children in Public Care.
- Ensure that a clear protocol for sharing of information will be followed both within school and with outside agencies.
- Endeavor to support all CiC and Post CiC educated in this school to achieve to their fullest possible academic potential.

## **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The named Governor will work in co-operation with the Head Teacher and Designated Teacher as the named staff responsible for ensuring that all CiC and Post CiC have equal access to all learning opportunities in line with their peers. The Head Teacher and Designated Teacher also have specific responsibilities for supporting the rest of the staff in their training and work with Looked After Children.

The named Governor should be satisfied that:

- The school has a coherent policy for CiC and Post CiC
- The school's policies and procedures are reviewed in the light of social inclusion guidance and joint DH/DfE guidelines
- The designated teacher has received appropriate training
- Looked after children have equal access to all areas of the curriculum

The Head Teacher will:

- Appoint the designated teacher
- Ensure that the designated teacher has received appropriate training
- Oversee the development of the policy on Children in Care and Post Children in Care.
- Be responsible for all systems to support Children in Care and Post Children in Care.

### **The Designated Teacher**

The designated teacher will serve as the contact for social services and the education department and will maintain responsibility for several key areas to support CiC and Post CiC within the school. This includes serving as an advocate for all CiC and Post CiC in the school.

The designated teacher will help establish and maintain the ethos regarding CiC and Post CiC of the school by:

- Maintaining and respecting confidentiality of all CiC and Post CiC and ensuring information is shared on a strictly 'need to know' basis
- Ensuring that all staff, through appropriate training, are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantages faced by CiC and Post CiC and understand the need for positive systems to support them, whilst maintaining appropriately high expectations for their educational achievements
- Acting as an advocate for CiC and Post CiC in order to allow them equal access to educational opportunities and support with important decisions affecting future life chances

The designated teacher will set up systems to monitor and record the progress of all CiC and Post CiC. They will:

- Have an overview and co-ordinating role for gathering and holding all information regarding children who are looked after
- Maintain records regarding all CiC and Post CiC, including legal status and information regarding who should be contacted regarding matters concerning the child
- Establish a system for contacting and forwarding educational records to new schools to facilitate a smooth and speedy transfer
- Monitor the educational progress of all CiC and Post CiC and intervene, in co-operation with other agencies if required, if there is evidence of underachievement, absence from school or internal truancy, or other similar concern

The designated teacher will facilitate effective communication by:

- Building positive home-school relationships between parents / carers with regular opportunities for dialogue
- Being proactive and participating in setting goals for the child's Personal Education Plan (PEP)
- Playing an active role in care planning by ensuring that the attendance of the most appropriate member of staff and/or written reports are provided to all statutory reviews of CiC and Post CiC
- Helping co-ordinate education and PEP meetings
- Serving as the named contact for colleagues in social services and education
- ensuring effective communication between all relevant parties
- Inviting the responsible social worker to all meetings, and liaising with this social worker regarding the development of PEPs

The designated teacher will monitor each child's achievement and ensure that they have the support they require within school:

- By ensuring each child has a PEP
- By requesting support from the SENCO and/or outside agencies, including the Virtual School, if a looked after child requires additional academic or social and emotional support
- By working closely with the SENCO to ensure all CiC and Post CiC with special educational needs are being assessed and are getting appropriate resources to support their learning
- By having a strategy for key stage or new school transitions
- By ensuring all CiC and Post CiC are made to feel a part of the school environment

The Designated Teacher at Norwood Primary School is Mrs P. Bennet

### **Personal Education Plans**

Each CiC will have a Personal Education Plan (PEP), which their social worker will take the lead in developing. However, the school's role in this plan is crucial and at least one member of staff who knows the child well will attend the meeting to establish and subsequently review this. Other staff will contribute in writing as appropriate.

The PEP will consider:

- The child's strengths and weaknesses
- Interests, both in and out of school
- Developmental and educational and pastoral needs
- Future plans, and how these can be supported
- Issues arising for the child
- It will also identify targets that will be reviewed during the next PEP meeting.

### **Admission/Induction Arrangements**

CiC are a priority for admission and, as such, we will follow the LEA's published admission criteria.

On admission, the child will meet with their named members of staff. They will discuss any relevant issues, academic or pastoral, and ensure the child is made to feel comfortable in our school. Records will be requested from the child's previous school and as soon as practicable after they are received a meeting will be held with the carer / parent, social worker, and other relevant professionals, and child as appropriate. This will provide information to inform the child's new Personal Education Plan, and ensure that communication systems are established early. In the first PEP meeting, we will seek clarification from the social worker as to who requires school reports and who may give permission for school trips or other such activities. At this meeting any means of communication to aid the fluid exchange of information between statutory meetings will be discussed and agreed (such as a home/school book to detail any sudden significant changes in a child's circumstances.)

### **School Trips and Special Activities**

Given the delays that CiC experience in getting parental consent for school trips and activities, we will aim to ensure that CiC and enjoy the same extra-curricular opportunities as other children by reserving placements for them on trips or on activities.

## **Complaints**

If a young person, parent or social worker wishes to complain about the provision or policy, they should in the first instance raise it with the designated teacher, who will try to resolve the situation.

If the issue cannot be resolved within 10 days, the young person, carer or social worker can submit a formal complaint in writing to the Head Teacher. The Head Teacher will investigate the complaint and respond within 10 working days.

Any issue that remain unresolved at this stage should be addressed through a meeting in order to assess the impact of any such complaint upon the young person's education. This meeting may include the named Governor and any other outside agency that both parties deem necessary to attend. This meeting should normally be held within 10 working days of the Head teacher's response.

## **REVIEW**

This policy will be reviewed at least annually by the Safeguarding Team.