

Children in Care and Previously Looked After Children's Policy

Rationale

Primary Schools have a key role in improving the life chances of Children in Care and Previously Looked After Children. They are ideally placed to be able to raise children's aspirations, give children a sense of the control they have over their own lives and foster positive attitudes and behaviours. When these are achieved, Primary Schools will improve the educational attainment and achievement of all Children in Care and give them the greatest chance of success.

Our vision is that we work together to enable all children to 'fly high like an eagle' and this ambition is particularly inclusive of Children in Care and Previously Looked After Children. Our school should be a safe place for all children, but it is essential that it is a haven for Children in Care. It is vital we provide a source of continuity and 'normality' for children who may have been subject to emotional distress, abuse and disruption. To enable Children in Care to fly high, our school is a place where they can learn, be themselves and make friends. Critically, we want to engender a sense of belonging so they can recognize themselves as integral members of our school community.

We aim to ensure that Children in Care and Previously Looked After Children excel and reach their full potential through academic, personal, social and emotional development. We aim to overcome their barriers to learning and enable them to leave us happy and secure in themselves, understanding that they do have control over their destiny and that education does matter. We will listen to what Children in Care tell us about what they want from their education and try to address any concerns or issues raised through their pupil voice as part of the [Personal Education Plan](#) (PEP) process. Details on [the funding and support available, along with admission and transition arrangements](#) are available later in this document.

St John's C of E Primary School strives to ensure that the culture and ethos of the school are such that, whatever the heritage and origins of members of the school, pupils should be provided with the opportunity to experience, understand and celebrate diversity.

Definition

The terms **Looked After Child (LAC)** and **Child in Care** are interchangeable. For the purposes of this policy we are using the term Children in Care. Under the Children Act 1989, a child is looked after by a local authority if he or she is in their care or is provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the authority.

A **previously looked after child** is one who is no longer looked after in England and Wales because s/he is the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order which includes arrangements relating to with whom the child is to live, or when the child is to live with any person, or has been adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales. A child is in 'state care' outside of England and Wales if s/he is in care of or accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation or any other organisation the sole or main purpose of which is to benefit society.

This school recognises that CHILDREN IN CARE and PREVIOUSLY LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN are likely to have experience of **trauma** and a high number of **adverse childhood experiences (aces)**.

‘ACEs are highly stressful, and potentially traumatic, events or situations that occur during pregnancy, childhood and/or adolescence and can have an impact on physical and mental health throughout life.’ (Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership)

Statutory guidance and requirements-

This policy should be read in conjunction with current statutory guidance. The Designated Teacher, Head Teacher and Children in Care Governor will have fully read the statutory guidance and will implement requirements as necessary. Provision for Children in Care/Previously Looked After Children will be reflected in all other policies in the school.

St. John’s Primary will support CHILDREN IN CARE/ PREVIOUSLY LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN by:

- ensuring an effective induction when joining the school or when coming into care whilst already on the school roll;
- balancing high levels of support with real challenge;
- ensuring that each Child in Care has a high-quality Personal Education Plan
- ensuring that Previously Looked After Children have high quality learning in place.
- ensuring that every Children in Care/ Previously Looked After Children has a trusted adult identified within the school
- making it a priority to know the children well and to build strong relationships;
- developing strong relationships with families, carers, local authorities including the Virtual School Head and specialist agencies;
- encouraging and supporting Children in Care/ Previously Looked After Children to take responsibility for their learning;
- engaging Children in Care/Previously Looked After Children in learning outside the classroom and after-school activities
- understanding that behaviour is communication and using a trauma informed approach
- supporting promptly if concerns emerge such as with mental health or attendance
- giving integrated but low-profile support in school for each child in care or previously in care so that they are not made to feel different from other children;
- identifying and planning for all transitions e.g. change of phase, cover teacher.
- regularly monitor academic progress and attendance and report to relevant parties as required

Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body will:

- Ensure that the school has a Designated Teacher, and that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out his or her responsibilities as below

- Ensure that all Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of Children in Care and Previously Looked After Children
 - Ensure the school has an overview of the needs and progress of Children in Care and Previously Looked After Children
 - Ensure that the headteacher allocates appropriate resources and staff capacity to meet the needs of Children in Care and Previously Looked After Children
 - Ensure the needs of Children in Care/Previously Looked After Children are reflected the school's other policies and procedures.
 - Support the Head teacher, the Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring that the needs of Children in Care and Previously Looked After Children are recognised and met
 - Receive a report once a year setting out:
 - The number of Children in Care and Previously Looked After Children students on the school's roll
 - Their attendance, as a discreet group, compared to other pupils
 - Their progress, attainment, SEND and inclusion data
 - The number of fixed term and permanent exclusions (if any)
- The information for this report should be collected and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity and respect the confidentiality of the pupils concerned

The name of the Governors with special responsibility for Children in Care are:

Caroline Davenport and Dinithi Wijedasa

The Headteacher will:

- Identify, or be, the Designated Teacher for Children in Care and Previously Looked After Children, whose role is set out below. It is essential that appropriate person has the capacity, support and training to complete the role.
- Ensure that should the Designated Teacher leave the school or take sick leave then another person is identified to hold the role immediately.
- Ensure that appropriate support and supervision for the designated teacher is in place to promote their wellbeing.
- Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor the admission, progress, attendance and any exclusions of Children in Care and Previously Looked After Children and that timely actions are put in place if concerns arise.
- Report on the attainment, progress, attendance and inclusion of Children in Care to all relevant parties.
- Ensure that all staff in school receive appropriate training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related guidance.
- Ensure that Pupil Premium funding is used appropriately, evidenced and monitored within the PEP/Education plan and agreed with all parties.

Our Designated Teacher will:

- Ensure that each Children in Care and Previously Looked After Children has an identified, trusted, member of staff that they can talk to and who will check in with them regularly. This need not be the designated teacher but should be based on the child's own wishes.

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- Track academic progress and target support appropriately.
- Co-ordinate and monitor any support for the Children in Care and Previously Looked After Children That is necessary to promote their educational progress
 - Meet regularly with appropriate professionals to discuss Children in Care and Previously Looked After Children e.g.: DSL, SENDCo, Headteacher
 - Ensure appropriate levels of confidentiality for individual children are in place.
 - Encourage Children in Care and Previously Looked After Children to join in extra-curricular activities and out of school learning.
 - Ensure that the child's voice is represented and acted upon
 - Ensure all meetings for the child are facilitated so that everyone involved, especially the child, feels able to attend and contribute fully.
 - Act as an advocate for all Children in Care and Previously Looked After Children within the school, providing advice to staff, senior leaders and governors.
 - Set up timely meetings with relevant parties where there are concerns or pupil is at risk of exclusion.
 - Ensure the appropriate transfer of information between individuals, agencies and if the pupil changes school
 - Be proactive in supporting transition and planning when moving to a new phase in education.
 - Ensure that the induction for Children in Care and Previously Looked After Children is well planned
 - Promote inclusion for Children in Care and Previously Looked After Children in all areas of school life.
 - Ensure high expectations for attendance, that attendance is carefully monitored, and any concerns addressed.
 - For Children in Care ensure that a Personal Education Plan is supportive and is completed with the child (if age appropriate), the carer, the social worker and any other relevant people, at least two weeks before the Care Plan reviews.
 - For Previously Looked After Children ensure that learning reviewed with families during the year.

Government Guidance says that the Designated Teacher should be “someone with sufficient authority to make things happen, who should be an advocate for Children in Care and Previously Looked After Children assessing services and support and ensuring that the school shares and supports high expectations for them.” It is strongly recommended that this person should be a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

The designated teacher is: Tony Weir

All our staff will:

- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of Children in Care and Previously Looked After Children, as for all students.

- Maintain Children in Care and Previously Looked After Children confidentiality and ensure they are supported sensitively.
- Respond promptly to the designated teacher's requests for information.
- Work to enable Children in Care and Previously Looked After Children to achieve stability and success within school.
- Carry out any actions necessary as agreed in the PEP for Children in Care and to support learning for Previously Looked After Children.
- Promote the self-esteem of all Children in Care and Previously Looked After Children.
- Have received appropriate training to support Children in Care and Previously Looked After Children, e.g. attachment, trauma, Adverse Childhood Experiences.
- ensure that all Children in Care are made to feel welcome and included;
- be aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation from birth families;
- understand the reasons which may be behind a child's behaviour, and why he/she may need more support than other children;
- understand how important it is to see Children in Care as individuals and not to publicly treat them differently from their peers;
- appreciate the central importance of showing sensitivity about who else knows about a child's looked after status;
- understand what a PEP is and its importance in helping to create a shared understanding between teachers, carers, social workers and, depending on age and understanding, the child him or herself of what everyone needs to do to help him/her achieve his/her potential.

Appendix 1

Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

All Children in Care must have a care plan which is drawn up and reviewed by the local authority which looks after them. Children formerly in care do not require a PEP but will be thoroughly supported and monitored in school. The care plan must include a Personal Education plan (PEP), which forms part of the child's official school record. Where they are used effectively, PEPs improve the educational experience of the child by helping everyone gain a clear and shared understanding about the teaching and learning provision necessary to meet the child's education needs and how that will be provided. The school and the Local Authority have a shared responsibility for making sure that the PEP is a useful document and for helping Children in Care to achieve and enjoy. Discussion about how together they can make that happen through the content, implementation and review of the PEP should be done through a meeting involving the young person, carers, the social worker, a teacher and others such as, where appropriate, staff from the HOPE Virtual School for Children in Care.

The Local Authority will:

Notify the school's designated teacher if a child on the school's roll becomes looked after and ensure that they receive the PEP paperwork, which should already include any information which the school will need to know.

The Social worker will:

- initiate the PEP as part of the wider care plan (A new Personal Education Plan will be needed at least two weeks before each LAC Review and whenever there is a change of circumstances [e.g. change of school or placement or where there are concerns arising in school]. If the young person has a Statement of Special Educational Needs this should be reviewed annually and should, where possible, tie in with a PEP.)
- arrange the meeting and ensure that all the relevant people are invited;
- bring the previous PEP and a PEP form to the meeting with relevant sections completed.

The designated teacher will:

- ensure all Children in Care have a current PEP which sets high quality expectations of rapid progress and put in place additional support which the child needs in order to succeed;
- have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of the child's PEP within school in partnership with others as necessary;
- ensure each child eligible for PEA allowance has this discussed at the PEP meeting and an application is made once a year;
- ensure arrangements are in place for the speedy transfer of a child's PEP if they change schools;

- attend PEP meetings prepared with relevant sections of the PEP completed and attendance and current attainment information for the child;
- agree who will chair the PEP meetings and who will take notes;
- circulate completed forms and appendices after a PEP meeting.

To be an effective tool the PEP should:

- Set long- and short-term educational attainment targets, agreed in partnership with the child and the carer where appropriate.
- It will identify the developmental and educational needs of the child.
- It will be a record of the child's academic achievements and participation in wider activities and provide information which helps all involved in supporting the child know what does and does not work for them.
- It will provide accountability and be a record of planned actions; identifying who is responsible for carrying out each of these actions.

It will consider:

- The child's strengths and weaknesses, their interests, both in and out of school and their developmental, educational, and pastoral needs.
- It will consider their aspirations, their future plans, and how these can be supported, as well as any issues arising for the child.

Appendix 2: Funding, Support, Admissions and Transition

Pupil Premium

All children of compulsory school age are entitled to Pupil Premium money to improve their outcomes. The school is responsible for reporting on how the money has been spent and the impact.

One to One tuition

Research has shown that Children in Care benefit from one-to-one tuition in English and/or maths even if they appear to be progressing in line with age related expectations. This school is committed to prioritising all Children in Care for one-to-one tuition.

Additional funding

Children in long-term care are entitled to additional funding to help improve their outcomes and narrow the gap between them and their peers. Which young people are eligible and the amount of such funding available will be determined as a result of government policy.

The school is committed to ensuring effective use of this dedicated funding where available for all eligible Children in Care on roll to provide additional, personalised support to ensure accelerated progress to improve outcomes. The dedicated funding for children in Year R to Year 11 is currently called the LAC Pupil Premium Grant.

The appropriate use of allocated funding is to be assessed through the Personal Education Plan. The HOPE Virtual School for Children in Care expects 80% of LAC Pupil Premium money to be spent on improving outcomes in English and/or maths.

Admission/Induction Arrangements

Children in Care are a priority for admission and, as such, we will follow the Local Authority's published admission criteria.

On admission to the school or to care, carers will be given an introductory booklet about the school's expectations and processes and the child will meet with the designated teacher for Children in Care. The designated teacher will identify any relevant issues, academic or pastoral, and ensure the child is made to feel supported in our school. Consideration will be given to giving the child a peer mentor. On admission, records will be requested from the child's previous school. As soon as practicable after the records are received, a meeting will be held with the carer/parent, social worker, other relevant professionals, and the child, as appropriate, to put together a new Personal Education Plan, this early meeting will ensure that communication systems are established early. If records are not received promptly, we will assess our own assessment to ensure that the teaching and support received are appropriate. We will endeavor to meet the statutory time scales for PEPs as outlined in the guidance.

When children already on school roll enter care, the school will ensure that the student meets with the designated teacher as soon as possible and is fully informed of the school procedures and additional support arrangements available. A meeting with other parties will be arranged and PEP prepared as soon as possible in the same way as for those children already in care admitted to school.

At 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 exchange of information between statutory meetings will be discussed and agreed.

Many Children in Care do not want school staff to be aware of their care status because it makes them feel “different”. Therefore, we will negotiate with the child to identify who should be aware of their care status. However, we recognise that in some cases, such as if the child has severe learning difficulty, this may not be possible.

Transition to another school

When a child in care leaves the school, we will find ways to say goodbye. We will also ensure the swift transfer of information to the next school.

Appendix 3: EqlA was carried out but all outcomes were “neutral” or “positive” for all

Due regard was taken by carrying out an EqlA to consider the impact on protected groups. However, the impact of the proposal was positive (or at least neutral) for all.	Tick required: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Date: 9.5.2024.
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