

Children in Care Policy

St Werburgh's Primary School

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VERSION CONTROL SHEET

Version	Section/ Para	Description of Amendments	Date	Author

1. STATEMENT OF COMMITMENT

At St Werburgh's Primary will do for children in care what we do for all children only more so. We aim to ensure that children in care excel, as we aim for all children to excel. 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 various means including the child's voice gathered in class and through surveys.

St Werburgh's 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, children should be provided with the opportunity to experience, understand and celebrate diversity.

2. DEFINITION

For the purposes of this policy a Child in Care (CiC) is one who is looked after within the meaning of section 22 of the Children Act 1989 or Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. A Previously Looked After Child (PLAC) 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 arrangement 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 CIC and PLAC 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)

3. STATUTORY GUIDANCE AND REQUIREMENTS

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

4. OBJECTIVES

St Werburgh's Primary will support children in care 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 has a high-quality Personal Education Plan
- linking each child to a key person they relate well to
- making it a priority to know the children well and to build strong relationships
- developing strong relationships with carers, local authorities including the Virtual School team, and specialist agencies
- encouraging and supporting children in care to take responsibility for their own learning
- engaging children in care in learning outside the classroom and after-school activities
- intervening promptly if a problem emerges such as with behaviour or attendance
- giving integrated but low-profile support in school for each child in care so that they are not made to feel different from other children
- planning for future transitions e.g. to secondary school.

5. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Governor with special responsibility for children in care in this school is: **Jon Peach**

The Designated Teacher in this school is: **Olivia Dowle**

The Headteacher will:

- Identify, or be, the Designated Teacher for CIC and PLAC, whose role is set out below. It is essential that the 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 CIC and PLAC and that timely actions are put in place if concerns arise.
- Report on the attainment, progress, attendance and inclusion of CIC 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.

The Governing Body will:

- Ensure that the School has a Designated Teacher, and that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out their responsibilities as below.
- Ensure that all Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of CIC and PLAC.
- Ensure the School has an overview of the needs and progress of CIC and PLAC.
- Ensure that the Headteacher allocates appropriate resources and staff capacity to meet the needs of CIC and PLAC
- Ensure the needs of CIC/PLAC are reflected in the School's other policies and procedures.
- Support the Headteacher, the Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring that the needs of CIC and PLAC are recognised and met.
- Consider a report once a year which sets out:
 - The number of CIC and PLAC students on the School's roll.
 - Their attendance, as a discrete 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 Designated Teacher will:

- Ensure that each CIC and PLAC has an identified and 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.
- Track academic progress and target support appropriately.
- Co-ordinate and monitor any support for the CIC and PLAC that is necessary to promote their educational progress.
- Meet regularly with appropriate professionals to discuss CIC and PLAC eg DSL, SENDCo, Attendance Lead, Headteacher.
- Ensure that appropriate levels of confidentiality are in place for individual children.
- Encourage CIC and PLAC to join in extracurricular activities and out-of-school learning.
- Ensure that the child's voice is represented and acted upon.
- Ensure that 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 CIC and PLAC within the School, providing advice to staff, senior leaders and

governors.

- Set up timely meetings with relevant parties where there are concerns or a child 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 CIC and PLAC is well planned and supported by the PEP/ Education Plan.
- Promote inclusion for CIC and PLAC in all areas of school life.
- Ensure high expectations for attendance, that attendance is carefully monitored and any concerns addressed.
- For each CIC ensure that a Personal Education Plan is completed with the child, the carer, the social worker and any other relevant people, at least two weeks before the Care Plan reviews.
- For each PLAC ensure that an Education Plan is completed and reviewed in partnership with the family.

Government Guidance says that the Designated Teacher should be “someone with sufficient authority to make things happen, who should be an advocate for CIC and PLAC 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.

All our staff will:

- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of CIC and PLAC, as for all the children at the School.
- Maintain CIC and PLAC confidentiality and ensure they are supported sensitively.
- Respond promptly to the Designated Teacher’s requests for information.
- Work to enable CIC and PLAC to achieve stability and success within school.
- Carry out any actions necessary as agreed in the PEP/Education Plan.
- Promote the self-esteem of all CIC and PLAC.
- Have received appropriate training to support CIC and PLAC eg attachment, trauma, Adverse Childhood Experiences.

6. 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. The care plan must include a Personal Education Plan (PEP), which forms part of the child's official school record. 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 child, their carers, the social worker, a teacher and others such as, where appropriate, staff from The HOPE Virtual School. If the child has an Education Health and Care Plan, this should be reviewed annually and should, where possible, linked to the PEP. Full guidance on PEP meetings and how to use the PEP is provided on the [CiC education web pages](#).

7. ADDITIONAL FUNDING

Children in care are entitled to additional funding to help improve their outcomes and narrow the gap between their outcomes and those of 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 in order to improve outcomes. The dedicated funding for children in Year R to Year 11 is currently called the CiC 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 CiC Pupil Premium money to be spent on improving outcomes in English and/or maths.

8. ADMISSION/INDUCTION ARRANGEMENTS

Children in Care are a top priority for admission and, as such, St Werburgh's will follow the statutory guidance on school admissions. On admission to the school or to care, 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 undertake our own assessment to make sure that the teaching and support received are appropriate. We will endeavour to meet the statutory time scales for PEPs as outlined in 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 (such as a home/school book to detail any sudden significant changes in a child's circumstances).

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 a severe learning difficulty, this may not be possible.

9. SCHOOL TRIPS AND SPECIAL ACTIVITIES

We aim to ensure that children in care enjoy as many extra-curricular opportunities as possible by reserving placements for them on trips or enrichment activities which they are eligible for and allowing sufficient time to gain the necessary consent. The responsibility for giving permission for school trips and enrichment opportunities is that of the social worker, although they often delegate this to foster carers. The person who may give permission will be clarified at the first PEP meeting. If in doubt we will always send consent forms to the social worker.

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

10. LEAVING ARRANGEMENTS

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.

11. MONITORING AND REVIEW

This policy will be updated as required and reviewed annually.

Children in Care

The terms Looked After Child (LAC) and Child in Care (CiC) are interchangeable. For the purposes of this policy we are using the term CiC. 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. They include the following:

- (i) children who are accommodated by the local authority under a voluntary agreement with their parents;
- (ii) children who are the subject of a care order or interim care order;
- (iii) children who are the subject of emergency orders for the protection of the child;
- (iv) children who are compulsorily accommodated. This includes remanded to the local authority or subject to a criminal justice supervision order with a residence requirement.

A looked after child may be in residential care, a foster placement or could be living with their parents. If living with their parents, this could be on a part time basis or possibly before returning home permanently after a care placement.

Legal Framework

This policy follows the statutory guidance for school governing bodies outlined in [Designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children](#) DfE February 2018.

Complaints

If a young person, parent/carer 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 alongside the carer and the social worker.

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 Headteacher. The Headteacher will investigate the complaint and respond within 10 working days, unless the formal complaint is about the conduct of the Headteacher, in which case the complaint will go straight to the chair of governors.

Any issues 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 Headteacher's response.

Pupils who wish to make a formal complaint against the school or about their care will be advised of the support available for children in care through Reconstruct (contact yourvoice@reconstruct.co.uk).

ANNEX 2 - SOURCES OF GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT:

Bristol City Council:

<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/web/the-hope/schools-education-settings>

<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/web/the-hope/guidance-policies-and-procedures>