



BREWSTER AVENUE INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL

Children in Care Policy

This policy was ratified by the Full Governing Body on: 14th November 2018

Date for review (this policy will be reviewed every three years): Autumn 2021

AS CORPORATE PARENTS, BREWSTER AVENUE INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL IS COMMITTED TO DO ALL THAT WE CAN TO PROMOTE THE EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENT & WELL BEING OF CHILDREN IN CARE

OUR DESIGNATED TEACHER FOR CHILDREN IN CARE IS: - Miss Becky Thompson

OUR DESIGNATED GOVERNOR FOR CHILDREN IN CARE IS: - Mrs Hollie Robinson

This policy describes our approach to meeting the requirements set out in:

- the Statutory Guidance of Section 52 of the Children Act 2004 (Duty on Local Authorities to Promote the Educational Achievement of Looked After Children);
- Care Matters: Time for Change 2007 Guidance (Chapter 4 “A First Class Education”)
- The Children & Young person’s Act 2008 (Duty on Schools to appoint a Designated Teacher for Children in Care)

In line with our school ethos and principles, and our commitment to the Corporate Parenting role of being a ‘good parent’, our policy is to identify specific roles & responsibilities within school to promote the learning, progress and wellbeing of children in care.

The school recognises that the provisions outlined in this policy must be in place regardless of whether there are any Children in Care and PLAC currently on the school roll. (See Appendix 2 - Roles and Responsibilities; ‘Rationale’)

This policy was developed in Partnership with Peterborough Children’s Services Virtual School for Children in Care. (See Appendix 3)

1. Governing Body and School commitment to enhanced support for CiC

Who are Looked After Children?

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is looked after by a local authority if he or she is in their care or provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the authority. They fall into four main groups:

- Children who are accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents (section 20)
- Children who are the subjects of a care order (section 31) or interim care order (section 38)
- Children who are the subjects of emergency orders for their protection (sections 44 and 46)
- Children who are compulsorily accommodated – this includes children remanded to the local authority or subject to a criminal justice supervision order with a residence requirement (section 21)

The term ‘in care’ refers only to children who are subject to a care order by the courts under section 31 of the Children Act 1989 – they may live with foster carers, in a Children’s Home, in a residential school, with relatives or with parents under supervision. Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are ‘accommodated’ by the local authority under section 20 of the Children Act – they may live in foster care, in a Children’s Home or in a residential school. All these groups are said to be ‘Looked After Children’ – LAC. They may be looked after by our local authority or may be in the care of another authority but living in ours.

Personal Education Plan (PEP) / LAC reviews, involving the school, will take place up until an adoption order has been granted. However, Pupil Premium Plus funding will continue for LAC and PLAC until they are 16 years old.

The Governing Body recognises that it is the corporate parent (any and all adults working for the Council or a school) that has responsibility and accountability for the wellbeing and future prospects of children in their care. A good corporate parent is expected to offer everything that a good parent would.

We recognise that entering care represents a significant change in a child's life. At this stage the State takes on an immense responsibility for these children by agreeing to undertake the parental role on a day to day basis. That means that all those working for the State at a local level in this school should demand no less for each child in care than they would for their own children.

- The Governing Body and School will ensure that high quality learning opportunities and education are provided for all our pupils
- We will ensure equality of access to opportunities and learning outcomes for all
- We aim to support all pupils in achieving across the five outcome areas of Every Child Matters, whatever their background or circumstances.
- We recognise that Children in Care and PLAC can be especially vulnerable and are sometimes 'at risk' of failure in the learning context.

Therefore, with specific reference to this cohort of children we will strive to achieve the following:

2. Aims for our Children in Care and Previously Looked After Children

- to ensure all school policies and procedures are followed sensitively for Children in Care and PLAC
- to ensure that all pupils in care have access to a broad, balanced and stimulating curriculum
- to provide personalised learning and curriculum appropriate to needs and ability
- to support and monitor social progress; ensuring key adults prioritise respectful and responsive relationship building with individual children and provide appropriate support for social development within the peer group)
- to ensure that wherever possible pupils in care receive a full 25 hours of education each week
- to ensure that pupils in care take as full a part as possible in all school activities and strive to reduce and eliminate any barriers that may stop them from taking part
- to ensure that Carers, Social Workers and Parents (as appropriate) of pupils in care are involved and kept fully informed of their child's progress and attainment
- to ensure that wherever possible pupils in care are involved in decisions affecting their learning, the plans for progress and future provision
- to ensure that success is appropriately recognised and reinforced
- to ensure that any emerging concerns are followed up in a timely way with skill and sensitivity (e.g. changes in patterns of behaviour and attendance)
- to liaise and cooperate with appropriate partners to ensure that all plans complement and support the promotion of the educational achievement and wellbeing of pupils in care.

3. Admissions to Our School

- The Governing Body supports Peterborough City Council's approach to admissions giving Children in Care the highest priority for admission to the identified school
- Our school will ensure Children in Care are named as first priority within our school written admissions criteria
- Sometimes care placement changes lead to a Child in Care entering school midterm or mid-year if this is thought to be in the best interests of the child. This school will ensure that in these circumstances a Child in Care will be admitted to the school in a timely manner, even if this would mean that this would increase class sizes above the recommended maximum. As necessary, we will give a positive welcome, plan entry, offer additional support and pre-entry visits to help pupil's settle in school.

4. Inclusion and Allocation of Resources

- Our policy recognises that all pupils are entitled to a balanced, broadly based, and stimulating curriculum and learning programme
- For Children in Care and PLAC there can often be a need to develop learning opportunities emphasising personalised planning and planned inclusive approaches
- The Governing Body will ensure our school makes all appropriate learning provision for pupils in care. Resources are allocated to support pupils in care in line with this policy and with our wider school teaching and learning policies and good practice. There is a separate Pupil Premium code for PLAC children and this is reported annually to Governors.

5. Monitoring the Progress of Children in Care

- Progress for pupils in care in school is monitored and supported and is guided by school policies for teaching and learning
- We will monitor and track the achievement and attainment of pupils in care and PLAC at regular intervals. This will be formally reported to the Virtual School for Children in Care at termly intervals for LAC
- We will ensure that the school makes an assessment of the pupil's needs and attainment on entry, to ensure continuity of learning
- We recognise the importance of the Personal Education Plan (PEP) and understand that they are statutory school documents.
- The school will ensure that PEPs for Children in Care are completed within the statutory time scales as specified below
- Wherever possible the PEP will be based on the individual personal planning and target setting that occurs as best practice within the school, which will be amended according to the views of the partners involved in the meeting
- We will ensure that the statutory Personal Education Plans are supported and systematically delivered within the appropriate timescales.
- The Social Worker for each pupil in care in school will initiate a Personal Education Plan. The Virtual School for Children in Care, in partnership with our Designated Teacher for CIC, will ensure that the initial planning meeting will take place within 20 days of the pupil joining the school or entering care.
- Each PEP will be reviewed according to the needs of the pupil. The school and social worker will review the PEP, initially within 3 months of the first PEP meeting and subsequently at least once a school term.
- The pupil's views are actively and sensitively sought by the appropriate key partner (Designated Teacher, Social Worker, Carer, and Education Caseworker).
- The views of the pupil and carers are noted within the PEP Form and shared sensitively at the meeting. The pupil is as actively involved as possible in selecting appropriate targets and with decisions relating to school and learning (see Appendix 4 - PEP Guidance).

6. Attendance and Exclusion

- The school recognises that Children in Care are statistically much more likely to have a poor attendance record and are up to 5 times more likely to be excluded than their non-looked after peers.
- The school will take specific steps to monitor the attendance of pupils in care and PLAC and will notify all appropriate partners at an early stage if there is an indication that problems with attendance might occur.
- The school will take all reasonable steps to ensure that exclusion is rarely used for a pupil in care and PLAC and then it is always only as a last resort, after all other avenues have been explored.

- The school will make arrangements for first day provision for any excluded pupil in care and PLAC as it would for any pupil after day 6 of exclusion.
- The school will organise a PEP meeting as part of the re admission process if appropriate.
- The school will ensure that should a pupil in care and PLAC be identified as at risk of exclusion, then contact is made with the Local Authority and the named contact in the Virtual School for Children in Care immediately, to enable early intervention/preventative strategies to be instigated.

7. Record Keeping and Information Sharing

- Our Designated Teacher will coordinate record keeping for of all Children in Care in school.
- Records will include individual learning plans, up to date progress and attainment records, PEPs and personalised information relating to care context as appropriate. These records will be maintained in a single place, having regard to the statutory nature of some of these documents and the confidential information that they contain.
- In Care status will be appropriately 'flagged' in school information management systems, ensuring information and planning records are readily available as required.
- We will ensure there is ready access to information and up to date contact details for Carers, Parents (where appropriate), Social Worker and the named contact in the Virtual School for Children in Care
- All appropriate records will be forwarded to the receiving school promptly if there is a transfer to another school.
- Sensitivity is a priority in sharing information with members of the school staff team. We are guided by best practice and on the 'need to know'. Wherever possible pupils' wishes are taken into account in sharing information within the staff team.
- The Designated Teacher will attend, or arrange for someone else to attend, or contribute in other ways to the Statutory Child in Care review process.

8. Appointments with in Staff and Governing Body

- The school recognises that there is a statutory requirement to appoint a Designated Teacher for Children in Care and PLAC and a Governor with responsibility for Children in Care. (see appendix 2)
- All staff and governors have a responsibility for the educational achievement and wellbeing of Children in Care as a Corporate Parent. The work of the Designated Teacher and Governor with responsibility for Children in Care is to lead in this area, but they do not hold sole responsibility.

9. Staff and Governors' Development and Training

- All staff and governors are encouraged to develop via reflective processes. We encourage ongoing engagement with relevant training to maintain and extend individual and team expertise in supporting Children in Care to progress.
- Our Designated Teacher makes particular efforts to develop good awareness and understanding of issues, guidance and developments associated with Children in Care. The Designated Teacher disseminates knowledge and skills to colleagues in school as appropriate and necessary. Partnership working and collaboration with the Local Authority and the Virtual School for Children in Care is essential here (see Appendix 3).
- There is a specific statutory expectation that the Designated Teacher for Children in care will be released to attend a programme of training each year to maintain and extend their personal expertise.
- Our Designated Governor will attend appropriate briefings and relevant development opportunities provided by the Local Authority and the Virtual School for Children in Care.

10. Partnership Working

- Our school values the views of Carers and Parents. We firmly believe in developing strong partnerships with Carers/Parents and Residential Care Workers to enable pupils achieve to their potential.
- We will develop close relationships and collaborative work to promote the learning and wellbeing of individual children, both in and out of school.
- PEP meetings, other school liaison and consultation processes and informal day to day dialogue are all seen as good opportunities to enhance our partnerships.
- We recognise the essential contributions that external support services make in supporting Children in Care. We commit to developing positive partnerships with all involved. Our partnerships with community partners are extensive; some of our key partners for these children include :-
 - CiC Team (Foster Carers / Residential Key Workers, Social Workers, Family Support Workers, Virtual School for Children in Care, Head of Learning & Opportunity for CiC)
 - Other Local Authority Services; Educational Psychologists; SEN Team; Behaviour Support; Learning Support; Medical Officers; School Nurses; CAMHS; Education Welfare Officers; Social Care Sessional Staff/ Community Care Worker/ Residential Care Staff; Youth Offending Service; Locality Team Workers; Independent Review Officers; Advocacy Services.

11. School Children in Care Policy Review and Evaluation

- Our Children in Care policy is of highest importance
- We will undertake a review of best practices each year
- The policy will be updated every 3 years, unless statutory or best practice guidance required an earlier review