



# ***Children In Care Policy***

Review Date: 2nd June 2017

Next Review: 2019

*“giving them a sense of the control they have over their own lives”*

# *Children In Care Policy*

## **Rationale**

RISE Education has a key role to play in improving the life chances of children on roll who are in Care . So that we improve the educational attainment and achievement of all children in Care and give them the greatest chance of success , we aim to be a place where children in Care can learn, be themselves and make lasting friendships. To do this we commit to:

- raising their aspirations;
- giving them a sense of the control they have over their own lives;
- fostering positive attitudes and behaviours;
- providing continuity and 'normality' for those who may have been subject to emotional distress, abuse and disruption.

## **Definition**

'Under the Children Act 1989, a child is in the care of the local authority if he or she is provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the authority. This includes the following:

1. children who are accommodated by the local authority under a voluntary agreement with their parents
2. children who are the subject of a care order or interim care order
3. children who are the subject of emergency orders for the protection of the child'

A child in care 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**

Legislation and guidance from the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) and the Department of Health (DH) requires schools to have effective policies for

supporting and promoting the education of children in Care. schools must:

- ensure access to a balanced and broadly based education for all children in Care;
- prioritise recording and improving the academic achievement of children in Care;
- prioritise a reduction in the number of exclusions and truancies for all children in Care;
- ensure there is a designated teacher to promote the educational achievement of all children in Care who are on the school roll;
  
- develop effective systems of communications and protocols;
- promote the attendance of children in Care.

### **Objectives**

At RISE Education we aim to ensure that those key qualities found by the DCSF (2009) and Ofsted (2008) to be features of best practice in supporting children in Care are embedded in our practice.

RISE Education will support children in Care by:

- positively discriminating for CiC e.g. providing 1:1 tuition;
- making it a priority to know the children well and to build strong relationships;
- balancing high levels of support with challenge and high expectations;
- ensuring consistency as well as discrete flexibility;
- actively extending the aspirations of each child;
- working to develop strong partnerships with carers, local authorities and specialist agencies;
- allocating a Key Worker;
- planning for future transitions effectively.

In addition, we will:

- closely monitor the academic, social and personal progress of all children in Care;
- work alongside social workers and other professionals to ensure that each child in Care has a current Personal Education Plan (PEP) in place which includes challenging, curriculum-based targets and is an effective tool which supports the young person's educational progress;
- ensure that Personal Education Allowance (PEA) money is accessed and used to provide additional, personalised support to improve outcomes for children in Care;
- challenge negative stereotypes amongst students and staff;
- ensure discretion when addressing a child's care status and the background and family history of children who are in care, especially surrounding teaching and learning relating to the family;
- ensure a clear protocol is followed in the sharing of information, both within school and with outside agencies.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

*The Role of the Senior Management Team:*

- appoint a designated teacher in accordance with the regulations published in September 2009;
- identify a SMT Member with specific responsibility for children in Care;
- ensure that, in partnership with the Headteacher, the designated teacher has the opportunity to acquire and keep up to date the necessary skills, knowledge and training to understand and respond to the specific teaching and learning needs of children in Care;
- ensure that the designated teacher is either on the Management team or, if not, that there is a champion of children in Care on the Senior Management team who can work closely with the designated teacher;
- ensure that the designated teacher is appropriately supported in order to fulfil their role;
- ensure that the school has a coherent policy in place for children in Care;
- ensure that the school's policies and procedures are reviewed in the light of social inclusion guidance and joint DH/DofE/DE guidelines;
- ensure that there are arrangements in place to keep themselves informed about provision for, and attainment of, children in Care;

The name of the SMT Member with specific responsibility for children in care is: Joe Kerson

*The role of the Headteacher:*

- ensure that, in partnership with the Governing body, the designated teacher has the opportunity to acquire and keep up to date the necessary skills, knowledge and training to understand and respond to the specific teaching and learning needs of children in Care;
- ensure that the designated teacher role contributes to the deeper understanding of everyone in the school who is likely to be involved in supporting children in Care to achieve;
- in partnership with the Governing body, monitor the effectiveness of the role of the designated teacher; oversee the development of the policy on children in Care;
- wherever possible allocate children in Care a Key Worker; evaluate the standards and achievement of children in Care and report these termly to the SMT and discuss them at Core SIP meetings.

*The role of the designated teacher:*

- promote the educational achievement of every child in Care on the school's roll;
- monitor the standards and achievement of children in Care and evaluate these in line with the school's evaluation policy;
- promote a whole school culture where the personalised learning needs of every child in Care matters and their social, emotional and academic needs are prioritised;
- facilitate the training of school staff in developing their understanding of the factors which can affect how children in Care learn and develop;

- contribute to the development and review of whole school policies to ensure that they do not unintentionally put children in Care at a disadvantage;
- promote a culture in which children in Care believe they can succeed and aspire to further and higher education;
- promote a culture in which children in Care are able to discuss their progress, have their views taken seriously and are supported to take responsibility for their own learning;
- be a source of advice for teachers about differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual students who are in Care;
- make sure that the school makes full use of Assessment for learning (AfL) approaches to improve the short and medium term progress of children in Care;
- make sure that children in Care are prioritised in any selection of students who would benefit from one-to-one tuition or any other initiatives/ interventions promoted by the Department for Education;
- promote good home-school links through contact with carers and effective communication;
- set up systems to monitor and record the progress of all children in Care;
- work with curriculum-based middle leaders to monitor the educational progress of children in care and intervene, drawing upon external agency support if required, if there is evidence of underachievement, absence from school or internal truancy, or other similar concern;
- maintain records regarding all children in Care, 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;
- have an overview and co-ordinating role for gathering and holding all information regarding
  - children in Care;
- maintain and respect confidentiality of all children in Care and ensure that information is shared on a strictly need to know basis;
- play 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 children in Care;
- serve as the named contact for colleagues in social care and ensure effective communication between all relevant parties;
- ensure that strategies are in place for effective transfers and transitions between Key Stages and Year groups;
- ensure that each child who is in Care has a carefully selected Key Worker.

The designated teacher is: Ms Bakich (Mitcham) and Ms Simon (Croydon)

*The role of all those involved in supporting children in Care:*

- ensure that all children in Care are treated inclusively;
- have high expectations of children in Care's involvement in learning and educational progress;

- be aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation from birth families;
- understand the reasons which may affect the behaviour of children in Care, and why they may need more support than other children / be positively discriminated for;
- 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 in Care 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 them achieve their potential.

### **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. 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 Education of Children Looked After Service (ECLAS).

#### *The Local Authority will:*

- notify the school's designated teacher if a child on the school's roll is taken into Care and will ensure that they receive the PEP, 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 student 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

- ensure that PEA applications agreed in PEP meetings are signed off by a social care manager

*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 it will provide information which helps all those 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.

**Personal Education Allowance (PEA)**

All children in Care who are of compulsory school age are entitled to a Personal Education Allowance of up to £500 a year to help improve their educational outcomes. These allowances are to provide additional, personalised support, and are accessed through the review of the Personal Education Plan.

**Admission/Induction Arrangements**

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

On admission, the child will meet with the designated teacher. The designated teacher will identify any relevant issues, academic or pastoral and seek the agreement of the child as to who in school should be notified of the child's Care status. 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.

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 planner to detail any sudden significant changes in a child's circumstances.)

### **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 for which they are eligible. The responsibility for giving permission for school trips and enrichment opportunities is that of the social worker, sometimes delegated to foster carers. The person who may give permission will be clarified at the first PEP meeting.

### **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 alongside the carer and the social worker.

If the issue cannot be resolved, then the procedures set out in the Complaints Policy should be followed.

### **Summary**

A key objective set out in this policy is that we at RISE Education 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.

RISE Education strives to ensure that the culture and ethos of the school are such that, whatever the heritage and origins of members of the school students should be provided with the opportunity to experience, understand and celebrate diversity.

This policy is written in accordance with the following policies and documents:

- Behaviour policy
- Anti-bullying policy
- PSHE & C policy
- Learning and Teaching policy
- Confidentiality policy
- Single Equality Scheme (inc. DES, GES, RES)
- Child Protection policy

- Safeguarding Children Policy
- Improving the attainment of looked after children in secondary schools - DCSF 2009
- The role and responsibilities of the designated teacher for looked after children - DCSF 2009
- Bristol LA Guidance for Primary and Secondary PEP, May 2010
- Bristol LA Guidance on the Personal Education Allowance, May 2010

This policy is dated: 2nd June 2017

To be reviewed again: 2019

### References

1. Definition taken from, 'The role and responsibilities of the designated teacher for looked after children,' 2009, DCSF.
2. 'Poorer children's educational attainment: how important are attitudes and behaviour?' Edited by Alissa Goodman and Paul Gregg, March 2010, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, is one piece of research which demonstrates the importance of the role of Primary schools.
3. 'Improving the attainment of looked after children in secondary schools, guidance for schools', 2009, DCSF
4. 'Looked after children - good practice in schools', 2008, Ofsted
5. Information from 'The role and responsibilities of the designated teacher for looked after children', 2009, DCSF
6. Taken from Bristol LA guidance on Primary and Secondary PEPs, May 2010 and 'The role and responsibilities of the designated teacher for looked after children', May 2009
7. Definition taken from Bristol's Local Authority Guidance on Personal Education Allowance, May 2010
8. 'Improving the attainment of looked after children in primary schools', DCSF, 2009