

Policy: Children in Care



“We want Children in Care to feel loved and cared for, able to achieve their potential, and given the best chances in life.” Children and Young Person’s plan 2008-2011

At Sidmouth College we believe that all Children in Care should have equitable access to excellent educational provision and achieve at a similar level to all Devon children. We as a community aim to be champions for Children in Care and take a proactive approach to support their success, recognising that we have a vital role to play in promoting children and young people’s social and emotional development.

Who are our Children in Care?

The child or young person will either have been taken into Care by the Local Authority, or have been ‘Accommodated’ by the Local Authority (a voluntary care arrangement). Most Children in Care will be living in foster homes but a smaller number may be in a children’s home, living with a relative or even be placed back at home with their parent(s) sharing parental responsibility with the Local Authority.

In Supporting Children in Care we will:

- Create a whole school ethos in which all staff understand their role and accept their responsibility as a Corporate Parent.
- Provide a safe and secure environment, which values education and believes in the abilities and potential of all children.
- Bring the educational attainments of our Children in Care nearer to those of their peers.
- Make sure that they have access to education appropriate to their age and ability. This includes access to a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Identify our schools’ role to promote and support the education of our Children in Care.
- Have a Designated Teacher (DT) for Children in Care who will act as their advocate and coordinate support for them, liaising with carers, parents (as appropriate) and social workers on a wide variety of educational and care issues.
- To support Every Child Matters five outcomes:
 - Be healthy - for example, helping learners to adopt healthy lifestyles, build their self-esteem, eat and drink well and lead active lives.
 - Stay safe - for example, keeping learners safe from bullying, harassment and other dangers.
 - Enjoy and achieve - for example, enabling learners to make good progress in their work and personal development and to enjoy their education.
 - Make a positive contribution - for example, ensuring that learners understand their rights and responsibilities, are listened to, and participate in the life of the community.

- Achieve economic well-being - for example, helping pupils to gain the skills and knowledge needed for future employment.

(Taken from Ofsted Conducting the inspection Guidance for inspectors of schools July 2005 pg 10)

All staff and governors are committed to ensuring improved educational life chances for Children in Care by ensuring that the relevant personnel have reasonable support and time to complete tasks and responsibilities. Also, to establishing and maintaining appropriate reporting and monitoring procedures both within the school and with other agencies.

In pursuit of this Policy we will:

- Nominate a Designated Teacher for Children in Care who will act as their advocate and co-ordinate support for them.
- Nominate a school governor to ensure that the needs of Children in Care in the school are taken into account at a school management level and to support the Designated Teacher.
- Support the Designated teacher in carrying out their role by making time available and ensuring that they attend training on Children in Care.

DESIGNATED TEACHER FOR CHILDREN IN CARE (See Statutory Regulations from September 2009)

The name of the Designated Teacher for Children in Care is Mrs Cassy Beer

The Designated Teacher needs to:

- Be a qualified teacher or head teacher.
- Be a person who has been doing the role for at least six months and must be taking active steps to becoming a qualified teacher.
- Maintain a register of all Children in Care (this includes Children in Care to both Devon and other local authorities). This will include a record of:
 - Status i.e. care order or accommodated.
 - Type of Placement e.g. foster, respite, residential, adoptive.
 - Name of Social Worker, area office, telephone number.
 - Ensure statutory documentation is kept up to date and is relevant to the child's needs and ability i.e. Personal Education Plan.
 - Daily contact and telephone numbers of those who need to be contacted in an emergency or for any other concerns. E.g. name of child, name of parent or carer or key worker in children's home.
 - Share Child Protection / disability information (if not appropriate to share, indicate the confidential nature of the information).
 - Relevant health information.
 - Baseline information and all test results.
 - Named officers in the LA with regard to exclusion issues, attendance issues and transition issues.

- The child is entitled to decide who attends their Children in Care Statutory Reviews (6 monthly); if school do not attend they need to submit a written report that promotes the continuity and stability of their Personal Education Plan.
- Participate in appropriate DT training and joint agency training.
- If there are safeguarding concerns for a Child in Care, contact and advice should be sought from Education Safeguarding team.

GOVERNORS

The name of the Designated Governor for Children in Care is Nancy Craven

What every Designated Governor for CIC needs to know:

- Number of CIC on school roll.
- Number of CIC with up to date PEPs.
- Overall attainment of CIC in the school / performance compared to peers.
- Number of CIC with SEN and statements.
- Authorised and unauthorised absence levels of CIC.
- Number of CIC who have been excluded in previous 12 months.
- How LA supports educational achievement of CIC.

Governing body will:

- Ensure the DT has opportunity to attend training and that school staff and governors are aware of the DCSF Statutory guidance.
- Have knowledge of the Duty on Local Authorities to Promote the Educational Achievement of Children in Care, under Section 52 of the Children's Act 2004.
- Make certain that there is a dedicated Governor or committee to champion and monitor the work of the school in supporting its Children in Care as a part of a larger group of vulnerable children.
- Take a proactive approach in co-operating with, and supporting, the relevant Local Authority with regard to the education of Children in Care attending the school.
- Ensure that Designated Teachers and staff are aware of and enabled to carry out their responsibilities effectively with the full support of the head teacher.

Whole School approach:

- The voice of the child will be listened to and acted upon.
- We will celebrate the achievements of Children in Care.
- Our staff will have high expectations of the child, encouraging achievement and ambition.
- Our Children in Care will have a special, trusted adult in school that is able to take time to listen to them and have access to support and counselling in school if required.
- For our young Children in Care, there will be clarity in relation to who is and is not allowed to collect them from school.
- Training will be provided so that all our staff understand the needs of Children in Care in order that they actively promote the child's best interests. That they are aware of a variety of issues that may undermine the child's ability to engage in the learning process - including feelings of loss, rejection, isolation, confusion and low self-esteem.

- Adults in our school will be sensitive to the child's wishes over what is known and by whom regarding their care status
- We will ensure that effective assessment, recording and reporting practices are established.
- There will be appropriate information sharing about individual Children in Care.
- Our DT will ensure that positive messages about behaviour and achievement are shared within our school and between school, carers, parents (as appropriate) and outside agencies. They will also ensure that high educational expectations are maintained.
- We will actively support and encourage the engagement of Children in Care in out of school hours learning.
- Our staff will work in partnership with carers, agencies and parents (where appropriate).
- We will support carers to value educational achievement and improve attendance
- Our staff will help our Children in Care to feel that they are fitting in and offer them a safe haven and a sympathetic ear in a crisis.
- Our staff will be aware that being or becoming 'in Care' has a major impact on children's lives and that when considering children's learning and or behaviour, due consideration will be given.
- We will make certain that our staff are aware of possible unresolved feelings the child may have about their own families and siblings, in addition to insecurity over their current homes and carers.

Special Educational needs / Gifted and talented (see our SEN and Gifted & Talented Policies):

- Any special educational needs/gifted and talented abilities will be quickly identified and appropriate provision will be made.
- We will have systems in place so that we can identify and prioritise when Children in Care are underachieving and have early interventions to improve this.
- If the child has a statement of special educational need, we will ensure the annual review coincides with one of the six monthly care planning reviews; dates can be obtained from the social worker.

Admissions and transitions:

We will:

- Prioritise Children in Care within our own admissions procedures and admit students as quickly as possible recognising the importance of re-establishing school stability for Children in Care.
- Ensure a warm welcome to our school by providing appropriate induction for all Children in Care so that there is a smooth and successful transition which includes carers and parents where appropriate.
- Make sure that on admission or transfer all relevant information is obtained at the outset.
- Forward appropriate documents, in a timely fashion, to any receiving school at the point of transition where the receiving school is made known.
- Make every effort to provide continuity of schooling and educational experience.

Attendance: (see our attendance policy)

We will:

- Establish a first day of absence procedure where attendance is identified as a problem.
- Inform the Carer / Education Welfare service / Social Worker / Parents (if appropriate) if there are any concerns about attendance.

- We will acknowledge attendance in any education meetings, celebrating success and setting realistic targets if it is a concern

Exclusion:

We will:

- Actively follow the DCC Eliminating the Exclusion of Children in Care Protocol.

Multi-agency liaison:

- We will support the child to engage fully in planning and decision making.
- The DT will liaise closely with carers, parents (if appropriate) and the pupil's social worker on a variety of issues, including homework, kit and equipment required It is important that positive messages about behaviour and achievement are shared.
- There will be a well planned and co-ordinated approach to meeting the child's educational and social needs, for example, whether potentially disruptive changes in school can be prevented.
- There will be a clear understanding about the role and responsibility of staff in relation to the child and the roles and responsibilities of the other professionals involved.
- Our staff will share positive perceptions and high expectations of the child with other professionals but especially with the child.
- We will be aware of and sensitive to the appropriate role of the parents.
- Our DT will ensure that requests from the LA for statistical or other information held by the school are completed and returned on time to comply with statutory obligations.
- We will encourage each of our Children in Care to access out of hours learning activities realising the positive impact this could have on their self – esteem and learning.

Personal Education Plans (PEPs):

We will:

- Hold a PEP meeting in time for every statutory care review that involves the social worker, foster carers, child and parent if appropriate. Additional attendees may include e.g. Connexions, Educational Psychologist, Education Welfare officer etc. We will seek the views of the child as to appropriate attendees in line with the statutory guidance.
- Have a PEP for each child which includes appropriate targets. This will be compatible with the timing of the child's Care Plan. Other school plans e.g. Statement, Transition Plan, Pastoral Support Programme will feed into and form a part of the PEP.
- Contribute to the process whereby all Children in Care have a high quality Personal Educational Plan (PEP) in place within 20 days of starting the school. This will include SMART educational targets and will be linked to the child's Care Plan and any other plan resulting from the assessment of the child (IEP, PSP, Statement of Educational Need).
- Seek to nominate our Children in Care to DCC for the Children in Care Celebration of Achievement Event.
- Make certain that following the writing of a PEP, any educational recommendations in that PEP will be adhered to by our staff in order that all our Children in Care have the opportunity to fulfil and achieve the targets set.
- Make or support applications for a Personal Education Allowance (PEA) e.g. those who are at risk of underachieving academically or for extra curricular activities; through discussions at PEP meetings.

Related Documentation:

- *DfES, Guidance on the Education of Young People in Public Care (DH/DfES, 2000)*
- *A Guide to the Law for School Governors, (2004)*
- *Children Act 1989, Children Act 2004*
- *DfES, Every Child Matters: Change for Children, (2004)*
- *DfES, Every Child Matters: Change for Children in Social Care, (2004)*
- *DfES, Statutory Guidance on the Duty of Local Authorities to Promote the Educational Achievements of Looked After Children under Section 52 of the Children Act 2004, (2005)*
- *DfES, Supporting Looked After Learners: A Practical Guide for School Governors, (2006)*
- *Ofsted, Raising Achievement of Children in Public Care, (2005)*
- *Social Exclusion Report, A Better Education for Children in Care: Full Report, (2003)*
- *DfES, Care Matters: Time For Change, (2007)*
- *DCSF, The Children's Plan: building brighter futures, (2007)*
- *Looked after children – good practice in schools (2008)*
- *DCSF, the Role and Responsibilities of the Designated Teacher for Looked After Children: Statutory Guidance for School Governing Bodies, (2009)*
- *DCC Eliminating Exclusions Protocol*
- *Ofsted, Children's Messages to the Minister, (2009)*
- *DCSF, Care Matters: Ministerial Stocktake Report, (2009)*
- *Ofsted, The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2008/09: Improving outcomes for looked after children (2009)*
- *DCSF, Improving the Attainment of Looked After Children in Primary Schools: Guidance for Schools (2009)*
- *DCSF, Improving the Attainment of Looked After Children in Secondary Schools: Guidance for Schools (2009)*

The head teacher and/or DT will be responsible for briefing all staff on the regulations and practice outlined in this policy.

Approved by: Learning & Standards 21.09.15

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