

Brine Leas School

An Academy

CARED FOR CHILDREN POLICY

RATIONALE

- Many Cared for Children have suffered disrupted learning and may have missed extended periods of school. The gaps in their learning – and in many cases the emotional impact of their experiences – are likely to have become significant barriers to their progress.
- For many Cared for Children, school life can be challenging. They may find it harder to trust adults; their educational experience may have been disrupted; their capacity to build and maintain relationships and friendships may be impaired.
- A supportive school can be the key to their success and can enhance their life chances. School can provide stability, a safe place in a turbulent world, an opportunity to achieve, be successful and excel and a route towards a more successful future
- Brine Leas School aims to provide positive experiences and to offer stability, safety, continuity, and individual care and attention for our Cared for Children

OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY

To fulfil our school's role as corporate parents by:

- promoting the educational achievement of Cared for Children;
- promoting the educational attainment of Cared for Children;
- promoting the welfare of Cared for Children;
- ensuring that Cared for Children stay safe, are healthy, enjoy and achieve, are involved and acquire economic wellbeing.

This policy takes account of:

- The Children Act 2004 to promote the educational achievement of Cared for Children.
- The Education (Admission of Looked After Children) (England) Regulations 2006.
- Relevant guidance to Governing Bodies (Supporting Looked After Learners: A Practical Guide for School Governors).
- The school's approach to supporting the educational achievement of Cared for Children is based on the following principles:
 - Prioritising education
 - Promoting attendance
 - Targeting support
 - Having high expectations
 - Promoting inclusion by challenging and changing attitudes of the school community
 - Achieving stability and continuity
 - Early intervention and priority action

- Listening to children
- Promoting health and wellbeing
- Reducing exclusions and promoting stability
- Working in partnership with carers, social workers and other professionals

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

• THE HEADTEACHER AND LEADERSHIP TEAM

The Headteacher and Leadership Team will ensure the provision/outcomes for Cared for Children are specifically recorded in:

- Personal Educational Plans.
- SES.
- Appropriate School Policies and Procedures.
- Specific Reports on issues such as student progress in relation to targets and Fischer Family Trust; exam results; attendance; behaviour, sanctions, exclusions; student voice.

The Headteacher and Leadership team will also:

- support the Designated Teacher (Assistant Headteacher Pastoral Support) in the production of annual/termly reports on the provision for, and progress of, Cared for Children to the Governing Body;
- monitor, with the Governing Body, the role of the Designated Teacher;
- ensure staff are aware that the provision to support Cared for Children is a key school priority;
- give the Designated Teacher for Cared for Children the time and resources to carry out the job description and support them at all times in their work;
- show a personal interest and involvement in Cared for Children in the school;
- challenge negative stereotypes of Cared for Children if they exist and insist on the highest expectations, especially in terms of Cared for Children achieving their full potential;
- provide Continuing Professional Development for staff on issues pertaining to Cared for Children and support the Designated Teacher so that they can attend regular training.

• THE LOCAL GOVERNING BOARD

The Local Governing Board has:

- appointed the Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral Support) as the Designated Teacher for Cared for Children.

The Local Governing Board will:

- receive reports on Cared for Children;
- ensure that the Designated Teacher is given the appropriate level of support to fulfil their role;

- ensure that 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 Cared for Children.

- **THE DESIGNATED TEACHER**

The Designated Teacher will:

- promote the educational achievement of every Cared for Child on the school's role;
- provide strategic leadership across the school to ensure that all staff understand and respond positively and with sensitivity to the individual needs of Cared for Children;
- contribute to the development and review of whole school policies to ensure that they do not unintentionally put Cared for Children at a disadvantage;
- make sure, in partnership with other staff, that there are effective and well understood school procedures in place to support Cared for Children's learning. Particular account should be taken of the child's needs when joining the school and of the importance of promoting an ethos of high expectations about what they can achieve;
- promote a culture in which Cared for Children believe they can succeed and aspire to further and higher education;
- promote a culture in which Cared for Children are able to discuss their progress via voice of the child and be involved in setting their own targets, have their views taken seriously and are supported to take responsibility for their own learning;
- lead the process of individual target setting and tracking of the progress made by Cared for Children;
- produce annual reports on the provision for, and progress of, Cared for Children to the Governing Body as part of the Pupil Premium cohort;
- be a source of advice for teachers at school about differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual pupils who are Cared for;
- promote Assessment for Learning approaches to improve the short and medium term progress of Cared for Children and help them and their teachers understand where they are in their learning, where they need to go and how to get there;
- make sure that Cared for Children are prioritised in any selection of pupils who would benefit from one-to-one tuition and that they have access to academic focussed study;
- have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of the PEP within school in partnership with others as necessary;
- ensure that systems are in place that enable children to have an opportunity to contribute to their PEP via voice of the child and understand what the plan means for them;
- ensure that appropriate staff attend the PEP meeting;
- ensure that the PEP is up-to-date and made available for the child's statutory care plan review;
- Work closely with Virtual schools and Social Workers to support Cared for Children;
- contribute to the decision making about the use of the Personal Education Allowance;
- prevent, wherever possible, the exclusion of a Cared for Child;
- maintain a register of Cared for Children;

- keep all relevant education and care information about Cared for Children up to date;
- ensure school procedures for welcoming pupils new to the school are followed when a Cared for Child joins the school, particularly as a mid-year admission;
- promote the involvement of Cared for Children in extra-curricular activities both during and after the school day;
- in secondary schools ensure that: students undertake work experience and have access to enterprise and work related education working with the careers advisor. Cared for Children receive all possible guidance and assistance in terms of their post 16 pathways, with the aim of ensuring that they progress to education, employment or training / Cared for Children are given specific help in developing the social and personal skills that will give them better life chances.

The Relationship of the Designated Teacher to others beyond the School

The Designated Teacher will:

- be a central point of initial contact for others beyond the school;
- ensure that arrangements are in place within the school to facilitate effective co-operation with other professionals, especially the virtual School Head;
- report to the Virtual Head on the progress, targets, achievements and levels of attainment of Cared for Children;
- work closely with the Cared for Child's carers and promote good home-school links;
- ensure school policies in relation to, for example, home-school agreements, time-keeping and attendance, organisers and parents' evenings are communicated to carers and social workers and, where appropriate, birth parents;
- ensure that the Cared for Child's teachers know the most appropriate person to contact when necessary eg for permission slips for school trips;
- provide advice about the likely impact of disrupting the child's education if changes of care placement occur;
- ensure education records are received/passed on if a Cared for Child transfers school and support the transition process;
- be involved in any discussion related to decisions about potential exclusions of Cared for Children;
- make sure that the authority which looks after the child and the child's carers are involved in any discussion/decision about exclusion.

Training

The Designated Teacher will:

- develop knowledge of Children's Services procedures by attending training and/or networking events;
- disseminate information to school staff as appropriate;
- attend training provided locally, regionally or nationally.

- **ALL STAFF/THE WHOLE SCHOOL**

All staff will be aware of Cared for Children in their classes and give them all possible support and encouragement as students who need special provision and positive discrimination whilst preserving confidentiality and showing sensitivity and understanding.

They will help Cared for Children to achieve by:

- having high expectations of Cared for Children's involvement in learning and educational progress;
- being aware of the social, psychological and social effects of loss and separation from birth families;
- understanding the reasons which may be behind a Cared for Child's behaviour and why he/she may need more support than other children. Do not, however, allow this to be an excuse for lowering expectations of what a child is capable of achieving;
- understanding how important it is to see Cared for Children as individuals rather than as a homogenous group and to not publicly treat them differently from their peers;
- appreciating the importance of showing sensitivity about who else knows about a child's Cared for status;
- appreciating the central importance of the child's PEP in helping to create a shared understanding between teachers, carers, social workers and, depending upon age, the child themselves, of what everyone needs to do to help the child achieve their potential;
- having the level of understanding needed of the role of social workers, and how education and the PEP fit into the wider care planning;
- being aware that, for many Cared for Children, bullying is an issue; ensuring that the school's anti-bullying policy is in operation;
- considering how extra academic and pastoral support can be provided for Cared for Children if it is needed;
- ensuring that Cared for Children have every opportunity to participate fully in the school's curriculum, examinations, careers guidance, extra curricular activities, work experience and additional educational support;
- ensuring there is sensitivity to the background of Cared for Children in teaching, especially in work on families and/or family trees;
- respecting the confidentiality of Cared for Children and ensure that any information is shared strictly on a need-to-know basis;
- ensuring that behaviour management policies recognise and make suitable provision for the needs and difficulties of Cared for Children;
- taking appropriate action as soon as there may be any problems with behaviour or attendance;
- involving appropriate carers/parents in home/school arrangements;
- ensuring that any Cared for Children who may have learning difficulties are appropriately supported/assessed/resourced.

LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES

This policy links with:

- Statutory Guidance for School Governing Bodies and Schools
- Improving the Attainment of Looked after Children in Primary Schools – Guidance for Schools
<http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=DCSF-01047-2009&>
- Improving the Attainment of Looked after Children in Secondary Schools – Guidance for Schools
<http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=DCSF-01048-2009&>
- The Role and Responsibilities of the Designated Teacher for Looked after Children – Statutory Guidance for School Governing Bodies
<http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/default.aspx?PageFunction=productdetails&PageMode=publications&ProductId=DCSF-01046-2009&>

It also links with a number of other school policies and documentation. It is important that Governors have regard to the needs of Cared for Children when reviewing them:

- Oversubscription criteria in the Admissions Policy
- The School Code of Conduct
- Positive Schooling Behaviour Policy
- Home School Agreement
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policies
- Safeguarding Pupils Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

The designated teacher and governing body will keep the working of this policy under review.

DEFINITION

Cared for Children can be:

Section 20 - Accommodated

This means that the child/young person is looked after on a voluntarily basis. Parents have parental responsibility and there is agreement with the Local Authority (LA) about day to day care arrangements. There are no legal orders i.e. care proceedings have not been to court.

Section 31 – Full Care Order

This means that the child is looked after as a result of care proceedings in court. Parental responsibility is shared by the LA and parents. However, the LA can make all important decisions. It is advisable for those involved with the case to check any requests made by the parents with the Social Worker.

Section 38 – Interim Care Order

This means that the child is subject to ongoing court proceedings and assessments. The child has the same legal status as a child on a full care order but only for the time period during which the interim care order has been granted.

Children can live with foster carers or at home, with members of their extended family who have been approved as foster carers, or with parents under the Placed with Parents Regulations or in residential care.

If a child is privately fostered, they are not a Cared for Child.

A special guardianship order is an order appointing one or more individuals to be a child's 'special guardian'. It is a private law order made under the Children Act 1989 and is intended for those children who cannot live with their birth parents and who would benefit from a legally secure placement.

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