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| <b>Policy Name:</b>   | <b>Children in Care and Previously Looked After Child</b>                                 |  |
| <b>Review Cycle:</b>  | Every 2 years   |  |
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| <b>Link Governor:</b> | Beth Williamson   |  |
| <b>Approved by :</b>  | Esther Messinger, Deputy Head Yrs 7-11<br>Beth Williamson<br><br>BCCS Local Governor Body | <b>Date:</b><br>Jan 2021<br><br>Feb 2021 |

| <b>Date</b> | <b>Summary of Changes</b> |
|-------------|---------------------------|
| 19.01.2021  | Policy updated            |
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# Children In Care & Previously Looked After Children

## Introduction

At Bristol Cathedral Choir School, we believe that all Children in Care should have equitable access to excellent educational provision and achieve at a similar level to all Bristol children. We as a school community aim to be champions for Children in Care and Previously Looked after Children. We take a proactive approach to support their success, recognising that we as a school have a vital role to play in promoting children and young people's academic, social and emotional development.

## Definitions

**Looked After Children (LAC)** or as referred to by Bristol LA **Child in Care (CiC)**

The above terms are interchangeable and refer to a child or young person who is looked after by a local authority if:

- they are in the care of the local authority (including children or young people who are the subject of a Care Order, Interim Care Order, or emergency Orders for their protection);
- or they are provided with accommodation by the local authority for more than 24 hours (often under a voluntary agreement with their parents or guardians).

**Previously Looked After Children (PLAC)** are children no longer looked after by a local authority in England and Wales because:

- they are the subject of an adoption order, special guardianship order, or child arrangements order which includes arrangements relating to with whom the child is to live, or when the child is to live with any person (but not which governs only where a child is to spend time and/or contact);
- were adopted outside England and Wales from 'state care' (care that is provided by a public authority, religious or other organisation, the sole or main purpose of which is to benefit society).

**Designated Teacher** is an appropriately qualified and experienced member of staff, appointed to undertake the responsibilities to promote and lead on the educational achievement of Looked After and Previously Looked after Children.

### **Personal Education Plans – PEP (Looked After Children only)**

All LAC must have a PEP. The PEP will be initiated by the social worker as part of a broader care plan. The Designated Teacher must ensure the PEP is effective in supporting the child to make good educational progress. The PEP forms part of the child's official school record (and transfers with them when they move school). It is an evolving record of the child's education (both academic achievements and participation in the wider activities of the school), describing what needs to happen to enable them to make the expected progress and fulfil their potential. It will record the child's views on the support they consider most to be most effective. It should work in

harmony with any EHCP and will set out steps taken to identify and support any mental health needs relevant to the child's education.

### **Pupil Premium plus (PP+)**

LAC and PLAC (except those PLAC adopted from state care outside England) are eligible for PP+ funding to improve attainment and close the gap with their peers. For LAC only this is managed by the Virtual School Head, who will work with the school to agree how the funding can be used most effectively. For PLAC it is paid directly to the school (based on the number of eligible PLAC recorded at the January Census). Like the Pupil Premium Grant, it is not a personal budget and is managed for the cohort according to its needs.

### **Virtual School or Bristol Hope School**

Is a local authority virtual school for LAC. They are responsible for discharging the local authority's duty to promote their educational achievement, as if they were in a single school.

## **Purpose**

This policy aims to set out how the school will meet the needs of Looked after Children and Previously Looked after Children and meet its statutory responsibilities to promote their educational achievement.

This policy also operates in conjunction with other school policies, in particular:

- Admissions Arrangements
- Attendance Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Behaviour, Discipline, Exclusions, Restraints and Searches Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- SEN Disability Policy

## **Aims and Objectives**

- 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 (CiC) and Previously Looked after Children (PLAC) in line with those of their peers, making sure 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 support and promote CiC and PLAC students and ensure that the progress gap between all them and their peers is closed.
- Nominate a Designated Teacher from CiC/PLAC who will act as their advocate and co-ordinate support for them, liaising with carers, natural parents (as appropriate) and social workers on a wide variety of educational and welfare issues.

**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 establish and maintain appropriate reporting and monitoring procedures both within the school and other agencies.**

## Process/Procedure

### Designated Teacher for Children in Care and Previously Looked After Children

1. Maintain a register of all Children in Care. This will include a record of:
  - The contact person in the relevant Children in Care Education Team
  - Status i.e. care order
  - Type of placement e.g. foster, respite, residential
  - Name of social worker, area office, telephone number
  - Daily contact and telephone numbers of those to be contacted in an emergency.
  - Share child protection/disability information that could be shared, if appropriate.
  - Relevant health information.
  - Baseline information and all test results.
  - Maintain regular contact with the Hope School
  - Be responsible for organising, disseminating and delivering training for academic and pastoral development. E.g. Attachment training.
2. Named officers in the LA with regard to exclusion issues, attendance issues and transition issues. Maintain close contact with the Bristol Hope School.
3. If there are safeguarding concerns for a Child in Care, contact and advice should be sought from the Education Safeguarding Team.

### Governors

- School staff and governors are aware of the guidance to promote the educational achievement of Children in Care and PLAC students.
- There is a dedicated governor to champion and monitor the work of the school in supporting this cohort as part of a larger group of vulnerable children.
- Designated teachers and staff are aware of and enabled to carry out their responsibilities effectively with the full support of the Principal.

### School Wide

- The school celebrates the achievement of Children in Care and Previously Looked after Children.
- Teachers must have high expectations of the young person, encouraging achievement and ambition.
- The young person will need a trusted person in school who is able to take time to listen to them.
- All teachers within the school are aware of the needs of the Children in Care and previously looked after children and actively promote their best interests.
- Ensure that systems are in place for all staff to keep up to date and informed about Children in Care PLAC students.
- The Designated Teacher will champion strategies that ensure positive messages about behaviour and achievement are shared within the school and between school, carers, the Hope School and outside agencies and that high educational expectations are maintained.
- Support the engagement of Children in Care in out of school learning.
- Staff work in partnership with parents, carers and agencies.
- Support carers to value educational achievement and improve attendance.
- Staff are aware that having been, being or becoming 'In Care' has a major impact on children's lives and that when considering children's learning and behaviour, due consideration will be given. Teachers can be aware of a

variety of issues that may undermine the young person's ability to engage in the learning process including feelings of loss, rejection, isolation, confusion and low self esteem.

## **SEN**

- Any special educational needs are quickly identified and appropriate provision is made.
- Ensure that systems are in place to identify and prioritise when Children in Care or PLAC are underachieving and have early interventions to improve this.
- If the young person has a statement of special educational need, then the annual review should coincide with one of the six monthly care planning reviews.

## **Admissions/Transitions**

- Ensure that on admission or transfer all relevant information is obtained at the outset.
- We will forward appropriate documents to any receiving school at point of transition where the receiving school is made known.
- Make every effort to provide continuity of schooling and educational experience.
- Prioritise Children in Care and PLAC within the schools admissions policy and admit students as quickly as possible recognising the importance of re-establishing school stability for Children in Care and PLAC students.

## **Attendance**

- When a child is absent for three consecutive days or more, the social worker needs to be informed via email or a phone call.
- Ensure that the schools Attendance Officer communicates with the Hope School who contact schools for LAC data.

## **Exclusion**

- Identify any Child in Care who is at risk of exclusion and contact the Children in Care Education Team, Social Worker and relevant professionals to put proactive strategies in place to avoid the Child in Care missing days from school.
- Ensure in the case of a fixed term, or permanent exclusion that the carer and the social worker and Hope School have been spoken to and within one day a letter has been sent specifying the period and the reasons for the exclusion, date of return, outline the rights of the carers to make representations to the governing body where appropriate and details of arrangements made to enable the child to continue his/her education.
- Make sure the Hope School are made aware of any exclusions and the reasons for the exclusion and invited to return from exclusion meetings as appropriate.

## **Review and Monitoring**

**This policy will be reviewed annually by the Designated Teacher, the Link Governor for LAC and PLAC or Deputy Head.**

**The impact of the provision for LAC and PLAC will be monitored and evaluated by an annual report by the Designated Teacher to the Trust Board which will cover:**

- Any workload issues arising as a result of the number of LAC and PLAC on roll at the school and the number of local authorities (LAs) which are involved
- Progress made by LAC and PLAC who are currently on roll, or have been on roll within the past 12 months, in relation to all children at the school (for example educational, social and emotional progress)
- Whether the pattern of attendance and exclusions for LAC and PLAC is different to that for all pupils
- Any process or planning issues arising from personal education plans (PEPs)
- How the needs of PP+ LAC and PLAC are being met
- Whether any have special educational needs (SEN) and whether those needs are being met through SEN provision.
- How the teaching and learning needs of LAC and PLAC are reflected in school improvement plans and are being met in relation to interventions and resources
- Training provided for the designated teacher to impart knowledge and understanding about the education and wellbeing of LAC and PLAC to staff
- Work with virtual school heads or their equivalents in LAs

The Deputy Head/Designated Teacher will ensure all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in this policy.