Policy for Children in Care and Previously Looked After Children

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Definitions

For the purposes of this policy a child in care is one who is looked after within the meaning of section 22 of the Children Act 1989 or Part 6 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. A previously looked after child is one who is no longer looked after in England and Wales because s/he is the subject of an adoption, special guardianship 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, or has been adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales. A child is in 'state care' outside of England and Wales if s/he is in care of or accommodated by a public authority, a religious organisation or any other organisation the sole or main purpose of which is to benefit society.

This school recognises that CIC and PLAC are likely to have experience of trauma and a high number of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). 'ACEs are highly stressful, and potentially traumatic, events or situations that occur during pregnancy, childhood and/or adolescence and can have an impact on physical and mental health throughout life.' (Keeping Bristol Safe Partnership)

Statutory guidance and requirements

This policy should be read in conjunction with current statutory guidance. The Designated Teacher, Head Teacher and CIC/PLAC Governor will have fully read the statutory guidance and will implement requirements as necessary. Provision for CIC/PLAC will be reflected in all other policies in the school.

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1.0 **INTRODUCTION**

Christ Church CE Primary School

Offer to Children in Care, CiC and Previously Looked After Children, PLAC

At Christ Church CE Primary School, we believe that all Children in Care should have equitable access to excellent educational provision and achieve at a similar level to all children. We as a school community aim to be champions for CiC and PLAC and take a proactive approach to support their success, recognizing that we as school have a vital role to play in promoting children and young people's social and emotional development.

Children who are in care or previously looked after children who have experienced adverse childhood experiences are highly likely to significantly underachieve in both their academic and social progress without significant and robust levels of interventions and support. Our aspiration for CIC and PLAC is for them to achieve their full potential through academic, personal, social, emotional development and to belong in our school and wider community. They will have a clear pathway for moving through their educational career with high aspirations for the future.

Christ Church CE Primary School strives to ensure that the culture and ethos of the school are such that, whatever the heritage and origins of members of the school, children should be provided with the opportunity to experience, understand and celebrate diversity.

OUR AIMS TO SUPPORT CiC and PLAC

- Provide a safe and secure environment which values education and believes in the abilities and potential of all children.
- Diminish difference - Bring the educational attainments of our CiC and PLAC in line with 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 school's role to promote and support the education of our Children in Care & PLAC.
- Ask the question, 'Would this be good enough for my child?'
- Have a Designated Teacher and a named governor responsible for CiC and PLAC who will act as their advocate and coordinate support for them, liaising with carers, birth parents (as appropriate) and Social Workers on a wide variety of educational and care issues.

We as a school keep accurate records of how many children are currently in care or have been at some stage during the past year and in which year groups. A provision map is collated with provision that these pupils' access within the core offer from the school as well as extra LAC Pupil Premium provision for each child.

We pledge that:

- The young person will have a trusted adult within the school who is able to take time to listen to them and have access to support and counselling in school, if required.

- There is information in SIMs in relation to who is and is not allowed to collect the child from school.
- All teachers within the school are made aware of the needs of CiC and PLAC and actively promote their best interests.
- Adults in school are sensitive to the young person's wishes over what is known and by whom regarding their care status.
- Effective assessment, recording and reporting practices are established.
- The Designated Teacher, ensures that systems are in place to keep staff up to date and informed about CiC and PLAC
- The Designated Teacher ensures that positive messages about behaviour and achievement are shared within the school and between school, carers and outside agencies and that high educational expectations are maintained.
- Christ Church CE Primary School supports the engagement of Cic and PLAC in out of school hours learning.
- Staff work in partnership with carers and agencies and parents (where appropriate)
- Supports carers to value educational achievement and improve attendance.
- Teachers help the individual to integrate into the school community and offer them a safe haven and a sympathetic ear in a crisis.
- Staff are aware that being ‘in care’ or coming into care has a major impact on children's lives and that when considering children's learning and or behaviour, due consideration will be given.
- Teachers are 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.
- Teachers are aware of possible unresolved feelings the young person may have about their own families and siblings, in addition to insecurity over their current homes and carers.
- The Designated Teacher will ensure that requests from the LA for statistical information held by the school are completed and returned on time to comply with statutory obligations.
- CiC and PLAC are given access to LAC Pupil Premium in school to support literacy and maths and any needs that require support outside of the core offer.

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2.0 STRATEGIES:

Christ Church CE Primary School will use best practice to implement the following strategies for CiC and PLAC :

3.1 High expectations:

- We celebrate the achievements of CiC and PLAC
- Teachers have high expectations of the young person, encouraging achievement and ambition.
- CiC and PLAC are expected to make good levels of progress. If it is recognised that the pupil is not reaching their age-related expectations, this will be identified and extra provision will be put in place if appropriate to support progress.
- We have an expectation that pupils' attendance will meet or exceed 96%.
- We will work with the Virtual School to raise aspirations and talk about future opportunities.

3.2 Ensure strategies for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning and be involved in target setting in an age appropriate way:

- We provide assessment and feedback to help the pupils improve their own learning.
- Pupils are set targets by teachers which they are aware of and, where possible, they set their own targets.
- Pupils are involved in their Personal Education Plan (PEP) meetings and contribute to their action plan for the year.
- We recognise that participation and interaction is an important part of learning and will build relationships with the pupil in order to encourage the CiC and PLAC to actively participate.
- The class teacher will meet the CiC and PLAC on a regular basis in order to gather the pupil's voice and to help them reflect on their own learning.

3.3 Close monitoring of progress (as appropriate)

- If the young person has agreed, all teachers of CiC and PLAC will have their status flagged on their registers and are aware of their responsibilities towards these pupils.
- Taking due account of data protection, CiC and PLAC have linked documents with guidance on their SIMs profile.
- Key staff will have a great understanding of the circumstances for all children in care within their school and monitor across subjects.
- The PEP process is completed a minimum of two times a year, which allows more in-depth information to be gathered regarding pupil progress in individual subjects.
- The Designated Teacher will monitor progress three times a year and monitor the impact of strategies that have been implemented as part of the action plan. If any actions are not having impact or not showing progress another PEP will be held.

3.4 Involvement in extra-curricular activities:

- CiC and PLAC are encouraged to join extra-curricular activities.
- Extra-curricular activities are publicized and signposted to foster carers.
- Any reasonable adjustments and support will be made available to ensure that CiC and PLAC have access to these activities.

3.5 CiC and PLAC are not made to feel different from other pupils:

- CiC and PLAC are included in all aspects of school life.
- The environment and curriculum are inclusive of all different family circumstances.
- Mentoring and support is available for all pupils and extra support is given sensitively to any pupil who requires it, to ensure discretion. A pupil's personal circumstances would never be publicly discussed.

3.6 Early intervention when concerns arise:

- Close communication takes place between the Designated Teacher and teachers should any concerns occur.
- Due to the close monitoring discussed earlier, if concerns arise, intervention can be put in place quickly and effectively. The Designated Teacher will take the lead on this if necessary.
- PEP meetings will be brought forward if necessary and progress meetings will be held between school/carers and any other professionals to address need.
- Any special educational needs / Gifted and talented abilities are quickly identified and appropriate provision is made.
- If the child or young person has a statement of special educational need/Education Health and Care Plan, then ensure the annual review coincides with one of the six monthly care planning reviews.
- Where attendance is a problem, a first day of absence procedure will be established. We will inform the Education Welfare Service / Social Worker / Virtual School if there are any concerns about attendance.
- Staff will acknowledge attendance in any education meetings, celebrating success and setting realistic targets if it is a concern.
- If a child is on a protection plan, we will ensure Social Workers and carers are contacted if child is absent from school.

3.7 Involve carers at every opportunity:

- The class teacher will liaise closely with carers, birth 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 young person's educational and social needs, for example, whether potentially disruptive changes in school can be prevented.
- Teachers will communicate regularly with carers.
- Contact will take place between carers and the class teacher at least termly.

3.8 Have alternative strategies to minimise exclusions for CiC and PLAC :

- Christ Church CE Primary works with carers and other key professionals to offer support and guidance to avoid exclusions wherever possible. We will identify any CiC and PLAC who is at risk of exclusion and contact the Virtual School, Social Worker and relevant professionals to put proactive strategies in place to avoid the Child in Care missing days from school.
- Where exclusions are necessary, all other routes will be explored first such as the use of alternative provision within the authority.
- Where exclusions happen, we will work with the Virtual School to ensure that relevant support is put in place for these pupils and in the case of a fixed term exclusion that the carer (or persons holding parental responsibility) and the Social Worker 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 of the rights of carers to make representations to the governing body or academy council where appropriate and details of arrangements made to enable the excluded pupil to continue his/her education.
- Make sure in the event of any exclusion, contact is made with the Virtual School with details of the exclusion outlining the reasons why the child has been excluded so that an appropriate response can be made.

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3.0 **ADMISSIONS and TRANSITIONS:**

- The Designated Teacher will ensure that on admission or transfer all relevant information is obtained at the outset.
- We will forward appropriate documents, in a timely fashion, to any receiving school at point of transition where the receiving school is made known.
- We will make every effort to provide continuity of schooling and educational experience.
- In the case of planned transitions, the Designated Teacher will arrange for representatives from the new provision to attend the last PEP at our school.

4.0 **PERSONAL EDUCATION PLANS (PEPS):**

- 'The quality of the PEP is the joint responsibility of the local authority that looks after the child and the school. (Promoting the Education of LAC, DfE 2014; para 34)
- Ensure that there is a Personal Education Plan (Early Years to Yr11+) for each child to include appropriate targets. This must be compatible with the child's Care Plan held by the Social Worker, and form part of any other school plan. e.g. Statement, EHC plan, Transition Plan, Pastoral Support Programme, Pathway Plan at Post 16.
- Contribute to the process whereby all Children in Care have a high quality Personal
- Education Plan in place within 10 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).
- Following the writing of a PEP, any educational recommendations in that PEP will be adhered to by staff in order that any Child in Care has the opportunity to fulfil and achieve the targets set.
- Hold a PEP meeting for every statutory care review, involving the Social Worker, foster carers, young person and parent if appropriate.

The Designated Teacher will be responsible for ensuring all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in this document.

The Governing Body will:

• Ensure that the school has a Designated Teacher, and that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out his or her responsibilities as below.

• Ensure that all Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of CIC and PLAC.

• Ensure the school has an overview of the needs and progress of CIC and PLAC.

• Ensure that the headteacher allocates appropriate resources and staff capacity to meet the needs of CIC and PLAC