Policy for the Education of Children in Care in Schools and Settings (including those Children Previously in Care)

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Policy due for review: May 2027

At East the water Primary School we believe that all Children in Care, and those previously in Care, should have equitable access to excellent educational provision and achieve at a similar level to all Devon children. As a community we aim to be champions for Children in Care and those previously in Care and take a proactive approach to support their success, recognising that we have a vital role to play in promoting their educational achievement and social and emotional development. To do this we commit to:

- Ensuring that Personal Education Plan is up-to-date and of a high standard;
- Supporting Children in Care to raise their aspirations and ambition;
- Giving children and young people a sense of the control they have over their own lives;
- Ensuring that the Designated Teacher contributes to the deeper understanding of everyone in the school who may be to be involved in supporting Children in Care to achieve, so that each staff member keeps Children in Care in mind;
- Fostering positive attitudes and behaviours;
- Providing continuity and 'normality' for those who may have been subject to emotional distress, abuse and disruption;
- Ensuing that they have a trusted adult who they feel they can go to for support during the school day;
- Ensuring they have the best provision the school can offer to help them make good progress in all areas;
- Working closely with the Virtual School, Carers and Social Workers;
- Ensuring a whole school ethos in which all staff understand their responsibility in supporting the role of Corporate Parent;
- Providing a safe and secure environment, which values education and believes in the abilities and potential of all children;
- Bringing the educational attainments of our Children in Care in line with those of their peers;
- Making sure that Children in Care have access to education appropriate to their age and ability. This includes access to a broad and balanced curriculum;
- Balancing high levels of support with challenge and high expectation to ensure rapid progress;
- Having 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;
- Working alongside the Social Worker, PEP Coordinator, Area Learning Advocate and other professionals to ensure that each Child in Care has a current, good quality Personal Education Plan (PEP) in place which includes challenging, curriculum-based targets and numerical progress targets and is an effective tool which supports the young person and helps them make excellent progress;
- Ensuring that Pupil Premium Plus funding is used to provide additional, personalised support as identified in the Personal Education Plan;

- Closely monitoring each child's attendance and academic progress, working and sharing information in a timely manner with the Virtual School to help ensure each child achieves the best possible educational outcomes;
- Ensuring there is a well-planned and coordinated approach to meet the child's educational and social needs, for example, whether potentially disruptive changes in school can be prevented;
- Planning for future transitions effectively including planning for transport.

School Leadership Responsibilities

- Nominate a School Governor to meet regularly with the Designated Teacher, to ensure that the needs of Children in Care in the school are taken into account at a school leadership 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 to support Children in Care;
- Support the child to engage fully in planning and decision making;
- Liaise closely with the Virtual School, Carers, parents (if appropriate) and the child's Social Worker on a variety of issues, including homework, kit and equipment required;
- Share positive messages about behaviour and achievement;
- Have 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;
- Share positive perceptions and high expectations of the child with other professionals but especially with the child;
- Be aware of, and sensitive to, the appropriate role of the parents;
- 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;
- 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.

Admissions and Transitions

We will:

- Prioritise the admission of Children in Care, and those who have been adopted or who have a Special Guardianship Order, within our own Admissions procedures in order to admit students without delay, recognising the importance of re-establishing school stability for Children in Care;
- Arrange a Planning for Success meeting as outlined in the Devon County Council Protocol for Supporting Children in Care in Schools;
- Ensure that all Children in Care meet the Designated Teacher regularly who will identify any relevant issues, academic or pastoral;

- Ensure a warm welcome to our school by providing appropriate induction for all Children in Care, following the Protocol for supporting Children in Care in Schools so that there is a smooth and successful transition which includes Carers and parents where appropriate;
- Meet with the Area Learning Advocate to make sure that on admission or transfer all relevant information records are 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) including organising transition meetings where needed;
- Make every effort to provide continuity of schooling and educational experience;
- Where appropriate, ensure that Children in Care receive timely and high-quality advice and guidance to support the transition into Post-16 provision;
- Liaise with Carers, previous schools and other professionals to help to effectively manage transitions;
- We recognise that Children in Care often need higher levels of transition support and will use the Devon County Council Transition Guidance and provide children and young people with the Transition Booklet.

Attendance (Associated Policy: Virtual School Attendance Policy)

We will:

- Promote the attendance of Children in Care, and where the attendance for a Child in Care becomes a concern and falls below 95%, inform the Virtual School and work with them and the EWO to improve attendance;
- Implement a first day of absence procedure for all Children in Care whose attendance falls below 95%;
- Inform the Carer / Area Learning Advocate / Education Welfare Service / Social Worker / Parents (if appropriate) if there are any concerns about attendance;
- Make attendance a priority in any education meeting, celebrating success and setting realistic targets if it is a concern.

Exclusion

We recognise that the challenging behaviour of some Children in Care and those previously in Care is strongly related to traumatic life experiences.

We will:

- Aim to use alternatives to exclusion as a sanction for Children in Care, for example restorative approaches and the Relational Support Plan;
- Inform the Virtual School as soon as there is an exclusion or a risk of exclusion;
- Actively follow the DCC Protocol for Supporting Children in Care in Schools;

- Engage with interventions provided by the Virtual School and the Educational Psychology Service to avoid exclusion, such as the REDS (Reducing Exclusions in Devon Schools) programme.

Personal Education Plans (PEPs) and Personal Education Allowance (PEA)

We will:

- Hold a PEP meeting each term for every Child in Care that involves the Social Worker, Foster Carers, child and parent (if appropriate). Additional attendees may include Careers South West, Educational Psychologist, Education Welfare Officer, Area Learning Advocate, PEPCo etc;
- Ensure that the views of the child are central to the PEP meeting and encourage them to attend;
- Ensure that PEP is of a high quality for each child and includes appropriate targets;
- Make certain that following the writing of a PEP, any educational recommendations in the PEP will be shared with all appropriate staff, in order that all our Children in Care have the opportunity to fulfil and achieve the targets set;
- Ensure that Pupil Premium Plus funding is carefully targeted to improve the educational outcomes of the Child in Care and used as identified in the Personal Education Plan;
- Make or support applications for a Personal Education Allowance (PEA) eg. those who are at risk of under-achieving academically or for extra-curricular activities through discussions at PEP meetings;

School Trips and Special Activities

We aim to ensure that Children in Care enjoy as many extra-curricular opportunities as possible by reserving places for them on trips or enrichment activities for which they are eligible.

Definition: Who are our Children in Care?

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.

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:

(a) Children who are accommodated by the Local Authority under a voluntary agreement with their parents;

(b) Children who are the subject of a Care Order or Interim Care Order;

(c) Children who are the subject of Emergency Orders for the protection of the child.

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Definition: Who are our Children Previously in Care?

- A Previously Looked After Child is one who is no longer looked after in England and Wales because he/she is the subject of an Adoption, Special Guardianship Order or Child Arrangements Order which includes arrangements as 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 or Wales and;
- A child is in 'state care' outside England and Wales if he/she is in the 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.

Legal Framework

- From 1 September 2009 all Governing Bodies were required under the Childrens and Young Persons Act of 2008, to appoint a Designated Teacher to promote the educational achievement of Children in Care;
- The Families Act of 2014 also required all Local Authorities to appoint a Virtual School Headteacher to ensure that the educational achievement of Children in Care was seen as a priority and to ensure arrangements were in place to improve their educational outcomes;
- Previous legislation and guidance from the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), Department for Education (DfE) and the Department of Health (DH) requires schools to have effective policies for supporting and promoting the education of Children in Care;
- The 2018 Statutory Guidance for Schools and Local Authorities which extended some responsibilities to Children Previously in Care. These responsibilities are not as extensive as those for Children in Care but the expectation is that there is a Designated Teacher and the likelihood is that it would be the same person as for Children in Care.

Related Documentation

DfE: Promoting the Education of Children in Care

Devon Protocol for Supporting Children in Care

Devon Virtual School Attendance Policy