

Children in Care Policy

STOKE ON TRENT MODEL SCHOOL POLICY FOR THE EDUCATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN CARE March 2014

AIM

To ensure that children in our care and care leavers enjoy and achieve and progress to a long term education, training and employment pathway.

Our Principles

- We are corporate parents, either legally or because we are in loco parentis. As corporate parents we accept that we have to be challenged by the question, 'is this good enough for my child?'
- We will work together, overcome differences between professionals and be child and solution focused. As a result:
 - Our young people will have timely access to education that meets their needs and therefore we will rapidly overcome problems with finding suitable placements, funding or admissions processes.
 - Our young people will not miss or be excluded from education: we will always work together to find solutions and alternatives for individual cases and for strategic issues.
- Our young people will feel safe in school and our aspiration is that they will also enjoy learning. A child who does not feel safe will not learn. How children feel about their school is important to us: we will listen and respond.

To whom does the policy apply?

Any individual or organisation providing or supporting the education of Children in Care and Care Leavers

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

Designated Teachers

Education providers will nominate a member of the senior leadership team to be the Designated Teacher for Children in Care. The Designated Teacher, who will act as their advocate and co-ordinate support for them as per statutory guidance '*The role and responsibilities of the designated teacher for Children in Care*'

If parts of the designated teacher role are delegated, this will be made clear to all those involved with the child.

The Designated Teacher will:

- Know all the Children in Care in their school and those who have recently left care and who will therefore still need support
- Make sure the young person's voice is heard and responded to.
- Promote a culture of high expectations and aspirations for the achievement of Children in Care
- Have sufficient up to date knowledge and training about the education, care and health [physical and psychological – particularly attachment and trauma] needs of

Children in Care to be able to respond proactively, support and challenge staff and seek support and advice from professionals when they reach the limits of their professional knowledge.

- Ensure each Child in Care has an up to date, complete and high quality Personal Education Plan [PEP – to age 16] or Education Pathway Plan [EPP – post 16]
- Ensure appropriate interventions and assessments are carried out so barriers to learning are overcome and record these plans in the PEP/EPP
- Make sure that Children in Care are prioritised in support arrangements and that carers understand the importance of supporting learning at home
- Work closely with other agencies, sharing information as appropriate.
- Ensure that there is high quality Information Advice and Guidance about careers
- Ensure there are well supported plans for transitions including a plan for education, training and employment Post 16.
- Attend training
- Keep governors and SLT up to date with the needs, issues and outcomes for Children in Care via an annual report and any other necessary communication.

Governors

Education providers will nominate a governor who will:

- Ensure that the needs of Children in Care are taken into account at a school management level.
- Support the Designated Teacher in carrying out their role by making time available and ensuring that they attend training about Children in Care.
- Ensure that the needs and outcomes of Children in Care are incorporated in policy decisions wherever relevant
- Ensure the school's work with Children in Care is reviewed at least annually by the SLT and governing body, using the governors' report proforma.
- Attend training

Senior Leadership Team will:

- Listen to and take account of the views of Children in Care
- Regularly review provision and outcomes for Children in Care
- Follow guidance and statutory guidance on admissions, exclusions etc
- Prioritise Children in Care in resource decisions and ensure that resources directly targeted at Children in Care [Pupil Premium Plus, money for special needs etc.] are used directly for them.
- Work with, support and challenge wider partnerships in providing the best possible educational provision and support for Children in Care in Stoke on Trent.
- Ensure Children in Care have access to the best of what the school has to offer and that barriers to do with being in care which might make this difficult are overcome
- Promote multi agency working and a solution focused, child centred approach
- Ensure the outcomes for Children in Care are tracked, monitored and appropriate interventions are put in place and included in PEPs and EPPs

Virtual School Will provide:

- Support and leadership to schools, LA and other agencies to ensure that Children in Care access high quality learning and support, which meets their needs in a timely way and leads them onto a long term education, training and employment pathway
- Strategic leadership to ensure there are high aspirations for Children in Care's education and the right provision, policies and protocols are in place to support them
- Direct, targeted support for Children in Care
- Training about education and other issues affecting learning for all those who work with Children in Care
- Specialist support to schools, for example with multi agency working, Personal Education Planning, preventing exclusion and promoting inclusion □ Support and advice to social workers, foster carers and other agencies.
- Advice to other local authorities whose children in care are living in Stoke on Trent
- Data and analysis of outcomes for Children in Care

DEALING WITH KEY CHALLENGES

Admissions

- We will act in accordance with the law and admissions codes and give timely access to school places to Children in Care.
- Work with the Virtual School, local authority and other authorities to overcome problems and plan for admissions.
- If appropriate, ensure that 'pre-admission professionals [and if appropriate PEP] meetings' are held and that arrangements are in place to support a child starting a new school.
- Ensure the PEP is reviewed within 20 days of admission.

Access to appropriate curriculum

- Children in Care will have access to the best curriculum that we can offer. We will work proactively with others to ensure that the curriculum meets their needs.

Access to support for children including those with SEN

- There will be SMART targets in PEPs to show how support is being used to improve outcomes – see also Pupil Premium Plus policy.
- We will work proactively to ensure children's needs are assessed early and their needs met.
- The designated teacher will take the lead in ensuring support or assessment from other agencies is in place.
- We expect, direct, clear, timely advice from professionals, including attendance at meetings.

Preventing exclusion and improving attendance

- The Virtual School will be informed of fixed term exclusions via information to Capita One or Welfare Call or similar system. and by email
- Where attendance is falling or low the school will work with other agencies, including EWO, to address issues and ensure a plan is in the PEP/EPP.
- The school will work with other agencies [including foster carer, social worker, psychology services and Virtual School] on strategies to prevent exclusion. The school will seek, accept and be provided with support in a timely manner

according to the availability of resources, if a pattern of exclusion is developing and ensure plans to address issues are in the PEP.

- Funding and resources already in the school's budget to prevent exclusion [e.g. notional SEN element] will be used to promote inclusion and prevent exclusion.
- Our aim is to never exclude a child in care:
- Permanent exclusions will only occur when all other options have been exhausted, or because of a one off extreme incident.
- Where the potential for a permanent exclusion can be anticipated e.g. because of a developing pattern of behaviour, alternatives will be found before this occurs.
- If there is a one off extreme incident, we will meet with the Virtual School prior to any decision about permanent exclusion.
- Where a managed transfer or move to full time alternative provision is agreed, we will not take a child off roll until a new placement is found. The current placement will take a lead in working with others to find an alternative placement.

Communication and Sharing information

- We will share attendance, exclusion, target setting, achievement data and plans.
- We will respond to requests marked urgent within 24 hours and within an hour in emergencies.
- In other cases we will adhere to statutory or agreed timescales.

Supporting transitions

- We will not change education placements without the agreement of the Virtual School and a review of the PEP/EPP, unless in emergency, in which case a review of the PEP will be held within 20 days.
- The designated teacher from the next education placement – including designated tutor or equivalent in FE/VI college - will be invited to the professionals and PEP meetings in the current placement. The designated teacher in the current placement will attend professionals and PEP meetings in the new placement as requested and appropriate.
- From Y9 onwards, a plan for further education, training and employment will be written into the PEP with the support of the Careers Adviser. The Careers Adviser will ensure this plan is handed over to the Post 16 provider.

Working with other LAs

- We will expect other LAs to provide the same support for their Children in Care in our schools, as we do for our children, including planning, funding and support. This will include all the stipulations of this policy and a particular emphasis on:
 - Pre planning for new education placements. Where there are issues, a pre placement admissions meeting should be held with all professionals involved.
 - Continuing financial support
 - Continuing professional support via the PEP process.

For further information see 'out of authority principles.'

Method for review

Specific issues with the policy should be raised directly with the Head of the Virtual School for Children in Care.