Shipbourne School

Policy
for the Education of Children in Care
(Looked After Children)

Designated Teacher: Sharon Vanns
Designated Governor: Rosalind Fisher

Nationally, children in care significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion and of becoming NEET compared with their peers. Schools have a major part to play in ensuring that children in care are enabled to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy, achieve, make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic wellbeing, in line with Every Child Matters.

Helping children in care to succeed and providing a better future for them is a key priority for Kent County Council and Kent schools. This policy takes account of:

- The County Council's duty under Section 52 of the Children Act 2004 to promote the educational achievement of Looked After Children (LAC).
- Promoting the Education of Looked After Children : Statutory guidance for local authorities July 2014
- The Education (Admission of Looked After Children) (England) Regulations 2006.
- Relevant DfES guidance to Governing Bodies (*Supporting Looked After Learners: A Practical Guide for School Governors*).

Shipbourne School's approach to supporting the educational achievement of Children in Care is based on the following principles:

- Prioritising education.
- Promoting attendance.
- Targeting support.
- Having high expectations.
- Promoting inclusion through challenging and changing attitudes.
- 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.

Implications

As for all our pupils, Shipbourne School is committed to helping every Child in Care to achieve the highest standards they can, including supporting aspirations to achieve in further and higher education. This can be measured by improvement in their achievements and attendance.

The Governing Board is committed to providing quality education for all pupils and will:

- Ensure Children in Care are prioritised in the school's oversubscription criteria, in line with the Education (Admission of Looked After Children) (England) Regulations 2006. (These require admissions authorities to give top priority for admission to CIC in their oversubscription criteria. Faith schools must give first priority to CIC of their faith ahead of other applicants, and are permitted to give priority to all CIC, regardless of faith. In addition, Grammar schools must give top priority to CIC who meet the academic requirements).
- Ensure a Designated Teacher for Children in Care is identified and enabled to carry out the responsibilities set out below
- Ensure a Personal Education Plan is put in place, implemented and regularly reviewed every 6 months for every Child in Care, in line with Kent's guidance on Personal Education Plans.
- Identify a governor as Designated Governor for Children in Care.

This policy links with a number of other school policies and it is important that Governors have regard to the needs of Children in care when reviewing them:

- Oversubscription criteria.
- The School Code of Conduct.
- Behaviour Policy.
- Discipline Policy.
- Home School Agreement.
- Anti-bullying Policy.
- Equal Opportunities Policy.
- Child Protection Policy.
- Special Educational Needs Policy.

The school will champion the needs of Children in Care, raise awareness and challenge negative stereotypes about them, in order to ensure that they achieve to the highest level possible.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

- Identify a Designated Teacher for Children in Care, whose role is set out below. It is essential that another appropriate person is identified quickly should the Designated Teacher leave the school or take sick leave.
- Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor the admission, progress, attendance and any exclusion of Children in Care and take action where progress, conduct or attendance is below expectations.
- Report on the progress, attendance and conduct of Children in Care. OFSTED now select a number of Children in Care, tracking their results and the support they have received.
- Ensure that staff in school receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related guidance.

RESPONSIBILITY OF THE GOVERNING BOARD

- Identify a nominated Governor for Children in Care.
- Ensure that all Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of Children in Care.
- Ensure the school has an overview of the needs and progress of Children in Care.
- Allocate resources to meet the needs of Children in Care.
- Ensure the school's other policies and procedures support their needs.

Procedures: the Governing Board will:

- Monitor the academic progress of Children in Care, through an annual report (see below).
- Ensure that Children in Care are given top priority when applying for places in accordance with the school's oversubscription criteria.
- Work to prevent exclusions and reduce time out of school, by ensuring the school implements policies and procedures to ensure Children in Care achieve and enjoy their time at the school, by recognising the extra problems caused by excluding them and by not excluding them except as a last resort.
- Ensure that the school has a Designated Teacher, and that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out his or her responsibilities as below.
- Support the Head of School, the Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring that the needs of Children in Care are recognised and met.
- Receive a report once a year setting out:
  1. The number of looked-after pupils on the school's roll (if any).
  2. Their attendance, as a discreet group, compared to other pupils.
  3. Their SAT scores, GCSE results, and other qualifications achieved, as a discreet group, compared to other pupils.
  4. The number of fixed term and permanent exclusions (if any).
  5. The destinations of pupils who leave the school.
  6. The information for this report should be collected and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity and respect the confidentiality of the pupils concerned.

THE ROLE OF THE DESIGNATED TEACHER

Government Guidance says that the Designated Teacher should be "someone with sufficient authority to make things happen…[who] should be an advocate for Children in Care, assessing services and support, and ensuring that the school shares and supports high expectations for them."

Governors should be aware that all schools are already required to have a designated teacher for Children in Care. It is strongly recommended that this person should be a member of the Senior Management Team. Training for Designated Teachers has been and will continue to be available through the Virtual School Kent (VSK). Governors should also be aware that OFSTED will focus on Children in Care, monitoring how the School has promoted their inclusion and attainment and the effectiveness of joint working with other services involved with them.

Our Designated Teacher will:

- Ensure a welcome and smooth induction for the child and their carer, using the Personal Education Plan to plan for that transition in consultation with the child's social worker and VSK.
- Ensure that a Personal Education Plan is completed with the child, the social worker, the foster carer and any other relevant people, at least two weeks before the Care Plan reviews.
- Ensure that each Child in Care has an identified member of staff that they can talk to. This need not be the Designated Teacher, but should be based on the child's own wishes. *Members of staff who take on this role may need to be supported by someone from the school's pastoral staff. They should also be alert to any child protection issues, any disclosures that pupils may make, and know what action to take. They should link closely therefore with the school's Designated Teacher for Child Protection.*
- Track academic progress and target support appropriately
- Co-ordinate any support for the child in care that is necessary within school.
- Ensure confidentiality for individual pupils, sharing personal information on a need to know basis.
- Encourage children in care to join in extra-curricular activities and out of school learning.
- Ensure, as far as possible, attendance at planning and review meetings.
- Act as an advisor to staff and Governors, raising their awareness of the needs of Children in Care.
- Set up timely meetings with relevant parties where the pupil is experiencing difficulties in school or is at risk of exclusion.
- Ensure the speedy transfer of information between individuals, agencies and – if the pupil changes school – to a new school.
- Be pro-active in supporting transition and planning when moving to a new phase in education.
- Track academic progress and target support appropriately.
- Promote inclusion in all areas of school life.

- Be aware that a high number Children in Care say they are bullied, so will actively monitor and prevent bullying in school by raising awareness through the school's anti-bullying policy.
- Ensure that attendance of each child in care on the school roll is reported to Welfare call each day.
- Raise awareness in secondary schools that Children in Care are automatically entitled to an allowance (the Bursary) if they go into the sixth form.

THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF ALL STAFF

All our staff will:

- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of Children in Care, as for all pupils.
- Maintain confidentiality with regard to children in care and ensure they are supported sensitively.
- Respond positively to a pupil's request to be the named member of staff whom they can talk to when they feel it is necessary.
- Respond promptly to the Designated Teacher's requests for information.
- Work to enable Children in Care to achieve stability and success within school.
- Promote the self-esteem of all Children in Care.
- Have an understanding of the key issues that affect the learning of Children in Care.
- Be aware that many children in care say they are bullied so work to prevent bullying in line with the School's policy.

Monitoring and review

This policy will be monitored by the Governing Board, who will always take due note of the guidance provided by the Local Education Authority.

The policy will be reviewed every three years, or earlier in the light of any changed circumstances.

Advice and support is available from Virtual School Kent: http://www.virtualschool.lea.kent.sch.uk/