



## Policy for Looked After Children (Children In Care)

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## **Aims**

We at Iminster Avenue Nursery School (IANS) will do for children in care what we do for all our children only more so. We aim to ensure that children in care excel, as we aim for all children to excel. We aim to overcome their barriers to learning and enable them to leave us happy and secure in themselves, We will listen to what children in care tell us about what they want from their education and try to address any concerns or issues raised through various means including The HOPE (Bristol's Virtual School for children in care)

Iminster Avenue Nursery 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, pupils should be provided with the opportunity to experience, understand and celebrate diversity.

This policy follows the statutory guidance for school governing bodies outlined in DFE statutory guidance; 'The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children' February 2018

## **Objectives**

*We will support children in care by:*

- Ensuring an effective transition when joining the school, transferring to a new school, or when coming into care whilst already on the school roll
- Balancing high levels of support with real challenge
- Ensuring that each child has a high quality Personal Education Plan
- Linking each child to a key person they relate well to
- Making it a priority to know the children well and to build strong relationships
- Developing strong relationships with carers, local authorities including the Virtual School Head and specialist agencies
- Encouraging and supporting children in care to take responsibility for their learning where appropriate
- Intervening promptly if a problem emerges such as with behaviour or attendance;
- Giving integrated but low profile support in school for each child in care so that they are not made to feel different from other children;
- Planning for future transitions

**Roles and responsibilities – see annex 2 for full detail**

The Governor with special responsibility for children in care in this school is: Jackie Melksham

The designated teacher in this school is: Carolyn Stevenson

### **Personal Education Plans (PEPs)**

All children in care must have a care plan which is drawn up and reviewed by the local authority which looks after them. The care plan must include a Personal Education Plan (PEP), which forms part of the child's official school record. The school and the Local Authority have a shared responsibility for making sure that the PEP is a useful document and for helping children in care to achieve and enjoy. These take place initially, within 28 days after becoming a CiC or if already in care after starting at IANS, three months after that and then every 6 months after that. Discussion about how together they can make that happen through the content, implementation and review of the PEP should be done through a meeting involving the carers, the social worker, a teacher, Designated teacher and others such as, where appropriate, staff from 'The Hope' Bristol's Virtual School for Children in Care. If the young person has an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) this should be reviewed annually and ought, where possible, tie in with the PEP. Full guidance on PEP meetings and how to use the PEP is provided on the BCC website. PEP paperwork when completed is sent to all appropriate people who have attended the meeting and, if the pupil is statutory school age, uploaded onto the CLA Tracker.

### **Additional funding**

Children in long term care, and previously looked after children, are entitled to additional funding (Pupil Premium Plus; PP+) to help improve their outcomes and narrow the gap between their outcomes and those of their peers. Which young people are eligible and the amount of such funding available will be determined as a result of government policy.

The school is committed to ensuring effective use of this dedicated funding where available for all eligible children in care on roll to provide additional, personalised support to ensure accelerated progress in order to improve outcomes.

Please see the schools Pupil Premium Policy for further detail.

The appropriate use of allocated funding is to be assessed through the Personal Education Plan.

The impact of interventions for these students is closely monitored by SLT.

### **Previously looked after children**

From February 2018 the designated teacher is also required to promote the educational achievement of previously looked after children (PLAC) who are on the school roll. 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' \*This duty does not apply to Child Arrangement Orders which only govern where a child is to spend time and/or

contact.

## **Admission/Induction Arrangements**

Children in care are a priority for admission and, as such, we will follow the Local Authority's published admission criteria. On admission to the school, the designated teacher will identify any relevant issues, academic or pastoral, and ensure the child and carer are made to feel supported in our school. On admission, records will be requested from the child's previous school. As soon as practicable after the records are received, a meeting will be held with the carer/parent, social worker and other relevant professionals, to put together a new Personal Education Plan. This early meeting will ensure that communication systems are established early. If records are not received promptly we will undertake our own assessment to make sure that the teaching and support received are appropriate. We will endeavour to meet the statutory time scales for PEPs as outlined in guidance.

When children already on our school roll enter care the school will ensure that a meeting with other parties will be arranged and PEP prepared as soon as possible (within 28 days max) in the same way as for those children already in care admitted to school.

At the first PEP meeting, we will seek clarification from the social worker as to who requires school reports and who may give permission for school trips or other such activities. At this meeting any means of communication to aid the exchange of information between statutory meetings will be discussed and agreed (such as a home/school book to detail any sudden significant changes in a child's circumstances).

## **Leaving Arrangements**

When a child in care leaves the school we will find an appropriate and meaningful ways to say goodbye to ensure the smoothest transition we can for them. We will also ensure the swift transfer of information to the next school.

Policy date: January 2021

## **Annex 1 – Definitions and complaints procedure**

### **Children in care**

The terms Looked After Child (LAC) and child in care (CiC) are interchangeable. For the purposes of this policy we are using the term CiC. Under the Children Act 1989, a child is looked after by a local authority if he or she is in their care or is provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the authority. They include the following:

- (i) children who are accommodated by the local authority under a voluntary agreement with their parents;
- (ii) children who are the subject of a care order or interim care order;
- (iii) children who are the subject of emergency orders for the protection of the child;
- (iv) children who are compulsorily accommodated. This includes remanded to the local authority or subject to a criminal justice supervision order with a residence requirement.

A looked after child may be in residential care, a foster placement or could be living with their parents. If living with their parents, this could be on a part time basis or possibly before returning home permanently after a care placement.

### **Legal Framework**

From 1 September 2009 the governing bodies of all maintained schools are required under the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 (the 2008 Act) to appoint a designated teacher (DT) to promote the educational achievement of children in care who are on the school role.

DFE guidance 2018 states that a designated teacher has the responsibility for promoting the educational achievement of previously looked-after pupils

### **Complaints**

If a parent/carer or social worker wishes to complain about the provision or policy, they should in the first instance raise it with the designated teacher, who will try to resolve the situation alongside the carer and the social worker.

If the issue cannot be resolved within 10 days, the carer or social worker can submit a formal complaint in writing to the Head teacher. The Head teacher will investigate the complaint and respond within 10 working days, unless the formal complaint is about the conduct of the Head teacher, in which case the complaint will go straight to the chair of governors.

Any issues that remain unresolved at this stage should be addressed through a meeting in order to assess the impact of any such complaint upon the young person's education. This meeting may include the named Governor and any other outside agency that both parties deem necessary to attend. This meeting should normally be held within 10 working days of the Head teacher's response.

## **Annex 2 - Roles and Responsibilities**

### ***The Role of the Governing Body:***

- The governing body will ensure that the designated teacher and the named governor undertake appropriate training;
- Ensure that the designated teacher is a member of the Senior Leadership Team.
- Governors will consider an annual report from the designated teacher covering attainment, attendance, progress, Personal Education Plans, CiC with Special Educational Needs or who are gifted and talented, impact on school development plans and how the school supports the work of The HOPE (Bristol's virtual school for children in care).

- The governing body, Head teacher and school leadership team will act on any issues raised in the report and will ensure that:
    - The school has a clear overview of the educational needs and progress of CiC on roll;
    - The school's policies are effective in reflecting the needs of CiC;
- Resources are allocated to support the designated teacher to carry out this role effectively for the benefit of CiC;

### ***The role of the Head teacher:***

- to ensure that, in partnership with the Governing body, the designated teacher has the opportunity to acquire and keep up to date the necessary skills, knowledge and training to understand and respond to the specific teaching and learning needs of children in care;
- to make sure that the designated teacher role contributes to the deeper understanding of everyone in the school who is likely to be involved in supporting children in care to achieve;
- in partnership with the Governing body, monitor the effectiveness of the role of the designated teacher;
- oversee the development of the policy on children in care;
- evaluate the standards and achievement of CiC and report these annually to the governing body and discuss them at Core SIP/SIO/HOPE meetings; (<http://www.bristol.gov.uk> <https://www.bristol.gov> ;search 'CiC report template' for an example)
- ensure that all staff are given the opportunity to attend training courses etc. that help them develop the skills and knowledge needed to support children in care.

### ***The role of the designated teacher within the school:***

The designated teacher has lead responsibility for helping school staff understand the things which affect how CiC learn and achieve. The DT will:

- promote a culture of high expectations and aspirations for how CiC learn;
- promote the educational achievement of every child in care on the school's roll;
- contribute to the development and review of whole school policies to ensure that they do not unintentionally put children in care at a disadvantage;
- make sure, in partnership with other staff, that there are effective and well understood school procedures in place to support children in care's learning;
- make sure the carer has a voice in setting learning targets;
- be a source of advice for staff about differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual children
- make sure that CiC are prioritised in intervention arrangements and that carers understand the importance of supporting learning at home;
- have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of the child's personal education plan (PEP) within the school;
- set up systems to monitor and record the progress of all children in care and establish a system for contacting and forwarding educational records to new schools to facilitate a smooth and speedy transfer;
- act as the named contact for colleagues in social care and health and ensure effective communication between all relevant parties;

- have lead responsibility for supporting school staff to understand the things which can affect how children in care learn and achieve;
- ensure that the school file for CiC holds all the essential information a template for which can be found <http://www.bristol.gov.uk> search for 'CiC file template'

### ***The role of all those involved in supporting children in care:***

- ensure that all children in care are made to feel welcome and included;
- have high expectations of children in care's involvement in learning and educational progress;
- be aware of attachment issues, the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation from birth families;
- understand the reasons which may be behind a child in care's behaviour, and why they may need more support than other children;
- understand how important it is to see children in care as individuals and not to publicly treat them differently from their peers;
- appreciate the central importance of showing sensitivity about who else knows about a child in care's status;
- understand what a PEP is and its importance in helping to create a shared understanding between teachers, carers, social workers and, depending on age and understanding, the child him or herself of what everyone needs to do to help them achieve their potential.

## **Annex 3 - Sources of guidance and support:**

### **National policy/statutory guidance**

- [Improving the attainment of looked after children in primary schools](#) -
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-teacher-for-looked-after-children>
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/promoting-the-education-of-looked-after-children>
- [Department for Education website](#)
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium-conditions-of-grant-2017-to-2018>
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### **Bristol policies and information**

- Pupil premium policy:  
<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/documents/20182/289934/Pupil+premium+policy+for+Bristol+2017+2018>
- Bristol LA Guidance on Personal Education Plans (PEP) and othe PEP resources:

[https://www.bristol.gov.uk/search?p\\_p\\_id=webworxxsearch\\_WAR\\_webworxxportlet&p\\_p\\_lifecycle=0&webworxxsearch\\_WAR\\_webworxxportlet\\_keepFilters=true&web](https://www.bristol.gov.uk/search?p_p_id=webworxxsearch_WAR_webworxxportlet&p_p_lifecycle=0&webworxxsearch_WAR_webworxxportlet_keepFilters=true&web)

[worxxsearch\\_WAR\\_webworxxportlet\\_searchKeyword=PEP+guidance&searchTerm=PEP%20guidance](http://www.bristol.gov.uk/worxxsearch_WAR_webworxxportlet_searchKeyword=PEP+guidance&searchTerm=PEP%20guidance)

- Education of children in care website:  
<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/schools-learning-early-years/resources-professionals/children-in-care-education>

### **School's own policies e.g.**

- Behaviour policy
- Anti-bullying policy
- PSED/PHSE
- Learning and Teaching
- Confidentiality
- Safeguarding Children Policy

### **Website links in policy document:**

- PEP guidance  
<https://www.bristol.gov.uk> (see related documents section)
- The role and responsibilities of the designated teacher for looked after children:  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-teacher-for-looked-after-children>
- Template for report to full governing body on the progress of children in care:  
<https://www.bristol.gov.uk> search CiC report template

### **Model school file for children in care:**

- <http://www.bristol.gov.uk> search CiC file template