



## **CHILDREN IN CARE POLICY**

### **1 RATIONALE**

1.1 Redland Green School has a key role to play in improving the life chances of the children on roll who are in care<sup>1</sup>. So that we improve the educational attainment and achievement of all children in care (CiC) and give them the greatest chance of success<sup>2</sup>, Redland Green School aims to be a place where CiC can learn, be themselves and make lasting friendships. To do this the school commits to having the very highest expectations with regard to:

- Raising the aspirations of CiC, and the aspirations of all adults involved in their education
- Giving these students a sense of the control they have over their own lives
- Fostering positive attitudes and behaviours
- Providing continuity and 'normality' for those who may have been subject to emotional distress, neglect, abuse and disruption

### **2 DEFINITION**

2.1 'Under the Children Act 1989, a child is in the care of the Local Authority (LA) if he or she is provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the LA. This includes the following:

- Children who are accommodated by the LA under a voluntary agreement with their parents
- Children who are the subject of a Care Order or Interim Care Order
- Children who are the subject of Emergency Orders for the protection of the child'

2.2 A child in care 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.

2.3 There are a variety of other circumstances in which a child may be placed into the care of the LA, including when that child is an unaccompanied asylum seeker.

### **3 LEGAL FRAMEWORK**

3.1 This policy follows the legislation and guidance laid down by various government bodies, including 'The role and responsibilities of the designated teacher for looked after children,' 2009, DCSF and 'Promoting the Education of Looked After Children; guidance for local authorities July 2014'.

3.2 Schools must:

- Ensure access to a balanced and broadly-based education for all CiC
- Prioritise recording and improving the academic achievement of CiC
- Prioritise a reduction in the number of exclusions and truancies for all CiC
- Ensure there is a designated teacher to promote the educational achievement of all CiC who are on the school roll
- Develop effective systems of communications and protocols

- Promote the attendance of CiC

## **4 OBJECTIVES**

4.1 Redland Green School aims to ensure that those key qualities found by the DCSF (2009)<sup>3</sup> and Ofsted (2008)<sup>4</sup> to be features of best practice in supporting CiC are embedded in our practice.

4.2 Redland Green School will support CiC by:

- Positively discriminating for CiC eg reserving places in extra-curricular provisions
- Making it a priority to know the children well and to build strong relationships
- Balancing high levels of support with challenge and high expectations
- Ensuring consistency as well as discrete flexibility
- Actively extending the aspirations of each child
- Working to develop strong partnerships with carers, LA and specialist agencies
- Allocating a Key Worker
- Planning for future transitions effectively

4.3 In addition, Redland Green School will:

- Closely monitor the academic, social and personal progress of all CiC
- Work alongside Social Workers and other professionals to ensure that each child in care has a current Personal Education Plan (PEP) in place which includes challenging, curriculum-based targets and is an effective tool which supports the young person's educational progress
- Ensure that Pupil Premium<sup>5</sup> funding is used to provide additional, personalised support to improve outcomes for CiC
- Challenge negative stereotypes amongst students and staff
- Ensure discretion when addressing a child's care status and the background and family history of CiC, especially surrounding teaching and learning relating to the 'family'
- Ensure a clear protocol is followed in the sharing of information, both within school and with outside agencies

## **5 ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES**

5.1 **THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNING BODY:**

- Appoint a designated teacher in accordance with the regulations published in September 2009
- Identify a Governor with specific responsibility for CiC
- Ensure that, in partnership with the Headteacher, 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 CiC
- Ensure that the designated teacher is either on the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) or, if not,

that there is a champion of CiC on the SLT who can work closely with the designated teacher

- Ensure that the designated teacher is appropriately supported in order to fulfil their role
- Ensure that the school has a coherent policy in place for CiC
- Ensure that the school's policies and procedures are reviewed in the light of social inclusion guidance and joint DH/DfE guidelines
- Ensure that there are arrangements in place to keep themselves informed about provision for, and attainment of, CiC; this can be achieved through an Annual Report

5.2 The name of the Governor with specific responsibility for CiC is: Rod Symmons.

### 5.3 **THE ROLE OF THE HEADTEACHER:**

- 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 CiC
- Ensure that the designated teacher role contributes to the deeper understanding of everyone in the school who is likely to be involved in supporting CiC to achieve
- In partnership with the Governing body, monitor the effectiveness of the role of the designated teacher
- Oversee the review and development of the policy on CiC
- Wherever possible allocate CiC a Key Worker
- Evaluate the standards and achievement of CiC and report these termly to the Governing Body and discuss them at core School Improvement Partner (SIP) meetings

### 5.4 **THE ROLE OF THE DESIGNATED TEACHER:**

- Promote the educational achievement of every child in care on the school's roll
- Monitor the standards and achievement of CiC and evaluate these in line with the school's Self-Evaluation Policy
- Establish a process for regular information sharing with The HOPE, Bristol's virtual school, through the CLA Tracker
- Promote a whole school culture where the personalised learning needs of every child in care matters and their social, emotional and academic needs are prioritised
- Facilitate the training of school staff in developing their understanding of the factors which can affect how CiC learn and develop
- Contribute to the development and review of whole school policies to ensure that they do not unintentionally put CiC at a disadvantage
- Promote a culture in which CiC believe they can succeed and aspire to further and higher education
- Promote a culture in which CiC are able to discuss their progress, have their views taken seriously and are supported to take responsibility for their own learning
- Be a source of advice for teachers about differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for

individual students who are in care

- Make sure that the school makes full use of Assessment for Learning (AfL) approaches to improve the short and medium term progress of CiC
- Make sure that CiC are prioritised in any selection of students who would benefit from One-to-One Tuition or any other initiatives/interventions promoted by the DfE
- Promote good home-school links through contact with carers and effective communication
- Set up systems to monitor and record the progress of all CiC
- Work with curriculum-based middle leaders to monitor the educational progress of CiC and intervene, drawing upon external agency support if required, if there is evidence of underachievement, absence from school or internal truancy, or other similar concern
- Maintain records regarding all CiC, including legal status and information regarding who should be contacted regarding matters concerning the child
- Establish a system for contacting and forwarding educational records to new schools to facilitate a smooth and speedy transfer
- Have an overview and co-ordinating role for gathering and holding all information regarding CiC
- Maintain and respect confidentiality of all CiC and ensure that information is shared on a strictly need to know basis
- Play an active role in care-planning by ensuring that the attendance of the most appropriate member of staff and/or written reports are provided to all statutory reviews of CiC
- Serve as the named contact for colleagues in Social Care and ensure effective communication between all relevant parties
- Ensure that strategies are in place for effective transfers and transitions between Key Stages and Year Groups
- Ensure that each child who is in care has a carefully selected Key Worker
- Report annually to the Governing body; the report, which must not mention individual children by name, should enable the Governing Body to make overall judgements about the designated teacher role in the context of wider school planning in relation to:
  - Any workload issues arising as a result of the number of CiC on roll at the school and the number of LA which are involved
  - Levels of progress made by CiC who are currently or have been on roll within the past twelve months in relation to all children at the school (ie educational, social and emotional progress)
  - Whether the pattern of attendance and exclusions for CiC is different to that of all children
  - The impact of Pupil Premium expenditure on CiC
  - Any process or planning issues arising from PEP
  - Whether any have special educational needs (SEN) and whether those needs are being met through school based support or statement of SEN/EHC plan

- How the teaching and learning needs of CiC are reflected in school development plans and are being met in relation to interventions and resources
- The training provided for the designated teacher in order to impart knowledge and understanding about the education and well-being of CiC to colleagues
- The work with the Headteacher of the virtual school, The HOPE
- The impact of any of the school's policies, for example on charging for educational visits and extended school activities, on CiC

5.5 The designated teacher is: Louise Blundell, Deputy Headteacher.

#### 5.6 **THE ROLE OF ALL THOSE INVOLVED IN SUPPORTING CiC:**

- Ensure that all CiC are treated inclusively
- Have high expectations of CiC's involvement in learning and educational progress
- Be aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation from birth families
- Understand the reasons which may affect the behaviour of CiC, and why they may need more support than other children/be positively discriminated for
- Understand how important it is to see CiC 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's in care status
- Understand what a PEP is and its importance in helping to create a shared understanding between teachers, carers, Social Workers and the child him or herself of what everyone needs to do to help them achieve their potential

### **6 PERSONAL EDUCATION PLANS (PEP)**

6.1 All CiC must have a care plan which is drawn up and reviewed by the LA which looks after them. The care plan must include a PEP, which forms part of the child's official school record. PEP are instrumental to improving the educational experience of the child by helping everyone gain a clear and shared understanding about the teaching and learning provision necessary to meet the child's education needs and how that will be provided. The school and the LA have a shared responsibility for making sure that the PEP is a useful document. 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 young person, carers, the Social Worker, a teacher and others such as, where appropriate, staff from the Virtual School.

6.2 The LA will:

- Notify the school's designated teacher if a child on the school's roll is taken into care

6.3 The Social Worker will:

- Initiate the PEP as part of the wider care plan (a new PEP will be needed at least two weeks before each CiC Review and whenever there is a change of circumstances [eg change of school or placement or where there are concerns arising in school]. If the student has a Statement of SEN this should be reviewed annually and should, where possible, tie in with a PEP)
- Arrange the meeting and ensure that all the relevant people are invited

- Bring the previous PEP and a PEP form to the meeting with relevant sections completed

#### 6.4 The designated teacher/Pupil Premium manager will:

- Ensure all CiC have a current PEP which sets high quality expectations of rapid progress and puts in place additional support which the child needs in order to succeed
- Have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of the child's PEP within school in partnership with others as necessary
- Ensure the utilisation of the Pupil Premium funding is discussed at the PEP meeting
- Ensure arrangements are in place for the speedy transfer of a child's PEP if they change schools
- Attend PEP meetings prepared with relevant sections of the PEP completed and attendance and current attainment information for the child
- Agree who will chair the PEP meetings and who will take notes
- Circulate completed forms and appendices after a PEP meeting
- Ensure that a robust system is in place for auditing the quality of PEP in the school

#### 6.5 To be an effective tool the PEP should:

- Record the child's academic achievements and participation in wider activities
- Identify the developmental and educational needs of the child
- Provide information which helps all those involved in supporting the child know what does and does not work for them
- Set long and short term educational attainment targets, agreed in partnership with the child and the carer where appropriate
- Provide accountability and be a record of planned actions, identifying who is responsible for carrying out each of these actions

#### 6.6 It will consider the child's:

- Strengths and weaknesses
- Interests, both in and out of school
- Developmental, educational and pastoral needs
- Aspirations, their future plans, and how these can be supported
- Any immediate or pending issues arising for the child

## **7 ADMISSION/INDUCTION ARRANGEMENTS**

7.1 CiC are a priority for admission and, as such, we follow the LA's published admission criteria.

7.2 On admission, the child will meet with the designated teacher. The designated teacher will identify any relevant issues, academic or pastoral and seek the agreement of the child as to who in school should be notified of the child's care status. 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, other relevant professionals, and the child, as appropriate, to put together a new PEP. This early meeting will ensure that communication systems are established early.

- 7.3 At the first PEP meeting, the school 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 phone/text/email).

## **8 SCHOOL TRIPS & SPECIAL ACTIVITIES**

- 8.1 Redland Green School aims to ensure that CiC enjoy as many extra-curricular opportunities as possible by reserving places for them on trips or enrichment activities for which they are eligible. The responsibility for giving permission for school trips and enrichment opportunities is that of the Social Worker, sometimes delegated to foster carers. The person who may give permission will be clarified at the first PEP meeting.

## **9 COMPLAINTS**

- 9.1 If a young person, parent 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.
- 9.2 If the issue cannot be resolved, then the procedures set out in the school's Complaints Procedure should be followed.

## **10 SUMMARY**

- 10.1 A key objective set out in this policy is that Redland Green School will do for CiC 'what we do for all children only more so'. The school aims to ensure that CiC excel, as the school aims for all children to excel. Redland Green School aims to overcome their barriers to learning and enable them to leave the school happy and secure in themselves, understanding that they do have control over their destiny and that education does matter.
- 10.2 Redland Green 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 community, students should be provided with the opportunity to experience, understand and celebrate diversity.
- 10.3 This policy is written in accordance with the following policies and documents:
- Attendance Policy
  - Behaviour for Learning Policy
  - Anti-bullying Policy
  - Learning & Teaching Policy
  - Confidentiality Policy
  - Equality Plan
  - Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy
  - Improving the attainment of looked after children in secondary schools – DCSF 2009
  - The role and responsibilities of the designated teacher for looked after children - DCSF 2009
  - Bristol LA Guidance for Primary and Secondary PEP, May 2010

## 11 REFERENCES

- 1 Definition taken from, 'The role and responsibilities of the designated teacher for looked after children,' 2009, DCSF.
- 2 'Poorer children's educational attainment: how important are attitudes and behaviour?' Edited by Alissa Goodman and Paul Gregg, March 2010, Joseph Rowntree Foundation, is one piece of research which demonstrates the importance of the role of Primary schools.
- 3 'Improving the attainment of looked after children in secondary schools, guidance for schools', 2009, DCSF
- 4 'Looked after children – good practice in schools', 2008, Ofsted
- 5 <http://www.education.gov.uk/schools/pupilsupport/premium>
- 6 Information from 'The role and responsibilities of the designated teacher for looked after children', 2009, DCSF
- 7 Taken from Bristol LA guidance on Primary and Secondary PEP, May 2010 and 'The role and responsibilities of the designated teacher for looked after children', May 2009

| Agreed by Staff | Agreed by Students | Agreed by Governors                     | Review Schedule | Date Reviewed | Date Reviewed | Date Reviewed | Date Reviewed |
|-----------------|--------------------|---|-----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| N/A             | N/A                | 10 MAR 2009<br>REWRITTEN<br>21 NOV 2012 | 2 YEARS         | 21 MAR 2011   | 21 NOV 2012   | 18 JUN 2014   | 30 JUN 2016   |
| Date Reviewed   | Date Reviewed      | Date Reviewed                           | Date Reviewed   | Date Reviewed | Date Reviewed | Date Reviewed | Date Reviewed |
|                 |                    |   |                 |               |               |               |               |