

School Policy for the Education of Children in Care

At Devoran School we believe that all Children in Care should have equitable access to excellent educational provision and achieve at a similar level to all Cornwall children. We as a school community aim to be champions for Children in Care and take a proactive approach to support their success, recognising that we as a school have a vital role to play in promoting children and young people's social and emotional development.

As Corporate parents we need to look to 'improve the experience of children in care and their life chances' Children and young person's plan 2008-2011

Our aims to support Children in Care

- Provide a safe and secure environment, which values education and believes in the abilities and potential of all children.
- Narrowing the gap - Bring the educational attainments of our Children in Care in line to those of their peers.
- Making sure that they have access to education appropriate to their age and ability. This includes access to a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Identifying our schools' role to promote and support the education of our Children in Care.
- Asking the question, 'Would this be good enough for my child?'
- All settings are required to have a Designated Teacher (DT) for Children in Care who will act as their advocate and coordinate support for them, liaising with carers, natural parents (as appropriate) and social workers on a wide variety of educational and care issues
- To support Every Child Matters five outcomes:

Be healthy

for example, helping learners to adopt healthy lifestyles, build their self-esteem, eat and drink well and lead active lives

Stay safe

for example, keeping learners safe from bullying, harassment and other dangers

Enjoy and achieve

for example, enabling learners to make good progress in their work and personal development and to enjoy their education

Make a positive contribution

for example, ensuring that learners understand their rights and responsibilities, are listened to, and participate in the life of the community

Achieve economic well-being

for example, helping pupils to gain the skills and knowledge needed for future employment.

(Taken from Ofsted Conducting the inspection Guidance for inspectors of schools July 2005 pg 10)

All staff and governors are committed to ensuring improved educational life chances for Children in Care by ensuring that the relevant personnel have reasonable support and time to complete tasks and responsibilities. Also, to establish and maintain appropriate reporting and monitoring procedures both within the school and with other agencies.

DESIGNATED TEACHER FOR CHILDREN IN CARE – See Statutory regulations from September 2009

Designated teacher needs to be:

A qualified teacher or head teacher

A person who has been doing the role for at least six months and must be taking active steps to becoming a qualified teacher

- Maintain a register of all Children in Care (this includes children both from in and out of Cornwall)
This will include a record of:
- The contact person in the relevant Children in Care Education Support Service (CiCESS).
- Status i.e. care order or accommodated.
- Type of Placement e.g. foster, respite, residential, adoptive.
- Name of Social Worker, area office, telephone number
- Ensure statutory documentation is kept up to date and is relevant to the child's needs and ability i.e. Personal Education Plan

“The PEP is a record of what needs to happen for looked after children to enable them to fulfil their potential.” (*Promoting the Educational Achievement of Looked After Children DCSF March 2010*)

- Daily contact and telephone numbers of those who need to be contacted in an emergency or for any other concerns. E.g. name of young person, name of parent or carer or key worker in children's home.
- Share Child Protection / disability information if appropriate (if not appropriate to share, indicate the confidential nature of the information)
- Relevant health information
- Baseline information and all test results.
- Named officers in the LA with regard to exclusion issues, attendance issues and transition issues.
- The child is entitled to decide who attends their Children in Care Statutory Reviews (6 monthly); if school does not attend they need to submit a written report that promotes the continuity and stability of their personal education plan.

“The PEP should reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning which secures good basic skills, stretches aspirations and builds life chances.” (*Promoting the Educational Achievement of Looked After Children DCSF March 2010*)

- Participate in appropriate DT training and joint agency training.
- If there are safeguarding concerns for a Child in Care, contact and advice should be sought from Education Safeguarding team and Central Referral Unit

GOVERNORS – what every Designated Governor for CIC should know***Number of CIC on school roll******Number of CIC with up to date PEPs******Overall attainment of CIC in the school / performance compared to peers******Number of CIC with SEN and statements******Authorised and unauthorised absence levels of CIC******Number of CIC who have been excluded in previous 12 months******How LA supports educational achievement of CIC***

- Governing body should ensure the DT has opportunity to attend training. School staff and governors are aware of the DCSF Statutory guidance March 2010
- Duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of Children in Care, under Section 52 of the Children's Act 2004
- There is a dedicated Governor or committee to champion and monitor the work of the school in supporting its Children in Care as a part of a larger group of vulnerable children
- Take a proactive approach in co-operating with, and supporting, the relevant Local Authority with regard to the education of Children in Care attending the school
- Designated teachers and staff are aware of and enabled to carry out their responsibilities effectively with the full support of the head teacher

Whole school approach:

- The school celebrates the achievements of Children in Care.
- Teachers should have high expectations of the young person, encouraging achievement and ambition
- The young person will need to have a special, trusted adult in school who is able to take time to listen to them and have access to support and counselling in school if required.
- For young Children in Care, there should be clarity in relation to who is and is not allowed to collect the child from school
- All teachers within the school are made aware of the needs of Children in Care and actively promote their best interests
- Adults in school will need to be sensitive to the young person's wishes over what is known and by whom regarding their care status
- Effective assessment, recording and reporting practices are established
- Ensure that systems are in place to keep staff up to date and informed about Children in Care
- The designated teacher ensures that positive messages about behaviour and achievement are shared within the school and between school, carers and outside agencies and that high educational expectations are maintained
- Support the engagement of Children in Care in out of school hours learning
- Staff work in partnership with carers and agencies and parents (where appropriate).

- Support carers to value educational achievement and improve attendance
- Teachers can help the individual begin to feel that they are fitting in and offer them a safe haven and a sympathetic ear in a crisis
- Staff are aware that being or becoming 'in Care' has a major impact on children's lives and that when considering children's learning and or behaviour, due consideration will be given
- Teachers can be aware of a variety of issues that may undermine the young person's ability to engage in the learning process including feelings of loss, rejection, isolation, confusion and low self-esteem
- Teachers need to be aware of possible unresolved feelings the young person may have about their own families and siblings, in addition to insecurity over their current homes and carers
- CIC are given access to 1:1 tuition in school to support literacy and maths (see LA guidance on 1:1 tuition)

Special Educational needs / Gifted and talented:

- Any special educational needs / Gifted and talented abilities are quickly identified and appropriate provision is made
- Ensure that systems are in place to identify and prioritise when Children in Care are underachieving and have early interventions to improve this
- Contact needs to be made with the Children in Care Education Support Service (CiCESS) as soon as concerns are raised
- If the child or young person has a statement of special educational need, then ensure the annual review coincides with one of the six monthly care planning reviews; dates can be obtained from the social worker.

Admissions and transitions:

- Ensure that on admission or transfer all relevant information is obtained at the outset
- We will forward appropriate documents, in a timely fashion, to any receiving school at point of transition where the receiving school is made known
- Make every effort to provide continuity of schooling and educational experience
- Prioritise Children in Care within schools own admissions procedures and admit students as quickly as possible recognising the importance of re-establishing school stability for Children in Care.
- Adhere to new Cornwall Council School Admission protocol (September 2010)
- Awareness of children educated out of year group Cornwall Council guide (June 2010)

Attendance:

- Where attendance is a problem, a first day of absence procedure needs to be established
- Inform Education Welfare service / Social Worker / CiCESS if any concerns about attendance

- Acknowledge attendance in any education meetings, celebrating success and setting realistic targets if it is a concern
- If a child is on a protection plan, ensure Social worker and Carer are contacted if child is absent from school

Exclusion:

- Identify any Child in Care who is at risk of exclusion and contact the Children in Care Education Support Service (CiCESS), Social Worker and relevant professionals to put proactive strategies in place to avoid the Child in Care missing days from school
- Ensure in the case of a fixed term (or permanent) exclusion that the carer (or persons holding parental responsibility) and the Social Worker have been spoken to and within one day a letter has been sent specifying the period and the reasons for the exclusion, date of return, outline of the rights of carers to make representations to the governing body where appropriate and details of arrangements made to enable the excluded pupil to continue his/her education.
- Make sure in the event of any exclusion, contact is made with the Children in Care Education Support Service (CiCESS) with details of the exclusion outlining the reasons why the child has been excluded so that an appropriate response can be made.

Multi-agency liaison:

- Designated teacher will need to liaise closely with carers, natural parents (if appropriate) and the pupil's social worker on a variety of issues, including homework, kit and equipment required. It is important that positive messages about behaviour and achievement are shared
- There should be a well planned and co-ordinated approach to meeting the young person's educational and social needs, for example, whether potentially disruptive changes in school can be prevented
- There needs to be clear understanding about the role and responsibility of school staff in relation to the young person and the roles and responsibilities of the other professionals involved
- School staff will need to share positive perceptions and high expectations of the young person with other professionals but especially with the young person
- The school should be aware of and sensitive to the appropriate role of the natural parents
- Designated teachers should ensure that requests from the LA for statistical information held by the school are completed and returned on time to comply with statutory obligations
- Encourage each child in care to access out of hours learning activities realising the positive impact this could have on their self –esteem and learning (See Cornwall Council Dis-advantaged subsidy, 'Give it a go' guidance 2010-2011)
- Support the young person to have the opportunity to participate fully in planning and decision making

Personal education plans (PEPs):

“The PEP is the joint responsibility of the local authority and the school.” (*Promoting the Educational Achievement of Looked After Children DCSF March 2010*)

- Ensure that there is a Personal Education Plan (Early years to Yr11) for each child to include appropriate targets. This must be compatible with the child's Care Plan held by the Social Worker, and form part of any other school plan. E.g. Statement, Transition Plan, Pastoral Support Programme, Pathway Plan at Post 16
- Contribute to the process whereby all Children in Care have a high quality Personal Educational Plan (PEP) in place within 10 days of starting the school. This will include SMART educational targets and will be linked to the child's Care Plan and any other plan resulting from the assessment of the child (IEP, PSP, Statement of Educational Need)
- Following the writing of a PEP, any educational recommendations in that PEP will be adhered to by staff in order that any Child in Care has the opportunity to fulfil and achieve the targets set
- Support referrals for the Personal Education Allowance (PEA) for CIC who are at risk of underachieving academically through discussions at PEP meetings
- Hold a PEP meeting for every statutory care review, involving the Social worker, foster carers, young person and parent if appropriate (*See brief PEP Guidance on website*)

Related documentation:

See CiCESS website on Cornwall intranet for related documentation and information
www.cornwall.gov.uk/cicess

Raising standards of achievement: www.education.gov.uk (*as of May 2010*)

Promoting the Educational Achievement of Looked After Children Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities
DCSF March 2010

Improving the Educational Attainment of Children in Care (Looked After Children)
DCSF 2009

Improving the Attainment of Looked After Children in primary schools
DCSF 2009

Improving the Attainment of Looked After Children in secondary schools
DCSF 2009

Special Educational Needs
SEN Code of Practice and SEN toolkit
DfES, 2001



CICES

Children In Care Education Support Service

Championing the educational achievement and rights of Cornwall's Children in Care



Statutory Guidance on Promoting the Health of Looked After Children DH/DCSF
November 2009

The head teacher or designated teacher will be responsible for ensuring all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in this policy.

Date 30/09/2010

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