

Heritage Park Primary School

Children in Care Policy



Approved by: Paresh Desai (Chair of Governors)

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Next review due by: January 2022

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Introduction

Nationally, Children in Care (CiC) significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion, compared with their peers, often due to the increased likelihood that they have suffered abuse or neglect. Schools have a major role to play in ensuring that CiC are enabled to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy, achieve, make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic well-being.

Heritage Park Primary School believes that we have a special duty to safeguard and promote the education of Children in Care. Helping them achieve and providing them with a better future is a key priority in our school.

Who are Children in Care?

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is deemed to be a Child in Care if he or she is in the care of a local authority or provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the authority. They fall into four main categories:

- Children who are accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents (section 20)
- Children who are the subjects of a care order (section 31) or interim care order (section 38)
- Children who are the subjects of emergency orders for their protection (sections 44 and 46)
- Children who are compulsorily accommodated – this includes children remanded to the local authority or subject to a criminal justice supervision order with a residence requirement (section 21)

The term 'in care' refers only to children who are subject to a care order by the courts under section 31 of the Children's Act 1989 – they may live with foster carers, in a Children's home, in a residential school, with relatives or with parents under supervision. Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are 'accommodated' by the local authority under section 20 of the Children's Act 1989 – they may live in foster care, in a Children's home or in a residential school. They may be looked after by their local authority or may be in the care of another authority but living in ours.

CiC reviews, sometimes known as Looked After Children (LAC or CLA) reviews, involving the school, will take place up until an adoption order has been granted. However, Pupil Premium funding will continue for CiC until they are 16 years old.

Aims

- To provide a safe and secure environment, where education is valued and there is a belief in the abilities and potential of all children.
- To support our CiC and give them access to every opportunity to achieve their potential, enjoy learning and take as full a part as possible in all school events, including extra-curricular activities.
- To ensure that school policies and procedures are followed for CiC as for all children.
- To work with the Virtual School and ensure that carers and social workers of CiC are kept fully informed of their child's progress and attainment.

The Schools' Approach

Heritage Park Primary School's approach to supporting the educational achievement of CiC is based on the following principles:

- Prioritising education
- Promoting attendance
- Targeting support
- Having high expectations and raising aspirations
- Promoting inclusion
- Achieving stability and continuity
- Early intervention and priority action
- Listening to children
- Helping them achieve stability and continuity
- Promoting mental well-being and good health
- Minimising exclusions and promoting stability
- Working in partnership with carers, social workers and other professionals

The role of the Designated Teacher for CiC

The role of the 'Designated teacher' became statutory in September 2009 under the Children and Young Person's Act 2008 (The 2008 Act). At Heritage Park Primary School this role will be undertaken by the Deputy Headteacher, who will act as CiC's advocate and co-ordinate support for them. By assigning this role to a senior member of staff we are able to ensure the role is undertaken by a staff member who has enough status and experience to advise and provide training to school staff on issues relating to CiC and be in a position to make decisions about the teaching and learning of these children.

The responsibilities of the Designated Teacher

- Knowing who all the CiC children are in school and ensuring that all relevant details from school record-keeping systems are stored confidentially but are available to relevant parties as required
- Attending training courses about CiC and acting as the key liaison professional for other agencies and carers in relation to CiC

- Promoting a culture of high expectations and aspirations for how CiC should learn
- Helping school staff understand the issues and aspirations that affect the learning of CiC such as: differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual children
- Making sure that CiC are prioritised in one-to-one tuition arrangements and that carers understand the importance of supporting learning at home
- Removing the barriers to learning for CiC
- Ensuring any CiC new to the school are welcomed positively, and assessed when they start at the school, to identify strengths and weaknesses in their learning. This will be used to inform planning and teaching.
- Ensuring CiC have a voice
- Working alongside other professionals to develop and implement the Personal Education Plan (PEP) in a leading role (The social worker is responsible for initiating the PEP process)
- Monitoring the child's progress against the targets on the PEP and extending these targets if they have been achieved
- Ensuring the child makes a smooth transition to the new school and that the child's records are transferred confidentially and without delay
- Liaising with the Virtual School in all aspects of the CiC's progress and support
- Convening urgent multi-agency meetings if a CiC is experiencing difficulties or is at risk of exclusion
- Arranging for a mentor or key worker to whom the CiC can talk to. Arranging for the CiC to be supported by his or her peers.
- Producing at least one annual report to the governing body which should include: current progress, attendance and exclusions (if any), any concerns regarding behaviour, how the PEP has been implemented and whether the actions put in place are effective in addressing the learning needs of CiC, how the Designated teacher works with the LA, training undertaken to carry out the role effectively. The report must not mention the children's names for reasons of confidentiality.

The role and responsibilities of all staff

- Ensure that any child in public care is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained
- Be familiar with, and respond appropriately to, requests for information to support the completion of PEPs and other documentation needed as part of review meetings
- Respond positively to a child in public care's request to be the named person that they can talk to when they feel it is necessary
- Contribute to the Designated teacher's requests for information on educational attainment and needs, as appropriate
- Provide a supportive climate to enable a child in care to achieve stability within the school setting

- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of CiC and positively promote their self-esteem

The role and responsibilities of the governing body

- Support the Local Authority in its statutory duty to promote the educational achievement of CiC
- Ensure that they are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of Children in Care
- Ensure the Designated teacher is given the appropriate level of support in order to fulfil their role
- In partnership with the Headteacher, ensure that, through their training and development, 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
- The governing body and the SLT should 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 CiC to achieve
- The governing body, in partnership with the Headteacher, is responsible for monitoring how well the role is working. As part of this monitoring an annual report will be received from the Designated teacher.
- To ensure a system is in place to ensure another appropriate SLT staff member is able to take over the role of the Designated teacher in their absence.

Conclusion

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. Governors will have regard to the needs of CiC when reviewing other relevant policies.

For more information please see:

The role and responsibilities of the designated teacher for looked after children - Statutory guidance for school governing bodies

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-teacher-for-looked-after-children>

Improving the attainment of looked after children in primary schools – Guidance for schools

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/improving-the-attainment-of-looked-after-children-in-primary-schools-guidance-for-schools>