

Policy for the Education of Children in Care

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

Our aims to support Children in Care

We aim to:

- Provide a safe and secure environment
- Narrow the gap - Bring the educational attainments of Children in Care in line to those of their peers.
- Ensure that Children in Care have access to an education which is appropriate to their age and ability. This includes access to a broad and balanced curriculum.

We have a Designated Teacher (DT) for Children in Care who acts as their advocate and co-ordinates support for them, liaising with carers, natural parents (as appropriate) and social workers on a wide variety of educational and care issues

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 compete tasks and responsibilities.

DESIGNATED TEACHER FOR CHILDREN IN CARE

The Designated teacher will be a qualified teacher or head teacher. They must maintain a register of all Children in Care (this includes children both from in and out of Cornwall) and ensure statutory documentation is kept up to date and is relevant to the child's needs and ability i.e. Personal Education Plan including a record of:

- The contact person in the relevant Children in Care Education Support Service (CiCESS).
- The child's care status i.e. care order or accommodated and type of placement
- Name of Social Worker, area office, telephone number
- Daily contact and telephone numbers of those who need to be contacted in an emergency or for any other concerns
- Relevant health information
- Baseline information and all test results
- Named officers in the LA with regard to exclusion issues, attendance issues and transition issues

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

Governing body should ensure:

- The DT attends appropriate training
- 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
- Staff work in partnership with carers and agencies and parents (where appropriate).
- 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 Pupil Premium to support their learning in school

Special Educational needs / Gifted and talented:

- Any special educational needs / Gifted and talented abilities are quickly identified and appropriate provision is made
- Systems are in place to identify and prioritise when Children in Care are underachieving and have early interventions to improve this
- Contact is 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 the annual review will be held to coincide with one of the six monthly care planning reviews

Admissions and transitions:

- On admission or transfer all relevant information is obtained at the outset
- Appropriate documents are forwarded in a timely fashion to any receiving school
- Every effort is made to provide continuity of schooling and educational experience
- Children in Care are prioritised within the school's admissions procedures

Attendance:

- Where attendance is a problem, a first day of absence procedure will be established.
- Education Welfare service / Social Worker / CiCESS will be informed if there are any concerns about attendance.
- If a child is on a protection plan the Social worker and Carer will be contacted if child is absent from school.

Exclusion:

- If a Child in Care is at risk of exclusion the Children in Care Education Support Service (CiCESS), Social Worker and relevant professionals will be contacted and work together to put proactive strategies in place to avoid the Child in Care missing days from school.
- In the case of a fixed term (or permanent) exclusion the school will ensure 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.
- In the event of any exclusion contact will be made with the Children in Care Education Support Service (CiCESS) outlining the reasons why the child has been excluded so that an appropriate response can be made.

Multi-agency liaison:

- The Designated Teacher will liaise closely with carers, natural parents (if appropriate) and the pupil's social worker on a variety of issues, including homework, kit and any equipment that is required. It is important that positive messages about behaviour and achievement are shared
- The role and responsibilities of school staff in relation to the young person and the roles and responsibilities of the other professionals involved will be made clear at all times.
- School staff will share positive perceptions and high expectations of the young person with other professionals but especially with the young person
- The school will be aware of, and sensitive to, the appropriate role of the natural parents
- Designated teachers will ensure that requests from the LA for statistical information held by the school are completed and returned on time to comply with statutory obligations
- Each child in care will be encouraged to access out of hours learning activities realising the positive impact this could have on their self –esteem and learning

Personal education plans (PEPs):

- The DT will ensure that there is a Personal Education Plan for each child with 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
- The PEP will be 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
- The school will make a referral for a Personal Education Allowance (PEA) for CIC who are at risk of underachieving academically through discussions at PEP meetings
- A PEP meeting will be held prior to every statutory care review, involving the Social worker, foster carers, young person and parent if appropriate

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

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.

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