

EDUCATION

Policy for the Education of Children in Care

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At Snowfields Academy we believe that all Children in Care should have equitable access to excellent educational provision and achieve at a similar level to all pupils with similar age and starting points. 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 have a vital role to play in promoting children and young people's social and emotional development and along with their academic achievement.

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. Prioritising education and targeted support.
- Closing the gap - bring the educational attainments of our Children in Care in line with 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. Having the highest expectations.
- Identifying our school's role to promote and support the education of our Children in Care.
- 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.
- 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 headteacher.
- 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 will include a record of:

- The contact person in the relevant Children in Care Education Support Service.
- 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.

- 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 (3x yearly) and Personal Education Plan (PEP) (3x yearly); if school do not attend they need to submit a written report that promotes the continuity and stability of their personal education plan.
- 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 Single Central Referral Unit.

Governors (What every Child in Care Governor should know)

- Number of Children in Care on school roll.
- Number of Children in Care with up to date PEPs.
- Overall attainment of Children in Care in the school/performance compared to peers.
- Authorised and unauthorised absence levels of Children in Care.
- Number of Children in Care who have been excluded in previous 12 months.
- How LA supports educational achievement of Children in Care.
- Governing body should ensure the DT has opportunity to attend training. School staff and governors are aware of the Working together to Safeguard Children Policy 2015.
- 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 cooperating 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 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.
- There is 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 / 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.
- Children in Care are given access to Pupil Premium (of up to and in exceptional circumstances more than £1900 per year) in school to support closing the gap in attainment (see national guidance on Pupil Premium Plus)

Special Educational Needs/Gifted and Talented:

- Ensure that systems are in place to identify and prioritise when Children in Care are underachieving and have early interventions to improve this.
- Education and Health Care Plan Review coincides with one of the 3x yearly Child in Care or Personal Educational Plan review meetings.

Admissions and Transitions:

- Ensure that on admission or transfer all relevant information is obtained at the outset.
- Make every effort to provide continuity of schooling and educational experience.

Attendance:

- Where attendance is a problem, a first day of absence procedure needs to be established.
- Inform Social Worker 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 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.

Multi-agency liaison:

- Designated teacher will need to liaise closely with carers, birth 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 coordinated 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 a 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.
- Support the young person to have the opportunity to participate fully in planning and decision making.

Personal Education Plans (PEPs):

- Ensure that there is a Personal Education Plan (Early years - Yr 11+) 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. EHC plan, 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 (EHC Provision Plan)
- 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 Children in Care 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 3x yearly, including at least two face to face meetings and one virtual meeting.