



## Children in Care Policy

Version number:	V2
Date adopted by Governors:	12 <sup>th</sup> October 2023
Scheduled review date:	October 2024
Statutory or Best Practice policy:	Best Practice
Appendices:	No
School or Trust policy:	School

**Meeting your communication needs:**

We want to ensure that your needs are met. If you would like this information in any other format, please contact us on 01326 314070 or email [falmouth@kernowlearning.co.uk](mailto:falmouth@kernowlearning.co.uk)

## **Falmouth Primary Academy School – Children in Care Policy**

At Falmouth Primary Academy we believe that all Children in Care (CIC) and Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) should have equitable access to excellent educational provision and achieve in line or better than all children from Cornwall and children nationally. We, as a school community, aim to be champions and advocates for CIC and PLAC, and will take a proactive approach to support their success and achievement, recognising that we have a vital role to play in promoting children and young people's social and emotional development and enhancing life outcomes.

Designated teacher for CIC and PLAC – Jennifer Hobday

Second contact for CIC and PLAC if the designated teacher is unavailable – Jess Mills

Designated Governor for CIC and PLAC – Jacqui Scarborough

### **Our Aims to Support Children in Care and Previously Looked After Children**

- Provide a safe and secure environment, which values education and believes in the abilities and potential of all children, ensuring they are able to engage with our broad and balance curriculum.
- Close the gap - bring the educational attainments of our Children in Care and PLAC in line or better to those of their peers.
- Ensure appropriate use of Pupil Premium Plus\* to support education
- Make sure that they have access to education appropriate to their age, ability and emotional understanding. This includes access to a broad, balanced and appropriate curriculum.
- Identify our school's role to promote and support the education of our Children in Care and PLAC.
- Always ask the question: 'Would this be good enough for my child?'
- All settings are required to have a Designated Teacher for Children in Care and PLAC who will act as their advocate and coordinate support for them, liaising with carers, birth parents (as appropriate), social workers and health on a wide variety of educational and care issues. This person will be required to make financial decisions in the best interest of the child.
- All staff and governors are committed to ensuring improved educational life chances for Children in Care and PLAC by ensuring that the relevant personnel have reasonable support and time to compete tasks and responsibilities. Also, to establish and maintain appropriate reporting and monitoring procedures, both within the school and with other agencies.

### **The Designated Teacher**

The Looked After Pupils England Regulations 2009 require that the designated person is:



- a qualified teacher who has completed the appropriate induction period (if required) and is working as a teacher at the school (regulation 3(2)); or
- a head teacher or acting head teacher of the school (regulation 3(3))
- Ensure statutory documentation is kept up to date and is relevant to the child's needs and ability i.e. Electronic termly Personal Education Plan

### **The Electronic Personal Education Plan (EPEP)**

*NB. PEPs do not have to be in place for PLAC*

**The EPEP is now in place as of September 2017 – this is through Welfare Call – guidance on the Virtual school webpage**

(Taken from 'Promoting the education of looked after children and previously looked after children', Feb 2018 DfE)

20. All looked-after children must have a care plan, of which the PEP is an integral part. The PEP (pre-school to age 18) should be initiated as part of the care plan. It is an evolving record of what needs to happen for looked-after children to enable them to make at least expected progress and fulfil their potential. The PEP should reflect the importance of a personalised approach to learning that meets the child's identified educational needs, raises aspirations and builds life chances. The school, other professionals and the child's carers should use the PEP to support achieving those things.
21. The quality of the PEP is the joint responsibility of the local authority that looks after the child and the school. Social workers, carers, VSHs, designated teachers and, as appropriate, other relevant professionals will need to work closely together. All of those involved in the PEP process at all stages should involve the child (according to understanding and ability) and, where appropriate, the child's parent and/or relevant family member.

### **PEP Content**

22. The PEP should cover the full range of education and development needs<sup>7</sup> including:

- Access to a nursery or other high-quality early years provision that is appropriate to the child's age (e.g. pre-school playgroups) and meets their identified developmental needs;
- On-going catch-up support for those who have fallen behind with school work (including use of effective intervention strategies);
- Provision of immediate suitable education where a child is not in school (e.g. because of temporary or permanent exclusion);
- Transition support where needed, such as when a child starts attending a new school or returns to school (e.g. moving from pre-school/ early years to primary school, primary to secondary school, from secondary school to further education, or following illness or exclusion) or when a child has a plan for permanence (e.g. placed for adoption) and may change schools as part of that plan;
- School attendance and, where appropriate, behaviour support; and



- Support needed to help the child realise their short and long-term academic achievements and aspirations. This includes:
  - a. support to achieve expected levels of progress for the relevant national curriculum key stage, and to complete an appropriate range of approved qualifications;
  - b. Careers advice and guidance and financial information about further and higher education, training and employment. Discussions about longer term goals should start early and, ideally, well before Year 9 (age 13-14) at school. High aspirations are crucial to successful planning for the future. They should focus on the child or young person's strengths and capabilities and the outcomes they want to achieve; and
  - c. Out-of-school hours learning activities, study support and leisure interests.

Designated Teachers should participate in appropriate termly Designated Teacher training or induction training and joint agency training with The Virtual School – *there is a requirement to attend in line with annual safeguarding return (the S175/157)*

If there are safeguarding concerns for a Child in Care or PLAC, contact and advice should be sought from Education Safeguarding team and MARU (Multi-agency referral unit)

**Governors** - what every Designated Governor for CIC and PLAC should know:

- Number of CIC AND PLAC on school roll
- Number of CIC with up to date PEPs
- Overall attainment & progress of CIC and PLAC in the school / performance compared to peers and national
- Number of CIC and PLAC with SEN and statements / EHC Plans- level of support in place
- Authorised and unauthorised absence levels of CIC and PLAC
- Number of CIC and PLAC who have been excluded in previous 12 months
- How LA supports educational achievement of CIC and PLAC
- Use of Pupil Premium Plus spend and impact on attainment
- The Governing body should ensure the Designated Teacher has opportunity to attend training.
- School staff and governors are aware of the 'Promoting the education of looked after children and previously looked after children', Feb 2018 DfE
- There is a duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of Children in Care and PLAC, under Section 52 of the Children's Act 2004 (still remains in place despite Act updates)
- There is a dedicated Governor or committee to champion and monitor the work of the school in supporting its Children in Care and PLAC 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 and PLAC attending their 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 and PLAC.
- 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 that is able to take time to listen to them and have access to support and counselling in school if required.
- For Children in Care and PLAC, 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 PLAC 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 and PLAC
- 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
- A nurturing approach and understanding of trauma and attachment will help to support Children in Care and PLAC
- Support the engagement of Children in Care and PLAC 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 'Child 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 emotional issues and trauma 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 have access to Pupil Premium Plus – from September, £350 will be allocated to every child from day one of being in care by the Virtual School head. School will receive this at the end of each term. A bid can be made via the EPEP to top this up by a further £350 if required. See Education Endowment Fund / Sutton trust for guidance on use, good practice and impact of PP+.

## Special Educational needs

see Cornwall SEND graduated response document – June 2017

- Any special educational needs are quickly identified and appropriate provision is made – early identification and action is key
- Ensure that systems are in place to identify and prioritise when Children in Care and PLAC are underachieving, and have early interventions to improve this
- Contact needs to be made with the Virtual School for CIC and PLAC (CICESS) as soon as concerns are raised



- If the child or young person has a statement of special educational need or EHC Plan, then ensure the annual review coincides with one of the six monthly Statutory Care Reviews / termly PEP meetings; dates can be obtained from the social worker.
- Please refer to SEN Code of Practice for further information

### **Admissions and transitions:**

- CIC and PLAC have priority on school admission
- Prioritise Children in Care and PLAC within schools' own admissions procedures and admit students as quickly as possible, recognising the importance of re-establishing school stability for Children in Care and PLAC.
- Adhere to Cornwall Council School Admission protocol
- Awareness of 'Placement of pupils out of their chronological year group', Cornwall Council guide (2015/16)
- 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

### **Attendance**

- Where attendance is a problem, a first day of absence procedure needs to be established
- Inform Education Welfare Officer / Social Worker / Virtual School 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
- Children in Care and PLAC should not be taken out of school for holidays
- There should be no unauthorised absences for CIC and PLAC
- Safety plans to be put in place where a CIC/ PLAC is on a reduced timetable or Children Missing Education or Children Missing Out of Education (CME/CMOE).

### **Exclusion**



- Identify any Child in Care who is at risk of exclusion and contact the Virtual School Education Welfare Officer, 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 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 Virtual School (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**

- The CIC and PLAC 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 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
- Support the young person to have the opportunity to participate fully in planning and decision making

### **At risk**

- Schools to be made aware / share information if they feel a CIC and PLAC is at risk in any way
- Schools to be aware and have a safety plan in place with regards to absconding, going missing and or at risk of exploitation

### **Related documentation**



See Virtual School website on Cornwall intranet for related documentation and information

**\*See Cornwall's guidance on Pupil Premium Plus on web page**

[www.cornwall.gov.uk/virtualschool](http://www.cornwall.gov.uk/virtualschool)

*Promoting the Educational Achievement of Looked After Children Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities*

DFE Feb 2018

Special Educational Needs

*SEN Code of Practice 2015*

*Graduated Response*

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

