



Elmlea Schools' Trust

Children in Care and Previously in Care Policy

Document History Record of recent Policy changes

Date	Version	Author/Owner	Change	Origin of
May 2020	1	LGB/Clare Sanders	New Policy	Bristol City Council (incl LR-JS amends)
Nov 2021	2		Annual review, no changes made	
Jan 2023	3	Lacey Flook	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minor edits to language • Addition of P-CiC in the policy • Addition of other virtual schools as HOPE is only for Bristol. • Addition of social/emotional support. 	

Trustees 'Committee	Local Governing Body Joint Committee
Policy Adopted	
Review cycle	Annual
Review date	Autumn Term - 2022

CHILDREN IN CARE AND PREVIOUSLY IN CARE POLICY

Overall Aims

Elmlea Schools' Trust recognise that children in care (CiC) or those previously in care (P-CiC) require additional emotional support, sensitivity and thought as well as often needing additional academic support and intervention. Children in Care have a statutory Personalised Education Plan (PEP) and we work in close consultation with the team around our children in care, including social workers and the relevant virtual school. We aim to understand barriers to learning, including the likelihood of them having experienced ACEs, and support children to feel emotionally held by our school with an experience of being heard and thought about. We strive to enable CiC and P-CiC to experience control over their destiny and engage in the joy of learning.

Elmlea Schools' Trust strives to ensure that the culture and ethos of the school are such that pupils should be provided with the opportunity to experience, understand and celebrate diversity by following a trauma informed approach.

Objectives

Elmlea Schools' Trust will support children in care by:

- ensuring an effective induction when joining the school or when coming into care if already on the school roll
- ensuring that the child feels safe
- balancing high levels of support with real challenge
- ensuring that each child in care has a high-quality Personal Education Plan
- linking each child to a key adult/mentor
- making it a priority to know the child well and build trusting relationships
- developing strong relationships with carers, local authorities, virtual schools and specialist agencies
- encouraging and supporting the child in care/previously in care to take responsibility for their learning
- engaging the child in learning outside the classroom and after-school activities
- intervening promptly if a difficulty emerges such as behaviour or attendance
- giving integrated but low-profile support in school for each child in care so that they are not made to feel different from other children
- planning for future transitions e.g. to secondary school.

Roles and Responsibilities – see annex 2 for full detail

The Governor with special responsibility for looked after children in EST is: **Sarah Rosenberg**

The designated teacher for CiC for the trust is: **Lacey Flook**

The designated teacher for P-CiC for the trust is: **Lacey Flook** and **Rob Salisbury**

Personal Education Plans (PEPs)

All children in care must have a PEP which is drawn up by the virtual school and designated teacher with contributions by social care and carers and any other relevant agencies; the virtual school monitors the effectiveness and quality of this paperwork. The PEP forms part of the child's official school record. If the young person has a Statement of Special Educational Needs or Education Health and Care Plan this needs to be reviewed annually and should, where possible, tie in with the PEP. Full guidance on PEP meetings and how to use the PEP is provided on the [CiC education web pages](#).

One to One Tuition

Research has shown that children in care benefit from one to one tuition in English and/or maths even if they appear to be progressing in line with age related expectations. This trust is committed to prioritising all children in care for one to one tuition.

Social and Emotional Support

Many children who are in care or who have been in care are likely to have experienced ACEs and have difficulties with attachment. Having a trusted adult in school can support them to build positive, trusting and secure attachments. This

trust is committed to prioritising CiC and P-CiC for interventions and support to develop secure peer relationships and have a safe space to express themselves. Interventions and support may include 1:1 sessions with their key adult/mentor, small group social skills or self-esteem support or access to play/art therapy. They will also likely need a flexible approach to the schools' behaviour policies and this should be assessed on an individual basis with the DT.

Additional Funding

Children in care are entitled to additional funding to help improve their outcomes and narrow the gap between their outcomes and those of their peers. Which young people are eligible and the amount of such funding available will be determined as a result of government policy. The dedicated funding for children in Year R to Year 6 is currently called the Pupil Premium Plus funding.

The trust is committed to ensuring effective use of this dedicated funding where available for all eligible children in care on roll to provide additional, personalised support to ensure accelerated progress in order to improve outcomes. The appropriate use of allocated funding is to be assessed through the Personal Education Plan. The HOPE Virtual School (Bristol) expects 80% of Pupil Premium Plus money to be spent on improving outcomes in English and maths. Other virtual schools do not have the same expectation and may have different priorities such as social and emotional well-being. The receipt methods and timings of the funding differs by authority.

Admission/Induction and Leaving Arrangements

Children in care are a priority for admission, details of which are recorded in the Trust Admissions Policy which follows statutory guidance on school admissions. On admission to the school, carers will be given an introductory booklet about the school's expectations and procedures and the child will meet with the designated teacher. The designated teacher will identify any relevant issues, academic or pastoral, and ensure the child is made to feel supported in our trust. Consideration will be given to giving the child a peer mentor. On admission, records will be requested from the child's previous school. As soon as practicable after the records are received, a meeting will be held with the carer/parent, social worker, other relevant professionals and the child, as appropriate, to put together a new PEP or review the last one. This early meeting will ensure that communication systems are established early. If records are not received promptly, we will undertake our own assessment to make sure that the teaching and support received are appropriate. We will endeavour to meet the statutory time scales for PEPs as outlined in guidance.

When children already on roll are taken into care, the school will ensure that the student meets with the designated teacher as soon as possible and is fully informed of the school procedures and additional support arrangements available. A meeting with other parties will be arranged and PEP prepared within 28 days of being taken into care. At the first PEP meeting, the social worker will provide information on who requires school reports and who may give permission for school trips or other such activities. At this meeting any means of communication to aid the exchange of information between statutory meetings will be discussed and agreed (such as a home/school book to detail any sudden significant changes in a child's circumstances).

Many children in care do not want school staff to be aware of their care status because it makes them feel "different". Therefore, we will negotiate with the child to identify who should be aware of their care status. However, we recognise that in some cases, such as if the child has a severe learning difficulty, this may not be possible.

When a child in care leaves the school, we will ensure the transition process is fitting to the needs of the child including a transition PEP with the new school. We will also ensure the swift transfer of information to the next school.

School Trips and Special Activities

We aim to ensure that children in care enjoy as many extra-curricular opportunities as possible by reserving placements for them on trips or enrichment activities which they are eligible for and allowing sufficient time to gain the necessary consent. The responsibility for giving permission for school trips and enrichment opportunities is that of the social worker, although they often delegate this to foster carers. The person who may give permission will be clarified at the first PEP meeting. If in doubt we will always send consent forms to the social worker.

Annex 1 – Definitions and complaints procedure

Children in Care

The terms Looked After Child (LAC) and child in care (CiC) are interchangeable. For the purposes of this policy we are using the term CiC due to research with children that voiced they did not like the term 'looked after child'. Under the Children Act 1989, a child is looked after by a local authority if he or she is in their care or is provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the authority. They include the following:

- (i) children who are accommodated by the local authority under a voluntary agreement with their parents;
- (ii) children who are the subject of a care order or interim care order;
- (iii) children who are the subject of emergency orders for the protection of the child;
- (iv) children who are compulsorily accommodated. This includes remanded to the local authority or subject to a criminal justice supervision order with a residence requirement.

A looked after child may be in residential care, a foster placement or could be living with their parents. If living with their parents, this could be on a part time basis or possibly before returning home permanently after a care placement.

Legal Framework

From 1 September 2009 the governing bodies of all maintained schools are required under the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 (the 2008 Act) to appoint a designated teacher (DT) to promote the educational achievement of children in care who are on the school roll. This policy follows the statutory guidance for school governing bodies outlined in the roles and responsibilities of the designated teacher for looked after children, published February 2018.

Web link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/683561/The_designated_teacher_for_looked-after_and_previously_looked-after_children.pdf

Complaints

If a young person, parent/carer or social worker wishes to complain about the provision or policy, they should in the first instance raise it with the designated teacher, who will try to resolve the situation alongside the carer and the social worker.

If the issue cannot be resolved within 10 days, the young person, carer or social worker should follow the formal complaints procedure which is available on the school and trust websites.

Pupils who wish to make a formal complaint against the school or trust about their care will be advised of the support available for children in care through the National Youth Advocacy Service and encouraged to look at the page on Bristol's children in care [RVoice website](#).

Annex 2 - Roles and Responsibilities

The Role of the Board of Trustees and Local Governing Body

- The local governing body will ensure that the DTs and the named governor undertake appropriate training.
- Ensure that the DT is a member of the Executive or Senior Leadership Team.
- Governors will consider an annual report from the designated teacher covering attainment, attendance, progress, PEPs, CiC with SEND or who are gifted and talented, impact on school development plans and how the school supports the work of the relevant virtual schools. A suggested template is available on this web page: <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/schoolslearning-early-years/information-for-schools>.
- The Board of Trustees, local governing body, Executive Headteacher and senior leadership team will act on any issues raised in the report and will ensure that:
 - the school has a clear overview of the educational needs and progress of CiC on roll;
 - the school's policies are effective in reflecting the needs of CiC;
 - resources are allocated to support the DT to carry out this role effectively for the benefit of CiC.

The role of the Executive Headteacher

- To ensure that, in partnership with the board of trustees, local governing body, the DT 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 children in care.
- To make sure that the DT role contributes to the deeper understanding of everyone in the school who is likely to be involved in supporting children in care to achieve.
- In partnership with the local governing body, monitor the effectiveness of the role of the designated teacher.
- Oversee the development of the policy on children in care and previously in care.
- Evaluate the standards and achievement of CiC and report these termly to the local governing body and discuss them at Core SIO/virtual school meetings.
- Ensure that all staff are given the opportunity to attend training courses etc. that help them develop the skills and knowledge needed to support children in care.

The role of the designated teacher within the schools

The designated teacher (DT) has lead responsibility for helping school staff understand the things which affect how CiC learn and achieve. The DT will:

- ensure staff understand the impact Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) have on a child's behaviour and learning
- ensure all staff are familiar with strategies to support CiC pupils
- promote a culture of high expectations and aspirations for how CiC learn
- promote the educational achievement of every child in care on the school's roll
- contribute to the development and review of whole school policies to ensure that they do not unintentionally put children in care at a disadvantage
- make sure, in partnership with other staff, that there are effective and well understood school procedures in place to support children in care's learning and wellbeing
- make sure the young person has a voice in setting learning targets
- be a source of advice for staff about differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual children and in making full use of Quality First teaching
- make sure that CiC are prioritised in one to one tuition arrangements and that carers understand the importance of supporting learning at home
- have lead responsibility for the development and implementation of the child's PEP
- set up systems to monitor and record the progress of all children in care and establish a system for contacting and forwarding educational records to new schools to facilitate a smooth and speedy transfer
- act as the named contact for colleagues in social care and health and ensure effective communication between all relevant parties

- have lead responsibility for helping school staff to understand the things which can affect how children in care learn and achieve
- ensure that the school file for CiC holds all the essential information; a template for which can be found on the [CiC education web pages](#)
- arrange for a mentor or peer mentor for each child in care on the roll of the school
- have due regard for the 'Expectations' document produced by the virtual schools

The role of all those involved in supporting children in care

- ensure that all children in care are made to feel welcome and included
- have high expectations of children in care's involvement in learning and educational progress
- be aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation from birth families
- understand the reasons which may be behind behaviour and why they may need more support than other children
- understand how important it is to see children in care as individuals and not to publicly treat them differently from their peers
- appreciate the central importance of showing sensitivity about who else knows about a child in care's status
- Understand what a PEP is and its importance in helping to create a shared understanding between teachers, carers, social workers and, depending on age and understanding, the child him or herself of what everyone needs to do to help them achieve their potential

Annex 3 - Sources of guidance and support:

National Policy/Statutory Guidance

- [Improving the attainment of looked after children in primary schools](#)
- [Promoting the education of looked after children](#)
- [Department for Education website](#)
- [Pupil Premium information](#)

Bristol policies and guidance – all available at <https://www.bristol.gov.uk/schoolslearning-early-years/guidance-policies-and-procedures> unless otherwise shown

- Admissions protocol and operational process
- Attendance plan for CiC example
- Exclusion Procedural Guidance
- Induction and leaving processes for children in care (CiC)
- Model confidential school file for CiC - Some schools requested a template of what a school's file for a CiC should contain. Several designated teachers contributed to this model document
- Monitoring and Tracking Pupil Progress - This document shows the processes that are in place in addition to what schools do
- [Personal Education Plan Guidance](#)
 - Glossary for PEP guidance
 - Free resources for CiC
- Process for agreeing part time timetable
- Process for new children in care/CiC moving
- Pupil Premium policy
- When a child comes into care Guidance for schools on social care processes when a child comes into local authority care
- [Children in care education website](#)