



Southfields Primary School

Children in Care Policy

Date agreed: September 2024

Review Date: September 2025

The Designated Teacher (DT) for Children in Care and Children Previously in Care are:

Mrs E Kapler and Mrs C Hilton.

The Governor with responsibility for Children in Care and Children Previously in Care is:

Mrs L Isnovuio.

This policy, having been presented to, and agreed upon by the whole staff and Governors, will be distributed to:

- All teaching staff
- School governors

A copy of the policy will also be available in:

- The Staffroom
- The Head's office
- School web site

This will ensure that the policy is readily available to visiting teachers, support staff and parents.

Southfields Primary is totally committed to social justice and improving life chances for potentially vulnerable children. It is dedicated to sharing its work and findings beyond the school to improve outcomes for as many children as it can reach and has a particular specialism in Speech and Language development.

Southfields Primary School believes that, in partnership with Peterborough City Council as Corporate Parents, we have a special duty to safeguard and promote the education of Children in Care (CiC) and those previously in care (PCiC)

Our aim is:

- To ensure that all Children in Care are treated inclusively.
- 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 CPiC and give them access to every opportunity to achieve to their potential and enjoy learning.
- To fulfil our schools' role as corporate parents to promote and support the education of our CiC and CPiC, by asking the question, 'Would this be good enough for my child?'
- To support and promote the well-being of our CiC and CPiC.
- To take a proactive approach to support their success, recognising that we have a vital role to play in promoting educational achievement and social and emotional development.
- To create, nurture model, and promote positive relationships within school.

School will:

- Nominate a Designated Teacher (DT), who has qualified teacher status, who will act as their advocate and co-ordinate support for them.
- Nominate a Designated Person (DP) for CPiC to offer information advice and guidance to parents and support for the child.
- Nominate a school governor to ensure that the needs of CiC and CPiC in the school are taken into account at a school management level and to support the DT and DP.
- Support the DT in carrying out their role by making time available and ensuring that they attend training on CiC, are able to attend Child Care Reviews and complete Personal Education Planning tasks.
- Support the DP in carrying out their role.

The Designated Teacher will:

- Know all CiC in school and those who have previously left care and who will therefore still need support.
- Be a central point of initial contact within the school.
- Make sure the young person's voice is heard, valued and responded to and be an advocate for the child.

- Promote a culture of high expectations and aspirations for the achievement of CiC throughout the school.
- Have sufficient up to date knowledge and training about the education, care and health needs of CiC to be able to respond proactively, support and challenge staff and seek support and advice from professionals when they reach the limits of their professional knowledge.
- Ensure that support continues should the child cease to be in care.
- Ensure each Child in Care has an up to date, complete and high quality Personal Education Plan (PEP).
- Closely monitor each child's attendance and academic progress, working and sharing information in a timely manner with the Virtual School to help ensure each child achieves the best possible educational outcomes
- Encourage high aspirations.
- Promote the educational achievement of CiC and CPiC, either directly or through appropriate delegation.
- Work alongside the Social Worker, Virtual School and other professionals to ensure that each Child in Care has a current, good quality Personal Education Plan (PEP) in place which includes smart, curriculum or SEMH based targets, and is an effective tool which supports the young person and helps them make excellent progress.
- Ensure that Pupil Premium Plus funding is used to provide additional, personalised support as identified in the Personal Education Plan.
- Ensure appropriate interventions and assessments are carried out so barriers to learning are overcome and share this during the PEP.
- Make sure that CiC are prioritised in support arrangements and that carers understand the importance of supporting learning at home.
- Work closely with other agencies, sharing information as appropriate.
- Attend training.
- Keep Governors and SLT up to date with the needs, issues and outcomes for CiC via an annual report and any other necessary communication.
- Support any transitions to new schools by providing information, attending meetings and ensuring a timely transfer of information.
- Effectively plan for future transitions within or outside of school.
- Fully involve parents, carers and guardians in decisions affecting their child's education.
- Promote the educational achievement of every child in care and child precious in care on the school's roll.
- Promote a whole school culture where the personalised learning needs of every CiC and CPiC matters and their personal, emotional and academic needs are prioritised.
- Take lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand the things which can affect how our children learn and achieve.
- Take lead responsibility for how the whole school supports the educational achievement of these pupils.
- Promote good home-school links.
- Communicate effectively with carers, parents or guardians.

- Ensure carers, parents or guardians are aware of how the school teaches key skills.
- Work closely with the school's Designated Safeguarding Lead to ensure that any safeguarding concerns are quickly and effectively responded to.
- Be a source of advice for teachers about differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual pupils.

The DT will make sure that all staff:

- Are aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation from birth families.
- Understand that some children may find it difficult to build relationships of trust with adults because of their experiences, and how this might affect the child's behaviour.
- Understand how important it is to see our children as individuals, rather than as a homogeneous group.
- Not publicly treat CiC/CPiC differently from their peers.
- Show sensitivity about who else knows about their care status and living arrangements.
- Support the wellbeing of our children.

Governors

We will nominate a Governor who will:

- Ensure that the needs of CiC and PCiC are taken into account at a school management level.
- Support the DT in carrying out their role by ensuring they have the time to fulfil the role to a high level and that they attend training about CiC.
- Ensure that the needs and outcomes of CiC are incorporated in policy decisions wherever relevant
- Ensure the school's work with CiC is reviewed at least annually by the SLT and Governing Body
- Hold the school to account, through the Designated Teacher, on how it supports CiC and CPiC
- Attend relevant training

School Culture

We will promote a culture in which CiC and CPiC:

- Are able to discuss their progress and be involved in setting their own targets.
- Have self-belief and high aspirations for themselves.
- Have their views taken seriously.
- Have their voices heard.
- Feel safe, valued and supported.
- Are supported to take responsibility for their own learning.
- Have access to academic support.
- Are encouraged to participate in school activities and in decision making within the school.

- Can discuss difficult issues (such as SEN, bullying, attendance) in an open and honest manner with a sympathetic and empathetic adult.
- Have safe, appropriate and trusted relationships with staff.
- Have positive relationships with other pupils.
- Develop a positive and growth mind-set.
- Are supported to self-regulate and manage challenging emotions

Personal Education Plans (PEP)

We (the Designated Teacher and staff involved with the child) will:

- Liaise with the Virtual School and other relevant parties to arrange regular PEP meetings.
- Have a high quality PEP for each child which includes appropriate targets, considers the voice of the child and celebrates successes.
- Work closely with other staff in school to make sure the child's progress is rigorously monitored and evaluated.
- Make sure the PEP is effective in supporting everyone to help the pupil to make good educational progress.
- Identify developmental and educational needs in relation to skills, knowledge, subject areas and experiences.
- Set short and long-term educational attainment targets agreed in partnership with the child and the carer where appropriate.
- Include information on how the child's progress is to be rigorously monitored.
- Record details of specific interventions and targeted support that will be used to make sure personal education targets are met.
- Set out how a child's aspiration and self-confidence is being nurtured and focus on strengths and capabilities and the outcomes they want to achieve.
- Include the child's views on how they see they have progressed and what support they consider to be most effective.
- Share the child's academic achievements and participation in the wider activities of the school and other out of school learning.
- Provide information which helps all who are supporting the child's educational achievement to understand what works for them.
- Have clear accountability in terms of who within the school is responsible for making the actions identified in PEP happen.
- Meet with the child prior to PEP meetings to ensure that their voice is heard.
- Share any educational recommendations in the PEP with staff in so that the child has the opportunity to fulfil and achieve the targets set.
- Ensure that Pupil Premium Plus funding is carefully targeted to improve the educational outcomes of the child as agreed in the PEP.
- Assess learning needs will help to identify strengths, weaknesses and any barriers to learning
- Judge whether the teaching and learning and intervention strategies being used are working to support achievement and wellbeing.
- Have a knowledge of whether child is likely to meet the attainment targets in their PEP.

Voice of the child

We will:

- Listen to the voice of the child.
- Understand that the voice of the child is vital in order to successfully understand the child and meet their needs.
- Ensure the child feels supported by the DT, class staff and whole school team.
- Ensure the child knows we will always support them.
- Be available for the child.
- Take the time to get to know the child.
- Understand that they may have a difficult past and that it may affect behaviour,
- Understand their experience of being in care.

Pupil Premium Plus

We will:

- Take into account the specific needs of the child.
- Make sure spending supports narrowing the gap in learning.
- Ensure spending is used to support academic attainment and progress.
- Discuss spending and liaise with PVS.
- Raise awareness of the funding available.
- Use evidence based interventions.

Raising Awareness and Staff Training

The Designated Teacher will:

- Have a strong awareness, skills and training around the needs of CiC and CPiC and how best to support them.
- Build strong links with PVS.
- Access relevant training.
- Keep up to date with research and good practice.
- Ensure teachers have an awareness of the specific needs of the children.
- Provide training and share information where necessary.

Dealing with key challenges

Wellbeing and Mental Health

'CiC/CpiC children are more likely to experience the challenge of social, emotional and mental health issues than their peers. For example, they may struggle with executive functioning skills forming trusting relationships, social skills, managing strong feelings (e.g. shame, sadness, anxiety and anger), sensory processing difficulties, foetal alcohol syndrome and coping with transitions and change. This can impact on their behaviour and education.'

We will:

- Support the mental health and wellbeing of our children to the best of our abilities.
- Act as an advocate for the child.

- Respect and value the wishes, thoughts and opinions of the child.
- Ensure the DT and other school staff can identify signs of potential issues.
- Draw on specialist services, such as CAMHS and Educational Psychologists when needed.
- Monitor, promote and support the mental health and wellbeing of our children.
- Seek advice from PVS and other professionals where needed and necessary.
- Provide access to nurture support within school where appropriate.
- Seek permission for counselling by one of our trained counsellors if needed.
- Refer to recommended documents with respect to supporting CiC/CPiC's mental health.
- Aim to identify and support pupils with attachment difficulties, drawing on specialist support where needed and when possible,
- Endeavour to identify signs of potential mental health issues, and access further assessment and support where necessary, making full use of the SENCO and local authority support team where applicable.
- Show understanding of the impact trauma, attachment disorder and other mental health issues can have on these children and their ability to engage in learning
- Show awareness that these issues will continue to affect CPiC.
- The DT will undertake the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) to form a view about a looked-after child's emotional well-being where required.
- Work with senior leaders in the school, the department responsible for links with mental health services and parents and carers to put in place mechanisms for understanding the emotional and behavioural needs of this group of children.

Relationships beyond the school

We will:

- Proactively engage with those involved with the child in order to respond effectively to the needs of the child.
- Discuss with the child's social worker how to engage with birth parents (where appropriate and involved),
- Ensure the school is clear about who has parental responsibility and what information can be shared with whom.
- Form relationships with those who have parental responsibility and encourage them to be actively involved in their child's education.
- Be open and accessible
- Encourage parents/carers to approach the DT to discuss the support needs of their child.

Working with carers and parents

We will:

- Encourage carers to take an active role in participation in PEP planning
- Support carers in supporting the education of the children they look after.
- Communicate parents' evenings dates to carers and social workers and, where appropriate, birth parents.
- Know the most appropriate person to contact when necessary for each child.
- Work closely with carers, parents and guardians.

- Make the DT known to parents and guardians so they can discuss their child's education.
- Respect the views and wishes of parents, carers and guardians at all times.

Admissions

- We will act in accordance with the law and admissions codes and give timely access to school places to CiC and CPIC.
- We will ensure that CiC and their carers meet with the Designated Teacher.
- New arrivals will be offered a tour of the school prior to their start date.
- We will give a warm Southfields welcome to our school and create a successful transition which includes carers and parents where appropriate.

Access to appropriate curriculum

- We will ensure that CiC and CPIC have access to the best curriculum that we can offer.
- We will provide interventions and additional support within school where necessary.
- We will work proactively with others to ensure that the curriculum meets their needs and ensure that staff are aware of any issues that could cause additional distress e.g. discussions around family, Mothering Sunday, and approach these with sensitivity and discretion.
- Bespoke and tailored curriculums will be in place where necessary.
- Class teachers will ensure that resources for support are provided where needed and appropriate adaptations are made to the curriculum when necessary.

Access to support for children, including those with SEN

- We will work proactively to ensure children's needs are assessed early and their needs met.
- The DT and SENCO will take the lead in ensuring support or assessment from other agencies is in place.
- Children's PEPs will work in harmony with any EHC plans to, coherently and comprehensively, set out how their needs are being met.
- Consider how the EHC plan adds to information about how education, health and care needs will be met without duplicating information already in a child's care plan or PEP.

Preventing exclusion and improving attendance

Our aim is to never exclude a child in care:

- We will adopt the processes of the external attendance monitoring service commissioned by PVS.
- Where attendance is falling or low, we will work with carers and other agencies, including the Attendance Service, to address issues and ensure a plan is in the PEP.
- We will work with other agencies (including foster carers, social workers, psychology services and the Virtual School) on strategies to prevent exclusion.
- The school will seek, accept and be provided with support in a timely manner according to the availability of resources.
- If a pattern of exclusion is developing and ensure plans to address issues are in the PEP.

- Permanent exclusions will only occur when all other options have been exhausted, or because of an extreme incident.
- Where the potential for a permanent exclusion can be anticipated e.g. because of a developing pattern of behaviour, alternatives will be found before this occurs and all professionals involved with the child will be consulted.
- If there is a one off extreme incident, we will meet with the Virtual School prior to any decision about permanent exclusion.
- Where a managed transfer or move to full time alternative provision is agreed, we will not take a child off role until a new placement is found. The current placement will take a lead in working with others to find an alternative placement.
- We will provide work from the first day of any fixed term exclusion.
- Where a child in care is likely to be subject to a suspension or permanent exclusion, the Designated Teacher (DT) will contact the local authority's VSH as soon as possible. The VSH, working with the DT and others, should consider what additional assessment and support need to be put in place to help the school address the factors affecting the child's behaviour and reduce the need for suspension or permanent exclusion. Where relevant, the school should also engage with a child's social worker, foster carers, or children's home workers.
- Where children previously in care face the risk of being suspended or permanently excluded, the school will engage with the child's parents/guardians and the DT. The school may also seek the advice of the VSH on strategies to support the pupil.

School Trips and Enrichment Activities

- We aim to ensure that Children in Care enjoy as many extra-curricular opportunities and life-experiences as possible.
- The person who may give permission to engage in these activities will be clarified at the first PEP meeting and permission will be sought from them thereafter.
- Support for funding will be applied for by the DT, should carers wish for them to do so.

Liaising with multi-agencies and sharing information

- We will share attendance, exclusion, target setting and achievement data and any other school plans or information requested by Peterborough Virtual School or the child's Social Worker.
- We will support the child to engage in planning and decision making as their voice is pivotal.
- The DT will liaise closely with those involved with the child and share and celebrate successes, as well as working together to overcome any issues that arise.
- We will share high expectations, aspirations and positive perceptions of the child with the child and other professionals.
- High quality PEPs will take place termly and the DT will attend CCR (child care reviews) when possible.

Further Reading

- [KCSIE 2024](#)
- [The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children](#)
- Improving the attainment of looked after children in primary schools
- [Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children](#)
- The Children Act 1989 guidance and regulations Volume 2 care planning placement and case review.pdf
- Promoting the health and well-being of looked-after children August 2022 update.pdf
- <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/children-and-families-at-risk/looked-after-children>
- [Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools academies and pupil referral units in England including pupil movement](#)

Acronyms

CiC- Children in care

CPiC- Children previously in care

PVS- Peterborough Virtual School

VSH- Virtual School Head

DT- Designated Teacher

DP- Designated person

CCR- Child Care Reviews

PEP- Personal Education Plans

SLT- Senior Leadership Team

SDQ- Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire

CAMHS- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services

EHC plan- Education, Health and Care Plan

SEMH- Social, Emotional and Mental Health

SENCO- Special Educational Needs Coordinator