



School Policy for the Education of Children in Care (CiC), Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) and Children with a Social Worker - 2022

Governors, parents and school staff worked together to agree a vision for Witton Church Walk Primary School which they felt was represented in the following quotation.....

'Where Every Door is Opened and Every Gift is Unlocked'

To elaborate on this...At Witton we are a partnership of school, church, home and community. We create a stimulating and caring environment, grounded in Christian belief and practice, so that all members of our school community feel happy, safe and secure. Time is taken to value and nurture each child educationally, creatively and spiritually. Children and staff are encouraged to aim for 'Everyday Excellence' and believe in themselves in order to achieve their full potential.

At Witton Church Walk Primary School we believe that all our Children in Care (CiC) and Previously Looked After Children (PLAC) should have equitable access to excellent educational provision and should achieve in line with, or better than, all children from Cheshire West and Chester and children nationally. We, as a school community, aim to be champions and advocates for Children in Care 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. From 1st September 2021 we also monitor the educational progress of the vulnerable group of children with a social worker in line with the new strategic responsibility of the Virtual School Headteacher.

Designated teacher (DT) for CiC and PLAC: Tracy Parr

Second contact for CiC and PLAC if DT unavailable: Kathryn Magiera

SENDCo: Sarah Johnson

Our aims to support Children in Care and PLAC:

- Provide a safe and secure environment, which values education and believes in the abilities and potential of all children
- Diminishing the Differences- bring the educational attainments of our CiC and PLAC in line with or better to those of their peers
- Ensure appropriate use of Pupil Premium Plus (PP+) to support education outcomes
- Make sure they have access to education appropriate to their age, ability and emotional development. This includes access to a broad, balanced and appropriate curriculum. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we will ensure our children have access to online learning, access to an IT device and that regular contact with our children is maintained
- Always ask the question: 'Would this be good enough for my child?'

- All settings are required to have a Designated Teacher (DT) for CiC 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 CiC and PLAC 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.

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 Personal Education Plans (PEPs)
- Overall attainment & progress of CiC and PLAC in the school/performance compared to peers and national
- Know about the barriers to learning for our CiC and PLAC, including an understanding of trauma and attachment
- Their role in leadership and management in relation to the school inspection handbook and focus questions relating to vulnerable children
- Staff are familiar with the LA 'PLEDGE' for CiC
- Number of CiC and PLAC with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and statements/Education Health Care Plan (EHCP)/Individual Development Plan (IDP) and the level of support in place
- Total attendance figure and authorised and unauthorised absence levels of CiC and PLAC
- The existence of risk assessments if not in school
- Number of CiC and PLAC who have been excluded in previous 12 months
- How the LA supports educational achievement of CiC and PLAC
- The school's use of Pupil Premium Plus spend and impact on attainment

This information will be shared at the termly Governor meetings and form part of the annual Headteacher's report.

- The Governing body should ensure the DT 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' document, Feb 2018 DfE
- There is a duty on Local Authorities to promote the educational achievement of CiC and PLAC, under Section 52 of the Children's Act 2004 (still remains in place despite Act updates)
- There is a dedicated Governor to champion and monitor the work of the school in supporting its CiC and PLAC as a part of a larger group of vulnerable children
- Staff take a proactive approach in co-operating with, and supporting, the relevant Local Authority regarding the education of CiC 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 CiC 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 around their emotional wellbeing
- For CiC 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 CiC 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, along with detailed analysis and future actions as a result
- Ensure that systems are in place to keep staff up to date and informed about CiC 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
- In line with Our Way of Working, a nurturing and trauma informed approach and understanding of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) will help to support CiC and PLAC
- Support the engagement of CiC and PLAC in out of school hours learning
- Staff work in partnership with carers, agencies and parents (where appropriate)
- Support carers to value educational achievement and improve attendance
- Staff can help the individual begin to feel that they are fitting in and offer them a safe space and time to talk
- Staff are aware that being or becoming a 'Child in Care' has a major impact on their lives and that when planning children's learning and support this should be considered
- Staff are 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
- Staff 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 funding 'which is requested through the termly PEP meeting and is awarded on a need basis linked to attainment and SMART targets

Special Educational needs: see Cheshire West and Chester SEND graduated response document

- 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 CiC and PLAC are underachieving, and have early interventions to improve this
- Contact needs to be made with the Virtual School for CiC and PLAC as soon as concerns are raised
- If the child or young person has a statement of special educational need, an EHCP or IDP, ensure the annual review coincides with one of the half yearly 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 CiC and PLAC within school's own admissions procedures and admit students as quickly as possible, recognising the importance of re-establishing school stability for CiC and PLAC
- Adhere to Cheshire West and Chester Council's School Admission protocol for Children in Care
- Ensure that on admission or transfer all relevant information is obtained at the outset
- Forward appropriate documents, in a timely fashion, to any receiving school at point of transition when the receiving school is made known
- Make every effort to provide continuity of schooling and educational experience, attending a Transition PEP meeting where relevant to help facilitate planning between settings
- CiC are not part of the Fair Access process

Attendance:

- The attendance of all CiC is monitored via Welfare Call through daily contact with schools
- Where attendance is a problem, a first day of absence procedure needs to be established

- Inform Education Welfare Officer/Social Worker/Virtual School of 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
- CiC should not be taken out of school for holidays
- There should be no unauthorised absences for CiC
- Safety plans to be put in place where a CiC/PLAC is on a reduced timetable or Children Missing Education

Exclusion:

- Identify any CiC who is at risk of exclusion and liaise with the Virtual School, Social Worker and relevant professionals to put proactive strategies in place to avoid a Child in Care missing days from school
- Ensure in the case of a fixed term exclusion, that the carer (or person 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 with details of the exclusion outlining the reasons why the child has been excluded so that an appropriate response can be made
- Permanent exclusion should be avoided for CiC, where a permanent exclusion is being considered, the headteacher will contact the Virtual School Headteacher to discuss and agree the education plan

Multi-agency liaison:

- The CiC and PLAC DT will need to liaise closely with carers, birth parents (if appropriate) and the pupil's social worker on a variety of issues including homework, uniform 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

Expectations of a DT

- To oversee the implementation of the PEP in school
- To ensure the appropriate person shares a copy of the PEP with the child
- To advise the Virtual School if the DT is going to change/leave the school, or there is a change in contact details (GDPR)
- To liaise with your finance department concerning fixed rate & additional PP+ payments

- To attend PEP meetings and oversee the final PEP before it is returned. Ensure the PEPs are written in a trauma informed language and to the child in line with Our Way of Working
- To submit the completed PEP within 5 working days of the PEP meeting being held
- To complete a PEP every term (at the very least)
- To inform the Virtual School of any changes or if there are any issues in order for them to be resolved at an early stage
- It is a statutory requirement for a DT to attend at least one training session (Induction/Network/Conference) with the Virtual School per year
- From September 2021 Children with a Social Worker are part of the school's Vulnerable Group and their education should be monitored, and the same principles regarding aspirations and education outcomes applied to CiC and Previously CLA

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