

## REDCLIFFE CHILDREN'S CENTRE

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### **Policy for Promoting and Supporting the Education of Children in Care**

#### **Aim**

The Centre will be a key factor in promoting the educational achievement and improving the life chances of children in care through careful planning, monitoring and evaluation. It will also provide a source of continuity and "normality" for children who may have been subject to emotional distress, abuse, and disruption. The Centre can be the place where children maintain relationships and a place where they feel safe and can be themselves.

#### **Definition**

In this policy the term "children in care" is used synonymously with "looked after children". The term "looked after" was introduced by the Children Act 1989. This refers to a child who is either accommodated (whereby the local authority provides for the child on an agreed basis with the person who has parental responsibility) or is subject to a care order (whereby a court order grants shared parental responsibility to the local authority in order to protect and promote a child's welfare). Children in both instances could be living with foster carers, in a residential unit, in a residential school, with relatives, or with parents.

#### **Legal Framework**

The 1989 Children Act and government guidance from different departments has set out requirements for looked after children. More recently the 2008 Children and Young Persons Act led to the Statutory guidance for school governing bodies being published in 2009 by the Department for Children, Schools and Families. This sets out the framework of requirements for governing bodies and designated teachers in promoting the educational achievement of children in care.

#### **The Centre will:**

- Ensure access to a balanced and broadly based education to all children in care
- Prioritize recording and improving the educational achievement of children in care
- Promote the attendance of children in care
- Prioritize maintaining a lack of exclusions for children in care

- Ensure there is a designated teacher to advocate for the rights of children in care
- Continue to develop systems of communications and protocols

## Objectives

We will:

- Take a lead in the development of high quality Personal Education Plan for every child in care
- Provide a climate of acceptance and challenge negative stereotypes.
- Ensure all children in care have the same opportunities to participate fully in the Foundation Stage Curriculum and any other Centre activities, and enjoy the educational experience fully in line with corporate parenting principles.
- Ensure discretion when addressing a child's care status and ensure there is sensitivity to the background of children who are in care, especially surrounding work on family.
- Ensure the **designated teacher** is provided with regular training, and cascades this training to Centre staff as appropriate.
- Review all Centre policies regularly in the light of any legislation or government guidance about children in care, Inclusion, Special Educational Needs or related issues.
- Ensure that a clear protocol for sharing of information will be followed both within the Centre and with outside agencies.
- Endeavor to support all children in care educated in this Centre to achieve to their fullest possible academic potential.

## Roles and Responsibilities

### The governing body

The Head of Centre will on behalf of the governing body:

- Appoint an appropriately qualified and experienced **designated teacher**
- Ensure that the **designated teacher** undertakes appropriate training
- Ensure a report to the governing body on an annual basis on the following (all information will remain anonymous):
  - The number of any children in care in the Centre
  - The achievement of these children compared to others, including any data available
  - The attendance of these children, compared to other children
  - The level of fixed term and permanent exclusions, compared to other children, if any occur
  - The number of complaints

The governing body will:

- Oversee the development of the policy on children in care

- Act on any issues, which arise from the report, in co-operation with the Senior Leadership Team, in order to support the role of the designated teacher
- Be responsible for all systems to support children in care

A named governor will work in co-operation with the Head of Centre and designated teacher. We have adopted the practice of having a named governor to ensure that children in care receive equal access to all learning opportunities in line with their peers and the best possible support in the centre to promote their educational achievement.

The **named Governor** should be satisfied that:

- The Centre has a coherent policy for children in care
- The Centre's policies and procedures are reviewed in the light of new government guidelines.
- The designated teacher undertakes appropriate training
- Children in care have equal access to all areas of the curriculum
- The governing body receives an annual report

The name of the **Governor** with special responsibility for children in care is: -----

### **The Designated Teacher**

The **designated teacher** will serve as the contact for social services and the education department and will maintain responsibility for several key areas to support children in care within the Centre. This includes serving as an advocate for all children in care in the Centre. The designated teacher will liaise with the Child Protection Officer, -----, who is a member of the Senior Leadership Team, and will act as a champion for children in care.

The **designated teacher** will help establish and maintain the ethos regarding children in care of the Centre by:

- Maintaining and respecting confidentiality of all children in care and ensuring information is shared on a strictly 'need to know' basis
- Ensuring that all staff, through appropriate training, are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantages faced by children in care and understand the need for positive systems to support them and to promote higher educational achievements
- Acting as an advocate for children in care in order to allow them equal access to educational opportunities and support with important decisions affecting future life changes
- Ensuring staff are sensitive to the wishes of the child as expressed by themselves or as understood by the social worker and carer (and parent, where appropriate) in terms of issues such as whom they wish to refer to as "mum".
- Undertaking training regularly and maintaining contact with Bristol's virtual school for children in care and the Education of Children Looked After service

The **designated teacher** will set up systems to monitor and record the progress of all children in care. S/he will:

- Have an overview and co-ordinating role for gathering and holding all information regarding children in care
- Maintain records, linked with main Centre records, regarding all children in care, including legal status and information regarding who should be contacted regarding matters concerning the child
- Maintain a system for sharing and forwarding educational records, including a child's current Personal Education Plan, so that the greatest continuity possible can be achieved for the child
- Monitor the educational progress of all children in care and intervene, in co-operation with other agencies if required, if there is evidence of underachievement, absence from the Centre, or other similar concern

The **designated teacher** will, in co-operation with the key person, facilitate effective communication by:

- Building positive home-Centre relationships between parents / carers with regular opportunities for dialogue
- Leading in the setting of high quality education targets for the child's PEP
- Playing an active role in care planning by ensuring that the attendance of the most appropriate member of staff and/or written reports on progress are available to all statutory reviews of children in care
- Helping co-ordinate education and PEP meetings
- Serving as the named contact for colleagues in social services and education
- Ensuring effective communication between all relevant parties
- Inviting the responsible social worker to all meetings, and liaising with this social worker regarding the development of Personal Educational Plans (PEP).

The **designated teacher** will, in co-operation with the key person, monitor each child's achievement and ensure that they have the support they require within the Centre:

- By the Admission/Induction arrangements outlined below
- By the operation of the key person system
- By ensuring each child has a quality Personal Education Plan
- By requesting support from the SENCO and/or outside agencies, if a child in care requires additional academic or behavioral support
- By regular liaison with the Education for Children Looked After service
- By working closely with the SENCO to ensure all children in care with special educational needs are being assessed and are getting appropriate resources to support their learning
- By identifying any gifted and talented children and planning appropriately
- By having a strategy for supporting transitions within and between settings
- By ensuring all children in care are made to feel a part of the Centre environment

The name of the **designated teacher** is -----

## Personal Education Plans

Each child will have a Personal Education Plan (PEP). The designated teacher will take the lead in ensuring that high quality education targets are developed. The Centre's role in this plan is crucial and at least one member of staff who knows the child well will attend the meeting to establish and subsequently review this. Other staff will contribute in writing as appropriate.

The PEP will consider:

- The child's strength's and needs
- Interests, both in and out of the Centre
- Developmental and educational and pastoral needs
- Future plans, and how these can be supported
- Issues arising for the child

It will also identify targets that will be reviewed during the next PEP meeting.

A member of the Education Looked After Service will be invited to PEP meetings. Where a transition is planned to a new school a member of staff from that school will also be invited.

## Admission/Induction Arrangements

Children are a priority for admission and, as such, we will follow the LA's published admission criteria.

The **designated teacher** will be informed as soon as it is known that a child in care is going to be offered a place at the Centre.

On admission to a daycare or education place, the child and carer will meet their key person. The key person and/or the **designated teacher** will liaise with the carer/parent and social worker to discuss relevant issues to ensure that the child is made to feel comfortable in the Centre. The **designated teacher** will always be consulted and informed.

On admission, we will seek clarification from the social worker as to who may give permission for visits or other such activities and who will require school reports. Records will be requested from any previous settings. We will enquire of the social worker about the child's Personal Education Plan. A meeting will take place as soon as possible between the key person/**designated teacher**, the carer/parent, social worker, the child, as appropriate and any other relevant professionals including a member of the Education of Children Looked After Service to provide information for any new Personal Education Plan. This will ensure that communication systems are established early. Any means of communication to aid the fluid exchange of information between statutory meetings will be discussed and agreed.

## Centre Visits and Special Activities

Given the delays that children in care can experience in getting parental consent for visits and activities, we will aim to ensure that children in care attending the Centre enjoy the same extra opportunities as other children reserving places for them on visits or on activities.

## **Complaints**

If a carer, parent 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.

If the issue cannot be resolved within 10 days, the carer, parent or social worker can submit a formal complaint in writing to the Head of Centre. The Head of Centre will investigate the complaint and respond within 10 working days.

Any issue that remains unresolved at this stage should be addressed through a meeting in order to assess the impact of any such complaint upon the child's education. This meeting may include the named governor and any other outside agency that both parties deem necessary to attend. This meeting should normally be held within 10 working days of the Head of Centre's response.