



L.E.A.D. Academy Trust

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Children in Care Policy

Witham St Hughs Academy

The Objective

To promote the educational achievement and welfare of Children in Care.

Designated teacher

Michelle Dexter

Governor with responsibility for CiC

Mr Mel Jays

Definition

'Children in Care' is a term that refers to children for whom the Local Authority is sharing parental responsibility. This can happen either with parental agreement or when a Court makes a Care Order. The child may be living with foster carers, in a residential unit, with family members or sometimes with their parents. These children are therefore subject to corporate parenting. Witham St Hughs Academy recognises that Children in Care may have very specific needs and may be coping with trauma, abuse or rejection, and are likely to experience personal distress and uncertainty.

Witham St Hughs Academy recognises that all pupils are entitled to a balanced, broad-based curriculum and aims to promote the educational achievement and welfare of pupils in public care. The school and the governing body endorses Nottingham City Council policy and welcomes CiC who may be looked after by our local authority or those who may be in the care of another authority but living in Nottingham City.

This policy includes requirements set out in:

The role and responsibilities of the designated teacher for looked after children – Statutory guidance for school governing bodies.

Improving the Educational Attainment of Children in Care (Looked after Children)

Improving the attainment of looked after children in primary schools – Guidance for Schools

Witham St Hughs Academy's approach to encouraging and supporting the educational achievement of Children in Care is based on the following principles:

- prioritising education set within an inclusive context which makes reasonable adjustments to ensure a personalised curriculum
- Having high expectations for the child and ensuring equal access to a balanced and broadly based education.
- listening to the child
- working closely with home, voluntary and statutory agencies
- promoting attendance, through a programme of early intervention, priority action, reducing exclusions and promoting stability and continuity within a positive learning environment
- identifying need, including social and emotional as well as learning needs or gifted and talented skills and abilities
- targeting support, including accessing resources from other agencies as well as provision from school resources
- having high expectations
- Maintaining and respecting the child's confidentiality wherever possible.
- Ensuring staff awareness of, and sensitivity to, the difficulties and educational disadvantages of Children in Care.

- Ensuring an appropriately trained Designated Teacher is appointed, who will be responsible for all Children in Care (Michelle Dexter)
- All Children in Care will have a Personal Education Plan (PEP) drawn up between the school, the child, and the child's social worker, which will identify the child's individual needs and the support they require

Rationale

Many children and young people who are in care have suffered abuse or neglect. Despite having as broad a range of abilities as their peers, Children in Care are particularly vulnerable to underachievement. Barriers to their progress include a high level of disruption and change in school placements, lack of motivation or involvement in extra curricular activities.

Witham St Hughs Academy believes that the educational experience of all children should be positive and powerful and aims to provide a learning environment in which every Child in Care can be successful. We believe that this school has a major part to play in ensuring that CiC are able to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy, achieve, make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic well being.

Admission arrangements

We recognise that due to care arrangements CiC may enter school mid-term and that it is important that they are given a positive welcome and where appropriate additional support and pre-entry visits to help them settle.

The school recognises that Children in Care are an 'excepted group' and will prioritise Children in Care in the school's oversubscription criteria following the DFE Admissions Code (Admissions of Looked after Children (England) Regulations 2006)

Role of the Governing Body

The Governing body will ensure that the school allocates resources, including professional time and expertise, to support appropriate provision for Children in Care, meeting the objectives set out in this policy.

- Ensure that all Governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance on the education of Children in Care.
- Ensure the school has an overview of the needs and progress of Children in Care.
- Allocate resources to meet the needs of Children in Care.
- Ensure the school's other policies and procedures support their needs.
- Ensure that the school has a Designated Teacher, and that the Designated Teacher is enabled to carry out his or her responsibilities as below.
- Support the Headteacher, the Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring that the needs of Children in Care are recognised and met.
- Receive a report once a year setting out:
 - The number of 'Children in Care' pupils on the school's roll (if any).
 - Their attendance, as a discreet group, compared to other pupils.
 - Their Teacher Assessment, as a discreet group, compared to other pupils.
 - The number of fixed term and permanent exclusions (if any).
 - The destinations of pupils who leave the school.
 - The information for this report should be collected and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity and respect the confidentiality of the pupils concerned.

Role and Responsibilities of the Designated Teacher

The duties of the Designated Teacher will include

- ensuring that Children in Care are welcomed into the school, necessary meetings are held and arrangements are put in place to ensure their needs identified and met. This may include providing basic equipment and resources if necessary and providing appropriate support in meeting uniform requirements if needed
- maintaining an up-to-date record of the Children in care in school, including those in the care of other authorities and ensuring all necessary information is passed to other staff as required
- monitoring and tracking progress of Children in Care in school and intervening if there is evidence of individual underachievement
- holding a supervisory brief for all children being looked after and acting as advocate for the CiC in school
- liaising with teaching and non-teaching staff in school, including the person responsible for Child Protection as well as pastoral and subject staff to ensure they are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantage CiCs may face
- establishing and maintaining regular contact with home, statutory and voluntary agencies
- ensuring PEP review meetings are held regularly and information passed to all those concerned, including the local authority
- attending training as required to keep fully informed of latest developments and policies regarding Children in Care

Roles and Responsibilities of Staff

All school staff will:

- Positively promote the raising of a Child in Care's self esteem.
- Have high expectations of the educational and personal achievements of Children in Care.
- Keep the Designated Teacher informed about a Child in Care's progress.
- Ensure any Children in Care is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained.
- Follow school procedures.
- Be familiar with the school's policy and guidance on Children in Care and respond appropriately to requests for information to support PEPs and review meetings.
- Liaise with the Designated Teachers where a Child in Care is experiencing difficulties
- Contribute to regular liaison with social care colleagues and other appropriate professionals and keep carers fully informed at all times
- Keep appropriate records, confidentially as necessary, and make these available to the Designated Teacher, and professionals/ parents/carers/pupil as appropriate.
- Make extra copies of reports available when required.

Record keeping and information sharing

The Designated Teacher will keep an up-to-date record of Children in Care in school and will ensure that relevant information is made known to appropriate staff.

A Personal Education Plan (PEP) will be initiated by Social Care within 20 school days of the child starting at the school or being taken into care.

The school's Designated Teacher is responsible for organising regular reviews of the PEP to meet the needs of the CiC. The PEP will provide a regular opportunity to review progress, note any concerns and ensure all relevant parties are informed accordingly.

Copies of reports and appropriate documentation will be sent to authorised carers and agencies involved with the child as well as any receiving school at point of transition.

It is vital that the child in care is aware of information being recorded, in what circumstances and who will have access to it. How this is shared with them will depend on their age and level of understanding.

Exclusions

Witham St Hughs Academy recognises that Children in Care are particularly vulnerable to exclusions.

Where a CiC is at risk of exclusion the school will try every practicable means to maintain the child in school. A multi-professional meeting will be arranged, bringing together all those involved with the young person to discuss strategies to minimise the risk of exclusion.

The child or young person's Personal Education Plan will reflect strategies to support the child and where relevant those employed in the Pastoral Support Plan.

All relevant measures and resources will be considered to provide support and perhaps alternative educational packages to prevent an exclusion from happening.

Staff development and training

Arrangements will be made to ensure that the Designated Teacher is kept up to date with developments relating to the education and attainment of Children in Care.

Other staff will receive relevant training and support to enable them to work sympathetically and productively with Children in Care, including those who are underachieving or at risk of underachieving or who have additional needs. These may include EAL, being Gifted and Talented or having learning or physical needs.

Teachers with responsibility for Special Educational Needs provision and for children who are Gifted and Talented will be informed of those Children in Care who have particular gifts, talents or learning needs and will work with them appropriately.

Home-school liaison

The school recognises the value of a close working relationship between home and school and will work towards developing a strong partnership with parents/carers and care workers to enable Children in Care to achieve their potential.

Consultation evenings as well as PEP and Care Plan review meetings provide opportunities to continue to develop this partnership working.

Links with other agencies

The school recognises the value of working together with other agencies and organisations and will work closely with colleagues from services involved with the CiC including Social Care teams; Community Educational Psychologist; Health services, CAMHS; Youth Offending Teams.

Date to be reviewed: June 2020