

# Model School Policy for the Education of Children in Care

**At .....School we believe that all Children in Care should have equitable access to excellent educational provision and achieve at a similar level to all Haringey children. We as a school community aim to be champions for Children in Care and take a proactive approach to support their success, recognising that we as school have a vital role to play in promoting children and young peoples social and emotional development.**

## **Our aims to support Children in Care**

- Provide a safe and secure environment, which values education and believes in the abilities and potential of all children.
- Bring the educational attainments of our Children in Care nearer to those of their peers. Making sure that they have access to education appropriate to their age and ability. This includes access to a broad and balanced curriculum.
- Identifying our schools' role to promote and support the education of our Children in Care. Asking the question, 'Would this be good enough for my child?'
- Nominate a Designated Teacher for Children in Care who will act as their advocate and co-ordinate support for them, liaising with carers, natural parents (as appropriate) and social workers on a wide variety of educational and care issues.

### **be healthy**

for example, helping learners to adopt healthy lifestyles, build their self-esteem, eat and drink well and lead active lives

### **stay safe**

for example, keeping learners safe from bullying, harassment and other dangers

### **enjoy and achieve**

for example, enabling learners to make good progress in their work and personal development and to enjoy their education

### **make a positive contribution**

for example, ensuring that learners understand their rights and responsibilities, are listened to, and participate in the life of the community

### **achieve economic well-being**

for example, helping pupils to gain the skills and knowledge needed for future employment.

Taken from Ofsted Conducting the inspection Guidance for inspectors of schools July 2005 pg 10

**All staff and governors are committed to ensuring improved educational life chances for Children in Care by ensuring that the relevant personnel have reasonable support and time to compete tasks and responsibilities. Also, to establish and maintain appropriate reporting and monitoring procedures both within the school and with other agencies.**

## **DESIGNATED TEACHER FOR CHILDREN IN CARE**

- Maintain a register of all Children in Care (this includes children both from in and out of borough)

This will include a record of:

- the contact person in the relevant Children in Care Education Team.
- status i.e. care order or accommodated.

- type of Placement e.g. foster, respite, residential.
- name of Social Worker, area office, telephone number.
- daily contact and telephone numbers of those who need to be contacted in an emergency or for any other concerns. e.g. name of young person, name of parent or carer or key worker in children's home.
- share Child Protection / disability information which could be shared, if appropriate.
- relevant health information
- baseline information and all test results.
- named officers in the LA with regard to exclusion issues, attendance issues and transition issues.
- ensure that someone attends Children in Care Statutory Reviews on each child and/or always prepares a written report that promotes the continuity and stability of their education.
- participate in joint training.
- If there are safeguarding concerns for a Child in Care, contact and advice should be sought from Education Safeguarding team. Maria Anastasi 020 8489 1192

## GOVERNORS

- school staff and governors are aware of the DCSF Statutory guidance Duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of Children in Care;
- there is a dedicated Governor or committee to champion and monitor the work of the school in supporting its Children in Care as a part of a larger group of vulnerable children;
- take a proactive approach in co-operating with, and supporting, the relevant Local Authority with regard to the education of Children in Care attending the school.
- designated teachers and staff are aware of and enabled to carry out their responsibilities effectively with the full support of the head teacher;

## SCHOOL WIDE

- the school celebrates the achievements of Children in Care.
- 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 who is able to take time to listen to them;
- For young Children in Care, 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 Children in Care 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 after status;
- effective assessment, recording and reporting practices are established in accordance with the school's policy on Children in Care;
- ensure that systems are in place to keep staff up to date and informed about Children in Care.
- teachers should actively seek training to help them fulfil their roles in relation to Children in Care;
- 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;
- support the engagement of Children in Care in out of school hours learning.
- staff work in partnership with parents, carers and agencies.
- support carers to value educational achievement and improve attendance.

- teachers can help the individual begin to feel that they are fitting in and offer them a safe haven and a sympathetic ear in a crisis.
- ensure that Children in Care are listened to, and have access to support and counselling in school if required.
- staff are aware that being or becoming 'in Care' has a major impact on children's lives and that when considering children's learning and or behaviour, due consideration will be given;
- teachers can be aware of a variety of issues 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;
- teachers 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;

## SEN/AEN

- any special educational needs are quickly identified and appropriate provision is made;
- ensure that systems are in place to identify and prioritise when Children in Care are underachieving and have early interventions to improve this. Contact must be made with the Children in Care Education Team as soon as concerns are raised.
- if the child or young person has a statement of special educational need, then the annual review coincides with one of the six monthly care planning reviews, this can be obtained from the social worker.

## ADMISSIONS/TRANSITIONS

- ensure that on admission or transfer all relevant information is obtained at the outset.
- we will forward appropriate documents, in a timely fashion, to any receiving school at point of transition where the receiving school is made known;
- make every effort to provide continuity of schooling and educational experience
- prioritise Children in Care within schools own admissions procedures and admit students as quickly as possible recognising the importance of re-establishing school stability for Children in Care.

## ATTENDANCE

- where attendance is a problem, a first day of absence procedure needs to be established;
- when a child is absent for three consecutive days or more, the social worker needs to be informed via e mail or a phonecall.
- ensure that the schools attendance officer communicates with agencies who contact school for LAC attendance data. For Haringey Children in Care, Welfare Call obtain attendance data.
- acknowledge attendance in any education meetings, celebrating success and setting realistic targets if it is a concern.

## EXCLUSION

- Identify any Child in Care who is at risk of exclusion and contact the Children in Care Education Team, Social Worker and relevant professionals to put proactive strategies in place to avoid the Child in Care missing days from school.
- Ensure in the case of a fixed term (or permanent) exclusion that the carer (or persons 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 to contact the Children in Care Education Team with details of the exclusion outlining the reasons why the child has been excluded so that an appropriate response can be made. The Haringey contact is [attracta.craig@haringey.gov.uk](mailto:attracta.craig@haringey.gov.uk) or 020 8489 3767

## MULTI AGENCY WORK:

- a designated teacher will need to liaise closely with carers, natural parents and the pupil's social worker on a variety of issues, including homework, kit 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;

## PERSONAL EDUCATION PLANS

- ensure that there is a Personal Education Plan for each child to include appropriate targets. This must be compatible with the child's Care Plan held by Social Worker, and form part of any other school plan. e.g. Statement, Transition Plan, Pastoral Support Programme.
- we contribute to the process whereby all Children in Care have a high quality Personal Educational Plan (PEP) in place within 20 days of starting our school. This will include SMART educational targets and will be linked to the child's Care Plan and any other plan resulting from the assessment of the child (IEP, PSP, Statement of Educational Need);
- following the writing of a PEP, any educational recommendations in that PEP will be adhered to by staff in order that any Child in Care has the opportunity to achieve his or her targets;
- we will attend Local Authority training regarding the roles and responsibilities involved in the education of Children in Care.

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

**Date**

**Review date**

# BRIEFING FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN IN CARE POLICY

NB: Children in Care or Children in Public Care may also be referred to as Looked After Children (LAC)

## Children in Care and School Policies

The attached document is a model for a school policy for Children in Care which can be adapted and amended by schools as appropriate.

It is a requirement that each school includes vulnerable children (which, includes Children in Care) in their school policies, so having a Children in Care policy is only a starting point and a basis from which to integrate the needs of Children in Care into the whole school system.

This model can also be used as a checklist for school policies or it can be used as a basis for a school Children in Care policy and establishing procedures within the school community which support Children in Care.

In relation to sections on attendance, admissions and transitions, exclusions and AEN/SEN schools will need to develop these areas to support Children in Care in accordance with their own school policies and procedures.

## Children in Care classified as Vulnerable children

Definitions of “Looked After” Children or Children in Public Care

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is looked after by a local authority if he or she is in the care or is provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the authority. They fall into 4 main groups:

- i. Children who are accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents (section 20)\*
- ii. Children who are the subject of a care order (section 31) or interim care order (section 38)
- iii. Children who are the subject of emergency orders for their protection (section 44 and 46)
- iv. Children who are compulsorily accommodated. This includes children remanded to the local authority or subject to a criminal justice supervision order with a residence requirement (section 21)

Taken from Supporting Looked After Learner – A practical guide for Governors 2006

\*unaccompanied minors can also be accommodated under Section 20 or 17. Section 17 means they are not a Child in Care. Children can also be classed as a Child in Care if they have more than 8 days respite in a year.

## School inspections

As schools are now required to complete self evaluations, evidence will need to be shown concerning how the outcomes from Every Child matters have been met by the school. In relation to inspections if the school can achieve the outcomes for vulnerable pupils which includes Children in Care, then it can be presumed that these outcomes can be met for all pupils.

Two key areas in the inspection for Children in Care are:

Ofsted will expect to see case studies, (school information) for vulnerable children where possible.

(Taken from Ofsted Conducting the inspection Guidance for inspectors of schools July 2005 pg 11)

How school policies support vulnerable children will be considered in the inspections.

Within the statutory guidance on the duty of local authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked after children under section 52 of the children’s act 2004(Paragraph 58). Governing bodies have vital role in supporting the School to be proactive in cooperating with the local authority in regards to looked after children.

## Children in Care - Key Statistics

- At any one time, around 60,000 children are in care. In 2001-2002, 41 % of Children in Care were aged 10 or under.
- Most children – 80% - enter care because of abuse or neglect, or for family reasons. Less than 10% enter because of their own behaviour.
- Two thirds live in Foster care and one in 10 in children's homes.
- One in four Children in Care lives outside their 'home' local authority.
- In 2001/02, only 8 % of Children in Care achieved five or more A\*-C grades at GCSE, compared to half of all young people.
- Children in Care have poor results in Key Stage tests at aged 7, 11 and 14. Just 1% go to University.
- Children in public care are 10 times more likely to be excluded from school and are the group most over represented in both fixed term and permanent exclusions.

### **Some care leavers go on to be very successful later in life.**

However, for many poor experiences of education and care contribute to later social exclusion.

- Between a quarter and third of all rough sleepers were in care
- Young people who have been in care are two and a half times more likely to be teenage parents
- Around a quarter of adults in prison spent some time in care as children.

### **Reasons for low attainment**

- Too many young people's lives are characterised by instability (numerous placement moves)
- Young people in care spend too much time out of school or other places of learning.
- Children do not have sufficient help with their education if they get behind (low expectations)
- Carers are not expected, or equipped to provide sufficient support and encouragement at home for learning and development
- Children in care need more help with their emotional, mental and physical health and wellbeing.

Taken from Better education for children in care – social exclusion unit report September 2003 (except wording in black)

## Things that can make a difference

### **Out of Schools hours learning (OSHL)**

- In a study commissioned by the Dfes, MacBeath et al (2001) found that regular participation in study support can have significant impact on pupils' attainment and achievement.
- Pupils participating in informal enriching activities did better than expected in their GCSE's, by an average of three and a half grades, or by one or more A-C pass. They also had better attendance and improved attitudes to school than those who did not attend additional activities.
- Oshl offers young people the time to 'find out more', to build up knowledge, and to review, reinforce and practise skills. Extension clubs that focus on homework and revision for particular subject areas have been shown to be highly effective in improving classroom performance.

Taken from: Taking part - Making out of school hours learning happen for children in care

### **A school community understanding and developing their role in relation to the Children in Care in their school can impact their educational attainment.**

### **To deliver better outcomes for all Children in Care local authorities, schools and independent care providers need to build on their progress so far in six areas:**

- Planning
- Prioritising Children in Care in local Government policies
- Support for Children in Care
- Advocating for Children in Care
- Training and support for social workers, carers and teachers
- Better use of data to inform service improvements

Taken from Better education for children in care – social inclusion unit report September 2003

**This policy outline is part of equipping schools to improve the educational attainment of Children in Care.**

**An electronic versions of the policy is available on request by contacting:**

**Email: [cherry.hunt@haringey.gov.uk](mailto:cherry.hunt@haringey.gov.uk)**

**020 8489 3767**

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**Documents and references used for this guidance:**

- Ⓢ Policies from:
  - Ⓢ Lambeth, Medway and Durham Councils
  - Ⓢ Supporting Looked After Learners – A practical guide for school governors.
  - Ⓢ Statutory guidance on the duty of local authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked after children under section 52 of the Children Act 2004.
  - Ⓢ Ofsted Guidance for inspectors of schools
    - Conducting the inspection
    - Every Child matters
  - Ⓢ Better education for children in care – social exclusion unit report, September 2003
  - Ⓢ Taking part - Making out of school hours learning happen for children in care, 2005

**Websites:**

[www.dfes.gov.uk](http://www.dfes.gov.uk)

[www.everychildmatters.gov.uk](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk)

[www.dfes.gov.uk/educationprotects](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/educationprotects)