



OAKLANDS CATHOLIC SCHOOL **AND** **SIXTH FORM COLLEGE**

With delegated responsibility from the
Edith Stein Catholic Academy Trust

CHILDREN LOOKED AFTER (CHILDREN IN CARE) POLICY

APPROVED BY LOCAL GOVERNING BODY	MARCH 2023
SCRUTINISED BY ETHOS AND STRATEGY COMMITTEE	FEBRUARY 2023
DATE LAST REVIEWED	FEBRUARY 2023
MEMBER OF STAFF RESPONSIBLE	Assistant Headteacher
STATUTORY / NON-STATUTORY	Statutory



Community

Unity

Opportunity

Policy Amendments

Version Date	Section / Page	Amendments
February 2023	Page 2	New Glossary of Terms
February 2022		No amendments
March 2021		No amendments
March 2020	1.2 / Page 2	Removal of staff name

Glossary of Terms

AFC	Adopted from Care
CAMHS	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
CiC	Children in Care <i>This is the same as Looked After Children (LAC) and Children Looked After</i>
DfE	Department for Education
DSG	Dedicated Schools Grant
ELSA	Emotional Literacy Support Assistant <i>An Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) is a trained, school based learning support assistant. Their role is to support the emotional wellbeing of pupils. They are trained by a team of Educational Psychologists and receive ongoing group supervision.</i>
EPAC	Educational Plan for Adopted Children <i>A plan to enhance the education of a Previously Looked After Child.</i>
IBP	Individual Behaviour Plan <i>A plan containing recommendations and strategies for behaviour management.</i>
IEP	Individual Education Plan <i>A detailed plan to set individual learning targets.</i>
LAC	Looked After Children <i>This is the same as Children in Care (CiC) and Children Looked After</i>
PEP	Personal Education Plan <i>A statutory active document for a looked after child. It forms the education part of the child's Care Plan.</i>
PLAC	Previously Looked After Child
PSP	Pastoral Support Plan <i>A school based intervention designed to provide additional support for a child if other strategies have not been successful.</i>
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disability
SENCO	Special Educational Needs Coordinator
4Matrix	A system to manage the performance and progress of pupils using data

The disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven". And calling to him a child, he put him in the midst of them and said, "Truly, I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever receives one such child in my name receives me".

Matthew 18: 1-5

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Oaklands Catholic School aims to promote the educational achievement and welfare of pupils in public care.
- 1.2 **Designated Teacher for Children in Care (CiC)** Ms Sadie Whyte
Aspects of the role are delegated to the Safeguarding and Welfare Manager, under the supervision of the Deputy Head and Designated Safeguard Lead.
- 1.3 The Local Governing Body of Oaklands Catholic School and Sixth Form College is committed to providing quality education for all its pupils, based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes. This policy includes requirements set out in "Statutory guidance on the duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of looked after children under section 52 of the Children Act 2004" (Nov 2005) and associated guidance on the education of CiC.

2.0 Aims

- 2.1 The aims of the school are to:
 - ensure that school policies and procedures are followed for CiC as for all children
 - ensure that all CiC have access to a broad and balanced curriculum
 - provide a differentiated curriculum appropriate to the individual's needs and ability
 - ensure that CiC pupils take as full a part as possible in all school activities
 - ensure that carers and social workers of CiC pupils are kept fully informed of their child's progress and attainment
 - ensure that CiC pupils are involved, where practicable, in decisions affecting their future provision.

3.0 Who are Children Looked After (Children in Care)?

- 3.1 The term Children Looked After has a specific legal meaning based on the Children Act. A child is looked after by a local authority if he or she has been provided with accommodation for a continuous period of more than 24 hours, in the circumstances set out in sections 20 and 21 of the Children Act 1989, or is placed in the care of a local authority by virtue of an order made under part IV of the Act.
- 3.2 The majority of children who are looked after by the local authority are placed with foster carers as it is believed to be best for children to live within a family environment.

3.3 For some children however, residential care may be more appropriate.

They fall into four main groups:

- children who are accommodated under a voluntary agreement with their parents section 20)
- children who are the subjects of a care order (section 31) or interim care order (section 38)
- children who are the subjects of emergency orders for their protection (sections 44 and 46)
- 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).

3.4 The term '**in care**' refers only to children who are subject to a care order by the courts under section 31 of the Children Act 1989 - they may live with foster carers, in a Children's home, in a residential school, with relatives or with parents under supervision. Children who are cared for on a voluntary basis are '**accommodated**' by the local authority under section 20 of the Children Act – they may live in foster care, in a Children's home or in a residential school. All these groups are said to be **Children Looked After (Children in Care)**. They may be looked after by our local authority or may be in the care of another authority but educated in ours.

4.0 Admissions

4.1 If there are more applicants than places available, applications will be considered in order of priority according to the current Admissions Policy, with specific reference to the Oversubscription Criteria referring to Children in Public Care and corresponding Explanatory Notes.

5.0 Inclusion

5.1 This policy recognises that all pupils are entitled to a balanced, broadly based curriculum. Our CiC policy reinforces the need for teaching that is fully inclusive. The Local Governing Body will ensure the school makes appropriate provision for all CiC pupils.

5.2 ELSA support will be given to Year 7 CiC on transition, where appropriate

6.0 Allocation of Resources

6.1 The Local Governing Body will ensure that the school allocates resources to support appropriate provision for CiC, meeting the objectives set out in this policy. This includes Pupil Premium funding and DSG funding

7.0 Monitoring the Progress of CiC

7.1 The social worker for the CiC should initiate a Personal Education Plan (PEP) within 20 days of joining the school, or of entering care, and ensure that the young person is actively involved. It is vital that the school assesses each CiC's attainment on entry to ensure continuity of learning.

- 7.2 The school will monitor and track the achievement and attainment of all pupils at regular intervals. CiC will require their PEP to be reviewed, according to their needs, as initiated by the designated teacher (Hampshire) or social worker (Portsmouth), and the young person's views should be sought by the Designated Teacher and noted on the PEP. Oaklands moved to the new Hampshire PEP form and the PEP Toolkit with effect from September 2014.

8.0 Record Keeping

- 8.1 The Designated Teacher will know who are all the CiC in school and will have access to their relevant contact details including parents, carers and social worker.
- 8.2 The Designated Teacher will also know about any CiC from other authorities.
- 8.3 It is important that the school flags CiC status appropriately in the school's information systems so that information is readily available as required. CiC will be identified and tracked using the school's systems to monitor academic progress.

9.0 Staff Development

- 9.1 We encourage staff to attend courses that help them to acquire the skills needed to support CiC. Part of the Designated Teacher's role is to develop awareness of issues associated with Looked After Children (LAC) e.g. attachment disorders

10.0 Partnership with Parents/Carers and Care Workers

- 10.1 At school we firmly believe in developing a strong partnership with parents/carers and care workers to enable CiC to achieve their potential. Review meetings are an opportunity to further this partnership working.

11.0 Links with External Agencies/Organisations

- 11.1 The Virtual School is the key organisation in determining educational provision for CiC.
- 11.2 We also recognise the important contribution that external support services make in supporting CiC.
- 11.3 Colleagues from the following support services may be involved with individual CiC:
- CiC teams
 - Educational psychologists and others from Local Authority SEN services
 - CAMHS
 - Education Welfare Officers
 - Social care worker/ Community care worker/ Residential child care worker
 - Youth Offending Service

12.0 CiC Policy Review and Evaluation

- 12.1 The policy will be reviewed every year. The outcomes of the policy review inform the School Improvement Plan

13.0 Roles and Responsibilities

13.1 Rationale for roles and responsibilities:

13.1.1 Children Looked After (Children in Care) are one of the most vulnerable groups in society and it is nationally recognised that there is considerable educational underachievement when compared to their peers. For example, they may experience:

- a high level of disruption and change in school placements
- lack of involvement in extra-curricular activities
- inconsistent or no attention paid to homework.

This may result in:

- poor exam success rates in comparison with the general population and home school population
- underachievement in further and higher education.

These issues may also affect adopted young people.

13.1.2 The majority of children who remain in care are there because they have suffered abuse or neglect.

13.1.3 To date the outcomes achieved by CiC have been unacceptably poor and the Government is committed to addressing this disparity. As corporate parents we all have a part to play in this by vigorously applying the principles of good parenting by:

- giving priority to education
- listening to children
- providing stability and continuity
- taking corporate responsibility
- promoting inclusion
- raising standards
- intervening early
- promoting early years experiences
- celebrating success.

13.1.4 This Local Governing Body is committed to ensuring that Designated Teachers and staff are enabled to carry out their responsibilities effectively.

13.2 The Designated Teacher will:

- be an advocate for CiC within school
- when new to the school, ensure a smooth and welcome induction for the child and carer, and note any specific requirements, including care status;

- ensure that a Personal Education Plan is completed, usually by their social worker, as soon as possible (at least within 20 days of entering care or joining a new school). This should be prepared with the child and the carer, in liaison with the school and other relevant support workers/agencies, and be linked to the Care Plan meetings, where in place. Where appropriate, the PEP should take account of any Individual Educational Plan (IEP), Pastoral Support Plan (PSP), Individual Behaviour Plan (IBP), career plan or any other relevant plans. The PEP should inform and be reviewed, concurrently with the Care Plan, ie: within 28 days, 3 months and 6 months and, at least, every 6 months;
- keep PEPs and other records up to date, particularly in time to inform review meetings;
- arrange a mentor (adult and /or pupil) to whom the young person can talk, particularly when the pupil is new to school
- co-ordinate support for the child in the school and liaise with other professionals and carers as necessary;
- ensure staff receive relevant information and training and act as an advisor to staff and governors;
- ensure confidentiality for individual children and only share personal information on a need to know basis;
- provide written information to assist planning/review meetings and ensure attendance as far as possible;
- ensure that the child and carer(s) receive early notification of meetings, parents evenings and other events and that communication remains regular and positive. The Home School Agreement may be adapted to take into account any specific points around communication, transport arrangements and consent signatures;
- encourage CiC to participate in extra-curricular activities and out of hours learning, where feasible;
- ensure speedy transfer of information between individuals and other relevant agencies and to a new school if and when the child transfers;
- seek urgent meetings with relevant parties where the child is experiencing difficulties and/or is in danger of being excluded.
- prepare reports for Local Governing Body meetings to include:
 - the number of CiC on roll and the confirmation that they have a Personal Education Plan (PEP)
 - their attendance compared to other pupils.
 - their attainment (using 4matrix and GCSE results) compared to other pupils.
 - the number, if any, of fixed term and permanent exclusions.
 - the destinations of pupils who leave the school.
- attend governor meetings as appropriate – such as the admission, disciplinary and exclusion of CiC.
- ensure that any Special Educational Needs are addressed in conjunction with the SENCO and in accordance with the SEND Code of Practice. CiC are six to eight times more likely to have a statement of Special Educational Needs than the general school population.
- Attend relevant training and attend Designated Teacher network meetings
- Hold a review meeting and complete an EPAC (Education Plan for Adopted Children) plan with any child who was Previously Looked After (PLAC). A previously looked after child is one who is no longer looked after because s/he is the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order. This document will be updated at least once a year for distribution to families and staff and any other relevant external agencies connected to children Adopted From Care (AFC).

13.3 Systems will be put in place so that all staff:

- follow school procedures.
- keep the Designated Teacher informed about a CiC's progress
- liaise with the Designated Teacher where a CiC is experiencing difficulties.
- ensure that any child in public care is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained;
- be familiar with the Guidance on Children Looked After and respond appropriately to requests for information to support the completion of PEPs and other documentation needed as part of review meetings;
- respond positively to a child in public care's request for a named person that they can talk to when they feel it is necessary;
- contribute to the Designated Teacher's requests for information on educational attainment and needs, as appropriate;
- as with all children, ensure that no child in public care is stigmatised in any way;
- provide a supportive climate to enable a child in public care to achieve stability within the school setting;
- as with all children, have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of Children Looked After
- positively promote the self-esteem of Children Looked After

13.4 Systems will be put in place so that all governors:

- ensure that the admissions criteria and practice prioritises CiC according to the DfE Admissions Code of Practice
- ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and Guidance for Children Looked After;
- be aware of whether the school has CiC and how many (no names)
- ensure that there is a named Designated Teacher for Children Looked After;
- liaise with the Head Teacher, the Designated Teacher and all other staff to ensure the needs of CiC are met.
- support the Head Teacher, Designated Teacher and other staff in ensuring the needs of CiC are met;
- nominate a governor who links with the Designated Teacher, receives regular progress reports and provides annual feedback to the governing body. These reports should not include any names of individual children for child protection and confidentiality reasons;
- review the effective implementation of this policy every year.