

## **Policy for Children In Our Care and Previously Looked-After Children.**

### **Background**

Newfield School believes that in partnership with Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council as Corporate Parents we have a special duty to safeguard and promote the education of Children In Our Care (CIOC) and Previously Looked-After Children (PLAC).

The Policy sets out the ethos of the school in its approach to meeting the needs of Children In Our Care and the associated procedures. It is well documented that CIOC achieve less well in their education than their peers, therefore, it is essential that schools promote the achievement of such vulnerable children.

There has been concern since the mid-seventies that the education of children in care has been neglected. Conversely, from about the same time, attention was also being drawn to the important part that successful schooling could play in helping children escape from social disadvantage. A joint report by the Social Services Inspectorate and OFSTED stated that the care and education systems were failing to promote the educational achievement of children in care and draw attention to:

- Poor exam success rates in comparison with the general population
- A high level of disruption and change in school placements
- Lack of involvement in extra curricular activities
- Inconsistent or no attention paid to homework
- Underachievement in further and higher education

It is, therefore, essential that our school promotes the achievement of such vulnerable children.

### **Introduction**

The following policy has been formally adopted by Newfield Governing Body from Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council. Children and Young People's Trust

#### **(a) The Objectives of the Policy**

To promote the educational achievement and welfare of Children In Our Care and Previously Looked-After Children (PLAC) by:

- Providing a safe and secure environment, where education is valued and there is a belief in the abilities and potential of all children.
- Giving them access to every opportunity to achieve to their full potential and enjoy learning.
- Fulfilling our schools' role as corporate parents to promote and support the education of CIOC and PLAC, by asking the question, 'Would this be good enough for my child?'

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In pursuit of this policy, our school will:

- Nominate a Designated teacher for CIOC and PLAC.
- Nominate a school governor for CIOC and PLAC.
- Support the Designated teacher in carrying out their role by making time available and ensuring that they attend training relevant to the role.

**(b) Definition of Children In Our Care**

CIOC are looked after by the Local Authority under an interim/ care order or accommodated under a voluntary agreement and can have the following living arrangements:

- with foster carers
- in a children’s home
- in a residential school
- with relatives
- with parents – under the supervision of the LA

**(c) The Designated Teacher for Children In Our Care and Previously Looked-After Children in our school:**

The Designated Teacher will follow as a minimum the nationally published statutory guidance:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/designated-teacher-for-looked-after-children>

The name of our Designated Teacher in school is **Jenny Riley, Deputy Head Teacher.**

The Designated Teacher will:

- Maintain an up to date record of all CIOC and PLAC who are on the school roll. This will include:
- Status i.e. in care
- Type of Placement i.e. Foster, respite, residential.
- Name and contact details of social worker
- Daily contact and numbers e.g. name of parent or carer or key worker in children’s home.
- SEN Code of Practice
- Child Protection information when appropriate
- Baseline information
- Attainment data
- Attendance figures
- Exclusions

**Role within School Systems**

- To ensure that all staff, both teaching and non-teaching, are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantage faced by children and young people in our care and understand the need for positive systems of support to overcome them.
- To inform members of staff of the general educational needs of children who are in our care, and to promote the involvement of these children in school homework clubs, extra curricular activities, home reading schemes, school councils etc.
- To work alongside the school Family Wellbeing Coordinators to ensure all CIOC are well supported in and out of school.

- To hold a supervisory brief for all Children In Our Care and PLAC, e.g to ensure all relevant education and care information is available to school staff and carer(s), and that this information is kept up to date.
- To monitor the educational progress of all Children In Our Care and PLAC in order to inform the school's development plan.
- To intervene if there is evidence of individual underachievement.
- To develop and monitor systems for liaising with the Education Support Team, carers and the Social Worker (or child support worker) for reporting and recording absence from school and by acting to address these issues through early and positive intervention.
- To ensure the involvement of the Careers/Information, Advice & Guidance Service with children in Years 10 through to 14.

### **Work with individual Children In Our Care and Previously Looked-After Children**

- To work with individual children, possibly through a carer, to arrive at a statement about their circumstances that they would be happy to share with staff and/or pupils
- To enable the child to make a contribution to the educational aspects of their Care Plan
- To ensure that, in liaison with the child's Social Worker (or child support worker), that each pupil has a Personal Education Plan. NB It is the responsibility of the Child's Social Worker (or child support worker) to ensure that Personal Education Plans are in date, however it is the responsibility of the school to create and update the PEP.

### **Liaison**

- To liaise with the member of staff responsible for monitoring children on the Child Protection Register.
- To co-ordinate Children's services and Special Educational Needs review meetings, so that any Personal Learning Plan and Personal Education Plans can inform the child's Care Plan
- To attend, arrange for someone else to attend, or to contribute in other ways to child care planning meetings
- To be named contact for colleagues in Children's services
- To report on the progress of all Children In Our Care and PLAC to Children's services
- To liaise with the LAC Virtual Head and Assessment Officer

### **Training**

- To develop knowledge of Children's services procedures by attending training events
- To cascade training to school staff as appropriate

### **Named Governor**

The name of the Named Governor is:

**Sara Barr-Frost, Chair of Governors**

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The named governor will report to the Governing Body on an annual basis:

- The number of CIOC and PLAC pupils in the school
- A comparison of test scores as a discrete group, compared with those of other pupils
- The attendance of the pupils as a discrete group, compared to other pupils
- The level of fixed term/permanent exclusions
- How the Pupil Premium for Children In Our Care and PLAC has been used
- Pupil destinations

The named governor should be satisfied that the school's policies and procedures ensure that Children In Our Care and PLAC have equal access to:

- The National Curriculum
- Public Examinations
- Careers Guidance
- Extra Curricular Activities
- Work Experience
- Additional Educational Support

### **Responsibility for Children In Our Care and PLAC in school**

It is important that all teaching staff who are in contact with the child or young person are aware that he/she is a child in the care of the Local Authority. The responsibility for the transfer of this information should be that of the Head teacher and/or the person named as the designated teacher within the school.

It is appropriate for a classroom support assistant/teaching assistant to have knowledge that the young person is a child in our care **only** when directly involved in the teaching of the young person.

In the absence of the usual class teacher, some information regarding the child's circumstances should be shared with the teacher covering the class. The extent of this sharing should be determined by the Head teacher or the School's designated teacher.

### **Admission Arrangements**

On admission, records will be requested from the pupil's previous school. A meeting will be held with carer/parent/Social Worker (or child support worker) as appropriate to complete base line information to inform the pupil's Personal Education Plan (this must be completed within 20 days of admission to school) and clarify contact arrangements. A home school agreement will be drawn up with the primary carer. An appropriate school induction will take place. NB Schools must make a place available in Key Stage 2 and above for all Children In Our Care.

### **Involving the Young Person**

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It is important that a young person is aware that information is being recorded regarding their personal circumstances. How this is shared with them clearly depends on their age and understanding. The explanation should emphasise that the school, the Social Worker (or child support worker), and their carer(s) are working together to promote their education.

It is important to establish the child/young persons's views of the changed circumstances and what they want to know, supporting them through the designated teacher. It is also important to ensure that a named teacher/carer prepares the child for situations when they are asked about home, e.g by other pupils in the playground.

### **Communication with Other Agencies**

Ideally, the Social Worker (or child support worker) and the school's designated teacher should meet when the young person becomes subject to the care of the LA, or if already in the care of the LA, when they join the school. This will enable information concerning the child's progress and circumstances to be shared. The monitoring form should help ensure that all information relevant to school is exchanged.

It is part of our school policy that a copy of all reports (e.g end of year) will be forwarded to the young person's Social Worker (or child support worker) in addition to, for example, the foster carer or residential care worker.

School and the Children's Services Department will endeavour to co-ordinate their review meetings, e.g to have an Annual review of an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) combined with a Statutory Care Review. Children's Services, Leisure Services, and schools will need to exchange information between formal reviews if there are significant changes in the young person's circumstances, e.g if school is considering exclusion, there is a change of care placement or there are significant attendance issues.

### **Assessment, Monitoring and review Procedures**

Each child in our care in our school will be given a Personal Education Plan, prepared by the child's Social Worker (or child support worker) in conjunction with the school. This will identify specific areas of concern and achievable targets.

Areas for consideration will include:

- Attendance
- Achievement Record (academic or otherwise)
- Behaviour
- Homework
- Involvement in Extra Curricular Activities
- Relationship to Care Plan
- Special Needs (if any)
- Development Needs (short and long term development of skills, knowledge or subject areas and experiences)
- Long term plans and aspiration (targets including progress, career plans and aspirations)

- How has the Pupil Premium, for Children In Our Care and PLAC, been used to raise the aspirations and academic achievement of the child.

Liaison will be undertaken with Education Welfare / Education Psychology / Social Care, etc in the assessment and review processes as appropriate.

The named governor will report annually to the Governing Body on the key indicators outlined on pages 2 & 3.

### **Safeguarding**

Newfield School is committed to safeguarding and protecting the welfare of children and vulnerable adults as its number one priority

Full copies of Policies and Procedures related to all aspects of Safeguarding, and the Complaints Policy, are available on request from Rachel Kay, Head Teacher and Designated Senior Person for Safeguarding and Child Protection.

### **Equal Opportunities**

Newfield School is also committed to ensuring the equality of opportunity in line with the Equality Act and seek to show this through all aspects of school life and in particular through our commitment to every child fulfilling their potential, our work in the classroom, our recruitment and retention of staff and our work in the local and wider community.