



SEND

Education of Children in Care Policy

<i>Document Title</i>	<i>Education of Children in Care Policy</i>
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Statement of Intent

Helping children in care to succeed and providing a better future for them is a key priority for Kent County Council and Kent schools.

Nationally, children in care significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion and of becoming young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) compared with their peers. Singlewell School understands that schools have a major part to play in ensuring that children in care, and those previously in care, achieve in school, stay safe, healthy, achieve economic wellbeing and make a positive contribution to society.

Children and young people who are looked after require individual care and attention positive discrimination in their favour in order to improve their situation and achieve these outcomes.

Singlewell Primary School endeavours to support children in care to accomplish these outcomes by:

- Prioritising high quality teaching with a curriculum which meets each child's needs including their academic, social and emotional development
- Encouraging pupils to reach the highest standards through positive experiences
- Promoting high attendance and punctuality to provide stability and continuity
- Using the school's resources efficiently to provide early intervention and targeted support upholding inclusion through challenging and changing attitudes
- Supporting the development of good health and wellbeing, including mental health
- Working in partnership with carers, social workers and other professionals

The school will champion the needs of children in care, raise awareness and challenge negative stereotypes about them, in order to ensure that they achieve to the highest level possible.

Related Policies

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies and documents:

- **Admissions Procedures**
- **Anti-bullying Policy**
- **Attendance and Punctuality Policy**
- **Child Protection Policy/Safeguarding**
- **Equality Scheme Policy**
- **School Wellbeing Policy**
- **Special Educational Needs and Disability Policy**

Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- The local authority's duty under section 52 of the Children Act 2004
- Children and Young Persons Act 2008
- Children and Families Act 2014
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- DfE 'Promoting the Education of Looked After Children and previously looked after children: Statutory guidance for local authorities' 2018
- DfE 'Keeping children safe in education' 2018
- DfE 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' 2018
- DfE 'The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children' 2018
- DfES Guidance to Governing Bodies 'Supporting Looked After Learners: A Practical Guide for School Governors' 2006
- The Education (Admission of Looked After Children) (England) Regulations 2006

Definitions

Children in care are also often referred to as looked-after children. The use of children in care was chosen in this policy due to this being a term many children and young people prefer as shown in research by the nspcc¹.

Looked after children are defined as, children or young people who are subject of a Care Order or Interim Care Order under the Children Act 1989. This definition applies to children who are placed in foster care, children's residential homes, with relatives or friends, in semi-independent or supported independent accommodation. If a child is subject to a Care or Interim Care Order whilst placed with a parent, they are classed as looked after, since the Local Authority has parental responsibility. Children who are not subject to an order, but are accommodated by the Local Authority under an agreement with their parents, are regarded as looked after.

Personalised Education Plans

All children in care must have a Personalised Education Plan (PEP), depending on SEND needs this may include an EHC Plan. The PEP will reflect the importance of a personalised approach and document the support which has been put in place to enable the child to fulfil their potential.

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Support for a child in care with SEND, who does not need an EHC plan, will be covered as part of the child's Personalised Education Plan review. The SENCo, class teacher, designated teacher and specialists will include parents in the planning of interventions and strategies to support their child.

Pupil mental Health

Children in care are more likely to experience the challenge of social, emotional and mental health issues. The designated teacher and teachers working with them will have awareness and skills regarding a child's needs and how to support them in relation to mental health. The designated teacher will work with staff and parents to support in identifying signs of potential mental health issues and access further support where necessary.

¹ <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/children-and-families-at-risk/looked-after-children> (26/09/2022)

Roles and Responsibilities

Responsibility of the Head Teacher

- Identify a Designated Teacher for Children in Care, whose role is set out below. It is essential that another appropriate person is identified quickly should the Designated Teacher leave the school or take sick leave.
- Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor the admission, progress, attendance and any exclusion of Children in Care and take action where progress, conduct or attendance is below expectations.
- Report on the progress, attendance and conduct of Children in Care. OFSTED now select a number of Children in Care, tracking their results and the support they have received.
- Ensure that staff in school receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related guidance.

Responsibility of the Governors

- Ensure Children in Care are prioritised in the school's oversubscription criteria, in line with the Education (Admission of Looked After Children) (England) Regulations 2006.
- Identify a nominated Governor for Children in Care.
- 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 a Designated Teacher for Children in Care is identified and enabled to carry out the responsibilities set out below.
- Ensure a Personal Education Plan is put in place, implemented and regularly reviewed every 6 months for every Child in Care, in line with Kent's guidance on Personal Education Plans.
- Have regard to the needs of Children in care when reviewing other school policies.

Procedures: the Governing Body will:

- Monitor the academic progress of Children in Care, through an annual report (see below).
- Ensure that Children in Care are given top priority when applying for places in accordance with the school's oversubscription criteria.
- Work to prevent exclusions and reduce time out of school, by ensuring the school implements policies and procedures to ensure Children in Care achieve and enjoy their time at the school, by recognising the extra problems caused by excluding them and by not excluding them except as a last resort.
- 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 Head teacher, 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:
 1. The number of looked-after pupils on the school's roll (if any).
 2. Their attendance, as a discreet group, compared to other pupils.
 3. Their SAT scores, GCSE results, and other qualifications achieved, as a discreet group, compared to other pupils.
 4. The number of fixed term and permanent exclusions (if any).
 5. The destinations of pupils who leave the school.
 6. The information for this report should be collected and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity and respect the confidentiality of the pupils concerned.

The role of the Designated Teacher

Government Guidance states that the Designated Teacher should be “someone with sufficient authority to make things happen... who should be an advocate for Children in Care, assessing services and support, and ensuring that the school shares and supports high expectations for them.”

Governors should be aware that all schools are already required to have a designated teacher for Children in Care. It is strongly recommended that this person should be a member of the Senior Management Team. Training for Designated Teachers has been and will continue to be available through the Virtual School Kent (VSK). Governors should also be aware that OFSTED will focus on Children in Care, monitoring how the School has promoted their inclusion and attainment and the effectiveness of joint working with other services involved with them.

At Singlewell School the Designated teacher is Mrs Hazeldene, the SENCo.

Our Designated Teacher will:

- Ensure a welcome and smooth induction for the child and their carer, using the Personal Education Plan to plan for that transition in consultation with the child's social worker and VSK.
- Ensure that a Personal Education Plan is completed with the child, the social worker, the foster carer and any other relevant people, at least two weeks before the Care Plan reviews.
- Ensure that each Child in Care has an identified member of staff that they can talk to. This need not be the Designated Teacher, but should be based on the child's own wishes. Members of staff who take on this role may need to be supported by someone from the school's pastoral staff. They should also be alert to any child protection issues, any disclosures that pupils may make, and know what action to take. They should link closely therefore with the school's Designated Teacher for Child Protection.
- Track academic progress and target support appropriately
- Co-ordinate any support for the child in care that is necessary within school.
- Ensure confidentiality for individual pupils, sharing personal information on a need to know basis.
- Encourage children in care to join in extra-curricular activities and out of school learning.
- Ensure, as far as possible, attendance at planning and review meetings.
- Act as an advisor to staff and Governors, raising their awareness of the needs of Children in Care.
- Set up timely meetings with relevant parties where the pupil is experiencing difficulties in school or is at risk of exclusion.
- Ensure the speedy transfer of information between individuals, agencies and – if the pupil changes school – to a new school.
- Be pro-active in supporting transition and planning when moving to a new phase in education.
- Track academic progress and target support appropriately.
- Promote inclusion in all areas of school life.
- Be aware that a high number of Children in Care say they are bullied, so will actively monitor and prevent bullying in school by raising awareness through the school's anti-bullying policy.
- Ensure that attendance of each child in care on the school roll is reported.

The responsibility of all staff

All our staff will:

- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of Children in Care, as for all pupils.
- Maintain confidentiality with regard to children in care and ensure they are supported sensitively.

- Respond positively to a pupil's request to be the named member of staff whom they can talk to when they feel it is necessary.
- Respond promptly to the Designated Teacher's requests for information.
- Work to enable Children in Care to achieve stability and success within school.
- Promote the self-esteem of all Children in Care.
- Have an understanding of the key issues that affect the learning of Children in Care.
- Be aware that many children in care say they are bullied so work to prevent bullying in line with the School's policy.

The Governing Body approved this SEND Policy October 2024