



L.E.A.D. Academy Trust
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Children in Care Policy Witham St Hughs Academy

Date Reviewed: July 2020

Designated Teacher: Michelle Dexter

Designated Governor: Mr Mel Jays

Nationally, Children in Care significantly underachieve and are at greater risk of exclusion, compared with their peers. Schools have a major part to play in ensuring that Children in Care are enabled to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy, achieve, make a positive contribution to society and achieve economic well-being.

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. Witham St Hughs Academy believes that in partnership with the local authority, and those authorities where children have moved from and are still in the care of, have a special duty to safeguard and promote the education of Children in Care.

Who are Children in Care (CiC)?

‘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.

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is cared for by a local authority if he or she is in their care or provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours by the authority. 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).

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 in Care - CiC. They may be looked after by our local authority or may be in the care of another authority but living in ours.

CiC reviews, involving the school, will take pCiCe up until an adoption order has been granted. However Pupil Premium Plus funding will continue for CiC until they are 16 years old.

Witham St Hughs Academy Aims

1. To provide a safe and secure environment, where education is valued and there is a belief in the abilities and potential of all children.
2. To support our Children in Care and give them access to every opportunity to achieve to their potential, enjoy learning and take as full a part as possible in all school activities.
3. To ensure that school policies and procedures are followed for CiC as for all children.
4. To work with the Virtual School and ensure that carers and social workers of CiC pupils are kept fully informed of their child's progress and attainment.
5. To fulfil our schools' role as corporate parents to promote and support the education of our Children in Care, by asking the question, 'Would this be good enough for my child?'

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 – having high expectations for the child and ensuring equal access to a balanced and broadly based education.
- Promoting attendance – through a programme of early intervention
- Targeting support - including identifying SEND needs or gifted and talented skills and abilities
- Having high expectations and raising aspiration - ensuring equal access to a balanced and broadly based education.
- Promoting inclusion - making reasonable adjustments and personalising the curriculum within an inclusive context
- Achieving stability and continuity – through a positive learning environment
- Early intervention and priority action – early identification of difficulties and possible educational disadvantages
- Listening to children and respecting confidentiality
- Promoting health and well-being – including identifying social and emotional needs
- Minimising exclusions and promoting stability
- Working in partnership with carers, social workers and other professionals including outside agencies

Witham St Hughs Academy will

- Nominate a Designated teacher for Looked After Children who will act as their advocate and co-ordinate support for them.

- Nominate a school governor to ensure that the needs of Children in Care in the school are taken into account at a school management level and to support the Designated Teacher.
- Support the Designated teacher in carrying out their role by making time available and ensuring that they attend training on Children in Care.

The role and responsibilities of the designated teacher for Children in Care

Designated teacher (DT)

The role became statutory in September 2009 under the Children and Young Persons' Act 2008

(the 2008 Act). The designated teacher must be a qualified teacher or a member of staff who is likely to gain QTS by September 2014. Ideally, s/he should be a senior member of staff who has enough status and experience to advise and provide training to school staff on issues relating to CiC. They need to be able to influence decisions about the teaching and learning of these children.

Responsibilities in school:

- Knowing who all the CiC are in school and ensuring that availability of all relevant details from school record-keeping systems as required. 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.
- Attending relevant training about CiC and acting as the key liaison professional for other agencies and carers in relation to CiC
- Promoting a culture of high expectations and aspirations for how CiC should learn.
- Helping school staff understand the issues that affect the learning of CiC such as differentiated teaching strategies appropriate for individual children.
- Making sure that CiC are prioritised in one-to-one tuition arrangements and that carers understand the importance of supporting learning at home.
- Removing the barriers to learning for CiC.
- Ensuring any CiC new to the school are welcomed positively and assessed when they start at the school to identify strengths and weaknesses in their learning. This will be used to inform planning and teaching.
- Developing personalised learning packages for CiC in conjunction with the relevant teaching staff.
- Ensuring that the CiC in their school have a voice in setting learning targets for themselves.
- Championing for CiC.
- Ensure 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

- Leading on developing and implementing the PEP within the school. The social worker is responsible for initiating the PEP process completing the front page of the PEP form.
- Monitoring the child's progress against the targets on the PEP and extending these targets if they have been achieved.
- Ensuring the child makes a smooth transition to the new school and that the child's records are transferred within five school days.
- Liaising with the Virtual School in all aspects of the CiC progress and support.
- Convening urgent multi-agency meetings if a CiC is experiencing difficulties or is at risk of exclusion.
- Arranging for a mentor or key worker to whom the young person can talk to. Arranging for the CiC to be supported by its peers.
- Producing at least one annual report to the governing body which should include: current progress, attendance and exclusions (if any), any concerns regarding behaviour, how the PEP has been implemented and whether the actions put in place are effective in addressing the learning needs of CiC, how the DT works in partnership with the LA, training undertaken for carrying out the role effectively. The report must not mention the children's names for confidentiality reasons.
- Promoting good home-school links and the importance of education as a way of improving life chances for CiC.
- Regular meeting with carers and staff using the school learning passport document and ensuring that relevant information is shared with appropriate staff.
- Record keeping and information sharing will be up-to-date and there will be a record of Children in Care in school.

Roles and Responsibilities of Staff

All school staff will:

- Positively promote the raising of a Children 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

The role and responsibility of the governing body

- Support the local authority in its statutory duty to promote the educational achievement of looked after children.
- Ensure that the DT is given the appropriate level of support in order to fulfil their role.
- In partnership with the head teacher, ensure that, through their training and development, the DT has the opportunity to acquire and keep up-to-date the necessary skills, knowledge and training to understand the respond to the specific teaching and learning needs of CIC.
- Governing bodies and the SLT should make sure that the DT role contributes to the deeper understanding of everyone in the school who is likely to be involved in supporting CIC to achieve.
- The governing body, in partnership with the head teacher, is responsible for monitoring how well the role is working. As part of this monitoring an annual report will be received from the DT.

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. Regular review meetings 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.

This policy links with a number of other school policies and it is important that Governors have regard to the needs of Looked After Children when reviewing them:

- Admissions Policy
- The school code of conduct
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Home-school agreement
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Special Educational Needs Policy

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

For more information please see: The role and responsibilities of the designated teacher for looked after children – Statutory guidance for school governing bodies.

<http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/01046-2009BKT-EN.PDF>

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

<http://publications.everychildmatters.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/DCSF-00523-2009.pdf>

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

<http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/01047-2009.pdf>

Improving the attainment of looked after young people in secondary schools – Guidance for Schools

<http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/eOrderingDownload/01048-2009.pdf>

Date to be reviewed: June 2021