OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
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OXFORDSHIRE VIRTUAL SCHOOL
Looking After Learning

Kirtlington C.E. School

Policy for the Inclusive Education of Children We Care For and Previously Cared For Children

Reviewed and approved by: FGB

Policy Reviewed: February 2026

Future Review: February 2027

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Looking After Learning

School Policy for the Inclusive Education of Children We Care For and Previously Cared For Children

We believe that all children we care for and previously cared for children should have equitable access to excellent educational provision and be able to achieve at a similar level to all Oxfordshire children.

We recognise that nationally there is considerable educational underachievement of children in residential, foster care, kinship care and those who have previously been in care when compared with their peers.

All staff and governors are committed to ensuring improved educational life chances for children we care for by ensuring that:

Advocacy

- Staff are aware that being or becoming 'cared for' has a major impact on children's lives and that when considering children's learning and/or behaviour, due consideration will be given
- Designated Teachers and staff are aware of and enabled to carry out their responsibilities effectively with the full support of the Headteacher
- School staff and governors are aware of the DfE statutory guidance: Duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of children we care for
- There is a dedicated Governor to monitor the work of the school in supporting its children we care for and previously cared for children as a part of a larger group of vulnerable children

Documentation and Monitoring of Progress

- We contribute to the process whereby all children we care for have a high quality Personal Educational Plan (PEP) in place within 20 days of starting at our school or becoming cared for. 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 (Student profile, EHCP)
- PEP targets should reflect the outcomes desired to reach individual goals. Targets need to be aspirational and have academic rigour. These will determine the need for pupil premium plus for the child or young person.
- The young person's views will be sought by the Designated Teacher and will be documented on the PEP.
- The child/young person will be encouraged to attend the PEP and encouraged to contribute. Some children/young people chair their own PEPs and it is always good practice to have a 'pre-meeting' where you can talk through who will be there, what to expect and most importantly find out if they have any concerns, anxieties or anything they would like you to help them raise.
- Following the writing of a PEP, any educational recommendations in that PEP will be adhered to by staff and shared with relevant adults to ensure the child/young person has every opportunity to reach their target
- The school should assess each young person's attainment either on entry to the school or on becoming cared for to ensure continuity of learning. These baselines should be recorded in the PEP.

- The school will monitor and track the achievement and attainment of all pupils at regular intervals and report this to the Virtual School. Where a child is underachieving, please arrange a PEP review to discuss how this underachievement will be addressed.
- The Designated Teacher will know all the cared for children and previously cared for in school and will have access to their relevant contact details including parents, carers and social worker
- The Designated Teacher will also know about any children cared for from other authorities
- It is important that the school flags children we care for status appropriately in the school's information systems so that information is readily available as required.

Joined Up Working (for all schools, the Virtual School)

- We will send representatives to any review held for the child where appropriate.
- We will send reports to any review held for the child.
- Schools will forward appropriate documents, in a timely fashion, to any receiving school at the point of transition. The Virtual School will assist and will ensure any additional information is also forwarded.
- We take a proactive approach in co-operating with and supporting the relevant Local Authority with regard to the education of our children we care for
- We liaise with other agencies as appropriate so that each child we care for has the opportunity to achieve their full potential
- At school, we firmly believe in developing a strong partnership with parents/carers and caseworkers to enable children we care for to achieve their full potential
- We ensure that carers and social workers are kept fully informed of their child's progress and attainment

Training

- We will attend Local Authority training regarding the roles and responsibilities involved in the education of children we care for.
- The Headteacher, Designated Teacher and / or Inclusion Officer will be responsible for ensuring all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in this policy.

Governance

- We have a governor designated to lead on children we care for and other vulnerable groups.
- We ensure that the designated teachers report at least once a year to governors on the training they have received and the safety of children we care for.
- Governors have good knowledge of the impact of the pupil premium for children we care for and challenge leaders.
- Designated governor attends training where appropriate to support understanding of children we care for and other vulnerable groups.

Admissions

- The Governing Body endorses council policy. The Council, as the Admission Authority for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools, believes that admissions criteria should not discriminate against children we care for
- Due to care placement changes, children we care for may enter school mid-term. It is vital that we give them a positive welcome. If necessary, we may offer additional support and pre-entry visits to support transition and develop a sense of belonging.

- Where an application is received for a place for an unaccompanied asylum-seeking child, the school will give due attention to the agreed protocol ensuring that these vulnerable young people are swiftly admitted and integrated in to school.

Inclusion

- This policy recognises that all pupils are entitled to a balanced and broadly based curriculum
- Our child we care for policy reinforces the need for teaching that is fully inclusive.
- The Governing Body will ensure the school makes appropriate provision for all children we care for and previously cared for children.
- We encourage each child we care for to access out of hours learning activities realising the positive impact this could have on their self-esteem and learning
- In the few instances where we review whether a child is still appropriately placed in a school we will:
    - Contact the LA education inclusion service and, if appropriate, the SEN Officer to discuss appropriate alternative arrangements
    - Involve the child, the social worker and the carer at all stages of decision-making
    - We will consider all alternatives to exclusion, recognising that exclusion for a child we care for has far broader implications than for those of other children.

Children We Care For Policy Review and Evaluation

We consider the children we care for policy to be important and we undertake a thorough review of both policy and practice each year. The outcomes of this review inform the School Improvement Plan.

Roles and responsibilities

Children we care for 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
- Underachievement in further and higher education These issues may also affect adopted young people

The majority of children who remain in care are there because they have suffered abuse or neglect. The Every Child Matters: Change for Children programme aims to improve outcomes for all children. As corporate parents we all have a part to play in this by vigorously applying the principles of good parenting by:

1. Giving priority to education
2. Listening to children
3. Providing stability and continuity
4. Taking corporate responsibility
5. Promoting inclusion
6. Raising standards
7. Intervening early
8. Promoting early years experiences
9. Celebrating success

The Designated Teacher will:

- Be an advocate for Children We Care For within school
- Ensure the pupil premium is used effectively to ensure children we care for make progress, especially in English and Maths.
- Be familiar with the statutory guidance on the role of the designated teacher
- Give regard to the impact of relevant decisions for children we care for on both the children and the rest of the school community
- Know all the children we care for in school, including those in the care of other authorities, and ensure the availability of all relevant details from school record-keeping systems as required
- Attend relevant training about children we care for
- Act as the key liaison professional for other agencies and carers in relation to children we care for, seeking advice from the children we care for team when appropriate
- Ensure that children we care for receive a positive welcome on entering school, especially mid-year and, if necessary, offer additional support and a pre-entry visit to help the new pupil settle

- Ensure that all children we care have an appropriate PEP that is completed within 20 days of joining the school or of entering care (see guidance on PEPs) and ensure that the young person contributes to the plan
- Ensure that all data on children we care for is made available for meetings between the Headteacher, governors and the school improvement partner
- Keep PEPs and other records up to date and review PEPs at transfer and at six monthly intervals
- Convene an urgent multi-agency meeting if a child we care for is experiencing difficulties or is at risk of exclusion
- Ensure confidentiality on individual children, sharing confidential and personal information on a need to know basis, bearing in mind the wishes of the individual pupil
- Act as the key adviser for staff and governors on issues relevant to children we care for
- Ensure that care and school liaison is effective including invitations to meetings and other school events
- Actively encourage and promote out of hours learning and extra curricular activities for children we care for
- Ensure a speedy transfer of information, records and coursework, where appropriate, when a child we care for transfers to another educational placement
- Contribute information to children we care for reviews when required
- Report to the Governing body on children we care for in the school and inform of relevant policy and practice development
- Agree with the social worker the appropriate people to invite to parents' evenings etc
- Prepare reports for Governors' meetings to include:
    - The number of children we care for on roll and the confirmation that they have a Personal Education Plan - PEP
    - Their attendance compared to other pupils
    - Their attainment (SATs/GCSEs) compared to other pupils
    - The number, if any, 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 children we care for
- Arrange a mentor (adult and /or pupil) to whom the young person can talk, possibly through the learning mentor scheme or through Connexions, particularly when the pupil is new to school
- Ensure that any Special Educational Needs are addressed in conjunction with the SENCO and in accordance with the Code of Practice for SEN. Children we care for are six to eight times more likely to have a statement of Special Educational Needs than the general school population

Good practice suggests that all school staff will:

- Follow school procedures
- Keep the Designated Teacher informed about the progress of a child we care for
- Have high expectations of the educational and personal achievements of children we care for
- Positively promote the raising of self esteem of a child we care for
- Ensure any child we care for is supported sensitively and that confidentiality is maintained
- Be familiar with the school's policy and guidance on children we care for and respond appropriately to requests for information to support PEPs and review meetings
- Liaise with the Designated Teachers where a child we care for is experiencing difficulties

- Give only official exclusions and only use exclusions in line with the school's exclusion policy, and relevant national guidance, being mindful of the difficulties this may create in the care placement
- 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 other professionals/ parents/carers/pupil as appropriate

Good practice suggests that the Governing Body will:

- Ensure that the admission criteria and practice prioritises children we care for according to the DfES Admissions Code of Practice
- Ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and guidance for children we care for
- Ensure there is a Designated Teacher for children we care for
- Liaise with the Headteacher, Designated Teacher and all other staff to ensure the needs of children we care for are met
- Nominate a governor with responsibility for children we care for who links with the Designated Teacher
- Receive regular reports from the Designated Teacher
- Ensure that the school's policies and procedures give children we care for equal access in respect of:
    - Admission to school
    - National Curriculum and examinations, both academic and vocational
    - out of school learning and extra curricular activities
    - Work experience and careers guidance
- Annually review the effective implementation of the school policy for children we care for
- Ensure that the Designated Teacher is invited to the exclusion meetings for children we care for

The Local Authority will:

- Lead the drive to improve educational and social care standards for children we care for
- Ensure that the education for this group is as good as that provided for every other Oxfordshire pupil
- Ensure that children we care for receive a full-time education in a mainstream setting wherever possible
- Ensure that every child we care for has a school to go to within 20 days of coming into care or of coming to Oxfordshire from another authority
- Make sure that each child we care for has a PEP according to national guidance
- Ensure that every school has a Designated Teacher for children we care for and that these teachers receive appropriate information, support and training
- Provide alternative educational provision where appropriate
- Ensure that appropriate support is provided whenever possible
- Work with others to provide smooth transitions at the end of the Foundation Stage and Key Stages 1, 2 and 4 and at any mid-phase transfer
- Be vigilant and proactive in identifying the special educational needs of children we care for and work collaboratively with other services and agencies to meet those needs