

**CHILDREN IN CARE (CIC) AND
CHILDREN PREVIOUSLY IN CARE (CPIC) POLICY**

May 2021

Responsibility: Nicki Starling (Headteacher)

Approved by Governors: 25.5.2021

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Governor responsible for CIC and CPIC:

Designated teacher for CIC and CPIC: Nicki Starling



Introduction

This policy is based on the model policy from Surrey's Virtual School. The virtual school is responsible for raising the educational standards of Surrey's Children in Care. At Dovers Green Infant School we would like to extend this policy to all children who have been in care at any point in their life, whether returned to natural parents, guardians or adopted. It is important to remember that these children have experienced separation and or trauma in their lives and need to be sensitively monitored and nurtured in order that they experience positive relationships and make at least expected progress.

Context

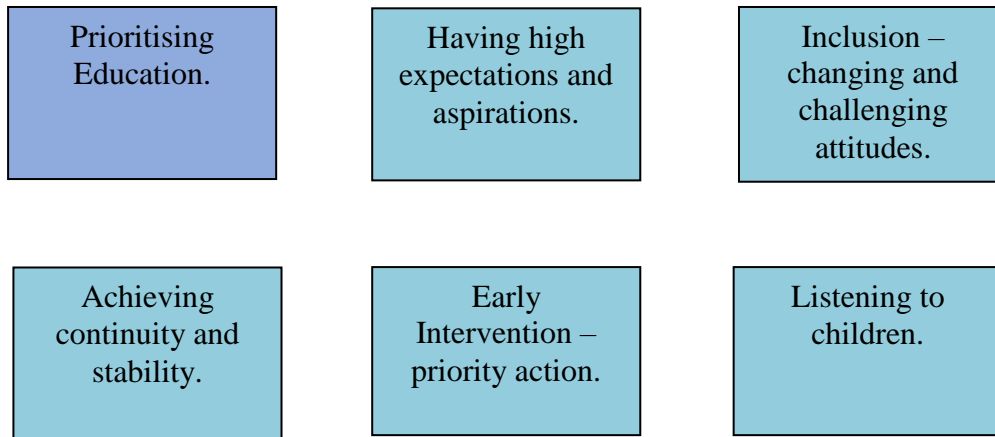
The terms 'Children Looked After' and 'Children in Care' are often used to define the same group of young people. In documents produced by Surrey's Virtual School the use of Children in Care (CiC) is the preferred term.

When a child or young person is taken into Care by a local authority under a Court Order, the key feature is a change in parental responsibility, which is then undertaken by the local authority - who become their 'Corporate Parent'. Young people can also be in Care under a voluntary arrangement with parents (a status known as Accommodated) where parental responsibility remains with birth parents, but this arrangement is monitored and supported by social services. Most children in care will be living in foster homes but some may be in a children's home, living with a relative or even be placed back at home with their birth parent(s). It is important the school attended by the child is aware of their Care status, as many children and families are supported by social care without the use of Care Orders. Foster carers will very rarely hold parental responsibility - this is assumed by the social worker. Children placed for adoption remain looked after by the local authority until the 'Final Adoption Order' is granted by the court.

A Personal Education Plan is required for every Child in Care and forms part of their overall Care Plan. The Care Plan should be in place within six weeks of entering care and thereafter reviewed at least every six months.

At Dovers Green we will produce a plan for any child in care or previously in care which shows how we plan to ensure high personal and educational achievements. The plan will be shared with parents and will be fully resourced through additional funding targeted for these children. Meetings with parents will be at least once a year and more frequently if required. Children will also be encouraged to contribute to the plan as appropriate. The Children Act (2004) places a duty to safeguard children in care, to promote their educational achievement and to ensure they are able to 'achieve to and reach their full potential'. The collective responsibility of local authorities and schools to achieve this are set out under six principles;

This policy is produced using the Model School Policy created by Surrey Virtual School, May 2013 - V1.05



The role of a Virtual Headteacher for Children in Care is now statutory for every local authority. Virtual Headteachers will scrutinise, challenge and support schools with their teaching and learning for all children in care and assist each other in this task where children cross physical borders to live and attend education provision.

A. ROLE & RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE HEADTEACHER AND SENIOR LEADERSHIP TEAM

- We will promote a culture in which children in care and those previously in Care and the belief they can succeed and aspire to further and higher education, without being labelled or singled out.
- We will appoint a Designated Teacher for CiC and CPiC (Designated Teachers must have Qualified Teacher Status and ideally be a member of the SLT in school, or have direct access to the team).
- We will empower the Designated Teacher to fulfil their role and responsibilities (this will include the provision of time to undertake the role; supporting training needs and providing opportunities for the cascade of training to all staff and governors in the school).
- We will ensure, through training and induction, that all staff, both teaching and non-teaching have an understanding of the difficulties and educational disadvantage faced by children in care and those previously in care and understand the need for positive systems of support to overcome them. A young person's ability to engage in learning can be undermined by feelings of loss, rejection, confusion, insecurity and low self-esteem . Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) are stressful events occurring in childhood such as:
 - domestic violence
 - parental abandonment through separation or divorce
 - a parent with a mental health condition
 - being the victim of abuse (physical, sexual and/or emotional)
 - being the victim of neglect (physical and emotional)
 - a member of the household being in prison
 - growing up in a household in which there are adults experiencing alcohol and drug use problems.

ACEs have been found to have lifelong impacts on health and behaviour and it is highly likely that a child in care or previously in care will have experienced at least one of these stressful events.
- We will recognise the particular circumstances of CiC and CPiC and provide for these in all appropriate other School Policies and when appropriate, the school's Development Plan.
- We will ensure the day-to-day management of information provides sufficient access to promote an understanding of, and provide safeguards for individual children (sufficient access to ensure staff who are in contact with the child are aware of their care status on a need to know basis, including staff cover where

appropriate and day-to-day arrangements such as the collection of younger children from school and automated texting to carers from school information systems).

- We will ensure extra alertness if there are any security issues with the child, and make the relevant staff aware of the increased vigilance required especially around the school boundary and exits and when dismissing children from classrooms.
- We will ensure we follow guidance from adoptive parents regarding any school publicity photos.
- We are committed to working with local authority Virtual Headteachers to promote the achievement of children in care and previously looked after (Surrey's Virtual School can be contacted at any time, about any pupil to aid communications with other local authorities. The Surrey VS website contains all contact details - see www.surreyvirtualschool.org.uk).

B. ROLE & RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE DESIGNATED TEACHER FOR CiC

- To have high expectations of CiC and CPiC involvement in learning and educational progress.
- To monitor the educational progress of all CiC and CPiC in order to ensure they are reaching their potential and feel a part of the school community.
- To intervene if there is evidence of individual underachievement, absence from school or internal truancy, taking action to communicate any difficulties as soon as possible.
- To act as an advocate for CiC and CPiC.
- To inform members of staff of the general educational needs of CiC and CPiC.
- To promote the involvement of these children in out of school hours learning.
- To be the named contact for and develop and monitor systems for liaising with carers, local authority children's services and the Virtual School of the caring authority, to ensure the speedy transfer of information between key partners.
- To ensure every child in care has appropriate support that includes educational targets and encourages the 'voice of the child' to be heard.
- To attend, arrange for someone else to attend, or to contribute in other ways to care planning meetings.
- To provide a programme of transition support, as appropriate.
- To present an Annual Report in the Autumn Term or as part of the Headteacher's report to Governors.
- To access statutory training events organised by Surrey Virtual School.
- To cascade training to school staff and governors as appropriate.

C. ROLE & RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE GOVERNING BODY

- We will ensure the appointment of a Designated Teacher in accordance with the Regulations (Designated Teachers must have Qualified Teacher Status and ideally be a member of the SLT in school, or have direct access to the team).
- We will ensure the designated teacher is given the appropriate level of support in order to fulfil their role.
- We will monitor the school's policies and ensure they are effective in reflecting the needs of CiC and CPiC.
- We will monitor the effectiveness of the role, governing bodies should receive an annual report from the Designated Teacher.
- We will examine whether the school is making the fullest possible use of all available resources, such as additional funding, in order to provide the maximum opportunity for CiC and CPiC to achieve at least the expected progress within a key stage.
- We will scrutinise the school's admission procedures to ensure students are admitted into the school as quickly as possible recognising the importance of re-establishing school stability for CiC or CPiC.
- We will champion the needs of those in care and support the work of the Designated Teacher on a more regular basis. The governing body will choose to identify a nominated Governor for CiC and PLAC.

The Headteacher and Designated Teacher will be responsible for ensuring all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in the Policy.

This policy should be read in conjunction with all other policies.