



Children in our Care Policy

September 2018

We are a Rights Respecting School and this policy is underpinned by our continued commitment to UNICEF and the UN Convention of Rights of the Child. This policy links directly to the following articles of the UN Convention of the Rights of the child. Children's rights and responsibilities:

Article 3: The best interests of children must be the primary concern in making decisions that may affect them. All adults should do what is best for children. When adults make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children. This particularly applies to budget, policy and law makers.

Article 9: Children should not be separated from their parents unless it is for their own good. For example, if a parent is mistreating or neglecting a child. Children whose parents have separated have the right to stay in contact with both parents, unless this might hurt the child.

Article 12: When adults are making decisions that affect children, children have the right to say what they think should happen and have their opinions taken into account.

Article 19: Governments should ensure that children are properly cared for, and protect them from violence, abuse and neglect by their parents, or anyone else who looks after them.

Article 20: Children who cannot be looked after by their own family must be looked after properly, by people who respect their religion, culture and language.

Article 21: Children who are looked after by their local authority, rather than their parents, should have their situation reviewed regularly

Bewley Primary School believes that in partnership with Stockton Borough Council as Corporate Parents we have a special duty to safeguard and promote the education of Children in our Care.

Designated Teacher for Children in our Care: Sheona Clift

Governor with responsibility for Children in our Care: Gill Lamb

Rationale

Children in our Care 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. The majority of children who come into care are there because of abuse or neglect, domestic violence or parents' drug related issues. As a school we recognise that outcomes nationally for Children in our Care fall well below national averages and we understand and support the government agenda to address this disparity. As corporate parents in Stockton-on-Tees we all have a part to play in this by vigorously applying the principles of good parenting by:

- Giving priority to education
- Listening to children
- Providing stability and continuity
- Taking corporate responsibility
- Promoting inclusion
- Raising standards
- Intervening early
- Promoting early years experiences and post 16 progression
- Celebrating success.

The governing body of Bewley Primary School is committed to providing high quality education for all its pupils based on equality of access, opportunity and outcomes. This policy includes requirements set out in *"Statutory guidance on the duty of local authorities to promote the educational achievement of Children in our Care under section 52 of the Children Act 2004"* (November 2005), the revised guidance under The Children Act 1989, Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (March 2010), the Statutory guidance for governing bodies 2009 and associated guidance on the education of looked after children.

We aim to give Children in our Care within our school the best opportunities and support to be safe and healthy, to achieve in education and their career, and enable them to play an active role in their community.

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Above all, as corporate parents we will preface all our thinking, planning, actions and decisions with: **"If this were my child I would....."**

The aims of the school are to:

- Ensure that school policies and procedures are inclusive of Children in our Care
- Ensure that all Children in our Care have access to a broad and balanced curriculum and this includes the provision of a differentiated curriculum appropriate to the individual's needs and ability
- Ensure that Children in our Care take as full a part as possible in all school activities including extra curricular activities
- Ensure that carers and social workers and the Virtual School Headteacher for Children in our Care are kept fully informed of their child's progress and attainment, attendance and transition arrangements
- Ensure that appropriate intervention strategies are put in place when there is concern about a child's lack of progress
- Ensure that Children in our Care are involved, where practicable, in decisions affecting their future provision
- Ensure all staff are appropriately trained to support the needs of Children in our Care.

Who are Children in our Care?

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is looked after 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 by the Local Authority under a voluntary agreement with their parents (section 20)
- Children who are the subject of a care order (section 31) or interim care order (section 38)
- Children who are the subject 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 or they may be fostered with family members. All these groups are said to be 'Children in our Care—CIOC. They may be

looked after by Stockton-on-Tees local authority or may be in the care of another authority but living in Stockton-on-Tees.

Admissions

The governing body endorses Stockton Borough Council policy. The Council, as the Admission Authority for Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools, believes that admissions criteria should not discriminate against looked after children. Due to care placement changes, Children in our Care may enter school mid-term. It is vital that as a school we ensure that they are given a positive welcome in order that they feel secure. If necessary we may offer additional support and pre-entry visits to help the new pupils settle.

Inclusion

This policy recognises that all pupils are entitled to a balanced, broadly based curriculum. Our Policy reinforces the need for teaching that is fully inclusive. The governing body will ensure the school makes appropriate provision for all Children in our Care and will be kept up to date via reports from the designated teacher/governor.

Allocation of resources

The governing body will ensure that the school allocates resources to support appropriate provision for looked after children, meeting the objectives set out in this policy. The governing body will hold the school to account for the progress and attainment of looked after children.

Monitoring the progress of Children in our Care

The social worker for the looked after child should initiate a Personal Education Plan (PEP) – within 20 days of the pupil joining the school, or of entering care. Wherever possible the looked after child should be actively involved in determining their plan. It is vital that the school assesses each looked after child's attainment on entry to ensure continuity of learning and progression.

The school will monitor and track the achievement and attainment of all Children in our Care at regular intervals and will provide the Local Authority with termly information in line with the Virtual School pupil tracking system. The school will put in place intervention strategies to support

underachievement and provide appropriate challenge for gifted and talented pupils in order that pupils are helped to fulfil their potential.

The school will inform the Attendance and Exclusion Service of any concerns regarding attendance and, if necessary, liaise with the service regarding all matters relating to fixed term exclusions.

Children in our Care will require their PEP to be reviewed, according to their needs, as initiated by the Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) or social worker, and the young person's views should be sought by the Designated Teacher and noted on the PEP.

The PEP will be placed on line as part of the Virtual School monitoring and communication system.

Transition

The school will ensure that all stakeholders are provided with the appropriate information, advice and guidance to support the smooth and effective transition of Children in our Care and young people at all key stages.

Record Keeping

The designated teacher will know the names of all the Children in our Care 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 in our Care from other authorities who are attending the school. It is important that the school indicates Children in our Care status appropriately in the school's information systems so that information is readily available as required. Information regarding Children in our Care will be stored securely.

Staff Development

Staff will be enabled to attend courses that help them to acquire the skills needed to support Children in our Care and disseminate this professional development to all relevant staff. Part of the Designated Teacher's role is to be the focal point in the school for all issues associated with looked after children.

Partnership with parents/carers and care workers.

As a school we firmly believe in developing a strong partnership with parents/carers and care workers to enable Children in our Care to achieve their potential. Review meetings, which take place at least every six months, are an opportunity to further this partnership working.

Links with external agencies/organisations

We also recognise the important contribution that external support services make in supporting looked after children. Colleagues from the following support services may be involved with individual looked after children:

- Virtual School Education Improvement Service
- Educational Psychologists and others from Local Authority SEN services
- SEND
- Medical officers
- School nurses
- CAMHS
- Attendance and Inclusion Service
- Social care worker/Community care worker/Residential child care worker
- Youth Offending Service.

Reporting to the Governing Body

In line with the statutory guidance (**The role and responsibilities of the designated teacher for Children in our Care- Statutory guidance for governing bodies.**)

The designated teacher will provide the governing body, as a minimum, with an annual report on the progress of Children in our Care and young people.

Review and Evaluation of Children in our Care Policy

We consider the Children in our Care and Young People Policy to be important and we will undertake a thorough review of both policy and practice with key stakeholders each year. The outcomes of this review will inform the School Improvement Plan.

Review September 2019