

# St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

## Religious Education Policy



### Mission Statement

At St Joseph's we welcome all as members of our school family.  
We learn and care for each other as brothers and sisters; enriched by the teachings of Jesus.

We encourage Creativity; valuing our unique talents and skills as gifts from God.

Working alongside pupils and parents/carers, we can all succeed and realise great things.

Serving the communities within the Parish of St Joseph's and St Francis and beyond, we reach out to all.

We respect each other, our different cultures and faiths celebrating our richness and diversity.

Through worship and prayer we show our love; striving to achieve our very best.

The Governors and Staff of St Joseph's have worked closely together to prepare a mission statement which reflects the aims and objectives of the school. It is displayed in a prominent position in all classrooms and public areas in school. We also have a Mission Song which reflects the ethos of our Mission Statement. Parents are made aware of the statement through the school prospectus. The school community works together to promote the mission statement. We acknowledge that the first educators in the faith are the parents\*, but each teacher is responsible for encouraging development of the attitudes, values and standards in a way which is appropriate to the age and ability of the children. Adults working within the school have a very important role to play in living the mission and in leading pupils to living it. Our purpose is to work together for the common good, to build the kingdom of God, here and now.

### **Rationale of Religious Education**

We believe that Religious Education is not one subject amongst many, but the foundation of the entire education process. The beliefs and values it communicates should inspire and unify every aspect of school life. All pupils have the right to receive an overall education which will enable

them, in the light of the faith of the Church, to engage with the deepest questions of life and find reasons for the hope which is within them.

We recognise that our children come to us with differing backgrounds and experiences. We should therefore, be sensitive to each child's life experiences and value each child's contribution to school life. Our teaching of Religious Education will reflect this.

### **The Aims of Religious Education**

- ❖ To create a Christian community where the Gospel values are evident in all aspects of its life, and to help pupils come to an understanding of these through experiencing and celebrating their faith.
- ❖ To help pupils to know and appreciate the spiritual and religious aspects of life as expressed in the Catholic faith through the sacraments and their participation in them, particularly Eucharist and Reconciliation.
- ❖ To develop an open minded, reflective and enquiring response to the children's own environment and to those of others in the wider global community.
- ❖ To explore the relationships between the Catholic Church and other Christian denominations and world faiths, so that pupils develop respect and knowledge of other religious traditions and cultures.
- ❖ To challenge and ask basic questions about human existence through various sources, so that they may deepen their personal faith, commitment and respect for others.
- ❖ To develop religious and scriptural knowledge and to teach children to pray reverently and participate in worship.
- ❖ To develop a knowledge and understanding of people, signs, symbols and their roles in the Church.
- ❖ To encourage an awareness of their moral responsibilities to people in their own community and the world around them, thereby helping each child to develop a sense of dignity, valuing themselves and others.
- ❖ To develop a respect for God's world and responsibility for it.
- ❖ To understand they have rights, how they can exercise their rights and understand how rights link to responsibilities.

### **Equal opportunities and Inclusion**

A central message of the Catholic faith is that, although we are all different, God loves each one of us equally, regardless of background, gender or ability. At St. Joseph's all children are of equal value and therefore entitled to a curriculum and set of experiences which enable them to fulfil their potential and develop their abilities. We will ensure that each child has equal access to the curriculum, and is not disadvantaged by ability, class, gender, race, age, background or faith. Equal opportunity means overcoming our own stereotypes and prejudices. Each child is seen as a gift from God.

We aim to ensure that resources do not reinforce any kind of stereotypes and that they reflect our own school community. It is important that the children are provided with images which reflect the multi cultural society in which we live, enhancing their awareness and knowledge of other faiths and cultures and respecting the rights of the individual at all times.

### **Home/School/Parish Partnership**

We believe that the school alone cannot undertake a child's religious education. Religious Education begins at home at Baptism; the parents are the child's first teachers and support the child with his/her first religious experiences. The school works in partnership with parents and parish to enrich the lives of our children.

We invite parents to Masses and liturgies in the school via our Weekly Newsletter. Invitations are also displayed in the form of posters around the school and, sometimes, in letters. Our school

regularly supports parish events and fund raising e.g. Mary's Meals, Missio, Advent and Lenten Appeals.

Our pupils attend Mass in school at least once a term, and opportunities are made throughout the year for classes to visit St Joseph's Church in Elm Grove. Some events, such as Harvest Service and the Christmas Carol Service, also take place at the Church. Father Kieron, our local priest, is part of the School Governing Body and pays weekly visits to the school. We seek to encourage participation by the Parish in school life and the RE Co-ordinator regularly attends a monthly Parish Council Meeting where opportunities for partnership is discussed.

We value and nurture our links with the wider community in Brighton and other schools in our Deanery. The RE Co-ordinator attends termly diocesan meetings with other RE Co-ordinators to discuss standards and issues arising. Visitors are warmly welcomed into St Joseph's, and all are encouraged to contribute their talents and in order to enrich our school community.

### **Curriculum time allocation**

In line with Bishops' Conference recommendations, 10% of curriculum time is allocated to Religious Education. This does **not** include Collective Worship.

### **Programme of Study**

To fulfil our aims and objectives we use the "Come and See" Programme which fulfils the criteria laid down by "Curriculum Directory" and "Broad Areas of Attainment in Religious Education" as prescribed by the diocese. This includes teaching the children an awareness of other faiths. We study Judaism for a week of every year and another religion for one week (usually Islam) in order to promote better understanding of other faiths.

We follow a whole school 1 year cycle of topics with each topic lasting for approximately four weeks. Nine topics are covered each year. Two attainment tasks are explored: **AT1: Learning about Religion** and **AT2 -: Learning from Religion**. AT1 is about knowledge of the church rituals and Catholic beliefs. AT2 is about the application of these beliefs in daily life. (see appendix)

### **Methodology**

A range of teaching strategies and learning methodologies are employed depending on the needs and abilities of the children and the nature of the activities being undertaken.

- Work is differentiated in terms of activity and/or outcome according to the needs and abilities of the children.
- Approaches include whole class teaching, group activities and individual work.
- Children have opportunities to work individually as well as co-operatively and collaboratively, developing their own knowledge and expertise as well as sharing their experiences with others.
- Thought provoking reflection and discussion are encouraged to enable the children to develop their moral and spiritual consciences. This is currently being explored through Lectio Divina.
- Teachers are encouraged to make cross - curricular links when planning RE, incorporating opportunities for ICT and extended writing where appropriate.

### **Planning**

We use the long term planning from the '**Come and See**' scheme of work to produce short term planning for each unit. The class teacher writes the plans for each lesson, listing the specific

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learning objectives for that lesson. All teachers use the agreed school planning format. (See appendices)

### **Assessment, Recording and Reporting**

Assessment in Religious Education cannot, and should not, assess the faith development of children. Learning about religion and learning from religion are assessed through the Come and See assessment guides. This is achieved through discussions with individuals, by observations made in large group situations and by marking written work. It is important that a clear class record is kept of the topics explored and of the levels achieved in both attainment targets. At the beginning of each topic children should be made aware of the learning objectives and then these can be assessed at the end of each unit of work through personal and teacher evaluations; each topic is assessed using the levels of attainment and driver words. Data is now tracked three times a year (at the end of Autumn, Spring and Summer terms.)

- ❖ Pupils' work is marked positively and constructively in relation to the learning intention. Written comments should be affirming, encouraging, thought provoking and challenging.
- ❖ Children are encouraged to assess their own learning within a unit of work.
- ❖ All teachers collect the books from an above average, average and below average pupil, three times a year. They give these books to the RE Co-ordinator for monitoring purposes. From this information, together with planning scrutiny, the co-ordinator feeds back and advises teachers on how to improve their practice. Good practice is also celebrated and shared.
- ❖ Progress and achievement in Religious Education is reported to parents/carers in a written report at the end of each academic year.

### **Display and Prayer Focus**

- ❖ Classroom RE displays relate to the topic being studied to stimulate further work or to celebrate the work that has been undertaken.
- ❖ Each class has a prayer focus table to stimulate and facilitate reflection and prayer, linked with the topic and the colours of the liturgical season.
- ❖ All classes have a crucifix in a prominent position.
- ❖ Displays are changed according to the liturgical year, or highlight particular issues or themes from the Come and See topic.

### **Prayer**

Prayer plays a central part in the life of the school. Prayers are recited in each class on a daily basis (see appendices). Children are also encouraged to offer and write prayers for their own intentions and to ask fellow pupils to pray with them.

### **Resources**

Each class teacher has a copy of the 'Come and See' and 'God's Story 2 & 3', relevant to their year group. They have access to the 'Come and See' website, which provides a range of resources, including interactive and multi-media resources. Teachers also have a copy of Youcat to aid teaching. They also have a set of Bibles for the children's use. Further resources including other faith artefact boxes are available in the school.

### **Other Faiths**

Two other faiths are taught from Year 1 to Year 6 following the programme of study in 'Come and See'. Each year covers Judaism and one other from: Islam, Sikhism and Hinduism. The whole

school will focus on one of these faiths for one week during the school year. Early years pupils may study stories from the Old Testament or appropriate Holy book during the Other Faiths weeks.

In addition children will learn about a variety of festivals from other faiths. Wherever possible, people from other faiths will be invited into school to talk to the children. We view the contribution made to our school by pupils and staff from other denominations as an enrichment of our faith community.

### **Monitoring**

In order to monitor RE teaching and learning:

- The RE co-ordinator will monitor RE planning throughout the school 3 x year.
- The RE co-ordinator will observe RE teaching formally once a year, and informally through learning walks and discussions with teachers.
- The RE co-ordinator, class teachers and Headteacher will carry out a specific moderation of RE once or twice a year.
- RE will be discussed at Teaching and Learning/ Performance Management meetings.
- RE INSET will be provided when deemed necessary throughout the academic year.

Individual feedback will be given to teachers and any common points for improvements will be shared at the first available staff meeting.

### **Management of the subject**

The RE Co-ordinator, with the support of the Deputy Headteacher, has responsibility for leading, managing and supporting the delivery of and training in Religious Education. The RE Co-ordinator will also attend relevant courses in order to disseminate information amongst the Staff.

### **Policy review**

This policy is monitored by the Religious Education Co-ordinator and is evaluated and reviewed by the Governors and whole staff. It will be updated every 2 years.

### **Evaluation**

Religious Education will be evaluated by:

- The knowledge and understanding of the teachers towards R.E
- Pupil enjoyment of the subject
- The knowledge and understanding of the pupil.
- The behaviour of the pupils towards each other and others.
- Delivery of the subject
- Informed planning.
- Appropriate assessment and recording.

APPENDIX 1

### **END OF KEY STAGE OBJECTIVES – CONCEPTS, SKILLS & ATTITUDES**

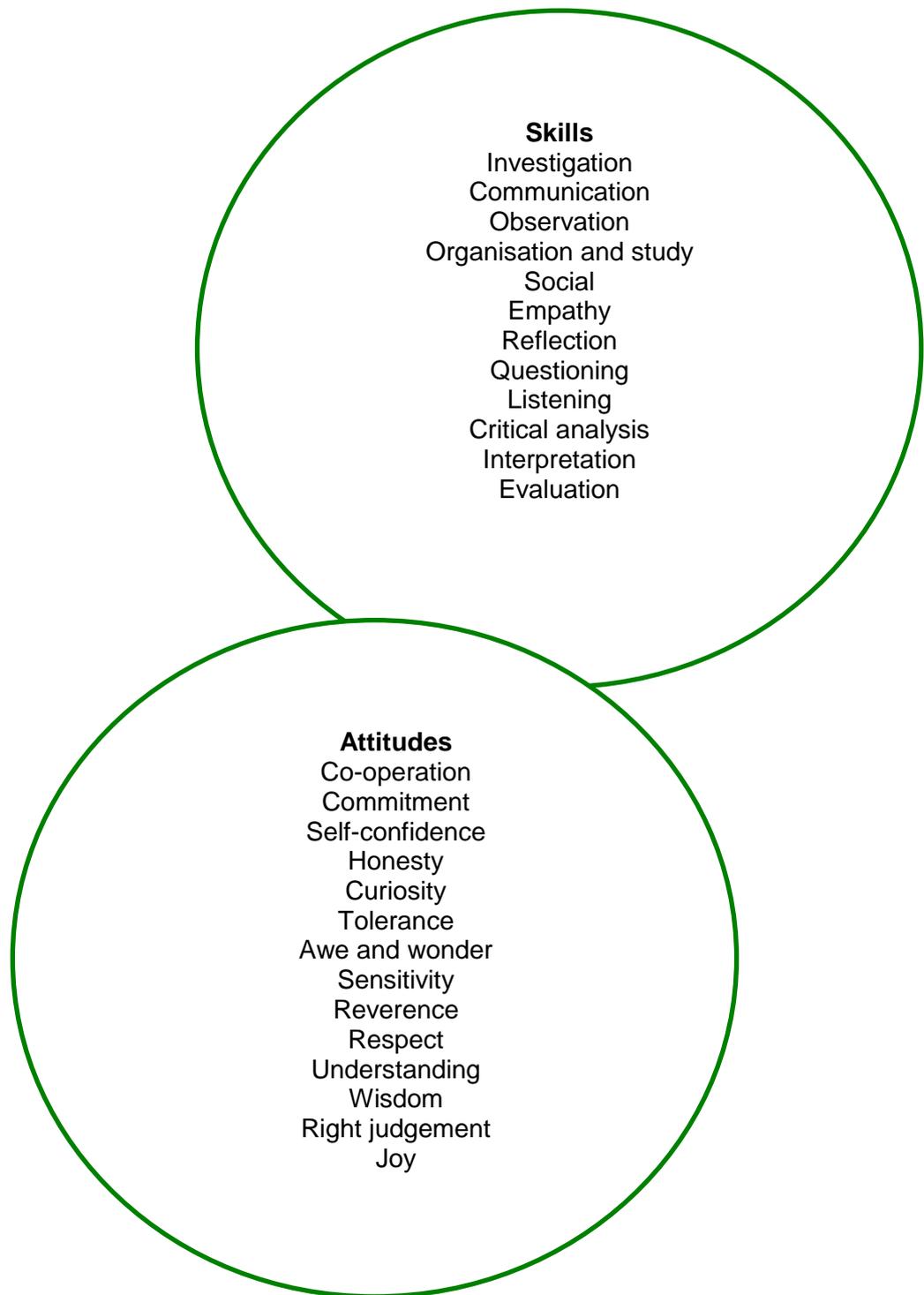
**By the end of key stage 1** each child will have had experiences which will have given him/her the opportunity to:

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- Know that stories have messages about life
- Know elements of key stories in the life of Jesus including the Nativity, the events of Holy Week, Easter and Pentecost
- Know that people belong to different groups
- Know the Church as the family of God, which is called to offer praise to God and serve people
- Know that there are people with different roles in the Catholic Church
- Know that each person is unique and has responsibilities towards God's World
- Begin to understand the difference between right and wrong and the consequences of choice
- Know that Jesus taught people the love of God and one another through his teaching and example
- Know about special occasions in life and that Christians celebrate certain days, particularly Sundays, Christmas, Easter and Pentecost.
- Know some elements of the Sacraments of Baptism, Eucharist and Reconciliation and understand that these are central to the lives of Christians
- Know some traditional prayers and know that they can communicate with God in their own way.

By the end of Key Stage 2 ***each will have had experiences which will have given him/her the opportunity to:***

- Know that there are different kinds of writing that help people to reflect on life
- Know the basic structure of the Bible and something of its historical background; and begin to understand that the Bible tells the story of God and the chosen people, and be able to tell the stories of some key people
- Know about the Trinity and the key features of the life and teaching of Jesus
- Know that other faiths have their sacred books
- Begin to understand that belonging to groups brings rights and responsibilities
- Know something of the daily life of the parish and its place in the diocese and the universal Church; and know about significant local and national figures in the life of the Church
- Know that the Church guided by the Holy Spirit continues the work of Jesus
- Know about significant figures in the life and history of other world faiths
- Know that each person made in the image and likeness of God, has special qualities and gifts; and begin to appreciate God's gifts in others and creation
- Begin to understand how people can strengthen or damage their relationship with one another and the world
- Begin to appreciate important Christian values as shown in the life of Jesus and know that Jesus came to help people to change and save them from their sinfulness
- Know that people celebrate special events in ways which give meaning to their lives, and know the main seasons and feasts of the Liturgical Year
- Know the names of the Sacraments and the essential rites and meaning of the Sacraments of Initiation and Reconciliation, and begin to understand the main features and pattern of the Celebration of the Eucharist
- Begin to understand the nature of prayer, and elements of liturgical and other traditional prayers
- Know that society and other world faiths have different ways of celebration
- Know about relevant traditions and customs of the Church
- Know about certain religious artefacts and their significance
- Begin to understand the concept of ministry as it relates to them and to others within the Church
- Know about some basic Church doctrine
- To know about the lives of particular saints especially Mary



## APPENDIX II

### LITURGICAL CELEBRATIONS

Class liturgy/ assembly  
Junior and infant liturgy  
Christmas liturgy/ Nativity

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Easter liturgy  
Reconciliation  
Mass  
Harvest  
Stations of the Cross  
May Liturgy  
Ash Wednesday  
St Joseph's Day  
Carol Service

Care should be taken that a variety of different children participate in each celebration.

Children can be actively involved in preparing for worship and liturgy by:

Allowing them to decide on the form and content  
Choosing the readings  
Praying in their own words in their own way  
Arranging the classroom, hall or focused display  
Welcoming visitors – preparing invitations  
Performing music, drama dance etc  
Bringing gifts, dressing up.  
Preparing a Gospel reflection

### APPENDIX III

#### GUIDELINES FOR PRAYING WITH CHILDREN

It is important for children to be silent before God, to listen to him. They need to be familiar with the gestures of prayer. Time and thought should be given to create atmosphere and setting.

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To help children develop a sense of prayer it is important to have places of quiet and reflection. This is developed within the classroom with an attractive focal area set aside with a candle and selection of appropriate books, key words and Bible references. Each day should begin and end with prayer. However, prayer should occur at any time *and any place in the midst of their everyday work*. Care should be taken that it does not fall into a dull meaningless routine.

## STRATEGIES TO DEVELOP PRAYER

Help them appreciate the language line by line or phrase by phrase;  
Use gestures, music drama;  
Share them in small group situations;  
Rewrite them in their own words;  
Write their own.

It is important to:

Enable pupils and teachers to relax, to use their breathing to help them relax  
Make the best possible use of silence  
Make the best possible use of music  
Lead the children in a meaningful experience of traditional prayers  
Lead the children to feel free to pray with openness and spontaneity  
Have the courage, as adults to share with the children  
Always respect their right to listen and be silent  
Ensure that our prayer reflects the essence of our lives, joy and sorrow, a sense of belonging, a feeling of loneliness, celebration and peace, anger and upset  
Introduce the children to traditional meditation techniques – stilling exercises, use of mantra  
rhythmic prayer e.g. Oh Lord hear my prayer  
Prayer boxes and books

### The morning offering

Thank you God for  
this new day,  
In my school to work  
and play,  
Please be with me all  
day long,  
In every story, game  
and song.  
May all the happy  
things we do,  
Make you our Father  
happy too.

### Grace before meals

Bless us O Lord as  
we sit together  
Bless the food we eat  
today  
Bless the hands that  
made our food,  
Bless us O Lord. Amen.

### Afternoon Prayer

God, our Father, I come  
to say  
Thank you for your love  
today.  
Thank you for my family  
And all the friends you  
give to me.  
Guard me in the dark of  
night  
And in the morning send  
your light. Amen.

## APPENDIX IV

## **GUIDANCE FOR PRAYER CORNERS/AREAS**

- ❖ These should be prominent in the classroom
- ❖ These should reflect the Religious Education topic.
- ❖ Should be attended to and cared for regularly.
- ❖ Focus should change with each new Come and See topic.
- ❖ Use prayer 'monitors' to assemble and care for the area.
- ❖ Keep a selection of beautiful and religious objects and cloths that can be brought out at different times and which reflect the liturgical colour of the period.
- ❖ Make the prayer area 'interactive' by using prayer intention cards (e.g. placed in a basket). Moving focus objects from the area to a different place for prayer. (Start or/and end of RE lessons.)
- ❖ Use incense sometimes
- ❖ Taped music sometimes
- ❖ Wind chimes (if near a window or door) sometimes
- ❖ Always have the Bible prominently displayed.
  - This may be turned to the Scripture reading of the day. Older pupils could be responsible for this. A beautiful ribbon or feather could mark the page.
- ❖ Keep the prayer area 'fresh' and refer to it and make use of it regularly.

## APPENDIX V

## **TEACHING STYLES AND WAYS OF LEARNING**

We adopt a variety of teaching styles as the children need to be involved actively in their learning to develop curiosity, creativity and independent thought.

We need to create opportunities for thought, prayer, stillness and silence. We should hope to foster an atmosphere that may evoke responses of trust, joy, sorrow, thanks, praise and acceptance.

See Appendix IV – Teaching Strategies and Children's work

### **TEACHING STRATEGIES**

Modelling/demonstration  
Whole class activities e.g. telling a story  
Asking questions  
Encouraging children to listen to each other  
Working with small groups  
TV and radio programmes  
Assemblies  
Visiting speakers  
Bible study  
Liturgy  
Prayer

### **CHILDREN'S WORK**

Reporting to/addressing whole class  
Doing art/collage/craft work  
Explaining to companion, teacher  
Working quietly – writing, reading  
Asking questions  
Performing movement/drama/role play  
Singing/playing instruments  
Sitting quietly in reflective prayer  
Preparing for assemblies and class liturgies  
Gathering information, researching and discussing

### **RE BOOKS**

RE books should be treated as special books. Pupils should be encouraged to present only their best work. There should be **at least** four pieces of work for each topic, as well as the cover page (with learning objectives) and the evaluation page. RE targets should be displayed in the front of the book.

### **APPENDIX VI**

In the school children will come into contact with Scripture through the curriculum mainly in RE, worship and assembly. There are many opportunities to present pupils with the rich vein of fundamental truth that Scripture contains. However, if children are to be taught to know, value and understand the Bible, it is essential that the teacher also values it and has some understanding of the texts, which will be used.

### **GUIDELINES FOR USING THE BIBLE WITH CHILDREN**

- ❖ In sharing Scripture with children there needs to be sensitivity to the age, experience and stage of development of each child

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- ❖ It is important that we understand the meaning of the passage and do not communicate misunderstood concepts about God - Father, son and Spirit – and the meaning of our human lives
- ❖ Bible translations should be selected which are easily understood by the children while remaining faithful to the context and meaning of the passage in scripture
- ❖ Pupils should be introduced to the person of Jesus in ways which they can understand so that they may gradually appreciate the significance of his life and death in our own lives
- ❖ Children should be encouraged to discover and explore something of their experiences through scripture, which depict characters, and events with which they can empathise.
- ❖ Children should gradually be introduced to the literary forms found in the Bible (prayer, psalms, poetry, myth, allegory, prose, parable) and help them to appreciate the context in which they were written.
- ❖ Children should be helped to see how the Bible is respected and revered by all Christians.
- ❖ By the end of KS2 all children should be able to locate parts of the scriptures from Bible references

\*Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 defines 'parent' as:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person (having care of a child or young person means that the child lives with and is looked after by that person, irrespective of what their relationship is).