

# St Joseph's Catholic Primary School



## Children in Care 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.

At St Joseph's Primary School we are committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of all children, staff and families in our school.

This policy incorporates the requirements set out in the guidance document 'Education of Young People in Public Care' (2000) and in the Brighton and Hove Handbook for Corporate Parents (2001). The policy will also support Section 52 of the Children Act 2004 which places a new duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of Children in Care. The term Children in Care refers to children and young people who are either on Care Orders or Accommodated under the Children Act 1989. In addition to families and schools the Local Authority has parental responsibility for all Children in Care.

**Policy Objective:**

To promote the educational achievement and welfare of Children in Care at St Joseph's Catholic Primary School.

**Designated Person Responsible for Children in Care:**

SENCO – Pippa Davies

Inclusion Team – Fran Morrison, Becky Hill, Liz Messenger, Gill Foan, Vicky Arnold

**Role of the Designated Person:**

**In school**

- To ensure that all staff, both teaching and non-teaching are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantages faced by children and young people in Care and understand the need for positive systems to overcome them;
- To inform members of staff of the general educational needs of Children in Care, and to promote the involvement of these children in school clubs, extra-curricular activities, home reading and school councils etc.;
- To act as an advocate for Children in Care;
- To develop and monitor systems for liaising with carers and colleagues in social care who support the child;
- To ensure all relevant education and care information is available to school staff and carers and that this information is kept up to date;
- To monitor the educational progress of all Children in Care in order to inform the school's development plan;
- To intervene if there is evidence of individual underachievement, absence from school, internal truancy or risk of exclusion;
- To develop knowledge of statutory responsibilities and procedures for Children in Care by attending relevant training events and cascade these to staff.

**With Children:**

- To arrange in school a child's Personal Education Plan (PEP) meeting in partnership with the Social Worker;
- To ensure that actions identified in the PEP are implemented and reviewed;
- To facilitate the completion of the student section of the PEP;
- To supervise the admission of new Children in Care and ensure appropriate induction into the school.

**With other Colleagues and Agencies:**

- To be the first point of contact for other professionals working with Children in Care and ensure the speedy transfer of information between agencies;
- To liaise with the SENCO and Inclusion Team of a receiving school on the child's transfer to another school to ensure effective integration;
- To ensure the PEP informs the child's Care Plan and looked after Children (CLA) Reviews;
- To attend CLA ( Children Looked After) Reviews if appropriate.

There is a named governor with special responsibility for Children in Care (see governor responsibility list).

**The Role of the Governor for Children in Care:**

The named Governor or Designated Person will report to the Governing Body on an annual basis:

- The number of Children in Care on roll
- Standards achieved
- Attendance
- Incidence of fixed term or permanent exclusions

The named Governor should be satisfied that the school's policies and procedures ensure that Children in Care have equal and sometimes priority access to:

- Admissions
- Public/Key Stage tests and examinations
- Additional educational support
- Extra-curricular activities and out of hours learning

**School Responsibility:**

Personal Education Plans (PEPs) are a statutory requirement for children and young people who are subject to Care Orders, Interim Care Orders and S20 Accommodation. The school is responsible for working in partnership with the child's Social Worker to draw up and review the PEP. A date set for completion of a PEP should be arranged within twenty school days of a child being taken into Care and reviewed every six months thereafter, immediately before the child's LAC review. A current PEP should be in evidence at every statutory review and updated if a significant change occurs, e.g. change of school, school programme disruption. PEP meetings should take place in school with relevant members of staff, the social worker, the carer and the child or young person as appropriate (see Personal Education Plan 'Guidelines for Social Workers and Designated Teachers).

It is very important that confidentiality for Children in Care is respected and that information is shared on a 'needs to know' basis and to regularly update school records. However, in order to both understand a child's needs and act to ensure positive systems of support are met school wide, it is clearly essential that all teaching staff who are in contact with the child or young person are aware that he/she is in Care and being looked after by the LA. It is appropriate for a Teaching Assistant to have knowledge that a child is in Care only when directly involved in teaching that child.

In both cases the extent of the sharing of information should be determined by the Designated Person and or the Head Teacher.

**Involve the Child:**

It is important that a child is aware that information regarding their personal circumstances is known by the school. How this is shared with them clearly depends on their age and understanding. The explanation should emphasise that the school, the social worker and carers are working together to promote their education.

For a child newly in Care it is important to establish his/her view of their changed circumstances and to monitor how this is impacting on behaviour and performance at school. Children may benefit from some preparation for when they may be asked about home by other pupils or staff.

**Admission Arrangements:**

On admission records will be requested from the child's previous school and a meeting will be held with the carer/parent(s)/social worker as appropriate – but always involving someone with parental responsibility. At this meeting a date to draw up/review the PEP can be agreed. An appropriate induction must always take place.

N.B.

The school Admission Code of Practice 2003 recommends that admission authorities give Children in Care top priority in their over-subscription criteria and that places are found in schools as quickly as possible. Schools' policies should reflect a proactive approach in co-operating with and supporting the admission of a Child in Care in order to prevent drift and delay.

**Exclusion from School:**

It should be noted that the guidance to schools on exclusion (2004) draws particular attention to Children in Care as a groups especially at risk of exclusion. Schools should try every practicable means to maintain the child in school and should seek LA advice and other professional advice as appropriate. The child's social worker should in all cases be involved at the earliest opportunity in working with the school to avoid the need to exclude a child. In cases where a Child in Care is excluded, anyone who is legally defined as a parent will have the right to make representations and to appeal.