

Education Policy for Care Experienced and Previously Care Experienced Children



Approval and review dates

Policy	Date of last review	Date of next review
SVS Education Policy for Care Experienced and Previously Care Experienced Children	September 2023	September 2024

1 Aims

SVS aims to promote the educational achievement and welfare of Children in Care (CiC) and Previously Care Experienced Children on the roll of the school.

This policy applies to all personal data, regardless of whether it is in paper or electronic format.

2 Legislation and statutory requirements

This policy is based on advice from the Department for Education (DfE) on:

- Children Act 1989
- DfE (2018) Promoting the education of SVS Education Policy for Care Experienced and Previously Care Experienced Children.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/683556/Promoting_the_education_of_looked-after_children_and_previously_looked-after_children.pdf
- The Children and Families Act 2014 amended the Children Act 1989 to require local authorities in England to appoint at least one person to promote the educational achievement of its looked-after children.
- Guidance and Regulations on Care Planning, Placement and Case review Guidance and regulations on care planning, placement and case review (PDF)
- The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) has published a guideline on Looked after children and young people, which sets out how organisations, practitioners and carers should work together to deliver high-quality care, stable placements and nurturing relationships for children in care.
- “The roles and responsibilities of the designated teacher for Looked after children” and “The Children and Young Persons Act 2008”, also the “Designated Teacher (Looked After Pupils etc.) (England) Regulation 2009.
- “Improving the attainment of looked after young people in Secondary Schools”.
- The Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010
- Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000
- Children and Social Work Act 2017
- DfE (2021) ‘Exclusions from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England’
- DfE (2021) ‘Keeping children safe in education 2021’
- DfE (2018) ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children’

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3 Definitions

Who are our Looked after Children/Children in Care

Children and young people become 'Looked After' either if they have been taken into Care by the local authority, or have been accommodated by the local authority (a voluntary care arrangement). Most LAC will be living in foster homes but a smaller number may be in a children's home, living with a relative or even be placed back at home with their natural parent(s).

LAC will have a care manager who arranges their care plan.

The governing body of SVS is committed to providing quality education for all its students, based on equality of opportunity, access and outcomes. This governing body recognises that, nationally, there is considerable educational underachievement of Looked after Children, when compared with their peers, and is committed to implementing the principles and practice, as outlined in DfEE Circular 0269/2000 and DfEE/DOH Guidance 2000 and the Children Act (2004). The Children Act places a duty to safeguard looked after children, to promote their educational achievements and to ensure that they are able to "achieve to and reach their full potential". The Guidance recognises the collective responsibility of local authorities and schools to achieve good parenting and sets out six principles:

- Promoting the education of looked after children and previously looked-after children.
- Prioritising education;
- Having high expectations;
- Inclusion-changing and challenging attitudes
- Achieving continuity and stability
- Early intervention – priority action; and listening to children

The Guidance introduced two key measures:

- To ensure designated Teachers are nominated in every school
- To ensure Personal Education Plans (PEPs) are in place for all Looked After Children.
- This governing body is committed to ensuring that Designated Teachers and staff are enabled to carry out their responsibilities effectively.

4 Role and Responsibility of the Designated Teacher

Our Designated Teacher Lead is Hayley Dale-Dolan and is contactable via email: hdolan@svs.sandwell.sch.uk or telephone 0121 6797522.

The Designated Teacher should:

- be an advocate for Children in Care;
- ensure a smooth and welcoming induction for the child and carer/s (and parent/s where possible). Note any specific requirements, including care status;
- ensure that a Personal Education Plan is completed (within 20 days of entering care or joining a new school). This should be prepared with the child and the carer/s (and parent/s

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if possible), in liaison with the social worker and other relevant support workers/agencies. Where appropriate, the PEP should take account of any Individual Educational Plan (IEP), Pastoral Support Plan (PSP), Individual Behaviour Plan (IBP), career plan or any other relevant plans. The PEP should inform and be reviewed

- ensure that each Child in Care has an identified member of staff that they can talk to
- ensure entry to examinations for all Children in Care
- co-ordinate support for the child in the school and liaise with other professionals and carers as necessary;
- ensure staff and governors receive relevant information and training
- ensure confidentiality for individual children and only share personal information on a need to know basis;
- provide written information to assist planning/review meetings and ensure attendance as far as possible;
- encourage Children in Care to participate in extra-curricular activities and out of hours learning;
- seek urgent meetings with relevant parties where the child is experiencing difficulties and/or is in danger of being excluded.

Roles and Responsibilities of All Staff

- as with all children, have high aspirations and celebrate the educational and personal achievement of Children in Care;
- ensure entry to examinations for Children in Care;
- be familiar with the Guidance on Looked After Children and respond appropriately to requests for information to support the completion of PEPs and other documentation needed as part of review meetings;
- liaise with the Designated Teacher where a Child in Care is experiencing difficulty;

Role and Responsibility of the Governing Body

The governing body of this school will:

- ensure that admission criteria prioritise LAC, according to the Code of Practice on Admissions
- ensure all governors are fully aware of the legal requirements and Guidance for Looked After Children;
- ensure that there is a named Designated Teacher for Children in Care;
- nominate a governor who links with the Designated Teacher, receives regular progress reports and provides feedback to the governing body
- for child protection and confidentiality reasons, ensure that information will be collected and reported in ways that preserve the anonymity, and respect the confidentiality of the students concerned.
- review the effective implementation of this policy, preferably annually and at least every three years.
- ensure that the school's other policies and procedures give children in care equal access in respect of:
 - Admission to school
 - The National Curriculum and public examinations

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- Additional educational support where this is needed. Extra-curricular activities
- Work experience and careers guidance.

5 Working with Virtual School (VHS)

We will ensure that copies of all relevant reports are forwarded to the care experienced Childrens social workers, in addition to carers or residential social workers. We will support the coordination of PEP meetings with the social worker responsible. We will work with other agencies to exchange information, such as changes in circumstances, exclusions or attendance issues, taking prompt action, where necessary, to safeguard care experienced and previously care experienced children.

Behaviour management strategies will be agreed between the VSH and the school, to ensure challenging behaviour is managed in the most effective way for that individual child.

The designated teacher for care experienced and previously care experienced children will:

- communicate with the VSH and child's social worker to facilitate the completion of the PEP. Through the designated teacher, we will work with the VSH, social worker and other relevant agencies to monitor any arrangements in place so that actions and activities recorded in the child's PEP are implemented without delay.
- communicate with the VSH and agree on how PP+ can be used effectively to accommodate the child's educational attainment and progress. PP+ for previously care experienced children will be allocated directly to, and managed by, the school. We will work with the VSH to manage allocation of PP+ for the benefit of our cohort of care experienced children or, previously care experienced children, and according to their needs. If deemed necessary, we will allocate an amount of funding to an individual to support their needs.
- ensure consistent and strong communication with the VSH regarding care experienced children who are absent without authorisation. In Swindon Virtual School Welfare call collect this information from the school. The school will share their expertise on what works in supporting the education of care experienced and previously care experienced children.

6 Training

The Principal, Designated Teacher and HR will be responsible for ensuring all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in the guidance from the DfE and DoH (as above).

The designated teacher and other school staff involved in the education of care experienced and previously care experienced children will receive the appropriate training, including information about the following:

- School admissions arrangements
- SEND
- Attendance
- Exclusions

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- Homework
- GCSE options
- Managing and challenging behaviour
- Promoting positive educational and recreational activities
- Supporting pupils to be aspirational for their future education, training and employment
- Safeguarding

All training will ensure staff are equipped with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to keep care experienced and previously care experienced children

7 Safeguarding

We recognise that many care experienced and previously care experienced children have experienced trauma, abuse or complex family circumstances that have led to them being placed in care, and will ensure that all staff are aware that experiences of adversity such as these can leave pupils vulnerable to further harm or exploitation.

All staff will be trained to recognise signs and indicators of safeguarding concerns and will ensure that extra vigilance is practiced in observing and identifying these indicators amongst care experienced and previously care experienced children as soon as possible. Where a care experienced and previously care experienced child has a social worker, this will inform decisions about safeguarding, e.g. responding to unauthorised absence or missing education where there are known safeguarding risks.

The Principal will implement appropriate pastoral support services in place throughout the school to ensure that the welfare of care experienced and previously care experienced children can be adequately protected to the extent that reflects their increased vulnerability.

Staff will be encouraged to report to the DSL any concerns they have over care experienced and previously care experienced children in line with the processes outlined in the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Staff will be regularly encouraged to look for signs of bullying and report to the designated teacher if they believe a care experienced and previously care experienced child is being bullied, as this can have a particularly negative impact on pupils who have early experiences of rejection or abandonment.

8 Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis by the designated teacher and the principal. The next scheduled review date for this policy is September 2024.

All changes to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.