



# Children in Care Policy

Amended: Spring 2021  
Ratified by the Safeguarding Governor on behalf of the Governing body: Spring 2021  
To be reviewed: Spring 2024

## Vision Phrase

'Aim high and smile'

We are committed to safeguarding and ensuring the health, safety and well-being of all pupils in accordance with safeguarding procedures and guidance for staff outlined in the school's Health and Safety, Child Protection, Security and Safeguarding policies.



## **Policy for Children in Care (Also known as Looked After Children)**

We have chosen to adopt the model policy produced by Brighton and Hove LA taking into account the guidance document 'Education of Young People in Public Care' (2000) and the Brighton and Hove Handbook for Corporate Parents (2001). The policy also supports Section 52 of the Children Act 2004 which places a duty on local authorities to promote the educational achievement of Looked after Children.

The names of the Designated Teachers for Looked after Children at West Hove Infant School are our Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator Ben Patterson and our Heads of School Louise Smith and Ben Massey.

### **The role of the Designated Teachers for Looked after Children.**

In School:

- To ensure that **ALL** staff are aware of the difficulties and educational disadvantage faced by Looked after Children and the need for positive systems of support to overcome them;
- To inform members of staff of the general educational needs of Looked after Children and to promote the involvement of these children in school clubs, extracurricular activities, home reading schemes etc;
- To act as an advocate for Looked after Children;
- To liaise with carers and colleagues in Children's Services and the Virtual School 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 Looked after Children in order to inform the school's development plan;
- To intervene if there is evidence of individual underachievement, absence from school or risk of exclusion;
- To develop knowledge of statutory responsibilities and procedures for children in public care by attending relevant training events and cascading these to staff where appropriate.

With children:

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

With other colleagues and agencies:

- To be the first point of contact for other professionals working with Looked after Children and to ensure the speedy transfer of information between agencies;
- To liaise with the Designated Teacher 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 Child (LAC) Reviews;
- To attend a LAC review if appropriate.

**The name of the governor with special responsibility for Looked after Children is our SEND Governor, Carole Kite.**

### **The Role of the Governor for Looked after Children.**

The named governor will report to the Full Governing Body on an annual basis:

- The number of Looked after Children in the school;
- Progress and attainment achieved.
- Attendance;
- Incidence of fixed term or permanent exclusions.

The named governor should be satisfied that the school's policies and procedures ensure that Looked after Children have equal and sometimes priority access to:

- Admissions;
- Additional educational support;
- Extracurricular activities and after school clubs, where appropriate;

### **School Responsibility**

Personal Education Plans (PEP) are a statutory requirement for those children 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 20 days of a child becoming looked after and reviewed every term 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 etc. PEP meetings should take place in school with relevant members of staff, the social worker, child's carer/s and the young person as appropriate.

It is essential that confidentiality for Looked after Children is respected and that information is shared on a need to know basis. Many children state that they do not want staff and other pupils to know their situation. However, in order to both understand a child's needs and to be able to ensure positive systems of support that are school wide it is clearly essential that all teaching staff who are in contact with the child should be aware that the child is being looked after by the local authority.

It is only appropriate for teaching assistants working directly with a child to know that he/she is being looked after in public care. The designated teacher and/or senior management should determine the extent of the sharing of information.

### **The Virtual School**

The Virtual School for Children in Care is a statutory service provided by the Local Authority with the main aim of improving the educational outcomes of children in care. They provide support and challenge to schools, social workers and foster carers to ensure that everyone is working towards this aim. West Hove Infant School will invite workers from the Virtual School to PEP meetings and will ask them to signpost to other services which may be able to support our children. The Virtual School hold the Pupil Premium Plus funding for all children in care in Brighton and Hove Schools and ensure that this is spent based on individual need in order to close the gap. West Hove Infant School will always be aspirational in our expectations for these children so that the Pupil Premium Plus funding can be used in the most effective manner to raise their progress and attainment.

### **Involvement of 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 depends on their age and understanding. The explanation should emphasise school, social workers and carers working together to promote their education.

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

### **Admission Arrangements**

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

**NB:** The Schools Admissions Code of Practice 2003 recommends that admission authorities give Looked after Children top priority in their over-subscription criteria and that places are found in schools as quickly as possible. We will be proactive in supporting the admission of a looked after child in order to prevent delay and further disruption for the child.

### **Exclusion from School**

It is noted that the guidance to schools on exclusion (2004) draws particular attention to children in public care as a group especially at risk of exclusion. Every practicable means will be used to maintain the child in school and we will seek Local Authority and other professional advice as soon as possible in order to avoid excluding the pupil. The child's

social worker would also be involved at the earliest opportunity. An emergency PEP meeting will be called if a child is at risk of exclusion. In any case where a child in care was excluded anyone who is legally defined as a parent will have the right to make representations and to appeal.