

ST CUTHBERT MAYNE SCHOOL
Joint Catholic and Church of England 11-18 Comprehensive School
Dioceses of Plymouth and Exeter



St Cuthbert Mayne School
Cared for Children Policy

Approved by Standards Committee: January 2023

Shared with Full Governing Body: March 2023

Next Review Date: January 2024

Introduction

As a Christian community seeking to live out and share the Good News of Jesus Christ, the Gospel underpins all our shared activity and endeavour. We recognise all students in the community, young people, and adults as children of God. As such, each is a unique creation, gifted by God and precious. The adults in our community support and challenge each other to fulfil their responsibility to nurture and develop all of the young people in our care. We therefore choose with care the type of learning experiences we offer and the values we promote.

The purpose of this policy

Cared for Children and Previously Cared for Children are one of the most vulnerable groups in society and it is nationally recognised that there is considerable educational underachievement when compared to other groups. It is recognised that schools are key in helping to raise the educational standards and in improving the life chances of cared for and previously cared for children. Social exclusion can also be prevented through careful planning, monitoring and evaluation. Cared for Children were previously termed 'looked after children' or 'Children looked after' (CLA), this acronym is currently and relevantly used by the Department for Education.

Context and Principles

Under the Children Act 1989, a child is looked after by a local authority if s/he is in their care or is provided with accommodation for more than 24 hours. They include the following: 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(1)) or interim care order (section 38); and children who are the subject of emergency orders for the protection of the child (section 44).

A previously looked-after child (previously cared for child) is one who is no longer looked after in England and Wales because s/he is the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order which includes provisions relating to with whom the child is to live, or when the child is to live with any person, or has been adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales.

Inclusion

This policy recognises that all students are entitled to a broad and balanced curriculum. Our CfC policy reinforces the need for teaching that is fully inclusive. The Governing Body will ensure the school makes appropriate provision for all cared for and previously cared for children.

The Role of the Designated Teacher

The designated person must be a qualified teacher. The role became statutory in September 2009 under the Children and Young Persons Act 2008. Ideally, the designated teacher should also be a senior member of staff who is able to influence decisions about the teaching and learning, plus promote the educational achievements of every cared for and previously cared for child.

Some of the responsibilities of the designated teacher include the following:

- Designated teachers should take lead responsibility for ensuring school staff understand the things which can affect how cared for and previously cared for children learn and achieve and how the whole school supports the educational achievement of these pupils
- Have high expectations of cared for and previously cared for children's learning and set targets to accelerate educational progress
- Are aware of the emotional, psychological and social effects of loss and separation (attachment awareness) from birth families and that some children may find it difficult to build relationships of trust with adults because of their experiences, and how this might affect the child's behaviour
- Understand how important it is to see cared for and previously cared for children as individuals rather than as a homogeneous group, not publicly treat them differently from their peers, and show sensitivity about who else knows about their looked-after or previously looked-after status
- Appreciate the central importance of the child's personal education plan (PEP) in helping to create a shared understanding between teachers, carers, social workers and, most importantly, the child's own understanding of how they are being supported
- Have the level of understanding they need of the role of social workers, Virtual School Head Teachers and carers, and how the function of the PEP fits into the wider care planning duties of the authority which looks after the child; and for previously cared for children, understand the importance of involving the child's parents or guardians in decisions affecting their child's education, be a contact for parents or guardians who want advice or have concerns about their child's progress at school
- Facilitate and encourage cared for children to join extra-curricular activities and maximise out of school learning opportunities e.g. 'more able and talented' projects
- Be proactive in supporting transitions and planning when moving children into a new phase in their education
- Promote inclusion in all areas of school life
- Children in care are among the groups who are most vulnerable to bullying. The Designated Teacher must ensure that they are actively monitoring and preventing bullying in school by raising awareness through the school's behaviour and anti-bullying policy.

Personal Education Plans (PEP)

All cared for children must have a Personal Education Plan (PEP), which their social worker will support the school in leading in developing. The PEP is a record of the child's education and forms part of the overall Care Plan. It provides a clear and shared understanding about the teaching and learning provision to ensure their academic progress. The social worker, parents, carers and the child may be invited to the PEP meeting to ensure the views of all stakeholders are considered. The school's role in this plan is crucial and at least one member of staff who knows the child well will attend the meeting to establish and subsequently review this. The PEP should set clear objectives or targets which relate to academic achievement as well as out of school activities and wherever necessary behavioural targets. If a child moves school, the PEP should be forwarded, as a matter of urgency, to the new school when known. In relation to previously cared for children, although they no longer required a PEP, the designated teacher should continue to consider their educational needs. The Designated Teacher should maintain links with Virtual School Head Teachers who must make advice and information available, in order to promote the educational achievement of this group of children.

Actions

As for all our students St Cuthbert Mayne School is committed to helping every cared for child to achieve the highest standards they can, including out of school activities and supporting career aspirations for further and higher education. This can be measured by improvements in their achievement and attendance.

This policy links with several St Cuthbert Maynes school policies:

- Behaviour and Anti-Bullying
- Online Safety
- Educational Visits
- Health and Safety
- Safeguarding, Early Help and Child Protection
- Special Educational Needs

St Cuthbert Mayne will ensure that the needs of cared for and previously cared for children are reflected in all aspects of our provision, e.g. through Collective Worship and Personal, Social and Health (PSHE) education. We will raise awareness and challenge negative stereotypes about them to ensure that they live life to the full.

Responsibilities of the Head Teacher

- Identify a Designated Teacher for cared for and previously cared for children
- Ensure cover arrangements are put in place should the Designated Teacher not be available to carry out these legal duties
- Ensure that procedures are in place to monitor and track the admission, progress, attendance and exclusions (if any) of cared for and previously cared for children and that appropriate action is taken where outcomes fall below expectations
- Report on the progress, attendance and conduct of cared for and previously cared for children.
- Ensure that all staff receive relevant training and are aware of their responsibilities under this policy and related guidance
- Ensure that all staff are briefed on the regulations and practice outlined in this policy

These duties are delegated to the Designated teacher.

Responsibilities of Torbay Virtual School

The role of The Virtual School under Section 20 of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 places a duty on the Virtual School to the Head teacher and designated a member of staff (the Designated Teacher) as having responsibility to promote the educational achievement of cared for and previously cared for children.

To this effect, the trustees should:

- Ensure that the necessary provision is being made for any pupil who is a cared for and previously cared for children
- Ensure that the Designated Teacher/s are given the appropriate level of support and be given the opportunity to keep up to date with relevant training
- Ensure the Designated Teacher disseminates relevant training and provides support for all members of staff that will influence teaching and learning for cared for and previously cared for children
- In partnership with the Head teacher, maintain responsibility for monitoring how well the role is working. As part of this monitoring an annual report will be received from the Designated Teacher with regard to reviewing the effective implementation of the Trust's policy

The responsibilities of all Staff

All our staff will:

- Have high aspirations for the educational and personal achievement of cared for and previously cared for children, as for all pupils
- Maintain cared for and previously cared for children confidentiality and ensure they are supported sensitively
- Respond positively to a pupil's request to be the named member of staff with whom they can talk to when they feel it necessary
- Respond promptly to the Designated Teacher's requests for information
- Work to enable cared for and previously cared for children to achieve stability and success within the school
- Promote self-esteem for cared for and previously cared for children
- Have an understanding of the key issues that affect the learning of cared for and previously cared for children

Confidentiality

Information on cared for and previously cared for children will be shared with school staff on a 'need to know basis'. The Designated Teacher will discuss what information is shared with which school staff at the PEP meeting. Once this has been agreed by the social worker, carer, young person and other parties, complete confidentiality will be maintained and will comply with General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) guidance.

Partnership Working

STCM values partnership working. In order to secure the best possible outcomes for cared for and previously cared for children it is essential that we work with parents/carers, social workers, the Virtual School Head Teacher and other external partners to ensure we are providing the best possible life chances for both cared for and previously cared for children.

Further Information

Keeping Children Safe in Education - Statutory guidance for schools and colleges
September 2022

[Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/640266/Keeping-Children-Safe-in-Education-September-2022.pdf)

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018

[Working together to safeguard children - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/640266/Working-Together-to-Safeguard-Children-2018.pdf)

The designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after children - Statutory guidance on their roles and responsibilities: February 2018

[The designated teacher for looked- after and previously looked-after children - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/640266/The-designated-teacher-for-looked-after-and-previously-looked-after-children-February-2018.pdf)

Promoting the education of looked-after children and previously looked-after children - Statutory guidance for local authorities: February 2018

[Promoting the education of looked-after and previously looked-after children - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/640266/Promoting-the-education-of-looked-after-and-previously-looked-after-children-February-2018.pdf)