



*Tomlinscote School
Sixth Form College*

A Specialist Language College

Children in Care Policy

Policy Type:	Mandatory
Approved By:	Resources
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Tomlinscote School

Children in Care Policy

Governors' Committee Responsible:	Resources Committee
Link AQC Councillor:	Mr Muir Laurie - vicechair@tomlinscoteschool.com
Designated Teacher for CiC:	Ms Helen Rushby - hrushby@tomlinscoteschool.com

CONTEXT

The Children Act (2004) places a duty to safeguard children in care, to promote their educational achievement and to ensure they are able to 'achieve to and reach their full potential'. The terms 'Looked After Children' and 'Children in Care' are often used to define the same group of young people. In documents produced by Surrey's Virtual School the use of Children in Care (CiC) is the preferred term.

When a child or young person is taken into Care by a local authority under a Court Order, the key feature is a change in parental responsibility, which is then undertaken by the local authority – who become their 'Corporate Parent'. Young people can also be in Care under a voluntary arrangement with parents (a status known as Accommodated) where parental responsibility remains with birth parents, but this arrangement is monitored and supported by social services. Most children in care will be living in foster homes but some may be in a children's home, living with a relative or even be placed back at home with their birth parent(s). It is important the school attended by the child is aware of their Care status, as many children and families are supported by social care without the use of Care Orders. Foster carers will very rarely hold parental responsibility – this is assumed by the social worker. Children placed for adoption remain looked after by the local authority until the Final Order.

A Personal Education Plan is required for every Child in Care and forms part of their overall Care Plan. The Care Plan should be in place within six weeks of entering care and thereafter reviewed at least every six weeks.

The collective responsibility of local authorities and schools to achieve this are set out under six principles:

Prioritising education;
Having high expectations and aspiration;
Inclusion – Changing and challenging attitudes;
Achieving continuity and stability;
Early intervention – priority action and;
Listening to children.

Aims

- To provide a safe and secure environment, where education is valued and there is a belief in the abilities and potential of all children.
- To support our Children in Care and give them access to every opportunity to achieve to their potential and enjoy learning.
- To fulfil our school's role as corporate parents to promote and support the education of our Children in Care by asking the question, 'Would this be good enough for my child?'

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The AQC will:

- ensure the appointment of a Designated Teacher and AQC Councillor in accordance with the Regulations. ensure the designated teacher is given the appropriate level of support in order to fulfil their role;
- monitor the school's policies and ensure they are effective in reflecting the needs of children in care;
- ensure all councillors are fully aware of legal requirements and guidance on the education of children in care;
- monitor the effectiveness of the role and as a minimum, receive an annual report from the Designated Teacher;
- examine whether the school is making the fullest possible use of all available resources, such as additional funding, in order to provide the maximum opportunity for CiC to achieve;
- scrutinise the school's admission procedures to ensure students are admitted into the school as quickly as possible recognising the importance of re-establishing school stability for children in care and;
- champion the needs of those in care and support the work of the Designated teacher.

The Interim Principal and the Senior Leadership Team will:

- promote a culture in which children in care believe they can succeed and aspire to further and higher education, without being labelled or singled out;
- appoint a Designated Teacher for CiC. (Designated teachers must have Qualified Teacher Status and ideally be a member of the SLT in school, or have direct access to the team);
- empower the Designated Teacher to fulfil their role and responsibilities;
- ensure all staff, both teaching and non-teaching have an understanding of the difficulties and educational disadvantage faced by children in care and understand the need for positive systems of support to overcome them;
- recognise the particular circumstances of CiC and provide for these in all other school policies;
- Will ensure the day-to-day management of information provides sufficient access to promote an understanding of, and provide safeguards for individual children and;
- commit to working with the local authority Virtual Headteacher to promote the achievement of children in care.

The Designated Teacher for CiC will:

- have high expectations of looked after children's involvement in learning and educational progress;
- monitor the educational progress of all Children in Care in order to ensure they are reaching their potential and feel a part of the school community;
- intervene if there is evidence of individual underachievement, absence from school or internal truancy, taking action to communicate any difficulties as soon as possible;
- act as an advocate for Children in Care;
- inform members of staff of the general educational needs of children in care;
- promote the involvement of these children in out of school hours learning;
- to promote the involvement of these children in out of school hours learning;
- be the named contact for and develop and monitor systems for liaising with carers, local authority children's services and the Virtual School of the caring authority, to ensure the speedy transfer of information between key partners;

- ensure every child in care has a current Personal Education Plan that includes appropriate educational targets and encourages the 'voice of the child' to be heard;
- attend, arrange for someone else to attend, or to contribute in other ways to care planning meetings;
- provide a programme of transition support, as appropriate;
- present regular reports to school councillors, including an Annual Report;
- access statutory training events organised by Surrey Virtual School (as a minimum requirement) and;
- cascade training to school staff and councillors as appropriate.

EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THIS POLICY

In evaluating the effectiveness of this policy the school will consider the views of:

- Children in Care;
- Carers;
- External Agencies and;
- School staff.

Student progress will provide evidence for the success of the policy including progress at KS3 and KS4 and through the achievement of individual student targets.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

Promoting the Educational Achievement of Looked After Children Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities DCSF 2010.

Improving the Attainment of Looked After Children in Secondary Schools DCSF 2019.

LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES

- Equality;
- Behaviour;
- Child Protection;
- Admissions;
- Attendance and;
- Anti-Bullying Policy.